



**STRATEGIC REPORT**  
**on the implementation of**  
**the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014**  
**in**  
**ROMANIA**

**2013**

**Reporting period**  
**15 March 2013 – 31 December 2013**

**MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN FUNDS**

**National Focal Point for the EEA& Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014**

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2013 was very important in the overall picture of EEA & Norway grants in Romania as it marked the closure of the programming phase; by the end of the year all 22 programmes had been approved by the donors and 18 were in the implementation phase, as both Programme agreements and Programme implementation agreements had been signed. Advances in amount of 16,081,530 euro were received.

Both NFP and Programme Operators made efforts to produce good programme proposals and to provide quick answers to any requests of additional information from FMO so as to shorten the approval process as much as possible.

Under some of the programmes approved in the first half of the year, calls were launched in accordance with the programme agreement (in amount of 82,595,493 Euros). More advanced programmes approved in 2012 began the evaluation of applications received under the calls.

Due to the cancellation of two programmes, almost a fifth of the total net financial allocation for Romania had to be reallocated (55 mil. Euro); after a short negotiation with the donors, the parties agreed, in October 2013, on the set-up of a new programme "Poverty alleviation", to be managed by FMO, and on the increase of financial allocations to existing programmes (of which the most significant to the "public health" programme).

In parallel, the complete national legal framework was put in place through the approval of the government ordinance regulating the financial flows related to the Financial Mechanisms.

At the same time, all institutions designated as programme operators created the dedicated units for the management of their programme(s) in view of the approaching implementation phase and compliance audit missions to be carried out by the Audit authority in 2014.

In the autumn of 2013, the NFP launched the calls under the Bilateral Fund at National Level for travel support and initiatives to be financed under three of the priority areas, as provided in the Work plan agreed with the donors.

Throughout the year both NFP and programme operators experienced good cooperation with DPPs and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

In terms of identified risks and possible problems, the widest spread reason for concern is by far the short period of time left for project implementation assuming that most project contracts will probably be signed in the first half of 2014. Some of them, particularly pre-defined projects, are rather complex, with large budgets and potentially lengthy procurement procedures. On the side of programme operators there are risks related to availability of sufficient human resources in terms both of number and expertise as well as staff migration.

Definitely, the top priority of 2014 will be the speed of programmes and projects implementation which will require close monitoring, supportive attitude and active involvement of all stakeholders.

2014 may be important also from another perspective, namely the opportunity to use the experience derived so far in the negotiation of the next round of grants, foreseen to start this year.

## 2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

### 2.1 Cohesion

#### *Current national economic and social data*

According to the estimations of the National Institute for Statistics, in 2013 Romania recorded a GDP growth of 3.5% compared to 2012 (mostly triggered by exports and good results in agriculture), higher than the IMF forecast of 2.8% and the highest in the EU. An all time high of 50 bn. Euro of exports was also recorded. The Government and International Financial Institutions anticipate an increase of 2.1-2.2% of GDP in 2014.

The European Economic Forecast Winter 2014 indicates the following data:

Forecasts for Romania	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP growth (% , yoy)	0,7	3,5	2,3	2,5
Inflation (% , yoy)	3,4	3,2	2,4	3,4
Unemployment (%)	7,0	7,2	7,2	7,1
Public budget balance (% of GDP)	-3,0	-2,6	-2,2	-1,8
Gross public debt (% of GDP)	38,0	38,3	39,3	39,2
Current-account balance (% of GDP)	-4,4	-1,0	-1,2	-1,6
25 February 2014, European Commission				

The budget deficit in Romania is estimated to have been reduced to 2.6% of GDP in 2013, from 3% in 2012. It is slightly higher than previously projected, as it accommodates higher co-financing expenditure to support EU funds' absorption. For 2014, the budget deficit is forecasted at 2.2% of GDP, higher than previously projected, again reflecting higher co-financing expenditure for EU funds.

In 2013, the unemployment rate has risen to 7.2%. It is expected to remain at broadly the same level in 2014, before coming down slightly in 2015 when policy measures, especially those targeted at youth unemployment, would start showing effects. While the number of employment contracts marginally increased in 2013, the number of self-employed fell, leaving overall employment broadly unchanged in 2013. Given the expected slowdown in GDP growth in 2014, employment is projected to grow only slowly.

The relative low unemployment should be correlated with the significant number of Romanian citizens currently working abroad, officially estimated by the Ministry of Labour to approx. 2 million people in November 2013.

Compensation per employee has grown moderately in 2013 driven by public sector wage increases. The trend is projected to be reversed in 2014 with private sector compensation growth overtaking the public sector. The increase in the minimum wage notwithstanding, overall compensation growth is forecast to remain moderate.

A precautionary financial assistance programme for Romania with IMF, EU and the World Bank was formally agreed in October 2013. It will provide an overall amount of € 4 billion, equally split between the EU and the IMF, until end-September 2015. This is the third time Romania benefits from EU financial assistance. The first programme (2009-2011) provided financing of 20 bn. euros, of which 5 bn. euros from the EU, and was fully disbursed. The second programme (2011-2013) provided precautionary assistance of 5 bn. euros, including 1.4 bn. from the EU, and was not drawn upon.

In terms of human development, the latest data reported by the United Nations Development Programme includes Romania in the High Human Development category, with other countries such as Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, Russia (except for Bulgaria, there is no other EU country in this category).

The main indicators reflecting Romania's standing are summarised in the following table (sources: Eurostat, UNDP, Transparency International):

Indicator	Rank	Value
Human Development Index	27/EU28	0.786 (2012)
At-risk-of poverty or social exclusion rate	26/EU27	41.7% (2012)
Gender Inequality Index	27/EU27	0.372 (2012)
Gender pay gap	6/EU27	9.7% (2012)
Life expectancy	24/EU27	74.5 years (2012)
Population growth rate		-0.29%
Health care expenditure	last/EU (no data for BG, LV, CY)	5.9% of GDP (2010)
Education expenditures		4.2% of GDP

Early leavers from education and training	23/EU27	17.4% (2012)
TI corruption Perception index	26/EU28 (69/world)	43 (2013)

### **Challenges to economic and social development**

During the process of elaboration of the Partnership Agreement, developed by the Ministry of European Funds for the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds allocated to Romania (approx. 23 bn. Euros), the following main challenges for national growth have been identified and taken into account:

#### ***The competitiveness challenge***

The overall level of economic activity in Romania remains very low. Examination of sectorial scale, structure and performance makes clear the challenge for competitiveness in Romania, such as:

- the present dependence for employment upon very low value adding agriculture, with a very high share of small farms (almost 93% of total farms) with low market orientation, low level of productivity and technical endowment, large areas of orchards declining (over 50% )
- the character of enterprise culture as reflected by the relatively low business density in all regions except Bucharest-Ifov and its orientation towards low value-adding activity;
- internationally uncompetitive levels of productivity in many areas of industry;
- the present under-representation of higher value adding services within the economy;
- fragmentation, excessive standardization, inefficient use of resources in Romanian R&D and academic environments and the absence of strategy for developing research-intensive institutions.

#### ***The people and society challenge***

Romania is subject to great disparities in wealth, opportunity, education, skills, health and in many areas these have intensified in the past decade. There is a profound territorial character to disparities, with pronounced variations between regions and between urban and rural areas.

Romania has a very low density of employment, especially in the rural area (In 2012, Romania's the rural area extended to 207,522 km<sup>2</sup> (87.1% of the territory of Romania), was inhabited by 45.0% of the Romanian population. (Source: National Institute of Statistics 2012). The rural area is defined though the designation of communes (NUTS5 units) as rural and statistics relating to the rural area are aggregated from that level). Large areas of the country lack a functioning labour market and consequently large numbers of young people are not in employment, in education or training.

There are great challenges in restoring the performance of the education system and, in the context of a depressed demand for labour in making education attractive and seen to pay. Apart from creating a modern and well-equipped educational infrastructure, there are challenges to overcome in extending access to early education, combating early school leaving, increasing the relevance of education and training to the needs of the labour market and opening access to tertiary education and to lifelong learning.

#### ***The infrastructure challenge***

Romania is hampered in pursuing growth by underdeveloped and outdated infrastructure. Although Romania sits on important routes connecting Central Europe with the Black Sea and the Caucasus, its transport infrastructure is underdeveloped relative to the volume of goods and passengers that transit Romanian territory, and accessibility remains a major barrier to regional growth. Connectivity via all transport modes is suboptimal due to the backlog of investments, as well as administrative deficiencies in the maintenance and operation of the infrastructure. As regards ICT infrastructure, basic broadband should be universally available by 2015 as a result of existing initiatives, although take-up remains low. However, Romania faces particular challenges in extending New Generation Access in rural areas where, in the absence of public intervention, it is estimated that by 2020 less than 50% of households will be covered with speeds over 30Mbps.

#### ***The resources challenge***

Romania is well endowed with energy resources, a significant proportion of which is from renewable sources and has potential for further extension. It has a much lower reliance on imported energy (21.7% in 2010) than in the EU27 (52.7%). The efficiency of Romania's electricity generation, transmission and distribution systems (from renewable sources such as wind, solar and on the other hand nuclear and gas turbines) is close to the EU average. The efficiency in energy use is poor, notably as a result of badly insulated residential and public buildings combined with inefficiency in the district heating transmission and distribution systems.

Romania is confronted with a range of natural and man-made environmental risks which pose a threat to Romania's citizens, its infrastructure and its natural resources. Risks arising from or exacerbated by climate change have had a major impact over the past decade; recurrent floods, forest fires and drought, have caused extensive loss and damage across the country. In some situations, the national response capacity was exceeded by their severity.

The extension and modernization of the water and wastewater infrastructure continue to be one of the most important priorities in improving Romanian living standards, especially in rural areas. Waste management is still far short of European standards with low levels of re-use, recycling and energy recovery. Romania has as transition period until 2017 to phase out non-compliant landfills.

Romania is well endowed with natural assets, but environmental quality and biodiversity remain under pressure from both natural process and economic activity. There is a pressing need to enhance environmental protection and to shift to more sustainable practices in agriculture, construction, extractive industries and in business generally.

#### ***The administration and government challenge***

Romania is still characterized by weak administrative capacity of public institutions and a predisposition towards bureaucracy and disproportionate regulation that seriously influence the competitiveness of Romania's business environment. Despite efforts to implement a robust policy process in Romania, reforms are urgently needed to improve the quality of public administration. Romania has taken numerous steps to create a strong, independent and well respected justice system. While progress has been made in many areas, it still remains a need for further capacity-building, reform and modernization.

The absence of an effective system of cadastre represents a significant obstacle to the development and implementation of infrastructure, property development and consolidation of agricultural land.

An important issue affecting the delivery of public services in Romania is perceived to be corruption: based on regular progress reports, independent reviews and perception survey, corruption continues to be identified by the public as a barrier to quality public services at central and local levels, as a phenomenon that undermines the effective administration of public funds and obstructing justice, also affecting business environment.

