

Strategic Report
EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014
Romania
1 January – 31 December 2016

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides a detailed overview of the progress achieved in 2016 in the implementation of the 2009-2014 EEA and Norway Grants in Romania, with one year before the ending of the programmes.

It was the most significant period for the implementation of projects, with a number of 668 projects being completed by the end of December 2016 of the total number of the 837 contracted on all programmes. Within programmes implemented by beneficiary state POs, most of which have benefited from extensions of the eligibility period, 228 projects of the total number of 386 are already finalized (60%).

The achievement of results has also progressed significantly, with many programmes reporting the achievement or surpassing of set targets on outcomes and outputs, as detailed in section 2.

In terms of financial implementation of the Grants, at the end of 2016, disbursements made by Donors have reached the level of approximately 90%. The overall level of payments to projects made was of 80% of the amounts received (disbursed by Donors) and 72% of the total budget available.

Significant progress can also be perceived in the strengthening of bilateral relations, with important results being obtained through both the fund for bilateral relations at national level and in donor partnership programmes and projects.

The Fund for bilateral relations at national level has been allocated to contracted initiatives in proportion of 88%. With a 3rd round ended in June 2016, the funds made available through the open call have reached a contracting rate of 94.4%, i.e. 923,175 Euros. Several significant and successful bilateral initiatives, such as conferences and seminars, were carried out in partnership and with the involvement of experts from the Donor States, as detailed in section 2.2, as well as section 3.

The risks affecting the successful achievement of results continue to be the same as previously identified - delays and errors in public procurement at project level, lack of capacity of certain POs and PPs and delays in the process of payment requests verification and authorisation at PO level due to lack of capacity.

An important issue to be taken into consideration, as projects and programmes are closing, is the possible impact of the savings and unspent amounts incurred, on the final absorption rate. This raises the need for a more realistic assessment of budgetary estimations in Programme design and in the approval of allocations to project.

2 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE GRANTS

2.1 Cohesion

The EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 are contributing to the objective of economic and social cohesion within the EEA, through the implementation of the established Programmes and projects and the achievement of important concrete results for the development of the Romanian society.

However, the overall goal of reducing social and economic disparities between Romania and the EEA countries needs to be placed in the context of Romania's overall performance in terms of development, generated by broader socio-economic factors, as identified in the relevant studies and statistical indicators at country level.

In terms of economic growth, recent EU level reports, such as the European Commission's Country Report of 2017¹ place Romania on a positive trend. Growth hit a post crisis peak in 2016 (at 4.6%) due to domestic demand. The report stated that economic growth will remain robust over the forecast horizon at 4.4% in 2017 and 3.7% in 2018. While private investment was supported by low interest rates and stable investor confidence, public investment declined in 2016 due to a low implementation of EU funds.

Concerning employment, the same report states that labour market has strengthened and unemployment is approaching its pre-crisis low and is forecast to decline further in 2017-2018. Employment decreased slightly in 2016 and is expected to grow at a moderate pace.

Poverty continues to represent a defining problem for Romanian society; poverty and social exclusion persist for young people, families with children, people with disabilities, Roma population, the rural population and inactive people. Education and health outcomes remain unsatisfactory, especially for the most affected by poverty and social exclusion. A change towards more integrated services targeted to disadvantaged groups is planned, as the provision of these services is low. A comprehensive anti-poverty package was adopted by the Romanian Government in 2016.

According to national statistics, in 2014 almost 40% of the Romanian population is at risk of poverty, with children particularly affected (50%). The low coverage and adequacy of the social benefits and services remain a challenge in reducing poverty. Budget cuts affected the capacity of the health, education and social protection systems to respond to their needs. Out of the 3.8 million Romanian children, approximately 8% are estimated to live in absolute poverty.

The Romanian education system faces important challenges in terms of participation and quality. For instance, the education budget decreased from 5.7% of the GDP in 2008 to 3.2% in 2013. The number of social workers was drastically reduced in the past five years. According to official National Institute for Statistics, more than 6% of the primary and lower secondary school age population are out of school and 17.5% of the population aged 18 to 24 left school before completing upper secondary education (early school leavers). Data show concerning trends, with the proportion of out-of-school children almost doubling since 2009. Only 33% of the Roma aged 15-18 remain in school (others being potential early school leavers), compared to almost 79% of other adolescents. Two out of 10 Roma children do not go to school at all and the early school-leaving rate among Roma is 37.7%.

According to Eurostat data, early school leaving rate in Romania has increased from 17.3 in 2013 to 19.1 in 2015, well above the Europa 2020 target of 11.3%, the 3rd worst result among EU countries.

The European Semester Country Report states that Romania made progress in public procurement reform, but corruption remains a challenge. The implementation of the public procurement strategy and action plan progressed in 2016. In May 2016 the new public procurement laws transposing the EU directives entered into force and all necessary secondary legislation was adopted by the end of 2016. The law for the PREVENT system for systematic ex-ante checks of conflicts of interests was adopted. The National Agency for Public Procurement (ANAP) was set up in 2015 as single institution responsible for public procurement providing more robust and efficient corruption control and preventive institutional mechanisms. ANAP is responsible for the ex-ante check of the public procurement procedures and is currently implementing a sample-based, more thorough, ex ante checks system, as opposed to the previous systematic control. However, the application of

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2017-european-semester-country-reports_en

public procurement legislation and procedures continues to represent the main risk and reason for delays in the implementation of non-reimbursable funds projects.

Efforts to strengthen the capacity of public administration were stepped up in 2016. They covered in particular: transparency, strategic orientation and coherence of public policies, decision-making tools, coordination within and between different levels of government. New civil service and training strategies were adopted, setting the reform lines for human resources management, but implementation has not started. Incomplete human resources reforms limit public institutions capacity to develop and implement policies in a strategic and coordinated manner. Moreover, the low accountability of the public administration negatively impacts the quantity and efficiency of public services.

The analysis of progress of judicial reform and fight against corruption concluded that Romanian has made substantial progress on much of the reform of the judicial system and the investigation of high-level corruption. Important challenges remain in the effective implementation of the preventive policies that have been defined in 2016.

2.2 Bilateral relations

The objective of strengthened bilateral relations between Romania and the Donor States is mainly supported by implementing the means established in the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms:

- the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level;
- the Funds for Bilateral Relations at Programme level;
- Implementation of donor partnership Programmes and donor partnership projects.

Implementation of the Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level

According to the agreed work plan and revised implementation system, the Fund for Bilateral Relations at National Level was implemented through an open call for proposals and through mutually agreed predefined activities.

The **implementation status** of the FBR is summarized in the table below:

	Budget	Contracted	%
Predefined projects	552 186 €	418 603 €	75.8%
Call	977 564 €	923 175 €	94.4 %
Total	1 529 750 €	1 341 778 €	87.7%

I. Open call

The Call III launching date was 25 March 2016 and the deadline for submission of applications was 30 June 2016 or until funds depletion. The end date for the implementation of the projects/actions was 31 December 2016. The grant applications submitted was continuously evaluated as they were registered, until the entire financial allocation was spent.

The budget allocated for Measure I – Travel Support was 50,000 Euros and the budget allocated for the Measure II – Priority Sectors was 150,000 Euros.

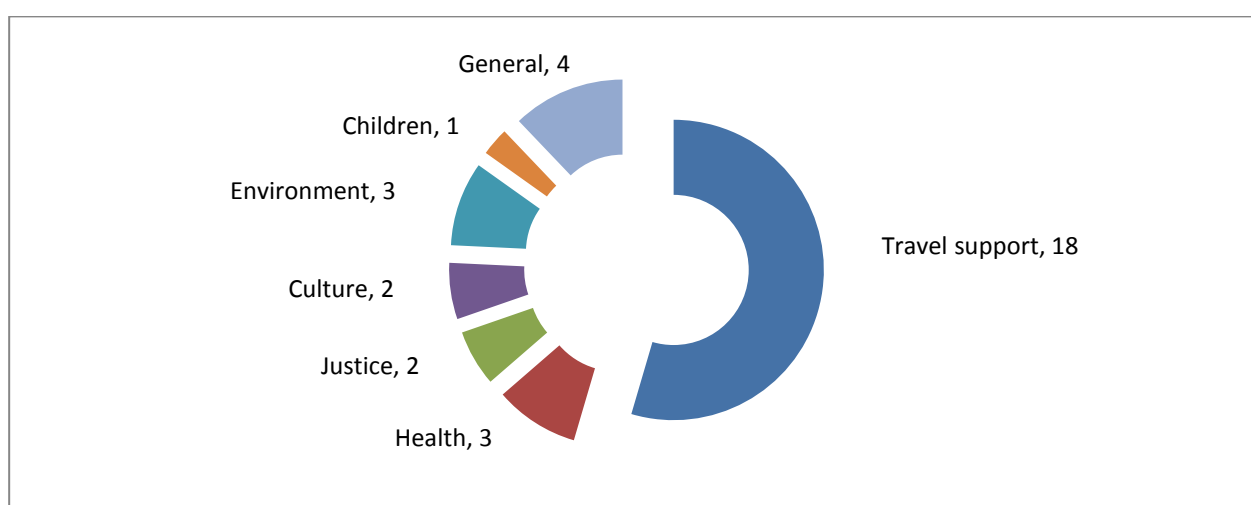
A number of 20 applications were approved in 2016, out of a total number of 46 application received with a total amount of **€245,727**. In the last 3 days of the submission period, the NFP received 31 applications and 12 applications were accepted for financing. The total budget of the approved applications exceeds the initial budget of the call. In parallel, the projects selected under Call II have finalized the implementation and have incurred significant savings. FMO approved the proposal for increasing the initial budget with the necessary amount in order to finance all the applications approved under Call III.

Applications received, approved and rejected in 2016:

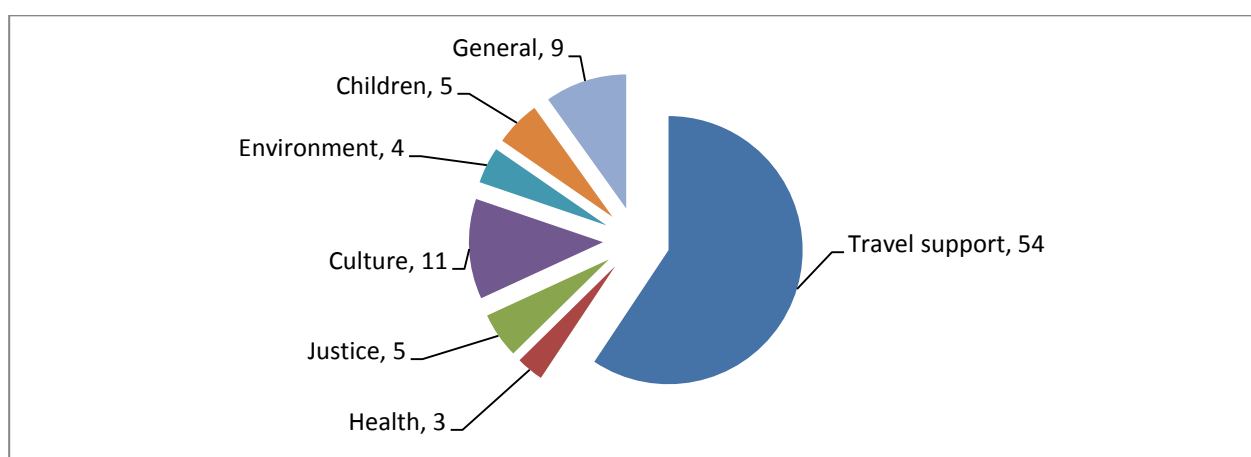
2016	Total	Approved
Applications received	46	20
Public	17	7
Private	29	13

2016	Total	Approved	Rejected
Measure I: Travel Support	18	10	8
Measure II: Priority Sectors	28	10	18

Projects contracted by measure and priority area - in 2016



Projects contracted by measure and priority area – total



In terms of results obtained in 2016, the level of contracting is presented in the table below:

Budget	Contracted Call II Extension	Contracted Call III	Contracted - 2016	Contracted – total	% (contracted in 2016 of total contracted)
Measure I: Travel Support	46,085.85	48,262.02	94,347.87	213,989.71	44.09%

Measure II: Priority Sectors	68,800.34	197,464.52	266,264.86	709 185.52	37.55%
Total	114,886.19	245,726.54	360,612.73	923,175.23	39.06%

A list of activities approved under the Bilateral Fund is presented in **Attachment 10**.

Analysis of the results achieved under the open call Bilateral Fund at National Level

Of the total amount of 977,564 euros made available under the three open calls, **approx. 94.4 %** were contracted by the end of 2016 (923,175.23 €), with a total number of **91 contracts** concluded for the implementation of projects following the calls for proposals.

The implementation of the open call has been successful and the main factors for the achievements are:

- Using the pre-financing method and the 100% financing rate of eligible costs;
- The variety of priority sectors available and the wide range of categories of eligible beneficiaries;
- The website dedicated to EEA and Norway Grants is user friendly;
- The text of the guidelines for applicants is well structured, containing clear and concise information (to be noted that it has been considered as an example of good practice at the level of the Ministry of European Funds is concerned);
- The application form is simple, accessible both to experienced beneficiaries and to those individuals who have not implemented projects;
- The travel support scheme, which has allowed for a great number of bilateral visits and exchanges in an easy and flexible manner;
- The evaluation procedure of submitted applications complies with the four eyes principle and the cooperation with the representatives of the Norwegian Embassy is rapidly established so as to allow a quick circuit of documents, the approval of projects and contracts signing
- The timely assistance for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries provided by the staff assigned to NBF implementation, on the telephone or via e-mail at the dedicated e-mail address: bilateral.relations@fonduri-ue.ro.

The main challenges in the implementation of the funds remains, as in the previous years, the difficulty in identifying donor states partners, as well as relative low involvement of public entities due to lack of capacity for implementation.

All the projects financed since the launch of calls until the end of 2016 were implemented in good conditions.

The successful implementation of projects depends on a number of factors such as:

- the background history of the applicant / partner and the experience in implementing projects financed from grants (implementation capacity), which are likely to determine the correctness of implementation and the assurance of sustainability;
- the reputation and good name of the applicant / partner in the field of work, with a direct effect on the dissemination area of results and their credibility;
- a good communication relationship between the applicant and the partner;
- good cooperation relationship with the funding authority (pro-active actions and providing assistance during the project implementation);
- the specific funding area.

The specific NBF indicators assumed by beneficiaries, such as:

- the number of participants involved in exchange visits between the beneficiary state and donor states,
- the number of participants from the public sector / civil society,
- the number of public entities involved in solving problems activities concerning the civil society

have been over-achieved in most cases.

The visibility of EEA and Norway Grants and of Donor States was ensured by various means starting from press releases in partner countries to postings on own websites and social media networks, leaflets, brochures or other publications.

The sustainability of activities funded is also supported by the fact that there are beneficiaries that have submitted a second application (National Anticorruption Directorate, Prader Willi Association etc.) and by the increase of number of a certain beneficiaries category (e.g. universities / police inspectorates) that have submitted applications after having received information on funding opportunities from similar institutions that had already implemented such projects and have disseminated the results of those projects in specific environments.

Examples of significant projects financed under the open call

➤ ***Transparency International Romania: Increasing the role of the judiciary in preventing corruption in business***

One of the most successful initiatives of bilateral cooperation in the „Justice and home affairs” field between entities from Romania and Norway was the organization a regional conference about corruption in private sector.

The project, amounting to approx. 23,000 euro was implemented by **Transparency International Romania Association in partnership with Transparency International Norway**.

The collaboration between the two partners aimed at an integrated approach to strengthen the capacity of Romanian business to align to the highest standards for ethics and integrity, by providing stakeholders with the necessary resources to promote transparency in business practices. Three regional conferences were organized (Bucharest, Brasov, Constanta), entitled "Integrity of Prosperity Summit", attended by 96 people. The conclusions of the three regional conferences, together with proposals and solutions from the business environment and identifying good-practice examples by Transparency International Norway have constituted the basis for the formulation of a public policy proposal. This will be used by Transparency International Romania to support efforts to achieve the objective 3.7 of the National Anticorruption Strategy 2016-2020, regarding „Increasing the integrity, reducing vulnerabilities and corruption risks in business”.

➤ ***Study visit and a training course on public lightning for all members of the Satu Mare County***

Within the project, promoted by **The Intercommunity Development Association Satu Mare** in partnership with the International Development Norway Research, entitled „**Partnership for an enlightened future!**” has developed the cooperation relations already established between the partners during the implementation of the project „Building partnership for a green future”. The project was aimed to continue the cooperation in the field of energy savings strategies for regions and municipalities and to contribute to the transfer of knowledge and best practices in the field of public lightning between the partners. The project budget was approx. 12,500 euros.

The project included three main activities:

- a training course on public lighting for all members of the Intercommunity Development Association Satu Mare (43 participants during the first day and 42 participants during the second day);
- a study visit for 3 representatives of the Intercommunity Development Association Satu Mare to the partner organisation in Trondheim (Norway);
- elaboration and printing of a best practices guide on energy savings strategies and public lighting.

The best practice guide elaborated during the project was to be distributed to all relevant public authorities and institutions in the county, contributing in this way to obtaining the objectives of saving energy in the Satu Mare County. The partners have also decided to start an application for a small project on climate change.

➤ ***Travel support to initiate, organize and get into operation a Romanian NGO that will secure the day-to-day activities for homecoming beggars and for other poor people.***

Within the project, promoted by the **From Beggar Cup** in partnership with the City Hall Tg-Cărbunefi, entitled „**Travel support to establish From Beggar Cup in Romania**”, the main objective with the three travels to Romania was to initiate, organize and get into operation a Romanian NGO that will secure the day-to-day

activities for homecoming beggars and for other poor people (both Roma people and Romanian people) in the municipality of Tg-Cărbunești – Târgu-Jiu and beyond. The project budget was approx. 12,000 euros.

Other objectives were:

- To secure a good collaboration with the officials within the municipality of Tg-Cărbunești and Târgu-Jiu;
- To set up non-corruption routines and secure implementation and enforcement of national laws for paying local taxes and routines for export/import expenditures;
- To establish relationship with stakeholders and associations in Romania focusing on the same purpose;
- To look for and initiate business opportunities locally in Romania for the association to secure more employment and self-employment for poor people.

The project revealed a great lack among Norwegians of understanding, respect and appreciation for people who are different. The two associations, From Beggar Cup and the new NGO association in Romania will continually combat such attitudes in both countries.

➤ **ACCEPT Association: Iceland-Romania cooperation for intersex human rights.**

Within the project, promoted by the **ACCEPT Association** in partnership with the Intersex Iceland, entitled „**Iceland-Romania cooperation for intersex human rights**”, the main objective was to enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange between Romania and Iceland in the area of LGBTI (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex) rights with a focus on protection of intersex rights in societal field of education, medical practice and civil society. The project budget was approx. 13,000 euros.

Other objectives were:

- Creating a cooperation context regarding specific human rights agenda pertaining to intersex communities and individuals;
- Developing common initiatives aimed at promoting human rights understanding within Romania and Icelandic societies;
- Transferring knowledge towards stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental actors;
- Reduce social disparities between the EEA countries, Romania and Iceland, through the promotion of social policy and practices in the fields of healthcare and education;
- Develop and promote exchange of expertise among civil society LGBTI actors in Romania and Iceland.

II. Predefined activities

A **predefined projects with significant impact** and which has involved a large number of entities in Romania and Norway is the one implemented by the **Ministry of Energy in partnership with Innovation Norway**. The project objective was to facilitate a study visit of Romanian researches to Norwegian institutes from the energy sectors.

The delegation of Romanian consisted of 15 people (12 researchers and 3 representatives of the Ministry of Energy) and has held visits and meetings at institutions such as: Research Council of Norway, Norwegian Environmental Agency (NEA), Norwegian Water Resource and Energy Directorate (NVE), University of Oslo, Oslo Renewable Energy and Environment Cluster (OREEC), SINTEF Energy, Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU.

The objectives of the project were:

- To develop the exchange of knowledge and experience in energy research between the two countries: hydro, nuclear and renewables;
- Identifying funding lines for Romanian energy research and the future projects of common interest between the Romanian and Norwegian parts for the financial framework for EEA and Norway 2014-2021, closely related to the Romanian Energy Strategy 2016-2030.

Implementation of Funds for bilateral relations at Programme level

In 2016, the overall progress in the implementation of bilateral funds at programme level has progressed well since the last reporting period, with an overall payment rate of approx. 40%.

Very good results can be reported on the following programmes:

- RO13 Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts - 92%
- RO15 Scholarships - 84%
- RO06 Renewable Energy – 86%
- RO18 Capacity Building – 72%,

All POs have intensified efforts to implement activities during 2017 and there are reasons to expect additional progress by the end of the eligibility period.

For an overview of the implementation of the bilateral funds at programme level, please see **Attachment 11**.

Donor Partnership Programmes and projects

The Partnership at Programme level has continued to be successful in all Donor Partnership Programmes, with Cooperation Committees organized in all programmes and DPPs being involved in the management of the programmes.

At project level, 28% of all projects are donor partnership projects, i.e. 241 projects of all 841. The results of these projects in terms of the bilateral objective will be assessed at the end of the implementation period and based on the achieved results.

3 REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES

3.1 Overview of Programme status

The previous years of implementation of the financial mechanisms in Romania were dedicated to preparation, selection and contracting of projects, as well as re-allocation of funds between the Programmes, 2016 was of key importance for ensuring the implementation of projects and achieving results.

Based on the approval of the Donors regarding the extension of the eligibility of expenses, the implementation period of most of the projects was extended to 30.04.2017. The procedure of concluding addenda to project contracts was started without delay. The good cooperation between the National Focal Point, the Programme Operators and Donors is worth pointing out in this respect.

In the context of the upcoming deadline of the projects eligibility, the National Focal Point, the Programme Operators and the Promoters have made all efforts to complete the implementation of the projects in due time, achieve the objectives and maximize the use of the funds available for the development of results.