#### ***The EEA and Norway Grants in the context of Romania's development challenges***

According to the finalised programming framework, the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014, will support the following objectives, which can broadly be included in two categories:

1. Human/social development
2. Environmental issues

Priority Sector	OBJECTIVES (TARGETED IN PROGRAMMES)	Financial allocation (Euro)
Climate change and renewable energy	Reduced <b>emissions of greenhouse gases</b> and air pollutants	8,000,000
	Increased share of <b>renewable energy</b> in energy use	12,270,000
	Reduced human and ecosystem vulnerability to <b>climate change</b>	5,000,000
Environmental	Halt loss of <b>biodiversity</b>	15,000,000

Priority Sector	OBJECTIVES (TARGETED IN PROGRAMMES)	Financial allocation (Euro)
protection and management	Improved compliance with <b>environmental legislation</b>	8,181,250
	Prevent injury and adverse environmental effects caused by <b>chemicals and hazardous waste</b>	10,000,000
Civil society	Strengthened <b>civil society development</b> and enhanced contribution to social justice, democracy and sustainable development	36,330,000
Human and social development	Improved well-being of <b>children and young people at risk</b>	27,000,000
	Strengthened <b>social and economic cohesion</b> at national, regional and local levels	
	<b>Gender equality</b> and work-life balance promoted	4,519,478
Research and scholarship	Enhanced research-based <b>knowledge development</b> in Romania	20,000,000
	Enhanced <b>human capital</b> and knowledge base in Romania	4,000,000
Protecting cultural heritage	<b>Cultural and natural heritage</b> for future generations safe-guarded and conserved and made publicly accessible	14,000,000
	<b>Cultural dialogue</b> increased and European identity fostered through understanding of cultural diversity	6,818,750
	<b>Poverty Alleviation</b>	20,000,000
Green industry innovation	Increased competitiveness of <b>green enterprises</b> , including greening of existing industries, green innovation and green entrepreneurship	29,700,000
Justice and home affairs	<b>Gender-based violence</b> prevented and tackled	4,000,000
	Increase citizen's security through improvement of the efficiency of cooperation between law enforcement authorities in the Schengen Member States in <b>fighting organised crime</b> , including trafficking in human beings	5,300,000
	A fairer and more efficient <b>judicial system</b>	8,000,000
	Improved <b>correctional services system</b> in compliance with relevant international human rights instruments	8,000,000
Human and social development	Strengthened <b>institutional capacity and human resource development</b> in public institutions, local and regional authorities	7,000,000
	Improved public health and reduced health inequalities	21,104,000
Decent work and tripartite dialogue	Decent work promoted and tripartite cooperation improved between employers' organisations, trade unions and public authorities in supporting equitable and sustainable economic and social development	1,152,000
Total		275,375,478
Total human and social development funds		187,224,228 (68%)
Total environmental issues funds		88,151,250 (32%)

From the above, we can conclude that the EEA and Norway Grants are addressing some of Romania's main challenges, as identified and recognised through recent relevant documents and will contribute to reducing the gaps between Romania and the rest of EU/EEA in terms of social and human development (in greater proportion) and environmental-related issues.

## 2.2 Bilateral Relations

The objective of strengthened bilateral relations between Romania and the donor states is supported by implementing the means established in the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms: implementation of

the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level, implementation of the Fund for Bilateral Relations at programme level, implementation of donor partnership programmes and donor partnership projects.

The progress in the achievement of the expected results of bilateral cooperation is to be monitored and measured through bilateral indicators established at national and programme level:

- Extent of cooperation
- Shared results
- Knowledge and mutual understanding
- Wider effects

## 2.2.1 Implementation of the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level

On 22nd of June 2012, the Grant Agreement for the financing of Technical Assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations at National Level was signed between the Financial Mechanism Committee, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NFP.

On 2nd of May 2013 the budget, the work plan and the implementation system for the bilateral fund at national level were approved by FMO.

The bilateral fund at national level constitutes a flexible source of funding for initiatives of interest to both the donor and beneficiary states that will strengthen the cooperation between them. The total allocation for the Romanian National Bilateral Fund is 1,529,750 euro.

### 2.2.2. Achieved results

On 30th of October 2013 the calls for proposals under the bilateral fund at national level were launched. The calls are opened until 31st of March 2014.

The first call dedicated to travel support had a total budget of 50,000 euro.

The following applications were received as a result of the travel support call:

	Applicant	Value (Euro at March Inforeuro rate)	Status as of 31.12.2013
1	East Europe Master Plan Association (E.E.M.P.A.)	2,570	Rejected
2	OI POS DRU (Intermediate body for HR Development Operational Program)	1,674	Rejected
3	Young Entrepreneurs Association from Romania	1,305	Contracted
4	Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate	4,500	Contracted
<b>Total received applications</b>		<b>10,049</b>	

The second call addressing projects within the priority areas had a total budget of 200,000 euro.

After the opening of the call for projects within the 3 priority areas, the following applications were received:

Applicant	Value (Euro at March Inforeuro rate)	Status as of 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013
<b>General/horizontal priorities</b>		
No request received	-	-
<b>Justice and Home Affairs</b>		
No request received	-	-

<b>Children and youth at risk</b>		
Association for Women with Addictions from Romania (ApFAR)	10,019	Rejected
SOS Children's Villages	18,560	To be contracted
<b>Total received applications</b>	<b>28,579</b>	

In addition to the calls for proposals, the Bilateral Fund at National Level was dedicated to the financing of the following preapproved activities:

<b>Beneficiary</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Amount (euro)</b>	<b>Status</b>
Embassy of Romania in Oslo	Conference on the inclusion of Roma	25,060	Contracted and paid
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bucharest	Event for promoting the signing of the MoUs on the implementation of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms	6,102	Contracted and paid
Norwegian Mapping Authority and Registers Iceland	Preparation of Project Proposal for RO03 pre-defined project	79,200	To be contracted
KS	Preparation of Project Proposal for RO07 pre-defined project	42,633	To be contracted
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bucharest	Ensuring High Competency Standards in a Challenging Market for Norwegian Shipping Industry	14,896	Contracted and paid
Council of Europe	Conference on Constitutional Reform in Romania	28,500	Contracted and paid
Oradea University	Reimbursement of costs for participation to the "Iceland geothermal conference 2013"	3,478	Contracted
Environment Fund Administration	Reimbursement of costs for participation to the "Iceland geothermal conference 2013"	TBD	To be contracted
NFP	Reimbursement of costs for participation to the "Iceland geothermal conference 2013"	1,831	To be contracted
Norwegian Tax Authority	Preparation of Project Proposal for RO18 pre-defined project	TBD	To be contracted
<b>Total</b>		<b>201,700</b>	



Total payments in amount of 72,118 euro were made by NFP under the Bilateral Fund at national level in the reporting period.

### 2.2.3. Lessons learned

Considering the experience of a 2 months period (November - December 2013) opened call and the challenges faced through the application process, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- limited interest shown by the potential applicants so far;
- difficulties encountered by potential applicants in finding a suitable bilateral partner;
- longer than expected evaluation process due to work load of both NFP team and of Embassy staff (who were voting members in the selection committee);
- After the analysis of the application process and of the issues raised along the evaluation period, the following mitigation measures can be proposed:
- increased publicity measures and targeted information actions;
- reopening of the calls including all agreed priorities;
- advising in the text of call for projects about the way to find potential partners;
- simplifying the evaluation procedure;
- repeating the pre-defining exercise in agreement with the donors.

## 3 REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES

### 3.1 Overview of Programme status

During 2013, the programming process for the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania has been finalised.

Following the rejection of two Programme Proposals (Carbon Capture and Storage and Maritime Sector), an amount of 55 million Euros was reallocated, according to the conclusions of the negotiation meeting between the Ministry of European Funds and Donor States of October 2013, as follows:

- 20 million Euros for a new programme within the Norwegian FM targeting poverty alleviation
- Increase of the budget of existing programmes:
  - 13 million Euros for RO19 - Public Health Initiatives
  - 5.7 million Euros for RO17 - Green Industry Innovation
  - 1 million Euros for RO18 - Capacity Building and Institutional Cooperation
  - 0.3 million Euros for RO21 - Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-border and Organised Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups
  - 4.270 million Euros for RO06 - Renewable Energy
  - 6.330 million Euros for RO09 - NGO Fund
  - 5 million Euros for RO10 - Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion

This section shall provide an overview of calls and predefined projects under the programmes, as main activities which will lead to the achievement of objectives and disbursements made in 2013, reflecting progress in terms of financial implementation.

**Table: Calls and predefined projects under RO Programmes**

Programme			Budget
<b>RO02</b>	<b>Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services</b>		
	Call 1	Studies and training Protected Areas	€ 2,000,000
	Call 2	Management/monitoring ecological corridors	€ 1,500,000
	Call 3	Large Ecosystems restoration scheme	€ 6,270,214
	Call 4	Identification PES (SGS)	€ 2,400,000
	Predef.	National Agency for Environmental Protection	€ 4,000,000
<b>RO03</b>	<b>Environmental monitoring and integrated planning and control</b>		
	Predef.	National Agency for Cadaster	€ 9,047,500
<b>RO04</b>	<b>Reduction of Hazardous Substances</b>		
	Call 1	Call for proposals 1	€ 7,145,770
	Call 2	Call for proposals 2	€ 1,188,372
	Predef.	National Agency for Romanian Waters	€ 2,341,039
<b>RO05</b>	<b>Energy Efficiency</b>		
	Call 1	Open call 1	€ 8,235,294
<b>RO06</b>	<b>Renewable Energy</b>		
	Call 1	Hydropower and geothermal heat plant projects	€ 8,387,406
<b>RO07</b>	<b>Adaptation to Climate Change</b>		
	Predef.	EPA Sibiu	€ 5,361,571
<b>RO09</b>	<b>Funds for Non-governmental Organisations</b>		
	Call 1	open call number 1	€ 16,880,000
	Call 2	open call number 2	€ 8,620,000
<b>RO10</b>	<b>Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives</b>		
	Call 1	Local - Small Grant Scheme focused on Roma	€ 5,176,471
	Call 2	Synergies for the future – children at risk	€ 7,058,823
	Call 3	Synergies for the future – youth at risk	€ 5,705,882
	Call 4	Coherent - Local and regional initiatives	€ 4,458,598
	Predef.	National Council Against Discrimination	€ 399,990
<b>RO11</b>	<b>Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance</b>		
	Call 1	Balance between work, family and private life	€ 4,697,514

<b>RO12</b>	<b>Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage</b>			
	Call 1	Call for individual projects	€ 9,621,005	no
	Call 2	Call for small grant scheme	€ 1,176,470	no
	Predef.	Astra Museum	€ 3,500,054	yes
<b>RO13</b>	<b>Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts</b>			
	Call 1	Large projects	€ 6,245,957	no
	Call 2	Small projects	€ 623,566	no
<b>RO14</b>	<b>Research within priority sectors</b>			
	Call 1	Call for Proposals 2013	€ 21,681,063	yes
<b>RO15</b>	<b>Scholarships</b>			
	Call 1	Call for proposals 2013	€ 1,185,000	yes
	Call 2	Call for proposals 2014	€ 1,850,000	no
	Call 3	Call for proposals 2015	€ 811,000	no
<b>RO17</b>	<b>Green Industry Innovation</b>			
	Call 1	Open Call - Individual Project Grant Scheme	€ 19,408,200	yes
	Call 2	Open Call - Small Grants Project Scheme	€ 2,000,000	yes
<b>RO18</b>	<b>Capacity Building and Institutional Cooperation</b>			
	Predef.	CNCAN	€ 4,215,098	yes
	Predef.	National Agency for Fiscal Administration	€ 2,381,373	no
<b>RO19</b>	<b>Public Health Initiatives</b>			
	Predef.	Pulmonology Institute Marius Nasta (increased budget)	€ 10,398,630	no
	Predef.	Matei Bals Institute	€ 1,373,470	no
	Predef.	National Public Health Institute (Roma mediators)	€ 1,052,910	no
	Predef.	National Public Health Institute (prevention non-communicable diseases)	€ 1,115,120	no
	Predef.	Chronic disease registries (new project)	€ 1,800,000	no
	Predef.	Cancer screening (new project)	€ 6,200,000	no
<b>RO20</b>	<b>Domestic and Gender-based Violence</b>			
	Call 1	Supporting the network of units in the framework of the Law on domestic violence	€ 1,294,539	no
	Call 2	Awareness and sensitizing activities	€ 529,412	no
	Call 3	Training activities for the professionals activating in the field of domestic violence	€ 452,941	no
	Predef.	General Police Inspectorate	€ 487,814	no
	Predef.	National Agency against Trafficking	€ 1,441,176	no

<b>RO21</b>	<b>Schengen Cooperation</b>			
	Predef.	General Police Inspectorate (increased budget)	€ 3,329,706	no
	Predef.	General Inspectorate of Border Police	€ 170,310	no
	Predef.	National Agency against Trafficking	€ 250,000	no
	Predef.	General Police Inspectorate	€ 791,550	no
	Predef.	General Police Inspectorate	€ 800,000	no
	Predef.	Dept. for Information and Internal Protection	€ 686,260	no
<b>RO23</b>	<b>Correctional Services</b>			
	Predef.	National Penitentiaries Administration (Bacau)	€ 3,127,355	no
	Predef.	National Penitentiaries Administration (therapeutic center)	€ 1,232,437	no
	Predef.	National Penitentiaries Administration (social reintegration)	€ 580,320	no
	Predef.	National Penitentiaries Administration (human resources)	€ 645,069	no
	Predef.	National Probation Directorate	€ 1,933,085	no
	Predef.	General Police Inspectorate	€ 1,286,598	no
<b>RO24</b>	<b>Judicial Capacity</b>			
	Predef.	Superior Council of Magistracy	€ 3,734,426	no
	Predef.	Ministry of Justice	€ 4,016,162	no
	Predef.	Superior Council of Magistracy	€ 941,177	no
<b>RO25</b>	<b>Poverty Alleviation</b>			
	Predef.	TBD	€ 20,000,000	N/A
			<b>Total budget</b>	<b>Total launched / contracted by 31.12.2013</b>
Calls			<b>€ 156,603,497</b>	<b>€ 82,595,493</b>
Predefined projects			<b>€ 98,640,200</b>	<b>€ 7,715,152</b>

Table: Allocated / disbursed at 31.12.2013

<b>Romania</b>	<b>283,003,750 €</b>	<b>Initial budget</b>	<b>Budget after reallocation</b>	<b>Disbursed</b>	<b>Disbursed %</b>
<b>EEA FM</b>		<b>176,443,750 €</b>	<b>176,443,750 €</b>	<b>20,558,260 €</b>	<b>12.903%</b>
RO01 – Technical Assistance and Bilateral Funds at National Level		3,815,000 €	3,815,000 €	506,879 €	13.286%
RO02 – Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services		15,000,000 €	15,000,000 €	0 €	0.00%
RO03 – Environmental Monitoring and Integrated Planning and Control		8,181,250 €	8,181,250 €	440,019 €	5.378%
RO04 – Reduction of Hazardous Substances		10,000,000 €	10,000,000 €	0 €	0.00%
RO05 – Energy Efficiency		8,000,000 €	8,000,000 €	516,290 €	6.454%
RO06 – Renewable Energy		8,000,000 €	12,270,000 €	170,850 €	1.392%
RO07 – Adaptation to Climate Change		5,000,000 €	5,000,000 €	0 €	0.00%
RO08 – Maritime Sector		15,000,000 €	0 €	0 €	0.00%
RO09 – Funds for Non-governmental Organisations		30,000,000 €	36,330,000 €	8,863,642 €	24.397%
RO10 – Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives		22,000,000 €	27,000,000 €	566,546 €	2.098%
RO11 – Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance		4,519,478 €	4,519,478 €	914,377 €	20.232%
RO12 – Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage		14,000,000 €	14,000,000 €	1,551,935 €	11.085%
RO13 – Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage		6,818,750 €	6,818,750 €	590,550 €	8.661%
RO14 – Research within priority sectors		20,000,000 €	20,000,000 €	5,253,291 €	26.266%
RO15 – Scholarships		4,000,000 €	4,000,000 €	1,183,881 €	29.597%
Reserve for projects under FM 2004-2009		2,109,272 €	1,509,272 €		
<b>Norwegian FM</b>		<b>106,560,000 €</b>	<b>106,560,000 €</b>	<b>12,055,831 €</b>	<b>16.954%</b>
RO01 – Technical Assistance and Bilateral Funds at National Level		2,304,000 €	2,304,000 €	306,121 €	13.286%
RO16 – Carbon Capture and Storage		40,000,000 €	0 €	0 €	0.00%
RO17 – Green Industry Innovation		24,000,000 €	29,700,000 €	3,220,501 €	10.843%
RO18 – Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation		6,000,000 €	7,000,000 €	1,753,290 €	25.047%
RO19 – Public Health Initiatives		8,104,000 €	21,104,000 €	0 €	0.00%
RO20 – Domestic and Gender-based Violence		4,000,000 €	4,000,000 €	418,795 €	10.47%
RO21 – Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-border and Organised Crime		5,000,000 €	5,300,000 €	1,941,177 €	36.625%
RO22 – Promotion of decent work and tripartite dialogue		1,152,000 €	1,152,000 €		
RO23 – Correctional Services, including Non-custodial Sanctions		8,000,000 €	8,000,000 €	3,181,300 €	39.766%
RO24 – Judicial Capacity-building and Cooperation		8,000,000 €	8,000,000 €	1,234,647 €	15.433%
RO25 - Poverty alleviation		0 €	20,000,000 €	0 €	0.00%

### **3.2 Individual Programme summaries**

#### **RO02/PA2 BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

Donor Programme Partner: Norwegian Environment Agency

During 2013, the Programme Proposal submitted in November 2012 was the subject of an extensive work of clarifications with the FMO/Donors in order to clarify its scope; the framework of outcomes, outputs and indicators was revised and a new predefined project was introduced. Several meetings with the DPP, FMO and NFP have been conducted for finalising the Programme Proposal. The Programme was approved in late 2013 (19.11.2013) and the Programme Agreement was not signed before the end of the reporting period.

The predefined project included in the Programme - "Demonstrating and promoting natural values to support decision making in Romania" (grant value 4 million Euros) was developed by the Project Promoter (National Environmental Protection Authority) and project partners (Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, WWF, Romanian Space Agency) beginning with the second half of 2013 and it still under preparatory phase.

The main risk affecting the achievement of the objectives is the low capacity of the Programme Operator combined with a relative complexity of the Programme - 3 calls, 1 Small Grants Scheme, 1 predefined project.

There are delays compared to initial planning regarding the dates of launch of open calls, contracting and implementation of projects.

Following delays in the approval of the programme, the date of launch of open calls, contracting and implementation of projects will need to be readjusted. A modification of the Programme Agreement will be proposed by the PO.

The first Cooperation Committee was organised on 10 December 2013 following the approval of the Programme, where the Work Plan for use of the fund for bilateral relations has been proposed and discussed. No activities under the fund for bilateral relations have been performed during 2013.

#### **RO03/PA3 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND INTEGRATED PLANNING AND CONTROL**

Programme Operator: National Focal Point

The Programme was approved by the Donor States in June 2013 and the Programme Agreement was signed in August 2013. From its negotiation and development phase, the Programme was designed to be limited in scope, financing only one predefined project, in the area of Environmental Monitoring and Integrated Planning and Control. The Programme will effectively start in 2014 with the signing of the Project Contract for the predefined project, with significant delay (of 9 months) as compared to the Programme Proposal.

The Updated Work plan confirms some risks addressed in the programme proposal which are maintained in the next period for activity 1 DTM: the procedure for the submission of appeals according to the public procurement legislation (the Romanian institution responsible for solving the appeals has a 30 days period for making a decision, but this period cannot be controlled, a situation that could lead to significant delays in the date of signing the procurement contracts) and technical risk: flyover permit, weather conditions (rain, fog, snow).

The Programme will start effectively in 2014 when the Financing Contract for the predefined project will be signed, with a big delay as compared to the Programme Proposal. During the evaluation and contracting of the pre-defined project, additional measures were taken to avoid double funding, measures that have caused delays in the implementation of the program.

Following consultations to avoid double financing, the initial area established for production of a detailed Terrain Model, new maps and orthophotos for about 50 000 sqkm in the southern part of Romania, the Danube river Including Areas along the entire Danube Delta, was replaced with the six counties area comprising: Bihor, Arad, Hunedoara, Alba, Mures and Harghita, including high-risk flood zone (the area from

the border with the Republic of Hungary in Arad and Bihor). Indicators have not been modified, the results remained the same. Approval of PDPs was secured.

#### **RO04/PA4REDUCTION OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

Donor Programme Partner: Norwegian Environment Agency

During 2013, the Programme Proposal submitted in November 2012 was the subject of an extensive work of clarifications with the FMO/Donors in order to clarify its scope; the framework of outcomes, outputs and indicators was revised and a new predefined project was introduced. Several meetings with the DPP, FMO and NFP have been conducted for finalising the Programme Proposal. The Programme was approved in late 2013 (01.10.2013) and the Programme Agreement was not signed before the end of the reporting period.

The predefined project included in the Programme - "Towards a proper aquatic environment" (grant value 2,753,351 million Euros) was developed by the Project Promoter (National Agency Romanian Waters) and donor project partner (Norwegian Environment Agency) beginning with the second half of 2013 and it still under preparatory phase.

The main risk affecting the achievement of the objectives is the low capacity of the Programme Operator.

Following delays in the approval of programme, the date of launch of open calls, contracting and implementation of projects will need to be readjusted. A modification of the Programme Agreement will be proposed by the PO.

There are major deviations from the first programme proposal submitted in November 2012, regarding the planned dates of launch of open calls, contracting and implementation of projects.

The first Cooperation Committee was organised on 10 December 2013 following the approval of the Programme, where the Work Plan for use of the fund for bilateral relations has been proposed and discussed. No activities under the fund for bilateral relations have been performed during 2013.

#### **RO05/PA5 Energy Efficiency**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Economy

The Programme was approved and the Programme Agreement was signed on 01.11.2013. During 2013, the PO has developed the Guidelines for applicants for the call foreseen, but the call was not launched.

A plan for the use of the fund for bilateral relations and the updated outcome indicators developed by the PO were sent to FMO on 09.12.2013.

#### **RO06/PA06 - Renewable Energy**

Programme Operator: Environment Fund Administration

Donor Programme Partners: NVE (Norway), OS (Iceland)

The Programme was approved on 06.09.2013, when the implementation of the programme started. The Programme Agreement was signed on 28.11.2013. The PO has set up its internal structure and working procedures. The Programme launching conference and a matchmaking seminar were held on 26.11.2013 in Bucharest.

After the approval of programme, the PO in consultation with the DPPs has drafted the Guidelines for Applicants for the call for proposals included in the Programme. The guide was published for consultation on the programme dedicated website at the beginning of December. On December 19, 2013, the state aid financing scheme, necessary for the launch of the call for proposals was approved by the Competition Council and signed by EFA's Approval Committee.

The following outputs were achieved during the reporting period:

Output	Output indicator	Indicator value		Fulfilled
Increased cooperation between Romania and the Donor States	Number of persons involved in the exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	Baseline	Target	9 representatives from Iceland and 6 from Norway participated at the seminar organised within the launching event (November 26, 2013).
		0	50	

A significant risk for the programme is the validity period of the state aid scheme which expires on June 30, 2014; delays in the contracting of projects beyond this date would require a lengthy process of approval of another scheme, falling under the new European state aid regulations and re-launch of the call.

Other technical and specific risks are identified and monitored according to the Risk Assessment table included in the Programme Proposal and will be reported on in the Annual Reports.

The call for proposals was not launched in the 4th quarter of 2013, as stipulated in the PA (the call for proposals shall be open between March and May 2014). The increase of the Programme budget with 4,270,000 Euros following the reallocation negotiations will call for the modification of the Programme Agreement

The plan for the use of funds for bilateral relations has been discussed and agreed in the Cooperation Committee. Activities under the fund are planned from 2014 onwards.

#### **RO07/PA7 ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

The Programme was approved on 01.10.2013 but the PA has not yet been signed. The Programme is implemented through a single predefined project promoted by the Environment Protection Agency Sibiu with main donor project partner KS. The Partnership Agreement has not been signed by the PP and its partners to this date. A final version of the predefined project, the detailed budget, and the result of an external evaluation were sent by the PO to the FMO. Considering the objectives and activities proposed under this Project, the Programme will need to include two outcomes, one for the Adaptation to Climate Change priority area and another from the Energy Efficiency priority area. These changes have not yet been made.

There are significant delays in the preparation of the programme and approval of the predefined project.

The initial Programme Proposal will be significantly modified, to include two outcomes, one for the Adaptation to Climate Change outcome and another for Energy Efficiency, thus creating new activities for the project promoter in the same time framework.

The Programme Agreement as well as the Predefined Project are still under development.

The funds for the bilateral relations will be available only for the PP. The PP will have to submit a project application for the requested amount with the justification regarding the opportunity for the proposed study visit/workshop/etc. and have it approved by the PO.

#### **RO09/PA10 FUNDS FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Programme Operator: Civil Society Development Foundation

In the first months of the implementation, the general management setup has been made, the key challenge being planning (and starting implementing) effectively the 2 rounds of the Programme, considering the implementing period of the projects (until 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2016).

Following the official launching of the Programme (April 2013), the first bilateral relations call was launched. The first year of implementation's main activity was launching the first call for applications, with a total value of 15,930,000 Eur.

In May and June, the 6 calls for projects were launched, with deadlines in July and August 2013. For the 5 Components of the Programme – ENGAGE, Social Justice (including 2 subcomponents with different calls for each: Rural interethnic communities development and Fighting social inequalities, poverty and exclusion),



Sustainable development, Welfare and basic services, NGO capacity development; networks and coalitions – a total of 1493 applications (respectively, letters of intent for Social justice Component) were received.