In terms of financial implementation of the Programmes, at the end of 2016, disbursements made by Donors have reached the level of approximately **90%**. The level of payments made within Programmes reached **80%** of the total amounts received (disbursed by Donors) and **72%** of the total budget. An overview of disbursements and payments at the level of all Programmes is presented in **Attachment 12**.

Achievement of indicators, as the clearest indication of achievement of results, has greatly progressed on all Programmes, as can be observed below.

A few Programmes have continued to lag significantly behind in implementation, affected by the risks identified in previous reports.

The only predefined project under *Programme RO03 – Environment monitoring and control* has experienced very important delays in procurement and the activities are very likely to not be implemented by the end of the eligibility period. Measures have been taken for the continuation of the project from funds ensured by the PP.

All projects contracted under the hydro component of *Programme RO06 – Renewable Energy* have failed, due to incapacity of PPs to ensure cofinancing. The Geothermal Component and the Fund for Bilateral Relations have been progressing well.

3.2 Individual Programme summaries

The details regarding the Programmes are presented in the annual reports prepared by the Programme Operators in accordance with the provisions mentioned by the regulations.

RO02/PA2 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

Donor Programme Partner: Norwegian Environment Agency

Three projects were finalized by the end of 2016 (RO02-0003, RO02-0004 and RO02-0015) and one more at the beginning of 2017 (RO02-0014). The other projects are ongoing and progress in the activities. Thirty-seven addendums to the financing contracts have been signed already for extending the implementation period of the projects and modification of the project's budgetary lines. Out of the sixteen projects, the Project Promoter for the predefined project submitted its fifth intermediary report for verification, the Project Promoters for the three finalized projects submitted their final report and the other Project Promoters submitted the forth of fifth intermediary report at the beginning of 2017.

By the end of December 2016, the PO made payments to projects of €10,901,250 euros of the total amount of €17,647,059. €1,658,848 of incurred expenditure at project level was verified/authorized at the PO level - the analysis of the submitted intermediary financial and technical report is ongoing.

Given the changings in national legislation on procurement, the Programme Operator expect the verification of large acquisitions procedures to be pending at the PO, the supporting documents for payments made by the PP submitted through some intermediary progress having their verifications pending (eg reports 4, 5, or 6 of the predefined project). Therefore, progressing with the verifications of intermediary progress reports, the difference between payments to Project Promoters and expenditures authorized by Programme Operator will diminish gradually.

Through three projects finalized at the end of December 2016 (all projects were selected on Call 1) and the others 13 are still in implementation, 85% of the Programme objectives are achieved and in some cases (Predefined Project) those indicators were exceeded.

Regarding the monitoring of the projects, the Programme Operator made 14 on the spot monitoring visits for some of the projects financed under RO02 Programme, according to the monitoring plan of the Programme. The rest of the monitoring will be performed in the first quarter of 2017.

Regarding the achievement of the indicators, two projects are at risk:

- RO02-0010 "Conservation methods of forest and wet areas ecosystems from Portile de Fier Natural Park area". For this project – RO02-0010 the PO registered delays in implementation because of a not very good project management and modification into the national legislation regarding public procurements;
- RO02-0008 "Restoration of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems complex, from Fundu Mare Island, part of the Small Wetland of Brăila". The risk for RO02-0008 is caused by a lack of communication between the project partners. Due to this fact, in October 2016 one of the partners within the project was removed from the partnership agreement and all his activities were distributed among the remaining partners. A major risk in the implementation of this project is that the remaining time until the end of the eligibility period (30th of April 2017) will not be sufficient for finalizing the work field that are proposed and most probably the remaining activities will be supported from the RNP Romsilva's own budget.

There were no major deviations from the plan. In case of the projects which had changes to the initial plan of implementation, deviations from the original plan of implementation was justified.

The Programme RO02 comprises within the Output 1 a predefined project RO02-0002 "Demonstrating and promoting natural values to support decision-making in Romania N4D having as Project Promoter the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and the Project Partners: Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA), WWF Romania and Romanian Space Agency (ROSA). Most of the activities detailed in the Project application were implemented (mapping and preparation of assessment frameworks and procedures, as basis for the development of MAES in Romania, development of the national-level map of ecosystems in Romania - Country Location Map, organization of the 2nd Scientific Group on validation of indicators, organization of GIS

and MAES training activities, organization of the kick-off conference for the presentation of project objectives, the MAES concept and its implementation in Romania according to the N4D project vision N4D, organization, at national level and of the fourth meeting of the Scientific Group for the assessment of MAES process and results, etc.). The rest of the activities are under development and the project will be completed at the end of April 2017. By the end of the project implementation the results will exceed the target proposed through Programme Agreement.

The Predefined Project received a total amount of 2,859,054.34 euro out of 3,386,122 euro and had 337,097.68 euro approved by the Programme Operator after the analysis of the third intermediary report submitted on 27.01.2016. The third, the fourth, and the fifth intermediary reports are still in review with the Programme Operator. The sixth intermediary progress report is expected to have significant delays since the fifth IFR was submitted late, on 2 November 2016.

There were no changes of the Management and Control System at the PO level in 2016.

On 14 November 2016, the Programme Operator launched the opening session for submission of project proposals under Bilateral Fund (200,000 euro, the deadline for submitting financing applications is 30 August 2017, "first come - first served", the DPP approved the guideline). The fund is dedicated to initiatives meant to develop bilateral relations through cooperation and transfer of knowledge between entities.

The budget of the call is 200,000 Euro, the Programme Operator being entitled to adjust the budget of the call, based on an analysis of the interest shown by applicants and depending on the possible savings. There is no maximum amount set for an application budget. The total budget may be contracted based on a single or several applications.

Two Cooperation Committees meetings were held in 2016 - in Lofoten, Norway (14-15 June 2016) and in Sibiu, Romania (7-8 December 2016).

RO03/PA3 Environmental Monitoring and Integrated Planning and Control

Programme Operator: Ministry of European Funds

The recovery of project implementation delays foreseen in the previous Annual Report was not achieved, as the main activity of the project – production of new maps (digital terrain model, maps and orthophotos) did not start in 2016, due to delays in procurement, which continued to accumulate for Activity no. 1 „Production of a detailed Terrain Model through airborne scanning, aerial photography and production of new maps and orthophotos for 50 000 sqkm in 6 counties”. The procurement contract for the main activity was signed with a delay of approximately 9 months, on December 29, 2016 due to numerous requests for clarification and four appeals.

Due to the specificity of the Programme which is implemented through a single project and also the delay in signing the contract for the main activity, of which the other activities of the project are conditioned, all other activities of the Programme regarding publicity, bilateral relations, complementary action, planned for 2016 have been postponed to 2017, as they were not justified to be achieved in the reporting period.

From the point of view of bilateral relations, the collaboration between the Project Promoter and the Norwegian and Icelandic project partners has continued in the reporting period and brought significant added value for project implementation. The activities related to knowledge exchange with the donor project partners had a significant contribution towards the objective of strengthening the capacity of the Project Promoter. Several technical meetings between the Programme Operator, Project Promoter and the Project Donors Partners took place and there is an excellent cooperation among the four institutions, which led to enhancing the bilateral relations through sharing experience and knowledge. All decisions regarding the changes that have occurred in the predefined project were taken in consultation with the donor project partners. In this respect, during the reported period, two events were funded from the project budget for strengthening bilateral relations. The purpose of the study visits was the exchange of knowledge and training between the project partners.

Given the delays in achieving the main activities – production of new maps (digital terrain model, maps and orthophotos) and production of a database with geographical names, the outputs set out in the Programme proposal and respectively of the predefined project which implements this Programme, the results recorded in the reporting period were related to activity no.3 and activity no.4.

For activity no.3 which was paid entirely, maintenance is free till April 2017. The indicator for this activity was achieved, namely,, Number of Data Centre Recovery with increased capacity for storage”, the acceptance report for equipment installed in NACLR Data Centre was received.

For activity no. 4 “Capacity building, transfer of knowledge and training”, the following study visits/training have been conducted in the reporting period:

- study visit to Iceland (November 27 - December 2, 2016 - attended 9 persons);
- Training in Norway (December 4 - December 10, 2016: 3 persons attended); (December 11 - December 17, 2016: 3 persons attended).

The output indicator is fulfilled and exceeded: 4 study visits were organized from the beginning of implementation of the project. Also, the output indicators: “10 people trained”, in the reporting period was achieved and exceeded; only in 2016 were trained 6 persons in all the technical areas as planned in the project.

Taking into account the delays incurred in carrying-out the procurement procedures, as well as the overall implementation of project activities, it is highly likely that the results agreed will not be achieved and the project to not be finalized in the eligibility period. Thus, a thorough assessment of the future similar predefined project under the 2014-2021 Environment Programme, taking into consideration the problems occurred in the LAKI II project.

RO04/PA4 Reduction of Hazardous Substances

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

Donor Programme Partner: Norwegian Environment Agency

The Programme RO04 Reduction of hazardous substances aims at correlating the Romanian legislation to the European directives and regulations through insuring a legislative framework for applying European legislation in Romania. The objective of the Programme is to prevent injury and adverse environmental effects caused by chemicals and hazardous waste.

The results of Programme RO04 will be the following:

- Long term national monitoring system of bioaccumulation of heavy air carried metals (the project BIOMONRO RO04-0005);
- An integrated system for acquisition and transmission of monitoring data from hazardous substances in the Cluj County (through the project SIM – SCP RO04-0006);
- The development of two guides, one methodology, two systems exchange information and one database, (through the project GNM-DPSC RO04-0010) ;
- A database of tested, a specialized scientific article, 5 specific procedures drawn up and validated for the analysis of hazardous substances, 6 risk maps for each geographic area of the country (through the project INSPIRE RO04-0004);
- A database on POPs pollution (organochlorine compounds, organo-phosphorus and dioxins) of Mures river basin, process modelling dispersion and accumulation of POPs in aquatic ecosystem surface, development of models to link the emission standards with environment standard where POPs were identified, (through the project SIDPOP RO04-0003);
- A methodological guide for monitoring antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance in the environment (through the project EnviroAMR RO04-0002);
- Consolidating knowledge on chemical substances for efficient and effective decisions (CONOSCEDE RO04 0007);
- Promoting the expertise in evaluation and monitoring of chemicals and hazardous substances in the environment (ProExpert RO04-0008);
- Training and awareness campaigns regarding the potential human health and environmental risks associated to hazardous substances and waste (TARCHS RO04-0009)

Three projects were finalized by the end of 2016 (RO04-0007, RO04-0008, RO04-0002) and one more at the beginning of 2017 (RO04-0004). The other projects are ongoing and progress in the activities. Thirty-four addenda to the project contracts have been signed for extending the implementation period of the projects

and modification of the projects. Out of the ten projects, the Project Promoter for the predefined project submitted its seventh intermediary report for verification, the Project Promoters for the three finalised projects submitted their final report and the other Project Promoters submitted the fifth intermediary report at the beginning of 2017.

Outputs 1.2 and 2.2 are achieved through the predefined project RO04-0001 "Towards a proper aquatic environment" implemented by "Romanian Waters" National Administration in partnership with Norwegian Environment Agency. The project is implemented between 5 September 2014 (when it was approved by the PO) and 15th of March 2017 and the main objective of the project is to increase the knowledge and awareness in the field of water policy by extension of the current monitoring activity based on the new European requirements.

The Predefined Project received a total amount of 2,104,499 euro out of 2,341,039 euro and had 1,113,783 euro approved by the Programme Operator after the analysis of the fourth intermediary report submitted on 15.01.2016. The fifth, the sixth and the seventh intermediary reports are still in review with the Programme Operator.

As presented during the two Cooperation Committees, the projects already exceeded the indicators targets set by the Programme Agreement of the RO04 Programme and, through the economies at the project budget, the Project Promoters realised activities complementary to those proposed through the project application.

Some exceptional results of the projects are: the first bioinformatics center in Romania was developed, dedicated to processing large volumes of data resulted from microbial metagenomic analyses for monitoring environmental health, a laboratory with modern equipment for analyzing the concentration of POPs in the environment and animal tissues, a database with information in the field of hazardous chemical substances resulted from ammunition exploitation and decomposition of explosives materials from arms industry, 220 staff trained on short term and 20 on long term in environmental and health evaluation and on hazardous chemicals and waste legislation.

Through 3 projects finalised and the other still in implementation, 95 % of the Programme objectives are achieved and the indicators "Number of staff trained in environmental and health evaluation and on hazardous chemicals and waste legislation" and "Number of awareness raising campaigns in hazardous substances and waste" are exceeded.

Regarding the monitoring of the projects, the Programme Operator finalised all on the spot monitoring visits for the ten projects financed under RO04 Programme, according to the monitoring plan.

Regarding the achievement of the indicators, two projects are at risk:

- TARCHS RO04-0009 "Training and awareness rising campaigns regarding the potential human health and environmental risks associated to hazardous substances and waste (TARCHS)". For the project TARCHS – RO04-0009 the PO registered delays in implementation because of a not very good project management; and
- GNM – DPSC RO04-0010 "Increasing the Capacity of the National Environmental Guard to Apply the EU Legislation and Strategy Regarding Dangerous Waste and Chemical Substances (GNM – DPSC)". The risk for GNM – DPSC RO04-0010 is caused by the delays in implementation of the activities of project partner COMPUTAS S.A. The database, which is the main outcome of the project, is difficult to be accomplished, according to the results presented by the Project Promoter and Project Partner.

By the end of December 2016, 9,864,419 euros were disbursed from Programme Operator to the Project Promoters and 3,911,059 euro in incurred expenditure at project level were verified and authorised, the analysis of the submitted intermediary financial and technical report is ongoing. The total payments for the Programme RO04 are 10,130,015 euro at the end of 2016. Given the changings in national legislation on procurement, the Programme Operator expect the verification of large acquisitions procedures to be pending at the PO, the supporting documents for payments made by the PP submitted through some intermediary progress having their verifications pending (e.g. reports 5, 6, 7 of the predefined project). Therefore, progressing with the verifications of intermediary progress reports, the difference between payments to Project Promoters and expenditures authorized by Programme Operator will diminish gradually.

There were no major deviations from the plan. In case of the projects which had changes to the initial plan of implementation, deviations from the original plan of implementation were justified (eg. The project TARCHS was amended on how to conduct training on the long term according to the structure of the academic year in Norway).

Two Cooperation Committees were held during 2016.

On 14 November 2016, the Programme Operator launched the opening session for submission of project proposals under Bilateral Fund for Programme RO04, after one week prior publishing of the guideline for public consultation.

The fund is dedicated to supporting applications/actions that correspond to the general objective of the Programme, which is preventing the adverse environmental effects caused by dangerous chemicals and waste and is dedicated to initiatives meant to develop bilateral relations through cooperation and transfer of knowledge between entities (public authorities/institutions/non-governmental organisations etc) from the beneficiary country, the donor countries and international organisations, i.e. through supporting the organization of or participation to seminars, conferences, workshops, study visits, courses, meetings.

The budget of the call is 100,000 Euro, the Programme Operator being entitled to adjust the budget of the call, based on an analysis of the interest shown by applicants and depending on the possible savings. There is no maximum amount set for an application budget. The total budget may be contracted based on a single or several applications. The deadline for submitting financing applications is 30 August 2017.

RO05/PA5 Energy Efficiency

Programme Operator: Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds

In 2015, the Ministry of Economy (former PO) requested the termination of the Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA) signed with the Ministry of European Funds (MEF) as National Focal Point (NFP), due to the lack of administrative capacity to continue to implement the Programme, following the major delays in the implementation of the Programme and failure to contract projects as a result of the call for proposals provided in the Programme agreement.

In this context, the NFP has sought to identify a solution for the continuation of the Programme and proposed to the Donors to take over the Programme as PO and identify possible predefined projects in the field of energy efficiency. On the 10th of December 2015, the Donors communicated their agreement with the NFP's proposal. During January/February 2016, the NFP has submitted to the donors 7 proposals for possible predefined projects in the field of energy efficiency in buildings, to be financed under the Programme.

On the 9th of March 2016, FMO informed the NFP about the approval of only one predefined project proposed: Improving energy efficiency by optimizing the technical and functional parameters of the lighting system at the Emergency Clinic Hospital "Prof. Dr. Agrippa Ionescu" (EESIL). The Project Promoter is the Military Unit 0929, Bucharest and the budget of the project is 415,214 Euros.

The specific objective of the project is to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact by streamlining and optimizing technical and functional parameters of indoor and outdoor lighting at Emergency Clinic Hospital Prof. Dr. Agrippa Ionescu - based in the town Balotesti.

Based on these modifications, the NFP proceeded with the modification of the MoU regarding the implementation of the EEA FM 2009-2014 (exchange of letters according to the provisions of MoU – 1539/AR/20.04.2016), the Government Emergency Ordinance (GEO) nr.88/2012 concerning the institutional framework for the coordination, implementation and management of the financial assistance granted to Romania through the EEA FM and of the Programme Agreement.

The expected outcomes regarding the implementation of the RO 5 Programme envisage improved energy efficiency in buildings. The outcome will be reached at the end of the implementation of the predefined project within the Programme (April 2017).

Regarding the implementation of the project, until the end of 2016, the activities related to public procurement procedures were finalized. Some delays were registered within the procurement procedures for the design and works contract. There was a claim/litigation which was solved. The contract was signed on the

22nd of September 2016. The delays in the procurement procedures did not and will not affect the deadline of the works.

So far, there are no risks identified within the Programme related to human resources / public procurement procedures, etc. The activities within the project will be concluded according to the implementation timetable (annex to the financing contract) by 30.04.2017. The monitoring of the implementation was made through the verification of the interim progress and financial reports.

Regarding the bilateral relations, there are no partners from the Donor States within this Programme. The Fund for bilateral relations within RO 05 will support and strengthen the relations between the Donor States and Romania in what concerns the energy efficiency. The Fund for Bilateral Relations established within the Programme, amounting to 139,417 Euros, is dedicated to supporting initiatives meant to develop bilateral relations through cooperation and transfer of knowledge between the eligible beneficiaries and partners from Romania and Donor States in the field of energy efficiency, i.e. through supporting the organization of bilateral seminars, conferences, workshops, study visits, courses, meetings, etc.

A call for proposals was launched on 15.11.2016 by the MEF, as PO within the funds for bilateral relations at the Programme level. The deadline for submission is 28.02.2017 or until funds depletion. The end date for the implementation of the initiatives is 31.10.2017.

RO06/PA06 - Renewable Energy

Programme Operator: Environment Fund Administration

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

At the end of 2015, SSM Prest Ltd. has informed the PO regarding its intention to terminate the grant contract, mostly because of the lack of co-financing funds and its impossibility to find a solution in order to implement the project in due time. A termination agreement was signed in February 2016. The project value was 995,259 EUR.

For the same reason, a termination agreement was signed in December 2016 with Corpad Ltd. The project value was 3,345,255 EUR.

The implementation of the projects within RO06 included a series of risks as the PPs' risk regarding the lack of co-financing. By the end of 2016 the status of the projects on hydro component was:

- Due to the lack of co-financing funds and to the impossibility to implement the project within the eligibility period, a termination agreement was signed with SSM Prest Ltd. in February 2016 in December 2016 with Corpad Ltd, which is a high risk in terms of funds absorption.
- MHC Green Investments Ltd. is in due-diligence procedure, in order to obtain the cofinancing amount. This project is also with a high risk for not being implemented.

A significant delay in the implementation plan was related to the lack of co-financing, in the case of the Project Promoters on the hydro component.

During 2016 four pre-defined projects submitted proposals for supplementing the value of their projects, as follows:

- Oradea City Hall – 53,000 EUR (235,876.50 lei)
 - EUR 18,000.00 – value allocated for National Agency for Mineral Resources, with the role of granting access to classified data needed for the implementation, and the translation of this data
 - EUR 10,000.00 – the value is mainly for external experts necessary for data processing and setting a secured room
 - EUR 25,000.00 – the value is necessary for the representatives of Orkustofnun who will have to process the classified data in Oradea, and the costs for travel and living in Romania are higher than previously estimated.
- Beius City Hall – 6,000 EUR (26,703 lei) – value allocated for National Agency for Mineral Resources with the role of granting access to data needed for the implementation and the translation of this data.

- University of Oradea – 180,000 EUR - the value is necessary for three identical two-day long workshops held in Bucharest, Oradea and Timișoara; workshops founded on research of Romanian/EU policy, legislation and regulations pertinent to geothermal development
- Gh. Asachi Technical University of Iasi – 119,800 EUR - the value is necessary for: the value-added tax (VAT) that was not included in initial budget; internal displacements to the future research infrastructure location and to the partner's headquarters: Bucharest, Timisoara and Bacau; and friendly environment construction works.

Only three of them were approved by the FMO: Oradea City Hall, Beius City Hall and Gh. Asachi Technical University of Iasi. For two of them (Oradea City Hall, Beius City Hall) the PO signed an addendum to the financing contracts.

Regarding the bilateral relations, in 2016 three events took place, as follows: one in Island (25-29 April 2016), one in Norway (13-17 June 2016) and one in Romania (12-14 October 2016).

Both private and public entities that visited Romania (for the first time, for most of them) have been pleasantly surprised by the business opportunities and the foreign companies presence (from EU member states mainly). The contacts established during the visit may hopefully lead to commercial relations and know-how transfer.

Regarding the estimated quantitative bilateral indicators:

Indicator	Target	Previous years	2016	Total achievement
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	1	2	0	2
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	1	5	2	7
Number of women involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	25	16	14	30
Number of men involved in exchange visits between beneficiary and donor states	25	72	22	94
Number of joint (bilateral) articles published, written by persons from both an institutions in a beneficiary and donor state, published in a national or international publications, originated from a project financed by the programme	2	0	1	1

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The Programme Operator also considered the transfer of knowledge and know-how for the staff by organising/attending different events: Poland (30-31 March 2016), Iceland (25-29 April 2016) and Norway (13-17 June 2016).

RO07/PA7 Adaptation to Climate Change

Programme Operator: Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests

The selected outcome and outputs of the Programme reflect the goals and priorities of the strategies and action plans at European and National level and the most stringent needs regarding adaptation to climate change in Region 7 Center of Romania, in order to fill the existing gap in the degree of preparedness to a changing climate as well as level of awareness, education and administrative capacity regarding adaptation to climate change.