At the first meeting of the Selection Committee, held in December, evaluation reports as well as lists with projects proposed for funding were finalised for the following Components: NGO capacity development; networks and coalitions, Sustainable development and Social justice – Fighting social inequalities, poverty and exclusion. In December, the process of sending pre-contracting letters and informing applicants of the results started. No contracts with project Promoters have been signed in 2013.

In 2013, evaluation for Components: NGO capacity development; networks and coalitions, Sustainable development and Social justice – Fighting social inequalities, poverty and exclusion was finished, subsequently a sum-up of the achievement of indicators on these Components has been made. The analysis so far shows that the large majority of the indicators will be over-achieved, but there are as well a series of indicators and outcomes that should be paid attention to in the 2nd Round. The results so far are intermediary – not only that the projects have not started yet, but the sum-up of the indicators in the pre-contracting phase could change based on the final list of projects that will be financed (after the last eligibility check).

The NGO Fund includes two pre-defined projects approved through the PIA, namely:

- *Social Atlas of Roma Communities in Romania* (maximum grant amount: 150,000 Euro), which focuses on development of an updated dataset on Roma communities defining their typologies and profiles from the point of view of their wellbeing;
- *NGO Forum* (maximum grant amount: 150,000 Euro), which focuses on bringing together NGOs from all over the country for developing an annual strategic programme for the civil society development in a transparent, participatory manner.

The calls for selection of project promoters are foreseen for 2014. Preliminary work has been done in 2013 for the preparation of the calls.

For the third pre-defined project *“Resources for the future – developing and strengthening capacity of NGOs to efficiently fundraise”*, a proposal for implementation has been submitted to the FMO and an additional request for clarifications was received.

Risks are addressed based on the risk assessment carried out between signing the PIA (and detailed in the proposal and further correspondence).

Each project's risk assessment will be done according to the following major risk factors:

- number of partners involved in the project;
- the grant amount requested by the promoter;
- number of project implemented by the promoter within the Programme;
- existence of an independent audit on the project contracted by the promoter;
- the volume of the costs related to reconstruction, renovation or refurbishment of real estate;
- the volume of the outsourcing within the project;
- the frequency of the financing contract amendments made by the promoter.

Over the reporting period, the Operator has mainly implemented actions within Measure a. of the Fund for Bilateral Relations, as follows:

- thematic workshops have been organized within the Launching Conference of the NGO Programme in Romania (Bucharest; April 17-19, 2013)
- Launching and implementing the 1st Call for proposals for seed money facility
- Organising of a Matchmaking seminar in Bucharest on November 26-27, 2013.
- Launching and promoting the 2nd Call for proposals for seed money facility

#### **RO10/PA11&12 Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion**

**Programme Operator:** The Romanian Social Development Fund

**Programme Partner:** Council of Europe

Approved in June 2013, the Programme started effectively in October 2013, when all the legislative issues at national level were settled. The official launching conference of the Programme was held in December, 17, as part of the Communication Plan. On this occasion, the Programme and the calls for proposals were substantially promoted at national level to many public and private actors acting in the area of social inclusion.

In December 2013, three calls for proposals were launched: "Local" (small grant scheme), focused on projects developed at local/ community level with high percentage of Roma population, „Synergies for future - children at risk", and „Synergies for future - youth at risk", both last calls for proposals supporting larger projects, developed at county/municipal, regional, or national level, for a high number of beneficiaries, including Roma, living in a multicultural environment, facing marginalisation and, sometimes, discrimination.

The pre-defined project called "Strengthening anti-discriminatory measures at national level through large participation of professionals and civil society" submitted by the National Council for Combating Discrimination, as Promoter, in partnership with the Council of Europe, was evaluated by PO in December 2013. The National Focal Point notified the Financial Mechanism Committee on the positive result of the appraisal conducted by the Programme Operator on 13th of December 2013, as per article 5.5.3 of the Regulation. The project will contribute to the development of the national strategy to prevent and combat discrimination for the period 2014-2020 and will increase the level of awareness regarding the new challenges in the dynamics of the discrimination phenomenon in the Romanian society, at both national and local levels.

A certain reluctance of the entities from Romania and from Donor States to develop future partnerships was observed during the launching conference and during the discussions conducted by help-desk operators. As a consequence, only a couple of Romanian entities and no entity from Donor states expressed their interest in developing donor partnership projects, until the end of the reporting period. Thus, PO estimates it will face difficulties regarding the disbursement of the 120,000 Euro allocated for seed-money for project development (preparation). This situation shall be further evaluated, after the fourth call, Coherent, in order to consider a reallocation of funds for activities such as exchanging, sharing and transferring knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between PPs and entities in the Donor states, organized by PO during Programme implementation, if necessary.

On the other hand, no "new" risks - other than those mentioned in the Programme proposal - were identified by PO, concerning the fulfilment of the Programme objectives and targets.

No major deviations from plan were registered before December 31, 2013.

No need for adjustments of plans was identified. All the risks identified in the programme proposal have mitigation measures, most of them being already in place.

According to the provisions of the Programme Agreement, in October 2013 the Programme Operator developed and submitted to FMC, for approval, the Plan for the use of the Fund for Bilateral Relations. The plan provides details about all the measures that the Programme Operator will carry through the Programme in order to strengthen bilateral relations, including activities, budget, objectives and implementation period.

The Programme Operator encouraged and provided support for potential Project Promoters in order to identify and develop partnerships with similar/ relevant entities from the Donor States. In this respect, the Programme Operator made a distinct section called Partner Identification on its website, announced its intention to organize match-making seminars between possible partners, based on their requests, and opened in December 13, 2013, a call for seed money, making available funds that entities from Romania and from the Donor States can use to organize meetings, workshops, seminars in order to conclude a project partnership, and to develop and submit an application within the open calls for proposals in the Programme.

In this respect, under the Bilateral Fund, the Programme Operator opened in December 13, 2013, a call for seed money for Measure (a), making available funds (up to 120,000 Euro) that entities from Romania and from Donor States can use to organize meetings, workshops, seminars in order to conclude a plan for future cooperation, a project partnership, and to develop and submit an application within the open calls for proposals in the Programme. During the launching conference of the Programme, PO presented to the

participants the bilateral fund's objectives and eligible activities. Answers to the participants' specific questions were provided.

Also, during the reporting period, the Programme Operator provided support for the entities interested in establishing bilateral relations by creating a facility on the PO website where any eligible entity could post expressions of interest for partnerships with potential PP from Romania/ partners from the Donor countries. In this respect, the Programme Operator made a distinct section called Partner Identification on its website.

An announcement regarding the organization of match-making seminars between possible partners, based on their requests, was also posted on the PO web page.

During the reporting period, the Programme Operator also provided help-desk services to the entities from Romania interested in developing partnerships with entities from the Donor States.

### **RO11/PA14 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly People

The Programme was approved on 01.10.2013. In December 2013, the PO elaborated the first draft of the applicant's guideline and its annexes which were submitted to the FMO for approval. The call text was not finalised during the reporting period.

The main risk identified for this Programme is related to delays in the public procurement procedures to be carried out by Project Promoters.

Under the Fund for bilateral relations, the call for activities on measure A will be launched simultaneously with the call under the outcome.

### **RO12/PA16 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Culture

Donor Programme Partner: Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Norway

The Programme was approved on 24.06.2013. The PO designated the Programme management team which became operational on October 1st. The launching conference of the Programme took place on 27.11.2013. In the same time, the PO prepared and negotiated with the representatives of FMO and the Donor Programme Partner the content of the documentation for the launch of the Call for large projects and the Call for Small grant scheme.

The call for proposals regarding Partnership Actions under the Fund for bilateral relations at programme level was launched on 27.11.2013 and a matchmaking event was organised by the PO with the help of the Donor Programme Partner on 28.11.2013.

The promoter of the pre-defined project submitted the project to the PO, which evaluated it according to the evaluation grid agreed by FMO. The grant contract for the pre-defined project was concluded and came into force on 31.12. 2013.

In the Programme proposal the PO identified several risks which may affect the achievement of the programme's objectives, but during this reporting period no event occurred that could jeopardize the implementation of the programme.

Annex II (section 3.2) of the Programme Agreement provided the launch of one call for applications under the call for proposals (projects between 200,000 and 2,000,000 Euro) and one call for applications under the small grant scheme (projects between 25,000 and 85,000 Euro) no later than in the fourth quarter of 2013. However, considering the extensive process of consultation with the Donor Programme partners and the representatives of the FMO regarding the drafting of the documentation, as well as the number of non-working days in December 2013, the PO requested the modification of the launching date to the first quarter of 2014. Thus, the period allowed for the potential applicants to prepare their applications is 3 months for large projects and 3 months and a half for small grant scheme.

During this reporting period one Call for Proposals regarding Partnership Actions was launched on November 27, using the Fund for bilateral relations. The deadline for submitting the applications was January 31st 2014. Under this call were considered eligible the activities aimed at searching for partners from the Donor States prior to the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project. The financial allocation for this call for proposals regarding partnership development actions was 100,000 Eur. As stated in the Applicant's guide, the following activities were eligible for funding:

- Activities to develop partnerships between Romanian and Donor States entities through meetings, working together, sharing knowledge, interests and experiences in order to elaborate specific ideas for future projects;
- Activities to identify additional partners to develop partnership projects through participation in conferences, seminars, workshops.

Until December 31st 2013, only 3 applications were submitted to the PO and they all were declared eligible. The subsequent grant contracts were concluded in January 2014.

As part of the bilateral actions for partnership development financed within the Fund for bilateral relations, on November 28th, PO organized a matchmaking event which gathered over 60 cultural operators from Romania and Norway, interested in finding partners for the development of cultural projects financed within the EEA Financial Mechanism. PO received over 100 Application Forms from Romanian cultural operators, expressing their interest in finding a project partner from the Donor states. For the organization of this event PO benefited from the support of the Donor Programme Partner - the Directorate for Cultural Heritage.

### **RO13 - PA17 Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within the European Cultural**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Culture

Donor Programme Partner: Arts Council, Norway

The Programme Agreement for the PA17/ RO13 Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage was approved by FMO on 6th of August 2013 and signed on September 29th. Subsequently, the Programme Implementation Agreement was signed on September 29th. Within the Romanian Ministry of Culture, the Project Management Unit (PMU) was designated to act as PO through Order no. 2466/2013. Subsequently, the management team was hired. The recruited personnel prepared the documentation for the calls for projects, the launching event of the programme, as well as drafted the operational procedures in order to put in place efficient management and control systems for the programme.

The Calls for proposals planned to be launched on 2013, will be launched in January 2014. A Programme modification letter was sent to this effect by the NFP to the FMO.

The Programme Operator paid special attention to the achievement of the Programme outcomes and opted to present the expected outputs as sub-categories of the two main outcomes set for PA 17/ RO 13. Thus, the application form for both calls, for large and small projects, require the applicants to structure their activities, costs and expected results according to the main categories of the Programme: A. Awareness of cultural diversity raised and intercultural dialogue strengthened; B. Cultural history documented. The documentation for the calls for projects was prepared during this reporting period, but since the calls were launched in the first quarter of 2014, no projects were implemented in 2013, thus no significant progress towards the expected outcomes can be reported.

During 2013 no projects were selected, since the calls for projects were launched on January 6, 2014. .

In the Programme proposal the PO identified several risks which may affect the achievement of the programme's objectives, but during this reporting period no event occurred that could jeopardize the implementation of the programme.

The main overall risk of the programme is the tight schedule at programme level and subsequently at project level.

Annex II (section 3.2) of the Programme Agreement provided the launch of one call for applications under the call for proposals for large projects and one call for applications for small projects no later than in the fourth quarter of 2013. However, considering the extensive process of consultation with the Donor Programme partners and the representatives of the FMO regarding the drafting of the documentation, as well as the number of non-working days in December 2013, the PO requested the modification of the launching date to the first quarter of 2014. Thus, the period allowed for the potential applicants to prepare their applications is 3 months for large projects and 3 months and a half for small projects.

In 2013, on November 18th, the PO launched the first call for proposals regarding partnership actions within the Fund for bilateral relations at programme level, Measure A. Under this first call, by December 16, 2013, the PO received 23 applications. Out of these, 20 were selected for financing for a total value of 29,220 euro.

Financed from the same Fund, on November 28th, the PO organized with the support of the Donor Programme Partner a matchmaking event which gathered over 60 cultural operators from Romania and Norway, interested in finding partners for the development of cultural projects to be financed within the EEA Financial Mechanism.

As far as bilateral relations at programme level are concerned, one meeting of the Cooperation Committee was organized. The meeting took place on September 24th, on the premises of the Romanian ministry and it was attended by the representative of FMO, representatives of the Arts Council Norway from Norway, the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, of the National Focal Point – The Ministry of European Funds and the representatives of the the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Romania, as observers.

#### **RO14/PA18 Research within Priority Sectors**

Programme Operator: Ministry of National Education

Donor Programme Partners: Norwegian Research Council – NRC (Norway) and the Icelandic Centre for Research – RANNIS (Iceland)

The Programme was approved on 05.08.2013. On 10th and 11th of December 2013, the Information Day and Brokerage event were held in Bucharest, at the premises of Polytechnic University of Bucharest in order to promote the opportunities for collaboration between the academia and economic sectors from Romania and the Donor States offered by the open Call for proposals. On 22nd and 23rd of October, the first meeting of the Programme Committee (PC) was held by the PO in Bucharest with the support of the IB. Five members of the PC attended and also representatives of the PO, IB, DPPs (RCN and RANNIS), NFP, FMO, and Norway Embassy (last three institutions as observers) participated to this meeting. The PC approved the following documents: Rules of Procedure for the PC and the Call text. The Guide for Evaluators and Guide for Applicants were also adopted by the PC during this meeting.

The expected outcome of the Programme is “Increased research cooperation between Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Romania”. The selected indicators are representative for the research activities and also for the cooperation component. The indicators are both quantitative and qualitative (publications and patent applications) and they are considered based on peer-review selection process.

The Programme is addressing both public and private research organizations (e.g. higher education establishments, research institutes, research centres, etc.). The private sector and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as defined in Article 2.2(a) of the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/c 323/01), are encouraged to participate to this Program.

The Call for proposals for this Program was launched on the 15th November 2013 and its deadline was January 24, 2014. Currently, the project applications are under the evaluation process. Therefore, the data on the projects are not available and the outputs of the Program (number of research institutes, number of researchers, cooperation between RO and EFTA states, role of postdocs, etc.) cannot be measured at this stage. The selection of the submitted projects based on the experts evaluation will take place at the end of April 2014 when the 2nd PC meeting will be held.

The total estimated budget, including the national co-financing, for the “Fund for Bilateral Relations” at the Program level is 352,942 euro.

In 2013, under measure A, an info-day and a brokerage event addressed to potential project partners from Romania and Donor States were organized by the Program Operator and the Implementing Body in Bucharest, in order to build up consortia for the joint research projects and facilitate preparation of the project applications. The interest of the research communities for these two events held in December 2013 was higher than expected; a number of 484 persons were registered compared to the initial estimation of 250 persons.

Under the same measure, the possibility was offered to apply for the reimbursement of the project proposal's preparatory costs both for the Project Promoter and its partners from the Donor States. These are the costs related to the search for partners prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project proposal.

Project Promoters had the option to apply for the reimbursement of the costs actually incurred by the Project Promoters from Romania and their partners from the Donor States while applying for a project to be funded under the call for proposals. Up to EUR 5,000 will be reimbursed in the case of proposals recommended for financing. Up to EUR 2,500 will be reimbursed for proposals that are not selected for financing but receive a score above a certain threshold within the available budget. The earmarked financial resources will be used after the completion of the evaluation and selection process of the submitted applications.

### **RO15/PA19 Scholarships**

Programme Operator: The National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training

Donor Programme Partners: The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU); Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS); National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA) in Liechtenstein

During 2013, the 1st Call for proposals was launched on 17-th of July. It addressed all the 3 measures under the Programme; the Preparatory visits measure was based on rolling deadline open call; for the other 2 measures, different deadlines for submission of applications were established.

Following the Call of 2013, only 82.58% of the total budget for the Call was committed, with the following results:

Measure	Number of applications received	Number of projects financed
Preparatory Visits	3	3
Mobility projects	17	15
Cooperation projects	4	2

Measure 1-Preparatory Visits: 3 applications received in 2013 and all of them have been financed. An increased number of Preparatory Visits is expected for 2014, since a “speed dating” seminar is organised by SIU in Oslo, with the purpose to support BS HEIs in finding suitable partner in a more effective way. At the end of 2014 the whole situation will be analysed again and in the case of underperforming, another contact seminar may be organised using the budget allocated to bilateral relations.

Measure 2-Mobility projects: 17 applications received and 15 financed (2 of them were ineligible). According to the applications financed, the number of students (both incoming and outgoing) who will go in mobility during the 2-nd semester of the academic year 2013-2014 is of 111 (out of a target of 336 for the whole period until December 2016). The number of staff (both incoming and outgoing) who will go in mobility during the 2-nd semester of the academic year 2013-2014 is of 133 (more than the target established for the whole programme, which is of 120).

Measure 3: Inter-institutional cooperation projects: 4 applications received, out of which only 2 have been approved after the quality assessment. The target is set at 15 applications for the whole programme period and at 10 financed projects. Both approved projects assumed in the application to issue at least one joint

publication and to organise joint seminars/workshops, thus contributing potentially to the programme outputs. In as far as the real contribution of the projects to the expected outputs is concerned, this may only be analysed after the final reports will be received and evaluated-for Mobility projects, since the final reports are expected on 30 of November. The cooperation projects will end in 2015.

The main risk identified for the programme is not achieving the final targets as regards the students' mobility and the number of bilateral agreements, due to the limited capacity of the DS HEIs in receiving too many students from Beneficiary States, which leads to a lower interest in concluding new agreements or in enhancing the existing ones.

The Scholarships and inter-institutional cooperation Programme started in Romania with a big delay (of 6 months) as compared to the Programme Proposal; this delay had an important influence on the achievements, as it has affected both the number of applications submitted as a result of the 1-st Call (the Call being launched in Summer 2013, for reasons based on the specific of a scholarship programme in HE area) and the absorption rate of the budget allocated to this Call (since in the Proposal the budget was destined to cover one entire academic year, 2 semesters, but in reality the applications could only request funds for one single semester).

In November 2013 the PO submitted to the FMO a request for an amendment of the Programme Agreement, based on the following reasons: for the contact seminar less money than foreseen was spent, therefore, as the funds were earmarked on the "bilateral funds" chapter, it was proposed to allocate the remaining budget to Preparatory visits;

The 1-st Call showed a high interest of the Romanian HEIs for Mobility projects, thus the increase of the budget of the 2-nd Call was proposed (and the decrease of the budget for the 3-rd one), in order to ensure a better absorption of the whole budget of the programme (taking into account that possible uncommitted funds in the first 2 calls will be included for the 3-rd one).

FMO approved the request and an amendment was issued. The modified amounts available for the 2-nd Call have been published accordingly in the Call.

During the 1-st half year of implementation, the following elements contributed to foster the development of bilateral relations between Romania and Donor countries:

- Preparatory visits (in order to prepare the future projects), that were a good opportunity of face-to-face meetings for staff of Romanian and DS HEIs to work together in order to initiate new bilateral agreements or further cooperation projects; thus they contributed to improving knowledge and mutual understanding and to enlarging the extent of cooperation;
- A contact seminar, organised by the PO
- meetings between the PO and DPPs (3 meetings)

In addition, there is a strong cooperation process established between the PO and the DPPs, since 2012; the DPPs had a valuable contribution to draw a good quality Programme Proposal, they reacted promptly whenever key documents had to be circulated for comments and suggestions (such as draft texts of the Call for proposals, Guidelines for applicants, templates for applications, assessment fiches).

So far, an amount of 23,000 Euro has been used from the bilateral funds (meaning 35.38%) for Preparatory Visits and the contact seminar.

### **RO17/PA21 Green Industry Innovation**

Programme Operator: Innovation Norway

Many potential applicants have shown interest in this programme, aspect that has been reflected by large number of participants at official launch of the programme and regional information sessions organized by the programme team. The programme has a unique approach in the Romanian context of encouraging initiatives that are good for business and in the same time good for environment. In 2013, the following phases of the programme have been finalized:

- programme documents' preparation (call for project proposals, Rules and Procedures etc.)

- programme promotion among potential applicants and partners
- Bilateral funds (travel support and project development fund): assessment, contracting phase and reporting.
- Individual project scheme and Small grants scheme: assessment phase.

85 applications were received upon the deadline for project application submission, 7 August 2013 (46 applications under the Individual Project Scheme and 37 applications under the Small Grants Scheme). 54% of the project applications were with a Norwegian partner. The total grant value of all applications was approx. EUR 47.6 mil against the budget of approx. EUR 21.5 mil.

Projects received were generally of good quality and with some promising donor partnerships. All eligible projects will contribute directly to one or more outcome indicators for the Programme, hence the objectives of the Programme are foreseen to be met. The financial and technical assessment and short-listing of projects have been finalized by end 2013. At the time of reporting the Project Contracting phase had started. Project Promoters financial capacity to implement the project is identified as the main risk on project level.

Achievements during the reporting period are considered efficient as the Programme in general is implemented according to plans. With sufficient interest from Romanian applicants and Norwegian partners, and short-listed projects with high relevance for the Programme indicators, the overall objectives of Norway Grants are expected to be fulfilled.

Under the fund for bilateral relations, the Seed Money Fund (Travel Support and Project Development Fund) have been relevant instruments in this phase. The spending of the Seed Money and the results (in number of projects) can be seen in the table below:

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Approved number of projects</b>	<b>Approved grant amount, EUR</b>	<b>Available budget, EUR</b>
Total Budget for Seed Money			215 000
Travel support (TS)	34	40 800	
Number of main project applications received based on TS	17		
Project Development Fund (PDF)	18	125 600	
Number of main project applications received based on PDF	17		
Not spent (to be transferred to networking etc.)			48 600
Budget for networking and experience sharing (activity not yet started)	-	-	145 000

#### **RO18/PA25 Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities**

**Programme Operator: National Focal Point**

**Donor Programme Partner: Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority**

The Programme was approved on 21.06.2013. The main activities undertaken during the reporting period were related the development according to requirements of the predefined project applications.

During 2013, after consultations and clarifications between the PO, FMO and PP, the Project Application for the predefined project Regional Excellence Project on Regulatory Capacity Building in Nuclear and Radiological Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Response in Romania was finalised. The Partnership Agreement between the Promoter CNCAN and the Donor Project Partner was signed in September 2013 and the Project Contract in December 2013.



For the second predefined project, Improving Integrity in the National Agency for Fiscal Administration (NAFA) through Institutional Cooperation and Capacity Building, the Project Promoter (National Agency for Fiscal Administration) carried out extensive activities for developing the project application in partnership with the Norwegian Tax Administration (Skatteetaten) and the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government.

Outputs achieved:

Output	Output indicator	Indicator value		Fulfilled
Bilateral Relations	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	Baseline	Target	<b>1</b> (Partnership Agreement under the CNCAN Predefined Project)
		0	2	

The main risk associated with this Programme is the delay in the implementation of the Projects, due either to procurement procedures or difficulties in collaboration between Promoters and Project Partners.

The following modifications to the PA are needed/expected for the next reporting period:

- Modification (increase) of target for output indicators in order to include results from the NAFA project (after its approval),
- Elimination of the provisions indicating the IAEA as Project Partner in the CNCAN project, while acknowledging its important role (as main beneficiary of the funds),
- Elimination of the provision related to verification of expenditure incurred by the IAEA in art. 4.2 par. 2 ("The IAEA should in this respect be treated as a donor project partner"),
- Modification of the provisions related to the involvement of the DPP in the administration of the Fund for Bilateral Relations;
- Reallocation of an amount of 27,000 Euro from the Management cost budget line to the Fund for Bilateral Relations at programme level;
- increase of the programme budget, following the reallocation (1,000,000 Euro)

According to the PA, the funds for bilateral relations shall be implemented by way of an open call for proposals under measure B, to be launched in 2014.

#### **RO19 /PA27Public Health Initiatives**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Health

On 18th of March 2013, the first programme proposal of the Ministry of Health (which was sent to evaluation to FMO on 27th of November 2012), was rejected and had to be significantly revised. According to received recommendations, the proposal was redeveloped around a few selected pre-defined projects, which target the outcomes of the MoU. In February 2013, a new working group was established and started to review the programme proposal from scratch.