Programme RO07 only comprises a predefined project, "A green way to sustainable development" and is structured in two outcomes:

Outcome 1: Developed strategies and measures for adapting to changing climate

The first Outcome is achieved through 13 outputs based on developing strategy and measure for adapting to climate changing. The outcome achieved his results in proportion of 90%. During 2016 the outcome increases his target with a new output (based on saving resulted from procurement procedures) Education centre in Targu Mures Municipality. This output was aimed at strengthening the “pilot project” character of this predefined project within the context of dissemination of the impact of climate change.

Outcome 2: Improved energy efficiency in buildings - achieved 40%.

Initially this Outcome 2 was structured in two outputs: Public institution buildings covered by the energy efficiency studies and public institution buildings where the energy efficiency measures have been completed. But taking account that Financing Contract was amended on February 2016, there were amendments regarding introduction of a new activity: intervention works on increasing energy efficiency in the Tg. Mureş Social Centre (initially the project covered the energy efficiency feasibility study, the drawing-up of the feasibility study). The thermal insulation of the building and the purchase of boilers will increase its energy efficiency up to the value given by the efficiency study. The cost for implementation of the new output s under Outcome 1 and 2 has been ensured, for each of them, coming from the same outcome through reallocation from other budget lines.

Outputs achieved:

- Three municipalities with developed local strategies, actions plans and guidelines on adaptation to climate change. This output implements development of strategies and plans of action on adaptation to climate change in three municipalities (Sibiu, Targu Mureş, Braşov). Three municipal surveys and the a risk-vulnerability analysis for Sibiu, Brasov and Targu Mures are completed (October 2016);
- Guidelines in developing municipal adaptation to climate change strategies developed- developing guidelines on adaptation to climate change in Region 7 Centre for municipalities (finalized in October 2016);
- Meteorological studies aiming at supporting climate change adaptation plans at regional level developed. This output is developing guidelines on adaptation to climate change in Region 7 Centre for municipalities. These guidelines are finalized in October 2016;
- Electric and communication cables installed underground in Sibiu Municipality. The correspondence between the PP and the partner Sibiu City Hall (which is in charge of creating the infrastructure for the location of the cables) shows that, with the increase in the allocated budget value for this activity, and in accordance with the prices stipulated in the public works contract, solely 10,089 LM can be executed, and that the target of 11,785 LM cannot be reached. Although the value resulting from the implementation of the public works contract exceeds the one stipulated in the PA (10,089 LM instead of 10,019 LM), the indicator's new value of 11,785 LM cannot be reached, as the price/LM of underground cable resulting from applying a competition-based procedure is higher than the one estimated in the PA;
- Trees planted in bus stations-30 trees planted in bus stations along the streets where the infrastructure is created (finalized in 2016);
- Traffic study for assessing efficient traffic and alternative routes at local level developed - delivered by Lucian Blaga University and accepted by the EPA Sibiu in November 2016;
- Public institution building in Sibiu adapted to climate change. The energy efficiency studies for the building of the Environment Protection Agency Sibiu, the building of Brothers Grimm Kindergarden and the building of Social Center Tg. Mures are completed;
- Education and training in adaptation to climate change provided. A number of 270 persons attended the training sessions out of 300 persons which is the target. This activity has achieved so far 75% of the output;
- Training module on adaptation to climate change developed. This activity was carried out by the University Lucian Blaga from Sibiu until December 2016. The training module for students was introduced and approved in the annual educational plan of the university. Also, the post-graduate course has trained 25 specialists on this domain;
- A network of communicators on adaptation to climate change establish. This output was completed, the network of communicators has been established - 60 communicators;

- Implementation of an educational centre on adaptation to climate change in Tg. Mures; The setting-up of an educational center (in the town hall building) for activities of dissemination/ training on the issue of climate change by Tg. Mures municipality was aimed at strengthening the “pilot project” character of this predefined project within the context of dissemination of the impact of climate change – Implemented;
- Information and awareness campaign implemented at local or regional level. This output is to be delivered through the end of the project. The public campaign is underway till the start of the project, at the level of the three municipalities, press releases for events in the project. Also, the campaign includes contests with students and pupils in schools, exhibitions, Open Day, caravans;
- Energy efficiency studies in public buildings completed. The Feasibilities studies and energy efficiency studies for the building of the Environment Protection Agency Sibiu, the building of Brothers Grimm Kindergarden and the building of Social Center are completed;
- Energy efficiency measures in buildings completed. The completion of the works for the building of the Environment Protection Agency Sibiu, Kindergarten “Grimm Brothers” and Tg. Mures Social Centre from Sibiu is planned for March 2017.

During 2016, there was no modification on Programme Agreement for RO07 Programme.

On 14 November 2016, the PO launched the opening session for submission of project proposals under Bilateral Fund. The bilateral fund will support activities specific for networking and exchange of experience—networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, between Project Promoter and entities in the Donor States. The text call was published on <http://eeagrantsmediu.ro/> for public consultation. Deadline for submitting the Financing Applications is 30 August 2017 or until funds depletion. There was no application on Bilateral Call till 31 December 2016.

RO09/PA10 Funds for Non-Governmental Organizations

Programme Operator: Civil Society Development Foundation

Romanian NGO Fund addressed all 10 specific Programme Outcomes and the initial estimated values of the indicators were exceeded. Through the financed projects, 17,800 citizens were directly involved in different civic engagement activities, more than 13,400 persons have been engaged in volunteering on a regular basis in NGOs, while over 2,700 persons were engaged in volunteering Programmes. The volunteers’ centres which have been created in the previously reported periods have continued to play their part successfully, and most of them ensured sustainability and continuity, after the end of the Programme. More than half of the projects have involved volunteers.

Over 1,300 NGOs increased their engagement in policy and decision-making with local, regional and national governments, over 290 reports on public policy issues of local, regional or national interest were developed and over 2,600 interactions between public authorities and NGOs on public policy issues were reported (consultation meetings, interviews, surveys, public hearings, public debates, round tables, focus groups, consultations with network/coalition/federation members, consultative thematic groups, information online and offline campaigns, social media groups, etc.).

The NGO Fund in Romania was the only program at national level that has financed human rights projects. Over 300 NGOs whose work is focused on minority groups were involved in projects, while over 160 cases/appeals were taken by NGOs to tribunals and courts.

Cross-sectoral partnerships continued to be developed with the aim to join efforts, complement actions, transfer knowledge and tools/instruments: 47 public authorities/governmental institutions were newly engaged in partnership with NGOs on supported projects, 357 new partnerships between NGOs and public authorities at all levels and over 1,400 partnerships that demonstrated effective working practice were reported. These partnerships includes: educational units/ school inspectorates, local councils, mayors’ offices, departments for social assistance and child protection, residential institutions for children/elderly, etc.

The project promoters undertook the final steps of the advocacy campaigns (monitoring the integration of the recommendations that emerged from the policy reports drafted, wrapping up the results and communicate them to the stakeholders, and planning the next steps after the finalization of the projects). Over 480 legislation/policy initiatives and practices addressed by NGOs, over 1000 NGOs were engaged in advocacy learning opportunities, while other more than 560 NGOs used various advocacy strategies and tools (online

platforms facilitating the consultation and participation of citizens; public debates; round tables; focus-groups; surveys; reports on public policies, etc.). A total number of 55 NGO coalitions and networks have continued to strengthen and become more representative for their beneficiaries and members (increasing the membership, developing procedures and strategies), as well as more visible for the general public. Overall, 847 NGOs have been involved in networks, coalitions and large partnerships implementing activities in different fields, such as culture, vulnerable groups, autism, debates, good governance, fighting cancer, community initiatives, children with disabilities, etc. Over 2,400 professionals have acquired competences in key areas relevant for NGOs development (such as fundraising, management, public relations, specific social service provision courses, etc.).

Projects have contributed to sustainable development at local, regional and national level. Over 13,000 teachers and students were involved in environmental education activities, and over 4,800 citizens were involved in implementing sustainable development actions (such as tree planting, ecotourism development as alternative to hunting and forest exploitation, fighting climate change through reducing carbon footprint, showing examples of construction of passive building). To stop illegal and environment harming activities (mining, forest exploitation, green space destruction) watchdog and advocacy activities were implemented that led to several lawsuits and visible campaigns.

Basic and welfare services initiated in previous reported period have continued to be provided, while other new services (46) were reported to have started. Beneficiaries previously reported, as well as over 15,400 *new beneficiaries* have received welfare and basic services (the total number of beneficiaries is actually higher, considering that the indicator does not include beneficiaries that were already registered within the NGO and continued to be provided with services). Over 11,000 beneficiaries have accessed basic services in *deprived / disadvantaged areas*, such as interethnic, Roma, poor, rural, isolated, etc. Over 10,900 beneficiaries were directly involved in service evaluation (through questionnaires, evaluation meetings, feed-back at the end of activities, etc.), while over 5,800 citizens pertaining to vulnerable groups have participated in community actions and/or public decision-making.

Projects under all the 10 outcomes have tackled the horizontal concerns of the Programme, ranging from protection of minority groups (such as Roma, LGBT, etc.), combating gender based violence, trafficking, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, hate speech and hate crime, as well as promoting tolerance, understanding and inclusion. Activities covering these topics have continued during the last months of project implementation, especially information and sensitization online and offline campaigns and events.

After the finalization of the projects in April 2016, the financial sustainability remains the most important threat for the sustainability of the NGO sector, due to the absence of major funding opportunities for the Romanian NGOs. The new ESF 2014 - 2020 programs, even though launched, have major delays in the evaluation process, and contracts are due to be signed in the second half of 2017. While trying to compensate with local or public funds and international donors, such sources proved to be insufficient to cover regular NGO operations (NGOs are competing with other entities like churches, schools, individuals/families, etc.).

Following the FMO request after the systems audit performed to the Programme in 2015, the MCS Manual was revised in order to fulfill the specific requirements of the auditor and to adapt it to the actual situation of the Programme (e.g. the fact that there are no Pre-defined projects under implementation, the fact that under round 2 application system was on-line etc.)

In September 2016, a third study visit *on sustainable development* has been organised in Norway (Oslo and Bergen) for representatives of 10 Romanian promoters, having as specific thematic areas: environment protection, ecological education and management of protected areas. It has been facilitated the exchange of information and results achieved through projects financed within the NGO Fund, at the same time with identifying policies and practices promoted by Norwegian counterparts, either public or private. Thus, focused discussions were conducted with Norges Naturvernforbund, Framtiden i våre hender, representatives of Ministry of Climate and Environment and the Norwegian Environment Agency, the University of Bergen, Ecological and Environmental Change Research Group, alongside with the field trip to the Hardangervidda Natural Park.

The *networking/dissemination event "News from Romania"* has been organised in Oslo, Norway, in November 2016. We aimed to share good practices and achievements reached by Romanian organizations through projects financed within the NGO Fund and reflect also the Norwegian perspectives on what collaboration with

Romanian organizations has meant. Opportunities for further supporting and facilitating exchanges and working together in the near future were addressed as well. *10 Romanian promoters were present and around 30 representatives of other* institutions and organizations from Norway joined in the event and the discussions. On the second day of the event, we facilitated an informal discussion with interested and available Norwegian organisations, focus being their respective direct experience in Romania or in general in implementing EEA funded projects. Participants were pretty diverse in terms of their relevant experience and interest. Some of the ideas highlighted the need for more information of Norwegian organizations about the national context and financial procedures in countries benefiting from EEA funds, the need for availability of documents in English, clarity and simplification of documents (both for application and later on related to implementation and reporting). Suggested: more flexibility in using the money (from what was foreseen to what is actually achieved), less requests for documents, more support in building and maintaining partnerships – what really is a partnership (given the pressure put on Norwegian institutions/organizations from all the beneficiary states), NMFA should have a local focal point in Oslo better endowed with human resources and information/knowledge on the specifics of the program in each of the beneficiary country, encourage sharing of experiences from the ones that gained more expertise, etc.

Over the period March-May 2016: 25 bilateral projects were implemented within the first call for proposals launched under Measure b, with the aim to facilitate networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between Romanian project promoters and entities in donor states. The focus has been on dissemination and valorisation of overall results, products and achievements of the projects financed under the NGO Fund in Romania (2009-2014). More than 90 persons were directly involved in mobilities and benefits vary from better understanding of organisational models or national contexts to identification of areas for further collaboration, agreements of different actions to be developed together (either events or projects), increased visibility on the use of EEA funds in particular towards public and entities in the donor countries, etc.

In November 2016: the second call was launched under Measure b and 27 proposals for activities aiming to facilitate networking and exchange of experience and best practices were received before the December 16 deadline. Evaluation was concluded in January 2017 and the 10 projects selected are currently under implementation.

The Programme will come to an end on April 30, 2017. Until then, the following activities are/will be undertaken, be it related to the grant schemes or to the Bilateral or Complementary Activities:

- The Fund Operator continues to verify the final reports received from Project Promoters (PP) and to provide technical support to PPs and their partners in finalizing the reports. All the reports will be checked and paid by April 30, 2017.
- Concluding contracts for the 10 selected projects under the second call under Measure b (Bilateral Funds), monitoring and providing technical support in implementation, analysing final reports and make payments by April 30, 2017.
- Study visit on welfare and social services in Oslo, Norway, 20-24 February 2017 - the study visit is envisaged for Romanian project promoters that work in the social field in order to get acquainted or get more in depth knowledge with the Norwegian system and expertise.
- Study visit on social entrepreneurship in Oslo, Norway, 20-24 February 2017 – As one of the important themes for the next generation of the EEA Fund, entrepreneurship is a subject the operator wants to address consistently. Hence it is proposed to undertake specific thematic visits in which both the promoters and the Programme Operator better understand the state of the art development of the topic in Norway as well as to incorporate the learnings from the visit into daily life of the organizations present and using the knowledge to further make sustainable the results of the projects financed under the NGO Programme.
- Training and experience sharing on human rights and gender equality in Reykjavik, Iceland, 20-24 February 2017 - the program include training sessions provided by the Icelandic Human Rights Centre and study visit to other Icelandic organizations. The training sessions will focus on education for human rights, human rights awareness for youth, equality and anti-discrimination, while the study visits will focus on a better understanding on how the training topics are actually put into practice in Iceland and will determine the

Romanian participants to understand how they can incorporate the learning into their work inside the organizations and future projects.

- Training and experience sharing on governance in the third sector, advocacy and lobby in Oslo, Norway, 27 February-3 March 2017 - the main objective of this event will be to get in depth knowledge of the systems and methodologies that the NGOs in Norway use in order to be more sustainable, accountable and efficient in their work. The program will be divided into training sessions and study visits.
- NO hate practitioners' meeting - 2-3 March 2017 - The aim of this activity is to share experience and discuss on possible mainstreaming of interventions piloted inside projects related to countering hate speech in Programme countries. The activity will contribute to the dissemination of best practices related to countering hate speech from different Programme countries involved in projects financed through the NGO Fund.
- Final Conference – Good practices and future trends – 30 March 2017 – The purpose of the Conference is to disseminate the achievements and impact of the NGO Fund.
- 2 trainings (topics from the following categories: evaluation and impact/communication on NGO work, alternative fundraising methods, public participation, new methods for social services), to be organised in Bucharest, Romania in April 2017 - expert training sessions to be organised with direct involvement of training experts from the donor countries and having as target group representatives of Romanian project promoters.

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

At the level of RO10 Programme, 101 projects (including the predefined project) were in different stages of implementation during 2016. In the first quarter of 2016, under the *PLUS* facility, 52 project grants were increased for additional activities in line with the projects' objectives and addenda to the financing contracts were signed. Until the end of August 2016, another 11 project grants were increased for additional activities, under facility PLUS 2. Thus, the PO managed to contract the entire amount allocated to projects (28,123,294.00 Euro), reaching a level of commitment of 100%.

For all the 101 projects (implemented in about 324 locations from all regions of the country, of which about 182 situated in rural areas), the period of eligibility is April 30, 2017, but the extension of contracts is different in terms of implementation duration. Until the end of December 2016, **59 projects were completed** and other 26 are planned to be completed until the end of January 2017. 15 will be finalised before end of April 2017.

The total amount released for the projects under implementation was of 27,079,032.66 Euro (out of which 23,017,178.76 Euro EEA grant), representing approx. 96.28% of the contracted amount. The disbursement rate at the level of the projects at the end of 2016 is around 88% of the received amount. However, there is an estimation for savings at the level of the projects (after projects closure), due to several reasons, among which: the reduction of VAT at national level from 24% to 19%, favourable prices on the construction market (about half of the projects were implying works for creating facilities for social activities), former public procurement law (applicable until April 2016) imposing the selection of contractors mostly based on the lowest price criteria, the staff involved in projects from some PPs - public entities financed from own resources, favourable exchange rate.

Based on current data and the rate of progress during the duration of Programme implementation, the Programme targets will be achieved. A brief analysis of the intermediary results reported by the PPs by the end of 2016 is showing that all the Programme outcomes and outputs are already exceeded, with one exception (regarding the Roma parents receiving specific support services under the Programme), which is estimated to be achieved until the end of the Programme.

Overall, out of the 101 projects financed, 78 projects are targeting Roma inclusion at least partially. The total amount of these projects (with PLUS allocations) is approx. 21.2 million Euro (grant allocation), representing double than planned. Also, according to the data provided by PPs in their progress reports, by the end of 2016,

other targets assumed in the Plan for Roma Inclusion for RO10 Programme (such as: no. of Roma children and youth directly benefiting the Programme, and no. of representatives of local or county authorities from areas/localities with a high percentage of Roma with new and specific knowledge regarding gender equality, equal opportunities, discrimination, intercultural understanding, respect for diversity etc.) were reached in 2016.

12 out of the 101 projects financed are implemented in partnership with entities from Donor States. The target was 20 projects. Also, the pre-defined project was implemented in partnership with the Council of Europe. During 2014 – 2016, 51% of the PPs were involved in joint activities with entities from the Donor States. The target (minimum 80%) will be achieved in 2017. Until the end of 2016, PO disbursed about 15.6% of the funds available under the Bilateral Fund at Programme level and appreciates that, as a result of the bilateral activities planned for 2017, planned to be organised by PO for almost all PPs, the progress in achieving the Programme targets on bilateral relations will be significant.

During 2016, cooperation between PO and Council of Europe (DPP) was productive. CoE participated at the assessment and approval of the applications submitted under the call for proposals for bilateral activities and facilitated participation of PO experts at CoE events, relevant for the Programme areas (as part of the Plan for Complementary Actions). The two CC meetings held in 2016 were focused on the assessment of the progress in implementing the Programme, including the planned bilateral activities and complementary actions and in the planning of the next steps. With the CoE support, until the end of 2016 about 36.5% of the budget for Complementary actions was disbursed.

The company contracted by FMO (INBAS) carried out monitoring visits to projects financed under RO10. Evaluators concluded that the PO comes in the Programme with significant expertise from the past in social inclusion, socio-economic development, equal opportunities, poverty alleviation, community development and re-granting. Also, the PO seems aware of all encountered difficulties by PPs and sufficiently open to confront most of the signaled deficiencies. All visited projects seemed pragmatically designed, practical and well-integrated in the targeted communities and responding to clearly identified needs of various vulnerable groups and could be recommended for replication. The results of the projects doubtless fit within the objectives of the Program, largely promoting social inclusion and improving the situation of children and youth in risk situation in their areas of implementation.

There are no risks that may threaten the achievement of the Programme objectives and no major deviation from the plan.

The only problem in this respect, despite the efforts of the PO, it seems that one project - PEH011 of €232,645 grant, developed by the Mayorality of District 4, Bucharest, will not reach the objectives and will return the entire contracted amount. The project did not develop any significant activity, facing important delays caused by low involvement of the management team, low communication between PP and the partner, and staff turnover.

Two Programme adjustments were made. The allocation to projects selected under the small grant scheme was increased to up to 22% of the eligible expenditure of the Programme. Also, there was operated a reallocation of funds (178,008 Euro, representing less than 10% of the total eligible expenditures of the Programme) between the budget headings for the 2 Programme Outcomes. There are no other adjustments estimated for 2017.

The PO estimates that all the targets will be achieved until the Programme closure.

Under RO10 Programme, a single predefined project was developed, implemented by the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), in partnership with the Council of Europe (CoE). The project entitled "Strengthening anti-discriminatory measures at national level through large participation of professionals and civil society" was implemented between February 2014 and October 2016 benefiting from a financial allocation of 399,990 Euro (with a 100% grant rate, including 15% national co-financing). During 2016, PP continued to confront problems in implementation, such as: delays in accessing the project funds due to a difficult relation with the Ministry of Finance, changes in the implementation team, insufficient allocated staff, difficulties in developing the procurement procedures, non-eligible expenditures to be recovered etc. PO supported PP and reviewed and approved successive requests of modification at the level of the project team, schedule of activities, budget etc. In addition, PO attended regular support meetings with the project management team, discussing specific issues of the project (related to procurement, financial management

etc.). The total payment to project was of ~391,519.40 Euro out of which at least 5.2% remaining unspent at the end of the implementation.

By results above mentioned, the predefined project contributed to the second outcome of the Programme (Local and regional authorities, as well as private and civil society actors, are developing in cooperation initiatives to reduce inequalities and to strengthen anti-discriminatory measures for groups vulnerable to social and economic exclusion). As an additional result, PP finalised the national anti-discrimination strategy "Equality, inclusion, diversity" planned for 2017-2021 and intends to submit for the Romanian Government approval its final version, after publishing on NCCD website, for public consultations (at least 30 days, according to the law provisions) and consultations with ministries.

The management and control manual of the Programme Operator is in use and does not require major changes until the end of the Programme.

In order to strengthen bilateral relations between relevant entities in Romania and in the Donor states or with international organizations, PO constantly encouraged and provided support, first for potential beneficiaries, and then for PPs and their project partners in order to identify relevant entities from the Donor States and to develop bilateral activities with them.