The PO has initiated discussion with relevant institutions and main stakeholders in the field: UNICEF, grant giving organizations working in fields of poverty or TB/HIV - such as the Romanian Social Development Fund, the Romanian Angel Appeal as managers of the Global Fund, the main think tanks at country level such as the manager of the national TB programme, the manager of the HIV national programme, etc. Also, on 15 of May 2013, a meeting between FMO, NFP and PO RO19 took place. Overall, inputs from all stakeholders mentioned above have been followed; the new version of the Programme Proposal was finalized and sent to NFP and FMO for evaluation of 3rd of June 2013. There were 2 requests for additional information on 12th of June 2013 and 28th of June 2013. The final version of the programme proposal and pre-defined projects proposals were transmitted for evaluation on 15th July 2013.

After submitting the final version of the proposed program, the Ministry of Health has started the process of internal organization of the management structure, namely, the persons responsible, developing internal procedures, opening bank accounts, allocation of co-financing and other administrative issues.

The programme was approved on 29.11.2013, to be implemented through 4 predefined projects. On 6th of December 2013, the PO started the evaluation of the pre-defined projects.

In the reporting period, there were only activities related to the programming phase. The program activities have not started, therefore the expected outcome were not achieved yet.

In October 2013, the programme budget was supplemented with the amount of 13,000,000 euro plus co-financing amounting to 2,294,118.29 euro. The total amount of 15,294,117.65 will be used for:

- Supplementing the project "Improving the health of the population in Romania by increasing the capacity of TB control – aprox 5.8 mil euro;
- Developing a new predefined project on the organization of screening programs for three types of cancer- 7,3 mil euro;
- Developed a project on the development of chronic disease registries, aprox.2 mil euro.

In the reporting period, the bilateral relation fund was not used. The bilateral fund under this programme will amount to 153,915 EURO and will be split between the predefined projects to cover networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice.

### **RO21/PA30 Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-border and Organised Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups**

Programme Operator: The Ministry of Internal Affairs

Donor programme partner: The Norwegian Police Directorate (POD)

The Programme was approved on 19.06.2013 and the PA was signed on the 28.06.2013. The first six months after the signing of the Programme Agreement were used to develop the legal framework for the proper implementation of the Programme's objectives, such as the Implementation Agreement (concluded between MoAI and MEF), the Order of the Minister for internal affairs no. 149/2013, that stipulates clear tasks for the two entities within the MoIA that act as PO's representatives (the Schengen Directorate, which is responsible for the general management of the Programme, and the Financial General Directorate, that is responsible for the financial management of the Programme) and other national legal issues.

The objectives of the Programme shall be achieved through implementing 6 predefined projects (PDPs). These projects are being implemented by structures of the MoAI, and the estimated starting date for all projects is March, 2014.

The main risks regarding this Programme concern unexpected delays, especially due to complicated and time-consuming public procurement procedures, unforeseen changes in the legal framework, unpredicted problems regarding some project partners.

The bilateral relations fund will be used to strengthen the cooperation and relations between Norway and Romania and to help the development of partnerships. During 2013, since the operational issues weren't ready, no activities involving financing by the bilateral fund were organized. During 2014, the PO intends to apply the call for proposals method when allocating the funds available under the Bilateral Relations budgetary line.

The fund will be used for enhancing networking, organising and financing meetings, trainings, study visits, sharing information and best practices, dissemination of projects' results, including financing publicity and visibility issues.

### **RO22 Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue**

Programme Operator: Innovation Norway

The Programme has shown to be of great interest from the side of the Project Promoters and to some degree the local media. The programme enables the different entities to communicate and reach a common understanding on issues related to the decent work agenda and tripartite issues, thus contributing to the programme overall objective.

A general trend has been observed, like a high involvement and strong commitment by all project parties. It is important to note that all meetings/workshops have promoted the Norwegian/Nordic model and the

cooperation/discussions have centred on the applicability of the model in the beneficiary state. The model stimulated round- tables and workshops and is being used as an argument to establish social dialogue and foster tripartite dialogue. It is also accepted that such communication will enhance economic and social development.

Some challenges on micro-level have been experienced in Romania. One of the projects – 2012/105537 run by Federatia AGROSTAR was cancelled due to an alleged black mailing against the president of the promoter. Some delays have also been experienced in 2 other projects due to procurement.

The programme has two outcomes:

- Improved Social Dialogue and Tripartite Dialogue structures and practices
- Enhanced understanding of the benefits of Decent Work

The elaborated outputs/indicators provides with a good platform to measure the programme's outcomes. The close communication and dialog with the applicants with active contribution from Norwegian partners were essential for developing outputs and indicators, and good understanding of them. The results were good, providing Innovation Norway with essential definitions and overview of achieved results by the projects. The collected indicators show Innovation Norway that the indicators are in compliance with the submitted project proposals. The mix of entities/partnerships shows how important the dialogue was for achieving the targeted outcomes defined by the applicants.

Outputs achieved:

The reports received from the Project Promoters were based on established measurable outputs and indicators. The measurable outputs and indicators made it possible to report the impact of the project and if they achieved their goals.

Capacity building on Decent Work issues

No.of seminars/workshops/events/trainings performed - 7

No.of web portals - 3

No.of training materials developed/guidbooks/materials - 7

No.of study trips to Norway - 3

No.of established local groups in municipalities with representatives from politicians, administration and trade unions – 8

No. of participants - 126

Experience and best practices exchange in Social/Tripartite Dialogue

No.of seminars/workshops/events/trainings - 12

No.of study visits to Norway - 3

No.of participants - 384

No.of round tables - 5

Improved Tripartite Relations

No.of participants - 460

No.of training materials developed/guidebooks/materials – 3

No.of seminars/workshops/events/conferences performed – 3

No.of information campaigns – 1

No.of municipalities and other key stakeholders involved – 4

No.of website established – 2

No.of study visits to Norway – 1

No.of people trained/informed – 26

Raised awareness and enhanced understanding on Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue issues

No.of systems/methods/strategies developed – 6

No.of municipalities and other key stakeholders involved – 4

No. of companies with improved working conditions – 200  
No. of topics reflected in media - 41  
No. of municipalities and other key stakeholders involved – 4  
No. of people informed – 4207  
No. of research and analysis conducted - 2

Improved bilateral relations  
No. of meetings/seminars/conferences – 9  
No. of study visits to Norway - 3  
No. of participants – 48

Almost all projects in Romania are being implemented according to programme expectations. Unfortunately, one major deviation was presented through withdrawal of funding to AGROSTAR due to an alleged black mailing against the president of the Project Promoter.

Innovation Norway has been in close dialogue with the Project Promoters since the start of the projects in order to mitigate possible risks. The Interim Reports have shown several risks that can be associated on the programme level, but all of them are with very low impact. Some delay in procurement activities has been identified. These risks were prevented through careful planning of time and human resources, and good contracts with reliable suppliers. In addition, Project Promoters and partners have monitored the activities together, discussed all possible deviations of expected results and relevant decisions have been taken.

Concerning the funds for bilateral relations, the activity has remained at a very high level and all involved reports very positive about the good contact and dialogue taking place.

## **RO20/PA29 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Justice

Donor Programme Partners: Council of Europe (CoE) and the Norwegian Police Directorate (POD)

The Programme was approved on 23.05.2013. The Programme foresees that its outcomes and outputs are to be achieved through two pre-defined projects, as well as through projects selected through an open call for proposals. In what concerns the call for proposals, it was established to be launched during the first quarter of 2014. The implementation of the 2 pre-defined projects proposed by the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons and the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police have not started. The projects will undergo the appraisal procedure in the first quarter of 2014.

Regarding horizontal concerns, the Programme Operator has elaborated a Roma inclusion plan, which describes how the allocation of at least 10% of the total eligible costs of the Programme to target the improvement of the situation of the Roma population is to be achieved and sent it to the FMO on 28.10.2013 (it was agreed by FMO on 04.12.2013).

The programme has the following outcomes:

1. Domestic violence reduced
2. Victims of trafficking supported

The first outcome is expected to be achieved through:

1. the projects to be selected under the following calls for proposal:

- “Supporting the network of units in the framework of the Law on domestic violence”
- “Awareness and sensitizing activities”, consisting of two sub-calls: “Actions undertaken for increasing the awareness and understanding among the general public on the harmful effects of domestic violence in a gender-sensitive way” and “Actions undertaken for increasing the awareness and understanding among the Roma population on the harmful effects of domestic violence in a gender-sensitive way”
- “Training activities for the professionals activating in the field of domestic violence”.

2. the predefined project Joint Action against Domestic Violence aiming at enhancing the capacity of the judicial authorities in Romania in fighting domestic and gender-based violence.

During 2013:

- the call was prepared at the level of the programme operator and sent to the FMO. The call is expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2014, after the donors' approval.
- the predefined project was discussed between the project promoter and the DPPs and improved under the supervision of the Programme Operator during the Cooperation Committee meeting. The revised project proposal is planned to be finalized in the first quarter of 2014.

The second outcome is expected to be achieved through:

1. the predefined project Best practice model on assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings – Pilot project aiming at strengthening the capacity of the Romanian victims' assistance system to comply with the relevant international anti-trafficking instruments by investing in human capital development and by creating assistance infrastructure, in accordance with international standards.

During 2013:

- the predefined project was discussed between the project promoter and the DPPs and improved under the supervision of the Programme Operator during the Cooperation Committee meeting. The revised project proposal is planned to be finalized in the first quarter of 2014.

The risks identified remain unchanged in comparison to the programme proposal submitted on 19th of November 2012, approved by the NMFA on the 23rd of May 2013.

During the reporting period, the Programme Operator has proposed a modification to the Programme Agreement. The object of the proposed adjustments refers to the updating of the launching date of the call for project proposals, from the third quarter of 2013 to the first quarter of 2014 and splitting of call priority "Awareness and sensitizing activities" in 2 sub-calls and modifying the maximum grant amount for each of the sub-calls, in order to allow a sufficient grant for one Roma targeted project.

The framework offered by the pre-defined projects represents a premise and an opportunity for ensuring the transfer by the project partners of knowledge, experience and best practice adapted to the peculiarities of the Romanian system in respect to domestic violence and trafficking and for the achievement of the Programme's outcomes and outputs, as described under chapter 1.9 of the Programme Proposal.

The 2 pre-defined projects will be implemented in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Norwegian Police Directorate, selected based on their specific expertise, competences and experience required for the achievement of the outcomes of the pre-defined projects and of those mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding.

The PO facilitated the establishment of such partnerships during the preparation of the predefined project application proposals, organising direct meetings between the programme promoters and the DPPs.

Furthermore, the Programme Operator and the Donor Programme Partners have agreed upon a procedure and an implementation plan of the bilateral fund on programme level. The plan has the overall objective to increase the bilateral relations between the Beneficiary State (i.e., Romania) and Norwegian entities in the field of the programme.

Under the Funds for Bilateral Relations, the bilateral plan provides 2 measures:

A) "search for partners for Donor Partnership Projects prior to or during the preparation of a project application, the development of such partnerships and the preparation of an application for a donor partnership project"

Under this measure, in 2013, the representatives of the National Agency against Trafficking in Persons – promoter of the pre-defined project "Best practice model for victims of trafficking in human beings assistance" attended a bilateral meeting in Oslo (Norway) in November 2013. In this context, the NPD facilitated the

interaction of the NATP representatives with 2 Norwegian NGOs, respectively Lauras House (<http://www.bymisjon.no/no/Virksomheter/Nadheim/Lauras-hus/>) and Rosa project (<http://www.rosa-help.no/>). During the meeting both NGOs showed interest in the project and set the basis to conclude partnerships with the PP, currently being under discussion the activities where it should be best use the future partners' expertise in the field.

B) "networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices between Project Promoters and entities in Norway"

This measure shall be implemented after the signing of the project contracts.

### **RO23/PA32 Correctional Services, including Non-Custodial Sanctions**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Justice

Donor Programme Partner: The Norwegian Correctional Services (KSF)

Due to the specificities of the Correctional services system, the Programme foresees that its outcomes and outputs are to be achieved only through pre-defined projects. The implementation of the pre-defined projects has not started yet. The appraisal by the Programme Operator of the pre-defined projects, according to article 5.5 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, as well as the signing of the project contracts are planned to be carried out in the first quarter of 2014, subject to the positive approval in due time of the modifications proposed to the Programme Agreement.