As a result, 12 out of the 101 projects financed are implemented in partnership with entities from Donor states, and one (pre-defined) with the Council of Europe. The partners from Donor states are one University (Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education, University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway) and 9 nongovernmental organisations (6 from Norway - Romers Rettigheter, Stiftelsen Radarveien, Hedda Foundation, SOS Barnebyer Norge, Caritas Norge and Jazzmontor AS Association and other 3 from Iceland - InterCultural Iceland, Child Safety House, and Icelandic Autistic Society). InterCultural Iceland is partner in 3 projects.

PO focused its efforts on facilitating networking, exchange, sharing, and transfer of knowledge, experience, and best practice between entities in Romania and entities in the Donor States and international organisations. In this respect, PO extended the deadline for submitting applications under the call for proposals for bilateral activities launched in 2015 and invited PPs with projects financed under the Programme to submit requests. As a result, until the end of 2016, 8 applications were contracted, totaling 37,371 Euro, with payments totaling 33,729.3 Euro.

Until December 31, 2016 PO disbursed about 15.6% of the funds available under the Bilateral Fund at Programme level and appreciates that, as a result of the bilateral activities planned for 2017 (conferences, training sessions for PPs and study visits), the progress in achieving the Programme targets on bilateral relations will be significant.

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

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

14 projects are being implemented by Local Public Authorities, some in partnership with local NGOs. Each of the projects had a set of minimum indicators to achieve: 1 day care center set up that could provide services for a minimum of 25 children out of which at least must be of Roma ethnicity.

Out of the 14 centers, 2 are opened and functional (with a total of 100 preschool children, out of which 37 Roma benefiting from daycare services) and one of the projects is completed. The other 12 centers are undergoing rehabilitation, with some delays due to the public procurement procedures not being finalised according to the initial schedule.

The implementation of the Programme, especially in the smaller communities, has been a huge change for the mothers aiming at returning to the labour market, but not being able to do so, due to a lack of decent alternatives for childcare.

The PO assessment has not identified any additional risks, compared to the report submitted last year. Indeed it has been confirmed the fact the public procurement related risks have significantly delayed the progress of most of the projects, in many cases even with over a year (Baia Mare and Bucharest general municipality being the most explicit examples in this case).

Most daycenters have postponed the initial provisioned opening due to delays resulted from the public procurement procedures not being completed according to initial schedule.

In terms of financial implementation, 2,766,192 Euros have been paid to projects (60% of the total budget of the outcome) and 1,107,704 Euros have been verified and authorized by the PO.

Regarding the management of the Programme, during 2016 the internal structure of PO remained unchanged, however there were registers some delays in the activities, especially in the public procurement area having as beneficiary the PO, due to the fact that the expert was no remunerated as an expert within the Programme.

RO12/PA16 Conservation and Revitalisation of Cultural and Natural Heritage

Programme Operator: Ministry of Culture

Donor Programme Partner: Directorate for Cultural Heritage in Norway

During 2016, the targets set in the Programme Agreement were reached and exceeded. 18 projects were finalized during the reporting year while 9 projects were extended in order to implement additional activities or finalize the restoration works. The results achieved by the end of 2016 are the following: 9 buildings of cultural heritage value restored or rehabilitated, 7 new cultural facilities created, 2,118 objects of cultural value restored, 34,655 items of cultural value digitized, 12 strategic documents related to cultural heritage and 5 business plans developed, 9 cultural collections of minorities created, more than 55 exhibitions and events related to the heritage of ethnical and cultural minorities organized all over the country.

Out of the 28 selected projects 3 large projects were completed, 8 large projects were extended until April 2017 while all the small projects were successfully finalized (except the suspended project and one project implementing additional activities).

The objectives set out in the Programme Agreement were already achieved. However, because the contracted projects results exceed the targets set in the PA, by the end of April 2017 more output indicators are expected to be achieved.

In 2016 the monitoring activities included the processing of 65 project interim reports, authorization by the PO of incurred expenditures for a total value of approx. 6.8 million EUR and carrying out 53 monitoring visits. As well, PO transferred since the beginning of the Programme 12,576,593 EUR to PPs as advance and interim payments, thus reaching at the end of December an absorption rate of 76.46% on the two outcomes.

There were no major deviations from the plan during this reporting period. At Programme level no adjustments were necessary during 2016. At project level, the extension of the eligibility period, allowed by FMO in 2015, was granted to all large projects and several small projects. This measure enabled most promoters to successfully achieve all planned results.

During 2016, calls for financing additional activities according to art. 6.9 in Regulation and calls under Measure B of the Bilateral Fund were launched. The first call for financing additional activities according to art. 6.9. in Regulation was open between June 13th – July 15th, 2016 with a total budget of 482.555 EUR. 7 applications were submitted and they all recommended for funding during the Selection Committee meeting organized on August 16th. Since additional savings were identified at Programme level (due to financial corrections or savings related to the completed projects), a second round for financing additional activities was launched on October 25th with an allocated budget of 500.000 EUR. Only 2 applications were submitted requesting 121.991 EUR. The Selection Committee decided both should be recommended for funding.

For 2017 a major adjustment is envisaged in order to increase the absorption rate at Programme level, that is transferring the savings under the 2 outcomes to the Fund for bilateral relations in order to implement more actions which will contribute to the valorisation of the cultural heritage and to strengthening the bilateral cooperation.

The actions implemented during 2016 consist in the launch of two calls for partnership actions under Measure B of the Fund for bilateral relations. 10 grant contracts were concluded by the end of December, having a total value of 69.752,55 and payments of 53.529 EUR were made as advance or reimbursement. The bilateral cooperation between the Romanian and Donor States cultural operators strengthened during 2016 through the extent of cooperation (approx. 38% of the financed projects are implemented with donor project partners), through shared results (organization of one cultural events in Romania and Donor States,

development of strategic documents related to cultural heritage, joint efforts for documenting the cultural heritage of minorities), improved knowledge and mutual understanding (site visits and transfer of knowledge in managing cultural spaces and creating strategic development plans).

The call for partnership actions aimed at networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices between entities from Romania and the Donor States was launched between January 21st and April 15th with a total budget of 88.000 EUR available. Because only 3 grant contracts were concluded, having a total value of 19.050,54 EUR, a second round was launched on May 30 and it will remain open until all the available budget is contracted. Until December 2016, 7 grant contracts were concluded, having a total value of 50.702,01 EUR. Under Measure B payments having a total value of 53.529 EUR were made as advance or reimbursement until December 2016.

Two meetings of the Cooperation Committee were organized during 2016: the first took place between February 22nd – 24th in Sibiu and included site-visits to the projects implemented in the adjacent area (Sibiu and Alba Iulia), while the second meeting was organized in Bucharest on November 21st 2016.

The Donor Programme Partner, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren), was constantly updated regarding the implementation of the Programme and the bilateral cooperation strengthened during 2016.

The progress of bilateral relations during 2016 consists in:

- Extent of cooperation - out of the 28 financed projects 10 are implemented with donor project partners (approx. 38%);
- Shared results – the bilateral cooperation will continue until the completion of the large projects (April 2017). The results already achieved during 2016 include: organization of one cultural event in Reykjavik, documenting ethnic minorities' cultural heritage concluded with one joint exhibition in Norway and one scientific study published in English, one scientific workshop on visual anthropology, one archaeological research, one strategic development plan, one workshop on international cultural cooperation, one Master Plan for the development of an ethnographic;
- Improved knowledge and mutual understanding - the contribution and added-value brought by the dpp materialized in 2016 through organizing bilateral actions such as site visits and cultural events in Romania, transfer of knowledge in managing cultural spaces and creating strategic development plans;
- Wider effects: some of the bilateral partnerships are planned to continue beyond the project completion in order to promote the fortified churches or implement restoration projects.

Under the predefined project implemented by Astra Museum – Open Heritage. Increased public accessibility to multiethnic heritage in Astra Museum, Sibiu the following results were achieved:

- in February the joint exhibition was developed in partnership with Museene I Sør Trøndelag, from Trondheim, Norway. The exhibition was hosted by the Coastal Museum (part of MiST) located on Hitra island.
- in May the official opening of the Multicultural Museum Pavilion took place. The building became the headquarter of ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization, hosting under proper conditions a number of 137.020 items which were previously stored under inappropriate conditions. The inauguration of the new museum pavilion coincided with the opening to the public of the three exhibitions that the new building hosts: the two indoor exhibitions of ASTRA Museum of Transylvanian Civilization – the Transylvanian fair and workshops, and the joint documentary exhibition.
- between June 13th and 19th the event ASTRA multicultural organized. An entire week was dedicated to valorizing the minorities' culture, traditions and heritage, for a better understanding and visibility in the museum. The event had 5 sections: a documentary film festival, a communication session, a crafts fair, a traditional music festival and an educational program. Field research was done in five ethnic communities (including Roma communities) during which local people were interviewed and filmed by the museum's specialists, with the final aim to make 5 documentaries that promote their cultural heritage, crafts and traditions. The documentaries were presented within the film festival at ASTRA multicultural event.
- during 2016 three Saxon houses were reconstructed within the project last year, and all of them became functional in order to offer a unique visiting experience, to encourage the visitors' interaction with the objects (props) for a better understanding of different values and believes.

- an additional grant of approximately 95.000 EUR was obtained in order to purchase professional equipment that will facilitate the conservation interventions at the 18 buildings which were conserved, restored or reconstructed within the project, thus ensuring the sustainability of the project's results.

No significant changes have been made to the management and control system. The PO updated the operational procedures in order to meet the requirements of the national legislation, but these changes referred mainly to formal elements.

RO13/PA17 Promotion of Diversity in Culture and Arts within the European Cultural Heritage

Programme Operator: Ministry of Culture

Donor Programme Partner: Arts Council, Norway

81 projects have been financed (45 large and 36 small), out of which 7 projects completed their implementation in 2015, whereas 71 were concluded in 2016, with other 3 projects continuing to implement their activities throughout 2017.

Various cultural fields are represented, thus offering a wide specter of events and performances, fine and visual arts. The artistic and professional interaction between artists and cultural professionals is supported by the large number of persons who contributed to the increased mobility of artists and their works at international level.

A key achievement towards one of the overall objective, namely the reducing of economic and social disparities, is the fact that out of 81 projects funded at Programme level, 61 projects are implemented by NGO's and one by sole proprietorship.

In 2016, the monitoring activities included a number of 17 on-site monitoring visits and the processing of 110 progress reports, out of which 91 were approved by the end of 2016.

The extent of bilateral cooperation is strongly supported by the fact that out of the 81 projects, 26 have been implemented in partnership with entities from Donor States. Moreover, 6 project promoters chose not to formalize partnership agreements but to simply undergo specific activities in Donor States with the support of local entities

The Programme Operator paid special attention to the achievement of the Programme outcomes and opted to present in the Applicant Guide the expected outputs as sub-categories of the two main outcomes set for PA17/ RO13, namely Outcome 1 Awareness of cultural diversity raised and intercultural dialogue strengthened and Outcome 2 Cultural history documented. Therefore, all 81 selected projects are expected to contribute to the achievement of outcomes.

All the implemented projects have a direct or indirect contribution to the following horizontal issues, contribution that has been taken into consideration during the selection process: tolerance, combating hate speech, extremism, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, sexual harassment, violence against women, trafficking in human beings.

All outputs indicators provided in the Programme Agreement have been exceeded:

- Education through art and culture reaching a broader audience - 12 of the projects under implementation contribute to the achievement of this output. The results include 404 workshops, seminars, debates (non-discrimination, combating hate-speech etc.), with 340 trained in cultural field, 1217 films and short movies, 26 theatre shows, 20 music concerts, 70 festivals (film, music, dance etc) organisation / participation, 8,481 audience people, 231,080 views / downloads.
- Projects concerning music and stage arts – 19 of the projects under implementation contribute to the achievement of this output. The results include 97 films, short movies and web documentaries, 5 theatre shows, 33 music concerts, 11 dance shows/representations, 5 festivals, 6 exhibitions, 48 workshops, 316 trainees, 24,300 audience people, 13,253 views/downloads and 1 awareness campaign.
- Projects concerning fine and visual arts – 11 of the projects under implementation contribute to the achievement of this output. The results include 26 films, short movies and web documentaries, 15 theatre shows, 10 music concerts, 1 dance shows/representation, 1 festival, 59 exhibitions, 108

workshops, seminars, debates (non-discrimination, combating hate-speech etc.), 7 research studies (including minorities/history/folklore /inclusion and discrimination/cultural architecture), 1271 trainees, 68,490 audience people, 138,081 views/downloads; 1 festival, 59 exhibitions, 108 workshops, seminars, debates (non-discrimination, combating hate-speech etc.), 7 research studies (including minorities/history/folklore /inclusion and discrimination/cultural architecture), 1271 trainees, 68,490 audience people, 138,081 views/downloads;

- Percentage of projects implemented in partnership with entities from the Donor States – in 2016 the PO reconsidered the calculation basis, in financial terms, as ratio between the grant value of the projects in partnership under Outcome 1 and the total grant value of the projects under Outcome 1, resulting in a percentage of 59% (at Programme indicator level).

Outcome 2: Cultural history documented

- Cultural history of minorities enhanced and promoted – 25 of the projects under implementation contribute to the achievement of this output.

Events/productions involving minorities (fairs, performances, festivals, productions etc.) – the events/productions financed are materialized in 8 films or short movies, 10 theatre shows, 7 fairs, 10 exhibitions, 1 festival, 3 research studies, 8 workshops, seminars, debates (non-discrimination, combating hate-speech etc.), 796 trainees, 24,476 audience people, 197,177 views / downloads and 2 awareness campaigns.

The main types of risks the PO closely monitored during project implementation were:

1. Risks related to public procurement procedures;
2. Financial risks;
3. Risks related to the implementation of projects (failing to reach the objectives, improper work execution, purchase of equipment with poor features/performance, etc.). The mitigation measures envisaged for the risks mentioned above consist of on-site monitoring visits established as a result of the evaluation of project interim reports by the PO.

Also, the PO assessed the risks and the mitigation plan within the 110 interim reports submitted by the PPs in order to act accordingly.

Moreover, the PO assessed on a case by case approach all situations that could have jeopardized project implementation; consequently, it identified proper solutions that generated target adjustments where such changes are justified and contribute to meeting the project's objectives.

The Programme did not undergo any major deviations that could jeopardize the achievement of objectives.

During 2016, PO proceeded to a reallocation between budget lines in accordance with Article 5.9 of the Regulation. Taking into account the strengthening of co-operation and exchange of experience and best practices in terms of cultural diversity within the EEA Grants, showcasing the added value brought by PA17/RO13 implemented projects, a reallocation for complementary actions was operated from the budgetary line of Outcome 1 - 40,000 Eur and from the budgetary line of Outcome 2 – 10,000 Eur. Given the above mentioned, the new complementary action budgetary line amounts to 118,000 Eur.

In April 2016 the PO launched the call for applications within the Fund for Bilateral Relations - Measure B - call 2: Collaboration and exchange of experience. The call was addressed to project promoters, local and national authorities, cultural institutions, higher education and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations in search to collaborate with similar institutions from the Donor States, intending to initiate and carry out activities/projects for the initiation / development of partnerships on purpose of collaboration, exchange of experience, transfer of knowledge, technology and good practice in the field of culture; participation to conferences, seminars, workshops organized by entities from the Donor States on purpose of identifying means to develop new projects; other activities that encourage the increase of bilateral collaboration and exchange of experience in the cultural field.

The total allocation for bilateral relations within Measure B - call 2 amounted 21,600 Eur. The maximum size of the grant was 5,000 Eur per application. Within this call 4 applications were submitted with a disbursed value of 16,643.38 Eur. The absorption rate for this call was 77.05%.

The extent of bilateral cooperation is strongly supported by the fact that out of the 81 projects, 26 have been implemented in partnership with entities from Donor States. 20 partnership projects had a Romanian NGO as project promoter and 6 partnership projects had a public entity as project promoter. Moreover, 6 project promoters chose not to formalize partnership agreements but to simply undergo specific activities in Donor States with the support of local entities. As percentage of projects implemented in partnership with entities from the Donor States calculated as ratio between the grant value of the projects in partnership under Outcome 1 and the total grant value of the projects under Outcome 1, the percentage is 59%. It can be noticed is an exceeded indicator.

RO14/PA18 Research within Priority Sectors

Programme Operator: National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation

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

In 2016, the Programme Operator has continued to successfully implement the Programme by pursuing all the activities undertaken within the Programme Agreement and in particular those related to the ongoing contracts for the funding of 23 joint research projects in the four priority sectors namely: “Renewable energy to fight climate change”, “Health and food safety”, “Environmental protection and management” and “Social sciences and humanities”.

At mid-February 2016, the Programme Operator made interim payments of 90% budget earmarked for 2016 on all contracts. The Annual Scientific and Technical Reports and Annual Financial Reports for 2015 were evaluated with the support of independent external experts and verified by the Programme Operator staff. Based on the positive evaluation and evaluators recommendations to continue funding of the projects, certification of declared costs and authorization of payments, followed by transfer of due payments in the case of eleven contracts were done. Finally, notification was sent to all project promoters on the results of the second reporting period.

In terms of output indicators, the targets were reached and exceeded. Beyond the progress registered for “number of internationally refereed scientific publications” and “number of postdocs and/or PhD students”, there are additional indicators reported, like the indicator for the number of patent applications.

Different measures of the Action Plan for the use of the bilateral relations fund were put in place like the organization of two seminars on communication and ethics, opening the call for proposals for support projects under the bilateral relations fund, a study visit and a training course held in Norway.

Representatives of the Programme Operator attended the Research Programme Operators seminar organized in Lulea, Sweden, on June 2016 by the Research Council of Norway, as a “back-to-back” event with EARMA (European Association of Research Managers and Administrators) conference. These events were an excellent occasion for the exchange of expertise and good practices among the Programme Operators and at the same time for the promotion of the Programme achievements with the poster, roll-up and leaflets during the EARMA conference. Another opportunity for raising awareness on the Programme publicity issues at project level was the workshop dedicated to communication held in Sibiu on May 2016. In addition, a partnership with Radio Romania Cultural has been set up in the framework of a communication campaign for the promotion of research projects’ results by means of a series of interviews.

Risks identified under this reporting period did not affect the achievement of the planned Programme outcome. Assessment of the identified risks was undertaken, followed by the mitigation actions carried out by the Programme Operator in order to eliminate them to the best possible extent.

The outcome indicators achieved in this reporting period and their values for 2016 are presented in the table below, which allows comparison with the figures reported previously for 2014 and 2015. These indicators are measuring the progress in reaching the Programme objective, namely an enhanced research based knowledge development in Romania:

Outcome	Outcome indicator(s)	Target	Value for 2014	Value for 2015	Value for 2016	Achieved in 2016 (data for DoRIS)
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Increased research cooperation between Romania and EFTA States	Number of internationally referred joint scientific publications	20	3	21	50	50
	Number of joint research projects between Romania and EFTA States	20	23	23	23	0
	Number of small medium sized enterprises engaged in research, development and/or innovative activities	5	8	8	7	-1

Whereas the Programme has foreseen a single call for proposals, the value of the indicator concerning the number of joint research projects remains unchanged until the Programme completion. The withdrawal of one Romanian project partner is diminishing also the indicator for the number of SMEs. On the other hand, it is worth noting the substantial increase (more than two times higher compared to 2015) for the indicator counting the number of internationally referred joint scientific publications. This indicator, which is measuring the results of common activities of the research teams from Romania and donor states, gives an indication of the level of collaboration between the project partners and on the efficiency of the created partnerships and ultimately brings the highest contribution to meeting the Programme outcome.

Trend of the values of output indicators generated by the funded joint research projects are available for three reporting periods so far (2014, 2015 and 2016), as given in the summary table shown below.

Output	Output indicator(s)	Target	Value for 2014	Value for 2015	Value for 2016	Achieved in 2016 (data for DoRIS)
Increasing number of research institutions	Number of research partners involved in joint research projects	50	87	87	86	-1
Increasing number of researchers	Number of researchers involved in joint research projects	150	356	492	474	-18
Better use of research results in terms of cooperation between Romania and EFTA States	Number of internationally refereed scientific publications	60	14	54	57	57
Increased role of postdocs and / or PhD students in R&D field	Number of postdocs and / or PhD students participating in joint research projects	50	125	130	134	4

The table shows the minor decrease in number of research partners involved in projects (from 87 to 86) due to the withdrawal from the project consortium of one Romanian project partner and also in number of researchers involved in projects (from 492 to 474) due to staff changes in certain projects occurred in line with the projects plan of activities.

Despite the small decline of these two output indicators, the other two indicators show progress for this reporting year in terms of research results, with 57 additional internationally refereed scientific publications and also a slight increase in number of postdocs and / or PhD students participating in projects (plus 4) as compared to the previous value of 130.

Other worthwhile achievements are three additional output indicators declared by the Project Promoters apart from the ones mentioned in the Programme, as follows: 5 patent applications, 46 conferences/workshops organized and 35 new project applications submitted under the various calls of the European/international programs or initiatives.

The outcome indicators are measuring progress in reaching the Programme objective, namely an enhanced research based knowledge development in Romania. All risks identified for this reporting period had no impact on the achievement of the Programme outcome since those risks are not related to the cohesion/Programme objective. The targets for the outcome indicators were already achieved, as already seen in the table on outcome indicators.

There are no deviations to report on from the initial planning of the Programme and up to this stage in the Programme implementation there was no need for adjustment of plans.

Minor reconfigurations of the PO structure have occurred in 2016, namely the designation of one person responsible with the bilateral fund open call for proposals, respectively the transfer of the responsible person for overall project monitoring to other ministry and consequently, the undertaking of the correspondent tasks by the Programme coordinator and deputy Programme coordinator.

As for the control system at PO level, taking into account the current composition of the PO structure and the principles of efficiency, effectiveness and separation of functions at PO level required by the EEA Regulation, on one hand, and the related national legislation on the other hand, by Decision of the President of the National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation (ANCSI) a new control team consisting of experts from the Structural Funds Intermediary Body within the PO was set-up in September 2016. These experts are undertaking specific control tasks in line with the Programme Operational Procedure for Verification and Control until the end of the Programme in December 2017.

Within the total budget (352.942 euro) foreseen for the “Fund for Bilateral Relations”, 264.705 euro were set aside for measure A “seeking partners” and 88.237 EUR were to be used under measure B “networking and exchange measures”. After receiving all payment requests for the reimbursement of project’s preparatory costs, the remaining budget of 240.970 euro from measure A was shifted to measure B with the approval of the Programme Committee. In line with the Action Plan for the use of the bilateral relations fund, several activities were performed in 2016, as follows:

- one seminar on Communication and one seminar on Ethics, organized in Sibiu on May 25-26, incurred costs of 575 euro;
- one open call for proposals for support projects, launched on May 10th, to be closed on April 28, 2017, payments done for contracted projects of 42,434 euro;
- a study visit for the Programme Operator staff in Norway during 26-27 October 2016, including a ½ day training course organised by the Research Council of Norway, incurred costs of 12,973 euro.

The Programme had one call for proposals opened in 2016 under the Bilateral Relations Fund.

The Programme has a single bilateral indicator, the “number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector”, that was set in relation to the single Call for proposals and is measuring the level of strengthening of the bilateral relations under the joint research projects funded for the period June 30, 2014 - April 30, 2017. The achieved value for the bilateral indicator in 2014 was 23, as compared to the target of 20, and will remain stable until closure of the Programme.

Actions for the use of the bilateral relations fund were undertaken by the Programme Operator under Measure B “Networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between the Donor States and the Beneficiary State”, at several levels of intervention.

Events for the benefit of project promoters and partners were held in 2016, such as the two seminars on Communication and Ethics organized by the Programme Operator in Sibiu on May 25th, respectively 26th (approximately 50 participants).

Furthermore, the bilateral relations fund open call for proposals has been launched on May 10th, 2016. The call for proposals is open to a broader area of research organizations and it has the main objective of strengthening the bilateral relations in the field of research, regardless of the thematic area, through

networking, exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice. Financial support is provided by means of seed-money for projects developed in partnership between entities from Romania, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, in line with the provisions of Article 7.7 to the EEA Regulation.

With an earmarked budget of 200.000 euro, the open call will end on April 28th, 2017 and provides for the applicants the following two funding instruments:

1. Participation to events/meetings/visits/training/courses
2. Organization of events/meetings/visits/training/courses

The total number of applications submitted in 2016 is 32, out of which 13 were accepted for funding (applications come from higher education organizations, universities and institutes of the Romanian Academy). Consequently, the capacity building indicator measured in „number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector” achieved in 2016 is 13. From the geographical coverage point of view, the majority of applications were submitted from Timisoara (6), while the rest of applications were from Bucharest (4) and then Iasi, Brasov and Cluj -Napoca (1 each). The contracted budget in 2016 represents 47% of the total call budget.

Actions for the benefit of PO staff, such as the ½ day training course organized on 26 October 2016 at the premises of the Research Council of Norway, focusing on topics such as programme administration in the reporting system of the RCN and the financial reporting. Also, a study visit was organized during 26-27 October for the delegation consisting of the PO staff, Programme Committee members and observers, at the headquarters of 5 Norwegian project partners located in Oslo. Both the training course and the study visit have been extremely useful for the implementation of the

Programme activities and they have contributed significantly to the consolidation of the bilateral collaboration at institutional level, leading to a better comprehension of the programme management practices in Norway, but also to exchanging ideas about the sustainability of the partnerships created by the Programme.

All the bilateral activities/actions carried out in 2016 were the result of the close collaboration and support provided by the DPPs (Norwegian Research Council and Icelandic Research Centre) aiming at strengthening the bilateral relations between Norway, Iceland and Romania.

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

2016 was the final year of the projects financed under Measures 2 and 3 (Mobility and Inter-institutional cooperation), as 30 September was the final eligibility date. Most of those projects sent already their final reports and consequently, in December, the PO was fully involved in the assessment of the reports.

At the end of 2015, in order to maximise the absorption of the whole Programme budget the PO requested an Amendment, which was approved by the FMO: the purpose of the Amendment was to move an amount of money from Measure 2 (Mobility) and Management to Bilateral Fund and to open a new Call in 2016, for small size bilateral cooperation projects (including Study visits), projects that had the possibility to expand the bilateral cooperation beyond 30 of September 2016. In Spring 2016, after analysing the intermediary reports of the Mobility projects funded in 2015 The Programme Operator found additional budget available, thus PO requested a 2-nd Amendment, to increase the budget of Bilateral fund available for the new Call. In total, an amount of 530 000 Euro (coming from Mobility measure and Management) have been put in the Bilateral Fund; the majority were destined to finance small bilateral projects and a small part was put aside for the international valorization conference of the whole Programme, planned to take place in March 2017. This new Call for bilateral cooperation was successful; The Programme Operator succeeded to finance 13 small size cooperation projects and 8 Study Visits, amounting 449 208 Euro. All of them will end before 31 January 2017.

The target foreseen for the staff mobility and for the number of students benefitting from placements was overreached ; strengthening of bilateral relations was enhanced through the additional money dedicated to

this domain and through the big number of projects financed; the targets for the outputs indicators for increased institutional cooperation between HEIs (showing academic cooperation in producing joint publications or events) were overreached by far; also, the promotion of results was successful. In this respect, there were success stories/testimonials presented every 2 months in the PO` electronic newsletter INFOALTFEL (10 000 subscribers) and during the annual national big valorization conference (which is organized by the PO every year since 2004) 2 good practice examples were presented.

For the Outcome 1 (i.e. "Increased higher education student and staff mobility between Beneficiary and EEA EFTA States"), the following indicators have been proposed: number of ECTS credits received by the participating students, increased skills/competencies of the staff and number of mobility project applications received by the PO. As one could see from the table below, the targets have been met or even overreached. The measurement of the targets, besides the regular statistics from the PO data base (i.e. the number of applications received) was performed through the analysis of the final reports of the HEIs (the number of ECTS received credits) and participants (staff); in this respect, the analysis of the reports of mobility projects shows that 100% of the staff declared that they have improved to a large extent their skills/competencies (at least 2 skills out of the following : Linguistic skills, Working in an international environment, Teamwork, Research skills, Using multimedia tools, Networking for further cooperation projects, Peer-learning, Teaching centred on learning outcomes), which brings a solid contribution to the enhancement of the human capital, in general, and to the improvement of the teaching and administrative processes in their universities.

For the Outcome no. 2, i.e "Increased and strengthened institutional cooperation at all levels of the education sector between Beneficiary and EEA States", the core indicator proposed was: joint products and services, split in joint publications, on one hand and joint summer schools/intensive courses/seminars,/conferences/workshops; in addition, the increased skills/competencies of the staff was repeated here.

Although the Programme Operator could not finance more than 12 cooperation projects (the target was of 11), they proved to be successful in terms of bilateral cooperation between Romanian universities and those from DS, showed by the very big number of tangible results obtained: joint manuals/books/articles published and joint events organised, like Intensive Programmes for students, workshops and conferences; all the projects organised at the end a final conference of the project, to disseminate the results achieved. The increasing interest for the bilateral cooperation was shown also by the fact that in 2016 PO received many applications under the new Call funded through bilateral funds, for small size bilateral cooperation projects (see description in the section dedicated to bilateral cooperation).

The results obtained are contained in the following table:

Indicator	Target for the whole Programme	Realised in 2016	Realised for the whole Programme (so far)
Number of ECTS credits received by the participating students	9000	3130.5 (*)	7811
Percentage of staff declaring that they have increased their competencies	90%	100%	100%
Number of mobility project applications received by PO	30	0 (no Call in 2016)	48
Number of joint papers/publications/articles	8	56 (**)	61
Number of joint summer schools/intensive programmes	2	5 (**)	6
Number of seminars, workshops, conferences organised jointly	10	27(**)	33
Number of cooperation projects applications	15	0 (no call in 2016)	18

received by PO			
Number of cooperation projects financed	11	n/a	12

(*) the figures are approximates, since not all the final reports are completely assessed.

(**)for the results obtained in cooperation projects PO summarised the results obtained over the whole programme, since the projects financed in 2014 and 2015 came to an end this year and PO is in process of analysing the reports.

Thus, during the first part of the year the last mobilities contracted in 2015 took place. As PO is now in the process of assessing the final reports of the 14 Mobility projects contracted in 2015, one could observe the same phenomenon like in the previous year: the big gap between the estimations made by the HEIs in the applications, based on signed bilateral agreements with HEIs from DS (294 mobile students) and the number realised in practice: 134 (out of which 7 incoming students); the biggest underachievement is in the area of incoming students: although their home universities from DS included some numbers in the bilateral agreements, the NO, IS or LI students simply did not want to come to Romania. In terms of quality, all mobile students received ECTS credits, even those going for placements (internships), in total 3130.5 ECTS achieved during 571.25 mobility months.

The number of staff (both incoming and outgoing) estimated to go in mobility in the academic year 2015-2016, according to the bilateral agreements was of 209, out of which only 85 (out of which 24 incoming staff) were realised, but at this point, for the whole programme, PO realised 223 mobile staff, compared to the target of 140. In total, the mobile staff spent 84.5 weeks abroad at the partner university.

The Programme Operator did not foresee any Call in 2016 for Inter-institutional cooperation projects (as described in the Programme proposal) projects, since 30.09.2016 was the final date for eligibility of activities.

Concerning the output indicator related to effective promotion of the Programme among HEIs potential beneficiaries, the target of organising at least 2 promotion events /year was achieved: the PO organised three (3) such events: in January, September and November 2016.

Shortly, the achievement of the targets established for the outputs indicators is as follows:

Indicator	Target for the whole programme	Realised in 2016	Realised for the whole programme so far
Increased or implement agreed numbers of students under existing agreements	365	134(*)	296
Number of HE students involved in placements	40	64 (*)	150
Number of students involved in mobility for study	325	70 (*)	146
Increased or implement agreed numbers of staff under existing agreements	140	85 (*)	209
Educational and administrative staff involved in various forms of training abroad	50	42(*)	100
Teaching staff involved in teaching assignments	90	43 (*)	109
Percentage of staff declaring that they have increased their competencies	90%	100%	100%
Number of mobility project applications received by PO	30	0 (no Call)	48
Number of institutional cooperation project	15	0 (no Call)	18

applications received by PO			
Number of promotional events where EEA/NRW Grants scholarship programme was presented	6	3	13
Number of cooperation projects financed	11	12	12
Number of bilateral agreements concluded between RO HEIs and those from DS	50	n/a	53

(*) the figures are approximates, since not all the final reports are completely assessed.

There is no need to update the risk analysis. Everything explained in the previous report remains valid for 2016. The high risk foreseen in 2014, i.e. to not reach the target in as far as the volume of students' mobility is concerned, materialised, as well as the risk concerning the target related to Roma. Even with additional measures put in place in 2016 for the Call on Bilateral funds PO did not succeed to be close to the target of 10% of the funds spent for this issue. The lesson drawn for the new Programme was to design a dedicated component for the topic of improving the conditions for the Roma population in the school education sector.

The two risk/negative factors have affected the Programme across the years (and that were also mentioned and explained in detail in the previous reports) as well as the results obtained:

- The limited capacity of the HEIs from Donor States to absorb the mobility flows from all the Beneficiary States;
- The financial mechanism put in place at national level for the management of the funds, in national currency through the State Treasury.

This combination of factors led to the following statistics: the final absorption rate for Mobility projects financed in 2015 was of 61.18% (this being mostly affected by the 1-st factor), while the absorption rate of the cooperation projects financed in 2015 was around 85% (this being affected by the second factor). In terms of volume of mobility flows, the indicators were 134 students (7 incoming) and 83 staff (24 incoming). With this numbers, the achievement of the targets set for mobility (for the whole Programme period) is not satisfactory at students' level: only 296 mobile students, vs. 350 planned. On the other hand, at the level of the staff we are happy with the achievements: 223 staff realised, vs. 140 planned.

There were no major deviations from the plan; in order to maximize the absorption of the funds, the PO requested an amendment to the Programme Agreement-and it was approved by FMO-i.e. to move part of the unspent funds from Mobility projects to Bilateral fund and to open a new Call (under the Bilateral fund) for small size bilateral cooperation projects and study visits. This initiative proved to be successful, there were many projects applied for under this new Call.

In 2016 it was organised only one special Call, funded through Bilateral Fund, which was considerably increased with savings from Mobility measure and Management funds. In total, the budget available for this Call was of 530 000 Euro (initially, 375 000 Euro and then complemented until 530 000 through a new Amendment). The Call was open for small size bilateral cooperation projects and Study Visits. Firstly, 200 000 Euro was destined mainly to cooperation projects focusing Roma issues (meaning that projects having such topic would have been financed with priority) and had as deadline 01.06.2016. Then, the Call was open for any topic and had the final deadline on 31-st of October (but over the date of the launching of the Call and 31.10.2017, the projects could have been submitted at any time). All the projects selected had to end the activities until 31.01.2017. Only one application was received with topic related to Roma (and it was approved).

Measure	Number of applications received	Number of applications financed
Study Visits	8	8
Small size cooperation projects	13	13

The DS HEIs partners in the Small size cooperation projects are HEIs from in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The following universities from DS involved in the projects (even in several ones): University of

Iceland, Reykjavik University, University of Akureyri, Iceland, Bifrost University, University College of Southeast Norway, University of Oslo, University of Adger, NORD University, NTNU Norway, Volda University College.

In 2016 the following elements contributed to foster the development of bilateral relations between Romania and Donor countries:

- The outreach event organised by the DPPs in June 2016 in Brussels, gathering as participants representatives of POs, NFPs, PP from all BS and various stakeholders from DS (decision makers, schools, universities); the event was a good opportunity for every BS to present the achievements of the Programme so far and examples of good practice projects; also, the draft of the Blue book for the new Programme was presented, providing room for discussions addressing lessons learnt in the present Programme from the content point of view, in view of the new one.
- The meetings between all the POs for Scholarships Programme and DPPs-the meeting took place in June, before the outreach event, in Brussels and it contained a Cooperation Committee meeting as well; the meeting was very useful, as it focused on gathering ideas for a future Educational
- Programme after 2017, extracted from the lessons learnt from administrative point of view during the actual phase and also there were workshops to identify the needs of various educational sectors, to be addressed by the new Programme (the workshops covered the HE sector, the school sector and the VET sector). The meeting led to strengthening bilateral relations at institutional level, being a good basis for sharing results, for contributing to improve knowledge and mutual understanding and to enlarging the extent of cooperation between the POs and the DPPs; during the meeting the Romanian PO gave detailed information about the international valorisation conference in Bucharest, in March 2017 with the participation of representatives of successful projects from all BS, DS and decision makers as well (around 130 participants in total). Initially the conference was scheduled in October 2017, but all the POs and DPPs considered it too soon after the outreach event and taking into account that Programme in many countries comes to an end after October 2016.
- Another meeting between POs and DPPs took place at the beginning of September, in Bergen and it provided the opportunity to deepen the assessment of the actual Programme, through a SWOT analysis, in order to agree what should be taken on board in the new Programme. It came out during the meeting that all the POs and DPPs form already a strong professional community, a good environment for peer learning and an asset for the implementation of the new Programme.
- The mobility projects selected in 2015 and that ended in September 2016 were all based on the bilateral agreements concluded between HEIs from RO and Donor countries, this being the first step towards a fruitful bilateral cooperation between HEIs; as such, they will contribute to improving knowledge and mutual understanding and to enlarging the extent of cooperation for future projects, beyond the mobility;
- The inter-institutional cooperation projects financed in 2014 and 2015 ended in September 2016; they involved partners from Donor countries and from Romania. These projects represent a solid basis for enhancing the bilateral relations, because the partners had to work together over a longer period of time, in order to achieve results and products, they had to have a good and continuous communication process, they had to work in teams and therefore they gained trust and mutual understanding. As it was described before, the big number of joint products (publications and events) is a good indicator of a strong bilateral professional relation built during the projects.
- The small size cooperation projects and study visits selected in 2016 and funded through Bilateral fund will contribute to expanding the bilateral cooperation between Romanian HEIs and those from DS, with a view towards the new Programme.
- In addition, besides the meeting mentioned before, 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); also, the consultation in view of approving the quality assessments and the list with the selected projects for Cooperation ran smoothly (as decided in the Cooperation Committee), via electronic means. It is important to mention that starting with November

2016 (when the kick-off meeting for all Romanian Programmes 2014-2021 took place, in the presence of FMO representatives and DPPs), the DPPs contributed strongly, with valuable input, to the design of the Concept Note for the Educational Programme in Romania.

RO17/PA21 Green Industry Innovation

Programme Operator: Innovation Norway

2016 was the final year for project implementation period for almost all financed projects. Except for 1 project which received the approval for extension until 30 April 2017, for the rest of 49 projects the implementation period ended before or on 30 April 2016. Our assessment is that this Programme has delivered the expected results and contributed to the main objective of reducing social and economic disparities in the EEA area.

During 2016 Innovation Norway has processed the final reports submitted by project promoters and partners and made the final payments for the completed projects. Final conference has been organized in Bucharest on October 2016, announcing excellent results achieved by promoters and partners as regards all 3 dimensions of the Programme: benefits gained at businesses level, green effect of the projects at company level and projects' benefits for the local communities (especially, through the number of new jobs created).

The outcome chosen for the Programme is "Realisation of the business opportunities of greening the European economy". Based on information received from project promoters, Innovation Norway has aggregated the results in the table below:

Results/Outputs of RO-17 Green Industry Innovation Programme Achieved 31.12.2016			
1. Innovative green technologies and products applied (for business projects)	28	investments & initiatives	Investments - projects with innovative environmental technologies supported
	9	green products	R&D - new products and services - projects related to development or improvement of green products or services
	10	green services	
2. Initiatives to increase the efficiency in business operations, material handling and improved waste management applied (for business projects)	18	investments & initiatives	Investments - projects related to material efficiency and improved waste management
	22	investments & initiatives	Investments and Initiatives - projects related to development and implementation of "greener" management and production processes
3. Eco-innovative business development in less developed areas in Romania improved (for NGO projects)	33	investments & initiatives	Investments and initiatives - projects supporting eco-innovative business development in less developed areas
	417	people trained	Training and awareness raising - number of people participating in training and awareness raising
	326	people made aware	
4. INCREASED BILATERAL RELATIONS (relevant for donor partnership projects)	21	awareness events	Donor Partnership Projects in the private sector (Norwegian-Romanian)
	14	donor partnerships	
	10	donor partnerships	Donor Partnership Projects in the civil society

			(Norwegian-Romanian)
	4	donor partnerships	Donor partnership projects (Norwegian-Romanian) with expected shared results (both partners are involved professionally in planning and implementation and can claim credit for achieved results)
5. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES (for all types of projects)	357	jobs created	Permanent green jobs created (employment contract without end date)
	76	jobs created	Temporary jobs created (1-24 months)
	130	people trained	Training
	26	training sessions	Training
	4	groups	ROMA or other disadvantaged groups (on community level)
	30	initiatives	CSR initiatives (Corporate Social Responsibility)
	128	activities	Publicity activities

a) outputs achieved

Output	Output indicator	Baseline	Target	Result 31.12.14	Result 31.12.15	Result 31.12. 16
Innovative green technologies and products applied	Number of projects with innovative environmental technologies supported	0	6	7 (IPS)	14	14
	Number of projects related to development/ improvement of green products or services supported	0	6	5 (1 SGS and 4 IPS)	9	9
Initiatives to increase efficiency in business operations, material handling and improved waste management applied	Number of supported projects related to material efficiency and improved waste management	0	4	6 (1 SGS and 5 IPS)	9	9
	Number of projects related to development and implementation strategies for "greener" management and production processes	0	4	3 (IPS)	7	7
Eco-innovative business development in less developed areas	Number of projects supporting eco-innovative business development in less developed areas	0	15	14 (All NGO projects under SGS)	14	14

areas in Romania improved	Number of people participating in training and awareness raising	0	150	N/A yet	743	743
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Note: Some projects will contribute to more than one output; table include projects counted only once.

Innovation Norway has submitted to FMO a request for transferring the non-allocated funds and the request was approved by FMO. The activities fostering the bilateral cooperation are planned to be implemented until June 2017.

A call for Fund for Bilateral Relations was opened for applicants. Other bilateral activities implemented at Programme level during 2016:

- Occupational Health and Safety & Greening of Businesses workshop, 19 January 2016

The workshop took place in Bucharest gathering in total 60 participants from Project Promoters and Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bucharest. The "Ethical Trading Initiative Norway" was the main facilitator/trainer of the workshop represented by Marcus Borley. The main topics had in view occupational health and safety, risk management, goals and performance indicators, employee's motivation. The second part of the workshop gave the opportunity to 5 Project Promoters to share their experience in greening of their business.

- 1st cluster training, Brasov, 14-16 September 2016

The main aim of the training was to create an interactive environment where Norwegian clusters and Romanian ones will share experiences. Olav Bardalen, expert from Innovation Norway, has facilitated the training of 32 persons in Brasov for two days. The methodological approach of the training was to mix the theoretical part with questions and answers sessions and concrete examples.

- 2nd cluster training, Bucharest, 3-4 November 2016

28 participants attended the training in Bucharest. The goal of the 2nd training was to provide the participants with tailored learning and help create practical change in work practices after the training program. Enable continuous learning at the individual level and at the cluster organization level.

- Bilateral Experience Sharing event, Oslo, 21-24 November 2016

The event was held in Oslo. More than 100 companies and NGOs, recipients of the GII Programme in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania within business areas such as Waste Management and Clean Energy, as well as social entrepreneurs gathered to learn from Norwegian knowledge and expertise in their business areas. As part of the Programme, Enterprise Europe Network and Innovation Norway hosted a Matchmaking Event targeted towards participants looking for future project and business partners, particularly in the Baltics and Eastern Europe.