Regarding the strengthening of the bilateral relations, partnerships between the Project Promoters and Donor Project Partners were established (5 projects in partnership with Norwegian project partners and 1 project in partnership with the Council of Europe).

The implementation of the Plan for the bilateral fund on programme level has not started yet. The Plan will be further developed and implemented during the next period.

Regarding horizontal concerns, the Programme Operator has elaborated a Roma inclusion plan which describes how the allocation of at least 10% of the total eligible costs of the Programme to target the improvement of the situation of the Roma population is to be achieved, and sent it to the FMO on 28.10.2013. The Plan is pending the Donor approval.

The implementation of the predefined projects has not started yet. The appraisal by the Programme Operator of the pre-defined projects, according to article 5.5 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, as well as the signing of the project contracts are planned to be carried out in the first quarter of 2014, subject to the positive approval in due time of the modifications proposed to the Programme Agreement.

The implementation of the predefined projects has not started yet. The appraisal by the Programme Operator of the pre-defined projects, according to article 5.5 of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, as well as the signing of the project contracts are planned to be carried out in the first quarter of 2014, subject to the positive approval in due time of the modifications proposed to the Programme Agreement.

The main risk affecting this Programme concerns delays in starting the implementation of the Programme/projects which may lead to difficulties in achieving the projects' results within the period of eligibility.

During the reporting period, the Programme Operator has proposed a modification to the Programme Agreement which was sent by the National Focal Point to the FMO on the 2nd of December 2013. The object of the proposed modification refers to the:

- Revision of certain indicators at the level of the Programme outputs;

- Waiver of the pre-eligibility condition mentioned within the Programme Agreement for the pre-defined project no. 6 “Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian probation system for delivering effective alternative to prison interventions”;
- Rearrangement of the projects under the Section 3 Eligibility of costs, table 3.3 maximum eligible costs (Euro) and advance payment amount (Euro), in order to have one project responding to only one outcome;
- Updating of the section 6 – Pre-defined projects of Annex II to the Programme Agreement with the following information: the confirmed Donor Project Partners in each of the 5 pre-defined projects which will be implemented in partnership with Norwegian counterparts, updating the descriptions of the pre-defined projects.

The approval process of the modifications to the Programme Agreement has not been finalised during the reporting period. No other needs for adjustments of plans were identified.

The implementation of the Plan for the bilateral fund on programme level, attached to the Programme Proposal (Annex IX), has not started yet. The Plan will be further developed and implemented during the next period.

The 6 pre-defined projects will be implemented in partnership with Norwegian project partners (5 projects) and the Council of Europe (1 project), selected based on their specific expertise, competences and experience required for the achievement of the outcomes of the pre-defined projects and of those mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding. The financing of the meetings for the establishment of the partnerships will be sought from the Fund for bilateral relations at national and programme level.

#### **RO24/PA31 Judicial Capacity-Building and Cooperation**

Programme Operator: Ministry of Justice

Donor Programme Partners: Norwegian Court Administration (DA) and the Council of Europe (CoE)

Due to the specificities of the judiciary, the Programme’s outcomes and output are expected to be achieved through predefined projects. One of the three predefined projects (Pre-defined project 2: “Improvement of the Electronic Court Register Information System (ECRIS)”) was appraised, the others being scheduled for appraisal in the first quarter of 2014. The implementation of these predefined projects has not started yet, the signature of the contracts being foreseen for the first quarter of 2014.

The strategy and concept of the Programme, as approved by the Donor, remain unchanged.

Regarding the strengthening of the bilateral relations, the Programme Operator and the Donor Programme Partners have agreed upon a procedure and an implementation plan of the bilateral fund on programme level. The specific activities envisaged by the implementation plan have not started yet, as they are scheduled for the second semester of 2014 and for 2015.

Regarding horizontal concerns, the Programme Operator has elaborated a Roma inclusion plan, which describes how the allocation of at least 10% of the total eligible costs of the Programme to target the improvement of the situation of the Roma population is to be achieved, and sent it to the FMO on 28.10.2013. The Plan is pending the Donor approval.

The implementation of the predefined projects has not started yet. One of the three predefined projects (Pre-defined project 2: “Improvement of the Electronic Court Register Information System (ECRIS)”) was appraised, the others being scheduled for appraisal in the first quarter of 2014. The implementation of these predefined projects has not started yet, the signature of the financing contracts being foreseen for the first quarter of 2014.

In addition to the risks comprised in the Programme proposal, two operational risks have been further identified as follows:

- Insufficient project management capacity/ experience at the level of the PPs, or occurrence of other factors which may lead to delays/ blockages/ irregularities in implementing the projects and achieving the envisaged outcomes of the Programme;
- Delays in starting the implementation of the Programme/projects which may lead to difficulties in achieving the projects' results within the period of eligibility.

Concerning the use of funds for bilateral relations, the Programme Operator and the Donor Programme Partners have agreed upon a procedure and an implementation plan of the bilateral fund on programme level. The specific activities envisaged by the implementation plan have not started yet, as they are scheduled for the second semester of 2014 and for 2015.

#### THE TARGET FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITUATION FOR THE ROMA POPULATION

According to the MoUs, within the relevant programmes for Roma, each Programme Operator should allocate about 10% from the total grant for the projects with Roma target. Thus, a number of 12 programmes in Romania (more than half) should have such projects. The target is concentrated on the programmes with NGOs as possible beneficiaries, in the areas of culture, justice and home affairs. Also, projects for Roma should be supported within the health, research and scholarships programmes.

For summarising the actions related Roma issues, the National Focal Point elaborated and submitted to the FMO, in August 2013, "The Concept paper for Roma". According to this document, the NFP will monitor the Programme Operators in implementing the actions for achieving the Roma target stipulated in the MoUs.

The table below highlights, in estimated figures, the financial input in each of the relevant programmes, according to the submitted proposals.

- Euro -

ID	Programme	PO	Total allocation of programme	Roma allocation	Estimation as per the Programme proposal
<b>EEA FM</b>					
<b>RO09</b>	Funds for Non-governmental Organizations	FDSC	36,330,000	6,330,000	4,000,000
<b>RO10</b>	Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion	FRDS	31,764,706	3,176,471	6,352,941
<b>RO11</b>	Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance	Ministry of Labour and Elderly Peoples	5,317,033	531,703	531,703
<b>RO12</b>	Conservation and Revitalization of Cultural and Natural Heritage	Ministry of Culture	16,470,588	1,647,059	2,059,523
<b>RO13</b>	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage	Ministry of Culture	8,022,058	802,206	762,096
<b>RO14</b>	Research within Priority Sectors	Ministry of Education	23,529,412	2,352,941	2,352,941
<b>RO15</b>	Scholarships	ANPCDEFP	4,444,444	444,444	444,444
<b>NORWEGIAN FM</b>					
<b>RO19</b>	Public Health Initiatives	Ministry of Health	9,534,117	953,412	985,410



<b>RO20</b>	Domestic and Gender-Based Violence	Ministry of Justice	4,705,882	470,588	470,588
<b>RO21</b>	Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-Border and Organized Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups	Ministry of Internal Affairs	5,882,353	588,235	791,550
<b>RO24</b>	Judicial Capacity-Building and Cooperation	Ministry of Justice	9,411,765	941,177	941,177
<b>RO23</b>	Correctional Services, including Non-Custodial Sanctions	Ministry of Justice	9,411,765	941,177	941,177

For all these programmes each Programme Operator has to elaborate a “Plan on Roma inclusion” where details on the means to reach the set target are to be presented.

As a general rule, there are two ways in which the programmes approach the 10% target: either by providing for additional points in the evaluation grid for projects aiming at Roma support and inclusion or by funding pre-defined projects having this objective (as is the case in RO09, RO10, RO 12, RO09, RO20, RO21, RO 24).

A more detailed description of the approach in each of the relevant programmes is given in Attachment 8.

#### **4 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **4.1 Management and control systems**

The description of the management and control system at national level, according to Article 4.8 of the Regulations, established by Romania for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, was submitted by the NFP to the FMC/NMFA on 21.03.2013. During the period March-May 2013 the Audit Authority carried out the compliance assessment audit mission and issued a positive opinion regarding the compliance of the MCS on 20.05.2013, supplemented by a positive opinion on proportionality on 23.07.2013. On 19.09.2013, the FMO communicated the compliance of the MCS description, as completed according to FMO's requirements, with the applicable provisions of the Regulation.

The process of drafting the Description of management and control systems for the approved programmes also began in 2013. In order to facilitate the work, the NFP supported the Programme Operators in drafting the description by means of ongoing consultation. The NFP also coordinates the process of development of working procedures at the level of the POs in order to ensure compatibility with requirements.

In parallel, extensive and complex consultations have taken place between the National Focal Point and the involved ministries (Ministry of Public Finance, Ministry of Justice) for the finalisation of the necessary national legislative framework for the establishment of the financial management of the related funds. The Government Emergency Ordinance regarding the financial management of external non-reimbursable funds related to the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the programming period 2009-2014 was adopted on 03.04.2013 and the related implementing rules on 07.10.2013.

Some changes at the level of the Romanian central public administration have been enacted in 2013, as follows:

##### **NFP**

Following a reorganisation of the Ministry of European Funds, the National Focal Point has been relocated within the General Directorate for Nonreimbursable Financial Mechanisms and Instruments, at the level of two units dedicated exclusively to the coordination and implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms and carrying out the responsibilities of NFP, under the direct coordination of a Deputy General Director. This change has been duly communicated to the Donors through letter no. 888/19.08.2013.

##### **POs**

The Ministry of Culture replaced the Ministry of European Funds, as Programme Operator for the following programmes:

RO	Programme name	Previous PO	Current PO
RO12	Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	Ministry of European Funds	Ministry of Culture
RO13	Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage	Ministry of European Funds	Ministry of Culture

The replacement was accepted through the Programme Agreements.

Following the 2012 elections, a new government structure was enacted and the names of some ministries designated as POs changed; the changes were communicated to the donors in 2013 and were reflected in the formal modification of the MoUs in early January 2014.

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

The European, national and the specific regulatory framework of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms is complied with at all levels of implementation. The management and control systems developed will also provide a special focus on providing adequate tools for ensuring the observance of public procurement and state aid legal provisions (if applicable).

The Programme Agreements and the Programme Implementation Agreements include also provisions aiming at ensuring that national and EU legislation are complied with at all levels during the implementation of the programmes. The same obligations are transferred to project promoters by way of the project contract. Observance of said legislation will be checked during project monitoring and verification.

The EU legislation on state aid is directly applicable in Romania, therefore all grantors have the obligation to comply with its provisions (if applicable). The Romanian Competition Council must ensure that all the conditions regarding state aid granting, monitoring and reporting, including compliance with the cumulation rules, are included in the regulatory/administrative documents which establish state aid measures.

According to the national legislation in force, the Romanian Competition Council monitors the state aids awarded in Romania based on the reports, information and data sent by state aid grantors within set deadlines. The Competition Council keeps and updates the State Aid Inventory, elaborates the Annual State Aids Report, and any other report necessary to fulfilling Romania's commitments in the field of State Aid as a EU Member state.

#### **4.3 Irregularities**

According to the MoU between Romania and the Donor States and the GEO no. 88/2012 (art.5.8.), the Certifying and Paying Authority is designated as responsible entity for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports. The role and responsibilities of the national public entity responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports are stipulated in the Regulations, in particular Article 11.3 to 7 and the treatment of irregularities and recovery of amounts unduly paid are detailed in Romanian legislation (GEO no. 66/2011).

Due to the early stage of implementation of the Programmes, there were no irregularities that required discussions or measures in accordance with rules and the Romanian legislation. Presently, the main focus is on setting up well functioning management and control systems at the level of the Programme Operators, which ensures avoiding or early detection of irregularities.

#### **4.4 Audit, monitoring, review and evaluation**

During 2013, the NFP has coordinated and carried out the finalisation of the process related to approval of the Programmes, completion (in cooperation with the POs) and signing of the Programme Agreements, and preparation for Programme implementation.

As Programmes moved into the implementation stage, a consistent and permanent monitoring has been carried out, through regular monitoring meetings, a continuous process of verification of the documents prepared by POs, reviews of implementation calendars submitted by POs, as well as permanent contact with POs in order to be able to take corrective measures where needed.

In 2014, the NFP will continue to carry out the process of monitoring of the Programmes, according to the applicable procedure, through programme monitoring reports submitted by POs, regular monitoring meetings, the Annual Programme Report, as well as monitoring visits.