Call for Fund for Bilateral Relations – opened between October –November 2016. Funds were available for Romanian and Norwegian entities who aimed to establish partnerships and prepare future projects within Horizon 2020 Programmes or other relevant Programmes. Two types of financial measures were offered:

- Seed money – up to EUR 10,000, maximum 50% grant rate
- Travel support – EUR 1,200 offered as lump sum

20 seed money applications received; 5 have been approved

10 travel support applications received; 8 requests have been approved

The bilateral indicators have been fulfilled, in all cases these have been exceeded.

Bilateral indicators	Baseline	Target	Status per 31.12.14	Status per 31.12.15*	Status per 31.12.16
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary private sector	0	10	12 (incl. one with NO mother comp.)	20 (incl. one with NO mother comp.)	20

Number of project partnership agreements in beneficiary civil society	0	3	10	10	10
Number of projects with expected shared results and wider effects (added by PO)	0	5	4	30	30
Number of study tours to Norway and Romania within complementary actions activities	0	3	Not started	1	2

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's outcomes and outputs are expected to be achieved through two predefined projects and the projects financed under the bilateral fund at the Programme level.

The predefined project no. 1 - *Regional Excellence Project on Regulatory Capacity Building in Nuclear and Radiological Safety, Emergency Preparedness and Response in Romania*, has achieved a good level of progress towards the fulfilment of its objectives. During 2016 approximately 85% of the total activities have been performed. The most important actions that have been taken are:

- During 4-6 October 2016, CNCAN together with the authorities involved in emergency response, tested the ability to respond to a potential nuclear emergency under the Valahia 2016 exercise;
- Over 30 new documents, consisting of the draft regulations, methodologies or internal working procedures have been developed so far in the project;
- Specialists from CNCAN have improved their professional skills by participating in training sessions, workshops, events for the exchange of experiences and best practices organized within the project;
- Hardware and software systems, equipment purchased/installed/upgraded so far, in order to strengthen the capacity of CNCAN were purchased;
- Were implemented a lot of recommendations and suggestions for improvement the Romanian nuclear system.

There are some challenges regarding the completion of some project activities (4.5, 5.4.2, 5.5.4.2, 5.5.6) considering the final date of the project implementation (30.04.2017).

The predefined project no. 2 - *Improving Integrity in the National Agency for Fiscal Administration (NAFA) through Institutional Cooperation and Capacity Building* has made significant towards the fulfilment of its objectives. The most important actions that have been taken during 2016 are:

- The activity related to the evaluation study has been completed, the study was developed and it is available on the project web site;
- The IT and electronic equipment and vehicles have been purchased and are being used. The IT platform for verifying the access to the data bases (including software and training) is in the final implementation phase;
- The activity related to the training sessions is in progress, some of them being completed. Additional training sessions were included in the project, financed from the existing savings at the project level;
- The IT application for monitoring the implementation of the measures recommended by the control structures that performed the control is operational and currently in use;

- The activity related to the awareness campaign is in progress. The TV and radio spots were broadcasted for a period of 1 month (November-December 2016), and are available on the project web site;
- 5 Study visits were organized until the end of 2016 in Norway, Poland, Holland, UK and Italy with participation of 43 NAFA staff;
- A new activity was included in the project, namely the organization of the conference on fighting corruption which was organized on the 9th of December (the Anti-corruption International Day) at the headquarters of the Government, with the participation of more than 100 persons;

The monitoring of the implementation of the two predefined projects was made through the verification of the interim progress and financial reports and of the monthly progress reports submitted by the Project Promoters, and through on-the-spot monitoring/verification visits.

Given the limited scope of the Programme, focusing on specific areas of the Romanian public administration through predefined projects, the main risks affecting it are of operational nature and relate to the low capacity of managing the projects at the level of the Project Promoters and the lengthy and complex process of public procurement which could lead to delays in implementation and implicitly to not achieving the expected results.

The strategy and the concept of the Programme, as approved by the Donor remained unchanged, the programme being focused on key areas able to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective.

During the reporting period no modifications of the Programme Agreement were made.

Regarding the cooperation between the PO and the Donor Programme Partner, a Cooperation Committee meeting was organized on 22 November 2016 in Norway. Representatives of the Programme Operator, Project promoters, Donor Programme Partner, Project Partners have attended to the meeting and several important aspects have been discussed: the implementation status of the predefined projects and of the Fund for Bilateral Relations at Programme level, presentation of the Annual Programme Report.

The Fund for Bilateral Relations at the Programme level is to be implemented through an open call. The total budget allocated to the Fund for bilateral relations is 349,773 Euro. A total amount of 254,115.51 euros has been paid to the beneficiaries up to the end of 2016. Under the first call for applications were financed 4 bilateral projects. A second call for applications was launched in March 2016 and the deadline for submission of applications was 30 June 2016. The budget of the call was 245.000 Euro and 8 applications were received: 1 application was withdrawn by the applicant, 1 application was rejected considering that the applicant does not fit within the categories of eligible beneficiaries and partners, and 6 applications were selected for financing

The progress in reaching the targets set for the indicators measuring the outcome of the Programme is:

Outcome Standard Indicator(s)	Target	Achieved in 2016	Total achieved
Number of institutions with strengthened capacity	2	0	0
Number of staff trained with improved skills to perform their duties - women	70	150	150
Number of staff trained with improved skills to perform their duties - men	50	181	181

The progress in reaching the targets set of output indicators is:

Output	Output indicator(s)	Target	Achieved in 2016	Total achieved

Regulations, policies, guidelines, methodologies and working procedures developed or improved	Number of regulations, policies, guidelines, methodologies or procedures developed or improved	49	31	49
Training sessions organized	Number of training sessions organized	37	18	45
Activities facilitating exchange of experience and best-practices between Romanian and Norwegian institutions organised	Number of activities facilitating exchange of experience and best-practices between Romanian and Norwegian institutions organised	9	16	32
	Number of participants to activities facilitating exchange of experience and best-practices between Romanian and Norwegian institutions	80	226	298
Improved technical capacity within beneficiary public institutions	Number of staff with improved technical capacity (ITC or other)	60	64	123
	Number of ITC solutions implemented for improving capacity	4	3	7

RO19/PA27 - Public Health Initiatives

Programme Operator: Ministry of Health

The focus of the Programme is to improve the relevant health indicators in Romania giving the fact that Romanian population has some of the worst indicators across the European region.

The Programme is implemented through 8 predefined projects. In 2016, the budgets of PDP 6, 7 and 8 were increased by reallocation of funds and the budgets of PDP 2 and 5 and Programme management were diminished. Those reallocations were made only for the savings recorded during implementation and the purpose was to increase the effectiveness and impact of the Norway Grants 2009-2014 intervention over to the target groups. In terms of achievements, 2 out (PDP 2 and PDP 5) of 8 predefined projects were completed, the rest of them being still in the implementation phase. In 2016, the Programme has contributed to the improvement of the health status of the population and to the reduction the economic disparities by achieving the following results:

- 50,022 patients tested for TB by rapid methods;
- 809 patients with MDR-TB receive full course treatment;
- 10 laboratories were equipped with equipment for TB rapid testing;
- the national electronic TB Programme database is currently under upgrading (approx. 80% done);
- 15215 persons from which 8572 Roma benefiting of information sessions conducted to reduce the harm of drug use;
- 1000 HIV tests, 400,000 condoms and 1,000,000 disposable syringes were provided for intravenous drug users to reduce the risk of infection with HIV, HVB and HVC;
- 37500 tests carried out for detecting infections of HIV, HBV, HCV;
- 45 community care center networks providing services to vulnerable communities established;
- 45 agreements with local authorities were signed;
- 128,601 vulnerable people served by Roma health mediators and community workers;
- Clinical prevention guideline was finalized;
- Guidelines for healthy nutrition intervention and physical activity in kindergartens and schools were finalized;
- report HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children) Romania 2014/ 2015 were finalized;

- guidelines to prevention recommendations addressed major risk factors relating to lifestyle (diet, physical activity, alcohol) at primary health care level were elaborated and sent to validation by consensus;
- 28,250 adult persons receiving preventive interventions for their health;
- 411,464 children and youth can benefit of preventive information related to unhealthy lifestyles;
- 1 IT platform and 5 registries developed and functional (Regional cancer registries (RCR), National electronic registry on vaccination (RENV), communicable diseases registry (CDR), Toxicological Information Registry, Environmental hazards for health registry);
- 10000 PAP tests and 5000 mammograms were carried out;
- 2 mobile unit have made over 40 visits to Roma communities and other isolated / disadvantaged communities for cancer screening;
- 789 infants and 1516 patients with high-risk pregnancy benefiting from medical assistance, 500 TORCH tests, 20 markers by flow cytometry test per case for haematological malignancy;
- 2 MRI machines, 2 remote monitoring system, 2 anaesthesia devices and a remote monitoring and anaesthesia system for the radiotherapy device and a CT machine were purchase and functional;
- 6112 medical personnel, community nurses and Roma mediators were trained on TB, HIV, HVB and HVC, cancer screening, risk factors related to lifestyle, health registries management, paediatric oncology, providing medical assistance to vulnerable groups, including Roma;
- Over 21000 persons have visited the PO webpage.

Related to the financial status of the Programme, the payments made by PO, until 31st of December 2016, to PP and consultants/suppliers is 24,949,187.37 euro, representing 93.28% from total value of the Programme. The certified expenses are 14,068,592.29 euro, representing 52.90% from total value of the Programme.

During 2016, the internal structure of PO remained unchanged, but there were constant changes of staff and MoH leadership which generated some delays, especially to the certifying of payments which will be recovered at the beginning of 2017. Also, in 2016, there were conducted several audits, monitoring and evaluation missions by the Audit Authority, Certifying and Payments Authority, various external experts with FMO agreement. Overall, the general opinion was that the PO management and control system are in line with the Regulation, but there are several aspects to be improved, most important being the institutional capacity and the task allocation within Programme Operator team.

There were organized two Monitoring Committee meetings on 29th of June 2016 and 15th of December 2016. The overall conclusions show that the implementation of the pProgramme is satisfactory.

Regarding the management of the Programme, the internal structure of PO remained unchanged, but there were constant changes of staff and MoH leadership which generated some delays, especially to the certifying of payments which will be recovered at the beginning of 2017. Several audits were conducted, monitoring and evaluation missions by the Audit Authority, Certifying and Payments Authority, various external experts with FMO agreement. Overall, the general opinion was that that the PO management and control system are in line with the Regulation, but there are several aspects to be improved, most important being the institutional capacity and the task allocation within Programme Operator team.

Due to the fact that the Programme contains only predefined projects, **the fund for bilateral relations** will be split between project promoters. The plan for bilateral relations was initially approved on 7th of May 2015, but giving the projects approved during 2014-2015 and other developments an updated plan was needed. The PO has sent the new revised plan to FMO on 29th of February 2016. The FMO has approved the plan on 24th of March 2016. During 2016, there were contracted 2 bilateral initiatives, one on Cancer screening amounting 69,200 euro (partners: Institute for Oncology „Prof. Dr. Ion Chiricuță” (IOCN), Cancer Registry of Norway, Center for Diagnosis of Breast Cancer in Drammen and Pathology Lab in Trondheim) and the other one on Tb control amounting 39,171 euro (partners: Institute of Pneumology "Prof. Dr. Marius Nasta" and LHL International Tuberculosis Foundation). The rest of the project promoters were not sent bilateral initiatives due to the fact that they were not able to establish partnership agreements with Norwegian entities. The advance payments for the two initiatives were 108,371 euro.

PO has implemented two initiatives under the complementary actions: participating to POs meeting on health organized in Vilnius, Lithuania in June 2016, respectively POs meeting on health organized in Bucharest on 23-25 November 2016. The amount used was 7,539.53 euro.

The 2017 is a decisive year related to the implementation of the Programme. The PO has some key objectives for this year like:

- implementing the all 6 remaining projects activities without further delays;
- contracting and implementing all initiatives under bilateral fund and complementary actions (where is still possible);
- implement the condition no 7 regarding the health status of Roma population and closely monitoring all the other conditions from Programme agreement, especially the horizontal issue concerning the Roma population;
- implementation of information activities as per PO Communication Plan;
- organizing at least 2 meeting of the Monitoring Committee;
- organizing the final conference of the Programme in September 2017;
- submission of the final report of the Programme in November 2017.

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's outcomes and outputs are expected to be achieved through 13 projects selected under the call for proposals and two pre-defined projects.

All projects registered progress in 2016 towards the achievement of their specific objectives and results. However, while some of the projects were completed in their initial implementation period, others are in an advanced stage of implementation, some projects registered delays, requiring the extension of the eligibility period until 30th of April 2017 in order to ensure the achievement of their objectives and results.

The framework offered by the projects represents both a premise and an opportunity for ensuring the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices between the project partners, as well as for contributing to the achievement of the Programme's overall outcomes and outputs.

Outcome	Custom Indicators	Total achievement
Outcome 1 : Domestic violence reduced	Number of women's shelters or crisis centres supported Target 60, starting from baseline 59	16
	Number of counselling/treatment programmes for offenders established Target: 4, starting from baseline 3	1
	Number of persons aware of the protection mechanisms provided for in the legislation and on how to access shelters/recovery centres or counselling/awareness centres Target: 50.000	0
	Number of specialists acknowledging and enforcing new legislation on DGBV Target: 500	1207
Outcome 2 : "Victims of trafficking	Number of specialists trained on THB Target: 135	149

supported"	Number of vulnerable communities (incl. Roma) aware of dangers related to forced begging Target: 15	15
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Output	Output indicators	Total achievement
Outputs related to Outcome 1 : Domestic violence reduced		
Output 1 - Counselling centres for perpetrators/Perpetrator programmes set up or supported in line with international standards	Number of counselling centre for perpetrators / perpetrator programme set up or supported – Target: 4, starting from baseline 3	2
	Number of perpetrators accessing the services of the supported counselling centres/programmes per semester Target: 5	15
Output 2- New services reflecting specific needs of vulnerable groups and European standards on victim services created	Number of victims from vulnerable groups accessing the services per semester Target: 30	558
Output 3 - Awareness on the harmful effects of domestic violence raised	% of population who acknowledge the existence of the law on domestic violence in place in Romania Target: 70%	0
Output 4 - Professionals (including the judiciary) trained on how to deal with DV in the context of the provisions of the new law on domestic violence	Number of working instruments (e.g. guidelines, handbooks etc.) for the use of the specialists working with DV cases created Target: 2	4
	Number of professionals trained on DV Target: 500	1207
Outcome 2 : "Victims of trafficking supported"		
Output 1 - Training of the specialists dealing with THB provided (including NGOs)	Number of specialists trained Target: 135	149
Output 2 - National assistance system evaluated in accordance with the national Standards for Specialized Assistance Services provided to trafficking victims as well as international standards	Number of reports elaborated Target: 1	1
Output 3 - National prevention campaign on THB targeting the Roma and other vulnerable communities	Number of prevention events organised Target 15	15

Out of the 13 selected projects, 6 projects completed their implementation period in 2016 and for the remaining 7 projects, the Promoters requested and obtained in 2016 the extension of the eligibility period until 30th of April 2017 the latest, the projects' outputs and indicators being expected to be achieved in 2017.

Regarding the project implemented by GDSACP Vaslui there is a risk regarding the achievement of the indicator concerning the providing of specialized services for the victims.

The Programme Operator is closely monitoring the progress of the projects for which an extension of the eligibility period was approved in order to ensure that the activities are fully and properly implemented in the extended timeframe.

The strategy and the concept of the Programme, as approved by the Donor remained unchanged, the Programme being focused on key areas able to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of preventing and tackling gender-based violence.

b) the need for adjustments of plans, including actions for risk mitigation;

During the reporting period, the following modifications of the Programme Agreement took place:

The first amendment, approved in March 2016, mainly concerned the insertion of a provision stating that the Programme Operator performs checks of the expenditure declared by the Project Promoters on a sample basis.

The second amendment, approved in June 2016, referred to the reallocation from the Domestic violence reduced outcome to the Bilateral Fund on Programme level.

Regarding the predefined projects:

PDP no. 1 - "Joint action against domestic violence" (JAD):

The following activities were carried out during 2016:

- Under Output 1 - Training materials and one manual for the use of the practitioners elaborated and distribute
 - a best practice manual for the use of the practitioners was elaborated;
- Under Output 2 - Specialists trained in fighting DV and discrimination:
 - an initial session for trainers, attended by 20 participants, was held in May 2016;
 - 5 training series of 3 training sessions each (in total 15 seminars) were organized during October- December 2016, being attended by 379 specialists.

PDP no. 2 - "Best practice model on assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings – Pilot project":

The following activities were carried out during 2016:

- Under Output 1 - National assistance system for THB victims evaluated in accordance with the specific Standards for Specialized Assistance Services provided to trafficking victims:
 - a report regarding the minimum standards of the services to be provided to victims was elaborated in view of their further adoption and enforcement by responsible institutions.
- Under Output 2 - Training of the specialists dealing with THB provided (including NGOs):
 - the last five training sessions of the project were organized during February – march 2016, attended by 139 specialists (e.g. social workers, psychologists, NGOs workers,)
- Under Output 3 - National prevention campaign aiming at reducing the risks associated with trafficking in human beings within vulnerable communities, including Roma:
 - as the main activities of the public awareness campaign were carried out in 2015, the promoter continued to promote its messages with other occasions (public events, meetings) as to ensure sustainability of the results achieved.

In the reporting period, two Cooperation Committee meeting were held: one on 19th of January 2016 in Strasbourg and one on 18th of October in Sibiu, which gave the participants the opportunity to discuss on the progress registered during the implementation of the projects under the Programme, on the use of bilateral fund at Programme level, on the best use of complementary fund at Programme level. One Cooperation Committees is envisaged for 2017.

The two Programme partners are also project partners on the two predefined projects under the Programme.

Also, a predefined project under the bilateral fund on Programme level, for which the financing contract was signed on July 27 2016, is on-going. The total budget allocated to the project is €185.000. The project is implemented by the Public Ministry - Prosecutor's Office High Court of Cassation and Justice, in partnership with the Council of Europe and the National Institute of Magistracy.

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 fifth and the sixth Cooperation Committee of RO21 Programme, "Schengen Cooperation and Combating Cross-border and Organized Crime, including Trafficking and Itinerant Criminal Groups" were organized on June 13th and November 9th 2016.

The Programme Agreement's modification, in the form agreed during the CC meetings, was approved by the Donors on December 2016. Thereby, the under-spending incurred, after 4 PDPs have completed their implementation on April 30, 2016, was reallocated to the on-going projects: PDP1 and PDP4. The overall budget of the Programme remains unchanged.

The Bilateral Fund Plan was expanded, from 2 activities to 3, taking into account that after the first event has been completed, important savings were recorded compared to the expected expenditures. Therefore, the PO proposed and it was settled to introduce a third activity in the plan.

Also, it was agreed to adjust the Complementary Actions Fund by using the entire budget (12.000 euro) for 4 study visits, conducted exclusively in Beneficiary States (in contrast to the initial agreement, which stated that one of the four study visits shall be performed by the PO in Norway).

On April 30, 2016 four pre-defined projects were timely and successfully finalised (PDP2, PDP3, PDP5 and PDP6). Another 2 pre-defined projects (PDP1 and PDP4) are still in implementation, until April 30, 2017.

The implementation of the pre-defined project no. 2 - *Cooperation in the field of illegal migration and the protection of human rights*, contributed to strengthen the cooperation between the police bodies from neighbouring countries. The Programme outcome was achieved by conducting study visits and workshops for law enforcement agencies, focused on topics regarding on how to improve and streamline the cooperation on illegal migration. In this respect, a professional network for combating illegal migration and protection of human rights was settled, based on joint participation, and a good practices handbook was elaborated. The manual comprises the inputs of all professionals involved in this project and addresses to new modalities, methods and procedures in combating illegal migration and for protection of human rights, and also to improve the existing techniques.

The implementation of the pre-defined project no. 3 - *National approach to compensation of victims of human trafficking* contributed to improving the cooperation between the authorities and relevant stakeholders, including NGOs, in assisting victims of trafficking for accessing financial compensation and legal aid. In this respect, one national research was carried out in order to identify possible gaps with regard to effective exercise of victim's right to claim compensation, comprising recommendations and conclusions with the aim of increasing the number of victims who receive financial compensation. Also, relevant authorities were trained (police, prosecutors, judges, NGOs) concerning the procedure of VoTs access financial compensation. Based on the results of the national study, brochures comprising main aspects concerning the right to compensation, legal aid and procedures for accessing it were elaborated and disseminated.

By implementing the pre-defined project no. 5 - *Fighting cross-border economic criminality at the Schengen Border*, a significant contribution to the Programme outcome was obtained, taking into account the fact that the police's operational capacity to prevent and fight cross-borders economic crimes was increased through the acquisitions of equipment and specialised transport means that were performed within the project. In the same time, the study visits and the seminars that were organised within the project facilitated the exchange of best practices on economic crimes and contributed to increase their knowledge in the field.

At the same time, pre-defined project no. 6 - *Strengthening the information cycle management in fight against the organized crime and illegal migration for increasing the European security* contributed through its achievements to the Programme's outcome. In this respect, relevant activities were performed for increasing and improving the technical capacity of the project promoter, such as: acquisition of IT&C equipment, special technique and vehicles, specialised trainings in the field of countering organized crime, including illegal migration, cyber-crime and trafficking in human beings, and study visits focused on gathering knowledge from other European State institutions.

Pre-defined project number 1

- Number of Romanian police officers posted to Norway - 30 (80% achieved)
- Number of Romanian and Norwegian police officers that participated in workshops/seminars dedicated to the prevention and investigation of crimes committed by itinerant criminal groups – 300 (50% achieved)
- International conference on cross-border crime issues in Europe – 1 (100% achieved)
- National meetings on criminal investigations – 5 (100% achieved)
- Training sessions in the field of JIT – 2 (100% achieved)
- National meeting on issues related to combating trafficking in human beings – 1 (0% achieved)
- Purchase of equipment for forensics on mobile terminals – 38 (0% achieved)
- Training course for the use of specialized software for forensics on mobile terminals – 1 (0% achieved)

Pre-defined project number 2

All the indicators were fulfilled, all the activities performed, and in terms of financial aspect the absorption rate is 99.63%.

Pre-defined project number 3

All the indicators were fulfilled and in terms of financial aspect the absorption rate is 61,93%.

Pre-defined project number 4

- Number of police officers trained on countering hate crime - 40 (100% achieved)
- Number of police officers trained in advanced interviewing techniques- 40 (100% achieved)
- Number of police officers trained in the field of preventing and countering victimization in Roma communities - 300 Project (33% achieved)
- Number of people informed through prevention campaigns- 2000 (0% achieved)
- Police officers trained in Roma integration issues – 10
- Participants on international cross-border conference – 60 (100% achieved)
- Roma language and culture trainings – 4 (0% achieved)
- Police officers trained on handling human sources for detection of criminal activity and early warnings on hate crimes targeting Roma communities – 10 (0% achieved)

The last indicator was introduced in December 2016 by the Programme Agreement's modification. By amending the PA, the total budget of the project was supplemented with 42.000 euro (from 791.550 euro to 978,550 euro).

Pre-defined project number 5

All the indicators were fulfilled, all the activities performed and in terms of financial aspect the absorption rate is 82,03 %.

Pre-defined project number 6

All the indicators were fulfilled, and in terms of financial aspect the absorption rate is 61, 93%.

Even though the indicators have been reached, not all the activities of the project were performed (due to some delays occurred in the tender procedure within the activity number 6 – acquisition of 4 vehicles with special technique and commissioning a technical study (project) for *Dumbrăvița* training centre), but the PP committed himself to implement the remained activities by April 30, 2017 and to support the related costs from its own budget. In this respect, the 4 vehicles were already purchased, but the technical project of the center wasn't yet started.

Some delays occurred in the implementation on pre-defined project number 4 in reference to the tender procedure for contracting the specialised firm which shall apply the survey at national level. Taking into account that the activities are interconnected and these cannot be implemented without the survey applied, the PP acted in order to mitigate the risk by transferring the implementation of the activity to the Romanian Academy – one of the project partners- taking into account their extended expertise in the field.

No major deviations from plan were registered before December 31, 2016. During 2016, one PA modification has been performed and the under-spending incurred, after 4 PDPs have completed their implementation on April 30, 2016, was reallocated to the on-going projects: PDP#1 and PDP#4. The overall budget of the Programme remains unchanged.

The bilateral relations are being addressed by implementing the 3 major activities described in the Bilateral Plan. The first activity, the seminar on minorities' issues with special concern on Roma communities' problems, took place on 8-10 November 2016 in Sibiu, Romania, the second one is planned to be organized in May-June 2017, and the third will be organized in autumn 2017.

Besides the Bilateral Fund, which is especially designed to increase the cooperation between Romania and the donor state (Norway), bilateral elements can also be found in the predefined project no. 1, implemented by the Romanian Police in partnership with the Norwegian Police Directorate, aiming to strengthen the cooperation through joint missions, consisting in deployments of Romanian police officers in Norway, and expertise exchange during specialized workshops.

RO22 - Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue

Programme Operator: Innovation Norway

Finalised.

RO23 - Correctional Services, including Non-Custodial Sanctions

Programme Operator: Ministry of Justice

Donor Programme Partner: The Norwegian Correctional Services (KSF)

The Programme foresees that its outcomes and outputs are to be achieved through the six pre-defined projects implemented, which registered progress in 2016 towards the achievement of their specific objectives and results. Although the projects have been progressing well, due to certain specific delays, extensions of the eligibility period were approved for all projects so as to ensure the achievement of their objectives and results and/or to increase the impact of the committed results by financing additional actions in cases where savings have been made during implementation (e.g. Arad, Bacău and Police projects).

The framework offered by the pre-defined projects represents both a premise and an opportunity for ensuring the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices between the project partners, as well as for contributing to the achievement of the Programme's overall outcomes and outputs.

Also, in the reporting period, there were new initiatives aiming at strengthening the bilateral relations. Thus, four applications were submitted for financing under the call for the bilateral relations fund (launched on May 27th 2014 and subsequently extended until July 31st 2017). Following their approval by the Cooperation Committee, a number of four financing contracts were signed for a total amount of approximately 80.000 euro. The beneficiaries of these bilateral relations funds were the National Administration of Penitentiaries and the National Probation Directorate.

The Programme's expected outcomes are to be achieved through the 6 pre-defined projects. As regards the progress made in 2016 towards achieving the Programme's expected outcomes, please see below the status of each specific outcome indicator:

Outcome	Custom indicator	Total achievement
Outcome 1: Overcome challenges connected to growing prison populations and prison overcrowding	Number of places in prison/ detention centers which meet the minimum standards of 4 square meters Target: 360	60
Outcome 2: Increased application of alternatives to prison	Number of convicted persons under probation supervision Target: 18.000	58903
Outcome 3: Increased focus on vulnerable groups in prison	Number of beneficiaries of the specialized Programmes Target: 220	419
Outcome 4: Improved competences of both inmates and prison staff	Number of certificates/ diplomas certifying graduation from training courses for prisoners Target: 100	126
	Number of certificates/ diplomas certifying graduation from courses/ training Programmes for staff Target: 1.409	1511
Bilateral relations	Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector Target: 5	10

The outputs and indicators corresponding to the Programme's expected outcomes are either on-going or achieved, the progress made in this regard being detailed in the table below:

Output	Output indicators	Total achievement
Outcome 1 "Overcome challenges connected to growing prison populations and prison overcrowding"		
<i>Output "Infrastructure improvements to bring prison facilities up to CPT standards"</i>	The number of square meters renovated in the two buildings Target: 500	690
<i>Output "Infrastructure improvements to bring police pre-trial detention facilities up to CPT standards"</i>	Number of police detention centers to be improved Target: 52	0
<i>Output "Infrastructure improvements in detention and re-education centres for juveniles"</i>	Number of detention and re-education centers for juveniles to be improved Target: 3	0
Outcome 2 "Increased application of alternatives to prison"		
<i>Output "Training of legal practitioners about alternatives to prison, such as</i>	Number of legal practitioners, such as probation staff,	332

<i>probation staff, judges and prosecutors"</i>	judges and prosecutors trained on alternatives to prison Target: 300	
<i>Output "Alternative to Prison Programme implemented"</i>	Number of adult offenders and young offenders made subject to community based Programmes as an alternative to prison during the funding period Target: 100	154
<i>Output "Enhanced work with Roma offenders"</i>	Number of Roma offenders made subject to the developed mentoring Programme as a motivational tool for encouraging their pro-social behaviour and positive attitude, as well as for supporting their skills development Target: 10	26
Outcome 3 "Increased focus on vulnerable groups in prison"		
<i>Output "Specialised Programmes for vulnerable groups: juveniles and women"</i>	Number of Programmes/ instruments developed and implemented for juveniles Target: 2	2
	Number of Programmes developed and implemented for women Target: 4	4
<i>Output "Staff trained to deal with vulnerable groups"</i>	Number of trained staff Target: 110	150
Outcome 4 "Improved competences of both inmates and prison staff"		
<i>Output "Human resources capacity improved"</i>	Human resources strategy at the level of the penitentiary system developed Target: 1	1
	Strategies/ action plans for the development and management of the probation system developed Target: 4	4
<i>Output "Training modules developed and courses delivered to 1) prisoners, 2) prison staff, 3) police pre-trial detention staff and 4) probation staff"</i>	Number of prisoners participating in training courses Target: 100	126
	Number of prison staff participating in training courses Target: 100	235
	Number of staff working in the police pre-trial detention centres participating in training courses Target: 884	944
	Number of probation staff participating in training courses Target: 425	332

The risks identified by the Programme Operator refer in particular to delays concerning the construction/ renovation/ endowment interventions and contracting of various advisory services, determined by objective

reasons related to the procurement procedure, the time necessary for obtaining the approvals on the technical documentation, the complexity and amplitude of the works foreseen to be carried out, difficulties in identifying/ selecting suitable experts/ consultants for implementing specific project activities, weather conditions etc.

The Programme Operator closely monitors the progress of the pre-defined projects for which an extension of the eligibility period was granted in order to ensure that the activities are fully and properly implemented in the extended timeframe.

The strategy and the concept of the Programme, as approved by the Donor remained unchanged, the programme being focused on key areas able to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of improving correctional services systems in compliance with relevant international human rights instruments.

In the reporting period, the following revisions to the Programme Agreement were performed and/or approved:

- The first modification of the Programme Agreement entered into force on 11.03.2016 and consisted in the insertion of a provision stating that the Programme Operator performs checks of the expenditure declared by the Project Promoters on a sample basis;
- The second modification of the Programme Agreement entered into force on 01.07.2016 and concerned modifications regarding the pre-defined project 2 (Bacău), specifically the introduction of two new project partners (the Detention Centres Craiova and Tichilesti) and the provision of an additional programme output (*"Infrastructure improvements in detention and re-education centres for juveniles"*) and corresponding indicator (namely *"3 detention and re-education centres for juveniles improved"*).

Regarding the initiatives for strengthening the bilateral relations, it should be mentioned that, in 2016, four applications were submitted for financing under the call for the bilateral relations fund (launched on May 27th 2014 and subsequently extended until July 31st 2017). Following the approval of these applications by the Cooperation Committee members, four financing contracts were signed for a total amount of approximately 80.000 euro. The beneficiaries of these bilateral relations funds were the National Probation Directorate and the National Administration of Penitentiaries.

During 2016, two on the spot visits of the Roma Monitoring Committee (RMC) were carried out on the 26th of September at Gherla Prison and on the 29th of September at Grindul Tătaru (Delta project), and one RMC meeting was held on the 30th of September in Bucharest in order to monitor the status of implementation of the Plan on Roma inclusion.

The findings and conclusions of the RMC members were that they appreciated that the measures implemented by the National Administration of Penitentiaries in the two projects are likely to have positive effects on their beneficiaries.

Regarding the predefined projects:

PDP no. 1 - "Strengthening the capacity of the penitentiary system in the area of human capital development at the level of prison staff"

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under output 1: A Human Resources Strategy, as well as other special training instruments for the prison staff developed:
 - the Career Guideline for the staff in the penitentiary system. Comparative analysis of the legal provisions of the national defence, public order and national security was elaborated;
 - educational courses (modules) were developed and adapted to an e-learning platform.
- Under output 2: Professional competence and knowledge of prison staff improved:
 - 12 training sessions were organized;
 - 140 prison staff benefitted of training;
 - all the activities under this output were finalized.

- Under output 3: The Centre for Training and Specialization for the National Administration of Penitentiaries' officers– Arad redeveloped/ rehabilitated and endowed:
 - extra endowments for the Centre has been approved in order to further enhance the accommodation and training facilities in line with the increasing number of trainees expected in the upcoming period and the need to ensure a proper training capacity of the Arad Training Centre;
 - the purchase of the extra endowments is ongoing.

PDP no. 2 - "Strengthening the capacity of the Bacau prison for minors and youngsters to comply with the relevant international human rights instruments"

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under output 1: Three prison wings within the detention area belonging to the Bacau Prison for minors and youngsters renovated and equipped in accordance to the CPT standards and 3 detention and re-education centres for juveniles improved:
 - Bacau Penitentiary:
 - ✓ the works for the renovation and endowment of a prison wing within the Bacau Penitentiary are in the process of finalization;
 - ✓ renovations and endowments of the infirmary and transit section within the Bacau Penitentiary are in the process of being contracted.
 - Craiova Detention Centre: the works contract was signed on 29.12.2016;
 - Tichilești Detention Centre: the works contract was signed on 28.12.2016;
 - Tîrgu Ocna Re-education Centre: the works are in the process of being contracted.
- Under output 2: An educational and psycho-social recovery programme and an evaluation tool for minors and youngsters deprived of liberty developed:
 - The integrated tool for the evaluation of the relapse risk of the minors and youngsters deprived of liberty was finalized and is being applied (at least 100 minors and youngsters were subject of the analysis performed during the piloting phase of the tool during the reporting period);
 - The modular type special program for the assistance of minors and youngsters deprived of liberty was finalized and is being applied (39 minors and youngsters were subject of the analysis performed during the piloting phase of the programme during the reporting period). Training was conducted for 15 prison staff (educators, psychologists and social workers) regarding the application of the modular type special program;
 - the manual comprising the modular type special program developed for the assistance of minors and youngsters deprived of liberty and the integrated tool for the evaluation of the relapse risk of these vulnerable group of prisoners will be printed in 2017.
- Under output 3: Improved professional competence and knowledge of the prison staff working with minors and youngsters deprived of liberty:
 - The curriculum for the prison staff working with minors and youngsters deprived of liberty was finalized;
 - 4 study visits in Norway (to Bergen and Oslo Prisons) were organized for 39 penitentiary specialists who work with minors and youngsters;
 - 60 penitentiary staff from the following sectors benefitted of training (5 training sessions) based on the developed training curriculum: detention and prison safety regime, medical and social reintegration;
 - the implementation of activities under this output are finalized.

PDP no. 3 - "Setting up an eco-reintegration mechanism for inmates"

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under output 1: Inmates trained in eco-construction and traditional crafts:
 - the building of the 5 eco-houses (the builder's house, pottery workshop, weaving workshop, carpentry workshop, eco-agriculture workshop) was finalized. The necessary administrative formalities for listing the eco-houses in the land registry will be performed in 2017;
 - during 2016, 80 detainees graduated the training courses on the following crafts: carpentry (49 detainees), eco-agriculture (20 detainees), and weaving (11 detainees).
- Under output 2: Prison staff trained for creating and implementing a human ecology detention system:
 - the activities under this output were implemented during the previous reporting periods.
- Under output 3: Increased awareness and involvement of the society as regards the social reintegration of inmates and ex-inmates:
 - three awareness events were organised in 2016 for improving the perception of public regarding the inmates and ex-inmates. The total number of participants at the three awareness events was about 180;

PDP no. 4 - "Establishing a therapeutic community center for women in Gherla prison"

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under output 1: A therapeutic community center for women in Gherla Prison established and equipped:
 - the renovation works and endowments for establishing the therapeutic community center for women were finalized during the reporting period;
 - the therapeutic community is functional and operational.
- Under output 2: A special psycho-social recovery program and clinic protocols for the assistance of women deprived of liberty developed:
 - the main activities under this output were implemented in 2015;
 - during the reporting period, the clinic protocols and the Programme for the personal were disseminated to all the penitentiary units that have women in custody (total number of 320 copies, 80 copies each).
- Under output 3: Improved professional competence and knowledge of prison staff working with women deprived of liberty:
 - The therapeutic community center methodology has been developed. A training session for familiarizing with the therapeutic community center methodology was organized for 30 specialists from Gherla prison and other penitentiary units that have women in custody;
 - an experience exchange between experts from the therapeutic communities in Gherla and Jilava took place;
 - a dissemination session of the results of the project took place with the participation of prison staff from other penitentiary units that have women in custody.

PDP no. 5 – "Strengthening the capacity of the pre-trial detention system to comply with the relevant international human rights instruments"

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under output 1: Police staff working in the police pre-trial detention centres trained with a special focus on protection of human rights:
 - 112 police staff were trained, as follows:
- ✓ 52 Police officers working in the Police pre-trial detention centers were trained during 2 training session of 6 weeks each on Roma language;

- ✓ 60 Police officers working in the Police pre-trial detention centers were trained during 3 workshops on good practice and case study regarding treatment of persons deprived of liberty in Police pre-trial detention centers. The 2 remaining workshops will be carried out during January-February 2017.
- two best practice guides and two information materials (leaflet) containing useful information relating to the protection of the human rights respectively on ways of preventing the discrimination in the police pre-trial detention centers (including Roma ethnics and other vulnerable groups) were elaborated by the Council of Europe's experts and printed;
- Under output 2: 52 police pre-trial detention centers endowed up to CPT standards:
 - as regards the endowment component, out of the total number of 10 procedures which include 2 direct purchases and 8 open tenders and bid for offers, 2 contracts were concluded in 2016, as follows: electric switches with potentiometer (615 pieces) and anti-vandalism toilets and anti-vandalism showers (62 pieces each);
 - the purchase of 810 beds and 810 mattresses for 26 Police pre-trial detention centers was approved and the procurement procedure was launched;
 - the procedures for the remaining equipment and works (revamping of 20 walking yards corresponding to 20 pre-trial detention centers and 5 macerator pumps for the setting-up of 7 systems of faces evacuation and household waste) were launched in 2016 and are ongoing;
 - as regards the purchase of 57 pieces of secured glass and audio systems for the visiting rooms, the tender procedure has not been launched yet, due to the fact that technical specifications were improved so as to accommodate additional requirements for a better use of the visiting rooms;

PDP no. 6 - „Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian probation system for delivering effective alternative to prison interventions”

The following activities were carried out in 2016:

- Under Output 1: “The organizational management in probation developed in accordance with European standards”:
 - the activities pertaining to the achievement of this output have been finalized since the previous reporting period.
- Under Output 2 „The working tools, capacity and practice of the probation system improved in accordance with European standards”:
 - 34 probation staff were trained with regard to the probation working standards and evaluation procedure;
 - 85 probation counsellors participated in training sessions delivered for discussing the working procedure built on the case management principle that was drafted under the project;
 - the “My Choice” type of alternative to prison intervention Programme for drug/ alcohol/ other addicted offenders under probation supervision was drafted and started being piloted (101 adult offenders were involved in the piloting of this Programme in 2016);
 - the civic education Programme to be used by the probation services in working with minors sentenced to non-custodial educational measures continued to be piloted by the probation services (29 minors were subjected to this Programme in 2016);
 - training was delivered to 352 persons (i.e. probation staff, judges, prosecutors and other relevant stakeholders) were trained on topics such as: legislative provisions concerning probation, working standards and evaluation procedure for improving the functioning of the probation system, working procedure built on the case management principle, the civic education Programme used by the probation services in working with minors sentenced to non-custodial educational measures.
- Under Output 3 „The capacity of the probation system to provide specific assistance for Roma offenders under probation supervision improved”:

- the activities pertaining to the achievement of this output have been finalized since the previous reporting period.
- Under Output 4 „The working conditions of the probation staff and the functioning of the probation system improved in accordance with Council of Europe probation rules”:
 - the endowment/ repairs component of the project has been affected by delays that occurred mainly due to a lack of capacity in terms of specialized procurement personnel at the level of the National Probation Directorate, as well as due to the revision, in May – June 2016, of the national procurement legislation which led to a further postponement in launching the tendering procedures;
 - at the end of 2016 the status of the tenders was as follows:
 - ✓ procurement of software development services for an IT probation management application – finalized;
 - ✓ procurement of 2 cars – finalized;
 - ✓ procurement of IT equipment, furniture and air conditioning – launched;
 - ✓ works for refurbishing/ repairs for a number of at least 7 selected local probation services and the National Probation Directorate Headquarters – to be launched

Regarding the management and control system, no changes occurred in 2016 in the Management and Control System established at the level of the Programme Operator.

In the reporting period three Cooperation Committees were organised, as follows: February 18th, June 22nd and September 22nd 2016, in Bucharest. The topics on the agenda of the meetings mainly concerned: progress and evolutions under the Programme (management of the Programme, status of the pre-defined projects), the use of the bilateral fund on Programme and national level, the plan for the use of the fund for Complementary action, the Plan for Roma Inclusion and the Roma Monitoring Committee.

As regards the pre-defined projects, they are being 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.

During the reporting period four applications have been submitted and approved by the Cooperation Committee members within the call for the bilateral fund at the level of RO23 Programme, for which financing contracts were concluded. 2 Cooperation Committees are envisaged for 2017 (in the first and second semester of 2017).

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)

The Programme’s outcomes and outputs will be achieved through three predefined projects.

The predefined project no. 1 - „Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian judicial system to face new legislative and institutional challenges” is the most advanced, the indicators of the outcome 2 “Increased competence of actors within the judiciary” and of the related outputs being achieved, although there still are remaining activities to be implemented in the next year, given the extension of the project until 30.04.2017 in order to make use of the registered savings.

The predefined project no. 2 - “Improvement of the Electronic Court Register Information System (ECRIS)” was extended as well until 30.04.2017. Significant progress has been registered in the achievement of both components, as, on one hand, the draft study with recommendations on relevant best practices regarding the use of case management systems in Europe and how they can be adapted to the Romanian ECRIS has been elaborated, and it is in course of finalisation, and on the other hand, the public procurement procedure for the hardware equipment was finalised, and the equipment delivered. Part of it will be installed in the final beneficiary locations in the first trimester of 2017.

Concerning predefined project no. 3 - „Improving access to justice. An integrated approach with a focus on Roma and other vulnerable groups”, as the second public procurement procedure for the services necessary to set up the legal assistance offices and to organise the awareness campaign was cancelled as well, as a mitigating action the project was extended until 30.04.2017 and it was modified in order to accommodate other actions falling under the objectives and scope of the project and of the Programme. The core of the initial project proposal being kept, the new approach concerns the means chosen. Thus, while the previous approach implied a single service integrator to set up the legal assistance offices, the PP with the support of the DPPs experts would take over these tasks and the services will be provided by lawyers directly selected by the PP, following a procurement procedure, which is ongoing.

Under the bilateral fund at Programme level is open for submitting applications on a continuous basis from 30.04.2014 until the last date of eligibility of the predefined projects (30.04.2017). During the reporting period, a new bilateral action in amount of 31.235,40 Euro was approved by the Cooperation Committee, which concerns sharing of best practices on the legislative processes in Romania and Norway, and which is implemented by the Romanian Ministry of Justice, Norwegian Courts Administration and the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

➤ **Outcome 1 “Improved efficiency of the court systems, including the development of systems for case handling”**

The outcome custom indicator (Number of institutions benefitting from the new IT hardware infrastructure – target 400) will be reached through the results of the PdP no. 2. The public procurement has been finalised, and all the equipment has been delivered. However, since part of the equipment (i.e., routers) has to be configured by the Service for Special Telecommunications, prior to its installation in the final beneficiary locations, the indicator is partially achieved. Thus, at the end of the reporting period 113 institutions (Ministry of Justice, courts, prosecutor’s offices, National Administration of Penitentiaries, National Anticorruption Directorate, the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism, Superior Council of Magistracy, Judicial Inspection) are benefitting from the already delivered and installed equipment (i.e., switches, NAS, SAN, Servers).