As 2014 will be the first full year of implementation for most Programmes, the NFP does not consider suitable to carry out evaluations. Regarding audits, the Audit Authority has planned to carry out compliance audits for the management and control systems established at the level of the POs, to be finalised by the end of the year.

#### **4.5 Information and publicity**

In line with NFP responsibilities set out in the Regulations and Annex 4 thereof, during the reporting period the following main activities were carried out:

1. Conferences, seminars
2. Development of the NFP website
3. Press releases
4. Production of promotional materials
5. Working group for information and publicity.

All these activities are meant to support the achievement of the general objectives of the NFP Communication Strategy which are to:

- Ensure recognition of the role and results of the EEA Financial Mechanism and of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism;
- Support the strengthening of the bilateral relations between the Donor States and Romania
- Inform target groups about funding opportunities that Romania can benefit from EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms, about objectives, conditions and benefits upon completion;
- Support optimum use of these funds.

##### **1. Conferences, seminars**

The Launching Conference for Justice and Home Affairs programmes under the Norway Grants was organised on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2013. The conference was organised on the occasion of signing the first programme agreements (justice and home affairs programmes) and was combined with the press release and press conference. The event took place at the Government Palace, Transilvania Room, and more than 100 participants attended. Mrs Grete Faremo, the minister of Justice and Public Assurance in Norway took part, along with representatives of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FMO, Royal Norwegian Embassy, other embassies accredited in Romania and Romanian public officials.

In order to promote all the programmes financed under the EEA&Norway Grants in Romania, the NFP organised the Programmes Launching Seminar on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2013. With this occasion each Programme Operator briefly presented the programme, its objectives and proposed structure (calls or predefined projects). The event was attended by some 250 participants, representatives of FMO, Norwegian Embassy, Donor States, other Embassies in Romania, Programme Operators, Donor Programme Partners, NFP, other relevant public or private entities. Media were present and the event benefitted of good press coverage in the following days, highlighting the contribution of the Donor States, the objectives of the Financial Mechanisms and the programme areas to be financed in Romania under the grants.

The NFP task managers collaborated with the PO teams for launching conferences for each programme and the events were organised according with the requirements of the Communication and Design Manual. Some of the launching conferences were followed by match making seminars or information seminars. The relevant

information about the events was posted on the PO and NFP websites. Promotional materials were produced for such occasions.

## **2. NFP website**

In order to widely promote the “life” of the EEA&Norway Grants in Romania, the NFP launched in December 2013 the dedicated website [www.eeagrants.ro](http://www.eeagrants.ro). The website is created in two versions, Romanian and English, as per the applicable provisions in the regulations. Until the launch of the new website, information was posted on the old website [www.asistentasee.fonduri-ue.ro](http://www.asistentasee.fonduri-ue.ro).

The information on the website has been continuously updated to cover all events and relevant texts in all programmes. A dedicated address was created, [asistenta.see@fonduri-ue.ro](mailto:asistenta.see@fonduri-ue.ro), where interested parties can write and request information about the EEA and Norway Grants and also a dedicated address for irregularities alert [sesizarisee@fonduri-ue.ro](mailto:sesizarisee@fonduri-ue.ro).

The site structure includes sections dedicated to the documents and legislation relevant for the grants, to programmes funded under each Financial mechanism, to the Bilateral Fund at National Level, to calls launched and news about grants-related events.

## **3. Press releases**

After important events related to the programmes financed under the grants, the NFP and programme operators produced press-releases which were both posted on the websites of the institutions and distributed to the media so as to ensure the widest access and impact on the public. Additionally, regular press monitoring makes it possible for the NFP to keep track of the extent and quality of media coverage of the grants.

## **4. Promotional materials**

In November 2013, the NFP produced (using TA resources) promotional materials: bags, pens, calendars, notebooks, memory sticks, agendas, post-its, planners, roll-ups, folders. The materials were distributed to the relevant public with occasion of the different events (Monitoring Committee, meetings with PO and predefined project promoters, launching conferences, etc.).

## **5. Working group for information and publicity**

In order to coordinate properly the information and publicity activities, ensure a common approach of communication issues and monitor the fulfilment of PO obligations in terms of information and publicity, the NFP organised a working group in this area, composed of communication officers from all programme operators. A representative of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bucharest is invited to attend the meetings.

## **6. Other events**

A public opinion survey, included in the Communication Strategy will be produced in the first months in 2014. The public tender was launched in December 2013 and two offers were received. The contract was signed in March 2014 for a value of 21,500 Euro.

### *Budget situation for information and publicity*

A total of about 33,000 Euros were spent during the reporting period:

- 5,630.72 Euros – website development and maintenance
- 8,535.83 Euros – launching conference
- 18,951.15 Euros – promotional materials

### *The coming year*

In 2014 the NFP will further implement the Communication strategy and extend its PR activities in close cooperation with the Royal Norwegian Embassy which will continue to be a very active and committed partner for the NFP in organising and correlating communication actions.

## **7. Communication activities undertaken by PO's**

**Launching events organised in 2013:**

Programme	Date of the event
RO06 Renewable Energy	November 26, 2013
RO09 Funds for Non-governmental Organisations	April 18-19, 2013
RO10 Children and Youth at Risk and Local and Regional Initiatives to Reduce National Inequalities and to Promote Social Inclusion	December 17, 2013
RO12 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	December 27, 2013
RO13 Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within European Cultural Heritage	December 4, 2013
RO14 Research within Priority Sectors	December 10-11, 2013
RO15 Scholarships	September 25, 2013
RO17 Green Industry Innovation	March 12, 2013
RO20 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence	June 28, 2013
RO21 Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-Border and Organised Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups	June 28, 2013
RO24 Judicial Capacity-Building and Cooperation	June 28, 2013
RO23 Correctional Services, including Non-Custodial Sanctions	June 28, 2013

Other six Programme operators have scheduled launching conferences for their programmes in early 2014. Promotional materials were produced and part of them distributed at the launch of the programme and at the matchmaking seminar. Internal working procedures include a communication procedure describing the promotion and publicity obligations of both project promoters and PO.

**Website development**

Programme Operator	Website	Bilingual information
FDSC (RO 09)	dedicated website <a href="http://www.fondong.fdsc.ro">www.fondong.fdsc.ro</a>	x
FRDS (RO 10)	dedicated section on PO's website <a href="http://www.frds.ro">www.frds.ro</a>	x
Ministry of Culture (RO 12)	dedicated website <a href="http://www.fonduri-patrimoniu.ro">www.fonduri-patrimoniu.ro</a>	Only RO version
Ministry of Culture (RO 13)	dedicated website <a href="http://www.fonduri-diversitate.ro">www.fonduri-diversitate.ro</a>	
Ministry of Education UEFISCDI (RO 14)	dedicated section on PO's and IA's website <a href="http://www.research.edu.ro/ro/categorie/2371/granturi-seen">http://www.research.edu.ro/ro/categorie/2371/granturi-seen</a> <a href="http://uefiscdi.gov.ro/Public/cat/786/European-Economic-Area--EEA-Romania-Norvegia.html">http://uefiscdi.gov.ro/Public/cat/786/European-Economic-Area--EEA-Romania-Norvegia.html</a>	x
ANPCDEFP (RO 15)	dedicated website <a href="http://www.see-burse.ro">www.see-burse.ro</a>	x
Innovation Norway (RO 17)	dedicated website <a href="http://www.norwaygrants-">http://www.norwaygrants-</a>	Only EN version

	<a href="http://greeninnovation.no/">greeninnovation.no/</a>	
<b>Ministry of European Funds (RO03, RO18)</b>	dedicated section on NFP's website <a href="http://www.eeagrants.ro">www.eeagrants.ro</a>	x
<b>Environmental Fund Administration (RO06)</b>	dedicated website <a href="http://www.rondine.ro">www.rondine.ro</a>	x
<b>Ministry of Justice (RO20,RO22,RO24)</b>	dedicated website <a href="http://norwaygrants.just.ro">http://norwaygrants.just.ro</a>	x
<b>Ministry of Economy (RO05)</b>	dedicated section on PO's website <a href="http://www.minind.ro/">http://www.minind.ro/</a>	x

The NFP will ensure that the remaining programme operators will fully comply with the website-related requirements as soon as possible.

As a general assessment, while also considering the different levels of progress in implementation of their related Programmes, the POs have fulfilled their communication responsibilities in line with Regulation requirements.

#### 4.6 Work plan

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Implementation period</b>
Signing of the remaining Programme Agreements between NFP and Donors	January 2014
Meetings between NFP and Programme Operators	As needed (monthly, as a general rule)
Meetings NFP- each Programme Operator on programme specific issues	As needed
Preparation of the Annual Programme Reports by the Programme Operators, verification by NFP	February 2014
Preparation and submission of the Strategic Report	March 2014
Preparation and launching of second call under Bilateral Fund at National Level	March – April 2014
Evaluation of projects/actions financed under the Bilateral Fund at National Level – signing of contracts	January – December 2014
Preparation and launching the calls for the programmes: RO 02, RO 04, RO 05, RO 06, RO 09, RO 10, RO 11, RO 12, RO 13, RO 15, RO 20	RO 02 – April 2014 RO 04 – April 2014 RO 05 – March 2014 RO 06 – March 2014 RO 09 – April 2014 RO 10 – March 2014 RO 11 – March 2014 RO 12 – January 2014 RO 13 – January 2014 RO 15 - January 2014 RO 20 - February 2014
Selection of projects	RO 02 – May – August 2014 RO 04 – June – September 2014 RO 05 – May – August 2014 RO 06 – May – June 2014 RO 09 – July – September 2014

	RO 10 – May – July 2014 RO 11 – June – August 2014 RO 12 – June – August 2014 RO 13 – May – August 2014 RO 15 - April – June 2014 RO 20 - May – July 2014
Start of implementation of approved programmes: - Launching events; - Appraisal of pre-defined projects; - Elaboration of call text, submission to FMO, launch of calls; - Signing of project contracts; - Start of projects implementation	January – December 2014
Annual Meeting on the EEA and Norway Grants	June 2014 and November 2014
Monitoring Committee meetings	June 2014 November 2014
Modifications of Programme Agreements	RO 05, RO 10, RO 19, RO 21, RO 23 + others, as needed
Programmes monitoring by the National Focal and projects monitoring by the Programme Operators	January –December 2014
Cooperation Committee meetings organised by the Programme Operators	As established by the Programme Operators
Selection Committee meetings	April -September 2014
Information activities: launching events, press releases, information seminars, etc.	As established by the Programme Operators or the National Focal Point

## 5. SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a summary of the above, it may be concluded that some important and necessary steps have been taken during 2013 for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania:

1. Finalisation of the programming process, including reallocation of outstanding amounts and modification of the MoUs;
2. Approval and beginning of implementation phase for all Programmes (except Adaption to Climate Change and Poverty Alleviation);
3. Launching of calls for proposals in a number of programmes (5);
4. Finalisation of national legislation for financial management;
5. Finalisation of the management and control system at national level, compliant with Regulation requirements.

Nevertheless, significant challenges affecting the efficient implementation of the Grants and achievement of results remain:

1. The long period necessary for the preparation of programme proposals, approval of Programmes and effective beginning of implementation activities, which leads to time constraints on the implementation of projects and the risk of not achieving results by the end of the expenditure eligibility period;
2. The large number of programmes (22) and many PO structures (11), which are difficult to coordinate;
3. Persistent lack of capacity of some POs;
4. A very unequal level of progress across Programmes which affects the ability to manage them in a systematic manner;
5. A financing model different from the one implemented for the European Structural Funds (pre-financing vs. reimbursement), which provides great advantages in terms of cash flow, but which required a long

learning/adjustment process in order to ensure compatibility with national public finance legislation and turned out to be cumbersome.

6. Relative difficulty in implementing donor partnership projects - reluctance of some donor state entities to comply and get acquainted with EEA and Norway Grants rules (financial and procedural).

## **6. ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT**

Attachment 1 - Applications in country

Attachment 2 and 3 - Projects with donor project partners in country

Attachment 4 - Programme and country irregularities

Attachment 5 - Project irregularities

Attachment 6 - Monitoring and Audit Plan

Attachment 7 - Risk assessment

Attachment 8 - Report on the target for Improvement of the Situation for the Roma Population

Attachment 9 - Technical Assistance Report