➤ **Outcome 2 “Increased competence of actors within the judiciary”**

The outcome standard indicator was already achieved in the previous reporting period (Number of legal professionals trained – target 6000), and during 2016, 1.536 legal professionals were further trained within the activities carried out in the framework of the PDP no. 1.

The outcome custom indicator has been also achieved in the previous reporting period (Number of judicial institutions with improved technical equipment – target 6). During the reporting period, equipment was delivered to National Institute of Magistracy and the Judicial Inspection.

➤ **Outcome 3 “Improved access to justice, including for vulnerable persons (e.g. Roma population, victims, minors, other minorities)”**

The outcome custom indicator (Number of individuals benefitting from free legal advice (including Roma) – target 1000) are expected to be achieved through the predefined project no. 3 and has not been achieved, as the legal assistance offices have not been established yet. The procurement procedure for selecting the lawyers to provide the legal aid services is ongoing, and the evaluation phase is estimated to be finalised in February, 2017.

Regarding the *Output 1 “Strengthened knowledge and know-how of key personnel within the Romanian judiciary on implementing major IT projects with a special focus on the case management systems”* under the Outcome 1, no indicator has been achieved yet, although progress has been registered as the implementation of the project advances. Thus, the draft study has been elaborated and it is in course of finalisation in order to accommodate the conclusions drawn from the review seminar. The training activities will be organised in the first trimester of 2017.

As regards the *Output 2 “IT infrastructure consolidated”*, although all equipment has been purchased, the indicator has been partially achieved (*Number of hardware equipment (routers, switches, network area storage, storage area network, servers) installed in the beneficiary institutions – 249 out of 787*), as part of the equipment will be installed in the beneficiary locations in the first trimester of 2017.

Related to the Outcome 2, in the reporting period the following progress was recorded in the achievement of the indicators of the *Output 1 - "Legal professionals have increased knowledge"*:

- 1065 court staff and legal professionals were trained on the new legal codes (target 5000) – the indicator was achieved in the previous reporting periods (6429 in total);
- 0 court staff and legal professionals have been trained on the ECHR (target 450) – the indicator was achieved in the previous reporting periods (489 in total);
- 0 court staff and legal professionals have been trained on court management (target 200) – the indicator was achieved in the previous reporting periods (241 in total);
- 0 court staff and legal professionals have been trained on alternative dispute resolutions (ADR) (target 200) – the indicator was achieved in the previous reporting periods (369 in total).

Regarding the *Output 2 - "Improved technical capacity available to judicial professionals"*, the output indicator has been achieved in the previous reporting period, as, leaving aside the other endowments, the courts of law have been endowed with 695 computers, 490 printers and 695 desks with office chairs (*Number of legal professionals with improved ICT-equipment – target 650*).

As regards Outcome 3, the *Output 1 - "Improved access to (primary) legal aid of the citizens from vulnerable groups, including the Roma community"* - while the indicator concerning the feasibility study on access to justice for the Roma population was achieved in 2014, little progress has been registered concerning the indicator *"Number of para-legal offices established – target 5"*. Nevertheless, the project was modified in order to accommodate other actions that fall under the objectives and scope of the project and of the Programme, and which are intended to maximise the impact of the project. Despite this modification, there was not registered a deviation from the plan, as the core objectives of the project remain the same.

As regards the *Output 2 - "Strengthened knowledge of legal professionals in countering discrimination"*, its related indicator was achieved in the previous reporting period (*138 legal professionals trained in countering discrimination – target 120*).

Considering the above data, little progress has been recorded during 2016 towards the achievement of the programme Output 1 and its related indicator, which depends on the outcome of the selection procedure of lawyers to provide legal assistance to Roma and other categories of vulnerable citizens, in the pilot offices to be established.

During the reporting period, the main risk identified concerning the Programme is related to the implementation of the predefined project no. 3 „Improving access to justice. An integrated approach with a focus on Roma and other vulnerable groups”.

Considering the difficulties registered by the PP in implementing PdP no. 3, during the CC meeting of 01.03.2016, it was agreed to modify the project in order to accommodate other actions that fall under the objectives and scope of the project and of the Programme. In this sense, the Programme Agreement was modified, and, consequently, the financing contract amended (the minimum number of legal offices to be established was down-sized from 5 to 3, and the minimum number of months for which the legal offices have to function was reduced from 12 to 7).

The strategy and concept of the Programme, as approved by the Donor, remain unchanged, the Programme being focused on key areas able to contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of creating a fairer and more efficient Romanian judicial system in the context of the adoption of the new codes. Even though the PdP no. 3 was modified in the reporting period, the objectives remain the same, as it aims at the improvement of the access to justice of Roma and other vulnerable groups, the change being more in what concerns the approach chosen, not in expected results.

Concerning the use of the bilateral fund at Programme level, the call has been open for submitting applications on a continuous basis from 30.04.2014 until the last date of eligibility of the predefined projects (30.04.2017 – the deadline was prolonged, given the extension of the predefined projects).

During the reporting period, a new bilateral action in amount of 31.235,40 Euro was approved by the Cooperation Committee, which concerns sharing of best practices on the legislative processes in Romania and Norway, and which is implemented by the Romanian Ministry of Justice, Norwegian Courts Administration and

the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Thus, out of the total allocation of 300.000 Euro, 235.108,34 Euro has been contracted so far (out of which 31.235,40 Euro in 2016), and 182.843,36 Euro has been disbursed in total (including both advance payments and authorized expenditure, as not all projects have been finalised).

Among the activities that were carried out in 2016, related to the projects financed under the bilateral fund at Programme level, the Programme Operator mentions: a mission of exchanges of best practices in Romania of representatives of the Norwegian Courts Administration in view of strengthening the mutual trust between the judiciary of Romania and of Norway; a mission of exchanges of best practices in Norway for Romanian judges in the field of child protection; organisation of an international seminar in Romania on ECHR; a fact finding mission in Romania of the specialists of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public security, joined by a representative of the Norwegian courts Administration in order to get acquainted with the Romanian legislative process, to present their Romanian counterparts the system in Norway and to prepare a workshop on the elaboration of normative acts process to be organised in Norway in 2017.

PDP no. 1 - "Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian judicial system to face new legislative and institutional challenges"

Taking into account the considerable savings registered in the implementation of the project, on the 26th of April, 2016, an addendum was concluded in order to extend the project until 30th of April, 2017, and:

- to supplement the activities of the project (e.g., further workshops on the unification of jurisprudence; seminars in the field of judicial ethics and deontology; seminars for clerks in the field of the management of the activity of clerks; IT equipment),
- and to implement new ones, with the support of the DPPs (e.g., conferences and training activities in order to increase the knowledge and professional skills of the Romanian magistrates' and clerks in the field of fiscal law, consumer's rights, insolvency and drafting of judgments).

Thus, the following training activities were carried out during 2016²:

- 47 workshops (974 participants) out of 135 planned in total, 1 national conferences (91 participants), out of 8 planned in total, in the field of the new codes;
- 6 seminars (120 participants) out the 19 planned in total in the field of the judicial ethics;
- 6 seminars (120 participants) out of 14 planned on the management of the activity of clerks;
- 1 conference (71 participants) out of 1 planned in the field of the insolvency of the natural persons;
- 2 workshops (43 participants) out of 4 planned in the field of consumers' rights;
- 4 workshops (117 participants) out of 4 planned in the field of drafting of judgements.

In addition, 4 guides were elaborated during the reporting period in the field of judicial ethics and deontology, and on the management of courts and prosecutor's offices clerks' activity.

Concerning the endowment component, the PP re-launched the tender for the 5 lots which were not contracted, and the following equipment was purchased:

a) for NIM: 1 Simultaneous translation equipment, 1 Streaming Server and UPS

b) for the Judicial Inspection: 2 UPS and 1 NAS server.

The tender procedure for the equipment corresponding to the second phase of the project was launched in November 2016 and it is ongoing.

PDP no. 2 - "Improvement of the Electronic Court Register Information System (ECRIS)"

During the reporting period, progress has been registered regarding the first component, and work is ongoing concerning the study with recommendations on relevant best practices regarding the use of case management systems in Europe and how they can be adapted to the Romanian ECRIS.

The following activities have been implemented:

² The information is mainly based on the data provided by the PP in the project reports, but also on monitoring reports.

- two expert missions of the Romanian stakeholders working with ECRIS took place in February 2016, in the Netherlands, and in April 2016, in UK.
- The draft study with recommendations has been elaborated.
- In September 2016, it was organised a seminar with relevant stakeholders from the judiciary and other relevant guests, in order to review the study in view of its finalisation.
- Regarding the training on business process analysis and project management for practitioners involved in the development and implementation of IT projects concerning case management and other major IT systems, while the structure and content of the training have been discussed and agreed upon with the working group of the project comprising representatives of the main beneficiaries, it was not launched yet as the PP submitted a proposal aiming at the supplementation of this component (please see the details below).

As regards the endowment component, the public tender procedure was launched on the 14th of November, 2015, with the deadline for submitting the bids on the 12th of January, 2016. The contract was signed on the 17th of August, 2016 for the value of approx. 1.960.000 Euro (resulting thus savings in amount of approx. 1.600.000 Euro). The delays in this activity were due to specific reasons such as the difficulties generated by the drafting of the tender dossier given the complexity of the endowment, and the legal prerequisites (in accordance with the Romanian legislation, the technical specifications of the equipment to be purchased need to be pre-approved by the Ministry of Communications and for the Information Society). Furthermore, a large number of bids were submitted, which further prolonged the evaluation phase of the procedure.

The following technical equipment has been delivered and installed in the beneficiary locations: 4 Switches Layer 3, 20 Switches Layer 2, 4 Network Area Storage, 1 Storage Area Network, 209 Servers type 1, 4 Servers type 2, 7 Servers type 3 (VM Host).

The other equipment (361 Routers type 1, 170 Routers type 2, 5 Routers VPN type 1, 2 Routers VPN type 2) has been also delivered, yet it needs to be configured by the Service for Special Telecommunications, prior to its delivery and installation in the final beneficiary locations, which is expected to be undergone in the first trimester of 2017.

A. Soft measures: one additional expert mission to a new state (such as Italy), in order for the Romanian experts to get acquainted with European best practices regarding the use of case management systems, supplementation of the training component of the project, with additional training sessions both on the same topics (i.e., business process analysis and project management) and on other topics (e.g., Agile methodology, Linux, SQL Server).

B. Hard measures: Videoconference systems for courts, Computers and communication security equipment (firewalls) for the National Administration of Penitentiaries (NAP) and penitentiaries.

While the above mentioned activities do not require the amendment of the Programme Agreement *per se*, as they fall under the scope of the project, considering the remaining time until the end of the project, in order to maximise the use of the available resources, the sharing of responsibilities between beneficiaries was identified as an optimal solution was to introduce the consortium NAP-BAGR as a partner in the project. Hence, the PO submitted the PA modification request in early November, 2016. The request was not approved by the end of the reporting period. Under these circumstances, bearing in mind the time left until the deadline of the project (30.04.2017), the PO will inform accordingly the PP on the necessity to focus only on those activities that could be implemented in the given timeframe, whereas the remaining needs identified and suggested for financing would be proposed for financing under the MFN 2014-2021.

PDP no. 3 - "Improving access to justice. An integrated approach with a focus on Roma and other vulnerable groups"

While the other activities were carried out, both of the public procurements for contracting the services required to set up the 5 pilot legal assistance offices for Roma and other categories of vulnerable citizens, and for organising the awareness campaign, were cancelled (the second was annulled in February, 2016 due to non-conformity of bids, as the bidders could not demonstrate the required minimum working experience for the proposed experts to be working with vulnerable groups – minimum 5 years overall professional experience, calculated from graduation; minimum 3 years of experience in working with vulnerable groups).

In this context, due to the fact that the legal assistance offices had to function for no less than 12 months, according to the condition set in the Programme Agreement, and that the remaining timeframe of the project was sufficient neither for organising a third procurement procedure, nor for fulfilling the aforementioned condition, as a mitigating action, during the Cooperation Committee meeting held on the 1st of March, 2016, in Strasbourg, it was agreed to proceed further with the modification of the project in order to accommodate other actions that fall under the objectives and scope of the project and of the programme.

Thus, the programme agreement was modified in May 2016, and an addendum to the financing contract was concluded on 18th of July, 2016, both for extending the project until 30th of April, 2017 and for the implementation of the following activities:

1) Setting up of 6 pilot legal assistance offices in existing courts which had to function for no less than 7 months (in the Programme Agreement there are mentioned 3 pilot legal assistance offices).

The core of the initial project proposal being kept, the new approach concerns the means chosen. Thus, while the previous approach implied a single service integrator to set up the legal assistance offices, the PP with the support of the DPPs experts would take over these tasks and the services will be provided by lawyers directly selected by the PP, following a procurement procedure.

As the PP informed in late September, 2016 that the selection procedure was cancelled, it was needed to re-launch it as quickly as possible in order to contract the services of lawyers to provide the legal aid, and thus achieve the programme outcome and output indicators (*1000 individuals benefitting from free legal advice (including Roma) and 5 para-legal offices established*). However, since the condition provided in the project description regarding the minimum number of months for which the legal aid offices have to function (i.e., *setting up of 3 pilot legal assistance offices for Roma and other categories of vulnerable citizens which [...] shall function for no less than 7 months*) was unlikely to be fulfilled.

The FMO advised on implementing the activities in order to obtain best possible results. Thus, it indicated that the project was amended and the minimum number of legal offices to be established was down-sized from 5 to 3 (the description of the project was modified in the Programme Agreement – Annex II, section 6 Pre-defined projects), in order to facilitate its implementation, considering the limited amount of time left. Nevertheless, it added that the number of months for which the legal offices have to function can be consequently amended in the Programme Agreement Annex II.

2) Elaboration of an informative package on specific domains pertaining to access to justice, tailored to respond to the needs of the Roma population and other vulnerable groups, based on the conclusions of the study on access to justice. The informative package was elaborated, and it will be translated and multiplied in order to be disseminated to the target group.

3) Organisation of a series of 7 regional workshops in order to present and disseminate the informative package to relevant stakeholders and local Roma communities, and to discuss various ways of improving access to justice and solutions to problems faced by local communities. The workshops are envisaged to be organised in the first trimester of 2017.

4) Organisation of an awareness campaign in order to promote the relevant information on the activity of the free legal assistance offices and the informative package, among Roma population and other vulnerable groups, as well as to increase the awareness on civil rights and freedoms within such groups. The activity depends on the activities concerning the setting up of the legal aid offices and the informative package.

5) Organising 10 training sessions on improving access to justice and combating discrimination for public institutions working with vulnerable groups, NGOs, lawyers, probation services, as well as judges and prosecutors. The seminars are envisaged to be organised in the first trimester of 2017.

No changes occurred in 2016 in the Management and Control System established at the level of the Programme Operator.

In the reporting period, two cooperation committee meetings have taken place. The two donor programme partners are also project donor partners on all three predefined projects under the Programme. In this respect, as mentioned in the previous report, partnership agreements for the implementation of each of the predefined projects have been concluded between each Project Promoter and each donor project partner (6 in total), and thus the bilateral indicator was achieved in 2014 (*number of project partnership agreements in the*

beneficiary public sector – target 3). Two Cooperation Committees are envisaged for 2017 (in the first and second semester of 2017).

RO25 – Poverty Alleviation

Programme Operator: Financial Mechanism Office / Deloitte

All the projects financed by the Programme registered visible progress in 2016. The promoters calibrate their interventions in order to have a better response to all the challenges faced by the Programme target group. On the short term, these interventions show that the general picture may be changed if money allocated to this Programme are used for sustainable actions within Roma and poor communities. Each financed projects have obtained good results and created the premises to surpassing the Programme general indicators.

The following main activities and results have been achieved in the reporting period:

Promoter: Intercommunity Development Association Cluj Metropolitan Area (RO25-01)

The implementation of the following activities has progressed:

- Facilitation of implementing quick actions in the four communities in order to exercise internal organization and improving life conditions (e.g. general cleaning, repairing water tap, planting trees etc.).
- Social Housing - In the reporting period, the promoter bought two plots of land in Apahida, which is closer and almost a neighborhood of Cluj. Parallel with this the Promotor continues to identify plots in Cluj but there were not suitable for the construction of the eight apartment buildings that are foreseen in the project.
- A measure plan for each community was set-up based on the evaluation of community needs (such as provision of heating equipment and fuel, construction equipment, etc.)
- Organizing socio-drama groups for strengthening solidarity, common values and identity in the communities.
- Taking the necessary administrative steps for ensuring ID, health insurance, social benefits, including tardive birth registration through court procedure, collaboration with public administrations and institutions from other counties.
- Identifying the “family survival system” and evaluating the needs and resources of the families (100 families in 2 years)
- Implementing the “Strong families” model - In total 169 families are assisted through coordinated case management.
- Implementing coordinated case management - from 177 persons benefiting from legal services, in this period, 43 persons benefited from legal assistance and counselling and 15 representations in court were made.
- Creating interdisciplinary network, partnering for coordinated community response - the promoter cooperated in different crisis interventions with local police sections
- Realization of architectural plans for the Youth Centre and details construction budget
- Art projects - A new round call for art projects was open to proposals from artists and organizations. During December-February 2016, a group of sociology students coordinated by Professor Calin Goinea has documented through research and interviews the history and human experiences in the neighborhood where the TYC will be opened soon.
- Production of works - The educative and cultural events for children continue to be staged
- Coordination of the activity of the Mobile Unit in Patat Rat, facilitation of school enrollment of children from the garbage dump community, preparing and accompanying their school attendance
- Facilitation of enrolment to second chance education
- Reaching business networks and creating partnerships with private economic actors focusing on those who has service contracts with the Municipality

UNICEF Romania Office (RO25-02)

- Increased access to a basic package of community-based services for vulnerable children and their families - Model of the minimum package of services defined, communities selected and local ownership ensured; 103 community workers selected, trained and actively delivering community services; 32,266 households

assessed in the targeted communities; identifying 13,370 vulnerable children and women (out of which approximately 5% self-identified as Roma).

- Reduction in the level of stigma and discrimination against Roma and increased empowerment of Roma families and children - 115 community and county professionals have improved attitudes and skills as result of training and capacity building. The methodology to empower Roma children and families and to increase their school outcome expectations (around the concept of role models) was designed. The methodology for the selection of positive role models in the community was developed and 64 teachers are now able to use it.
- Local campaign for promoting healthy behaviours among adolescents - The local and county authorities increased their capacity to identify and actively address adolescents' issues, and to work with adolescents. A national campaign to prevent and fight alcohol consumption among adolescents was developed in three TV and radio spots. It is currently ongoing on television (it was shown nearly 2,000 times) and on the online channels (YouTube – 779,245 impressions; Facebook – 1,833,641 views, Instagram – 114,424 views).
- Changes in national legislation, policies and secondary legislation, as well as increased resource allocation, based on the model - Advocacy with and technical assistance to the Government and the Parliament continued. UNICEF worked closely with the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Labour, the World Bank and civil society to develop a Minimum Package of Services at the national level using EU funding. A large group of parliamentarians across parties are aware about the Minimum Package of Services and committed to support a new law in the Parliament. The draft law is expected to be introduced in the Parliament for debate in the 2016 autumn session or at the beginning of 2017.
- The social census, which aims at identifying vulnerable families, has already assessed 33,266 households; over 90,000 household members were interviewed; 13,370 vulnerable children and women were identified, out of which 664 declared that they were Roma. This is an average of 417 children at risk per community, almost 3 times higher than the initial estimation.
- On average, over 1,100 services were provided in each of the 32 targeted communities. The 32 communities include 23 rural communities (corresponding to 23 rural localities) and 9 urban communities (selected from 3 urban municipalities).
- Parenting education was a very successful component of the model, with 3,257 parents taking part in the activities, benefitting nearly 6,000 children.
- Over 4,900 vulnerable adolescents have already been identified through the community census; including 1,098 adolescents with risky behaviours related to early and unprotected sex or substance abuse, (out-of-which 75 are underage mothers). Over 3,000 adolescents were also identified as being vulnerable in the targeted schools (these numbers might overlap as adolescents could be identified as vulnerable in their household and at school).
- In addition to the ongoing national campaign on the prevention of alcohol consumption, adolescents receive services and support from social workers, communities nurses, school counsellors and teachers.
- In addition to the 103 local professionals (social workers, community nurses, school counsellors, health mediators and school mediators) who are providing community services, the model also involves mayors, accountants and other mayoralty staff, as well as the Local Consultative Committee for Children. These Committees include the local authorities but also local stakeholders like the police, the school, the church and community-based organizations. These Committees discuss the micro-grant allocated to each community.
- each community has now at least 3 community workers with the capacity to deliver outreach services. Mayors and their staff are now able to recruit community workers; play a key role in coordinating/leading model implementation; receive, use, monitor and report on funding.
- School Board, who discuss and decide on the allocation of the school micro-grants, have become more active and sensitized to the rights and needs of vulnerable children. These Boards include school staff as well as parents and students.
- Over 720 teachers from pre-school, and primary and lower secondary education, including the school directors were involved in activities aiming at improving teaching methods, promoting child participation, supporting inclusion of children with special education needs, improving school management, support parenting classes and promoting positive role models.

- Establishing a Community Center in Iasi - the activities are running on regular basis
- Establishing a Community Centre in Ploiesti - the activities are running on regular basis
- SALVATtex - With the beginning of January 2016, the promoter has started activities at the warehouse with sorting second-hand clothes. SALVATtex stores have been inaugurated and 1 sorting and reconditioning clothes warehouse have been functional since December 2015
- Mobile Health Clinic Bucharest - The organization has hired four employees (a doctor, a nurse and driver, a social worker and a coordinator). The Mobile Health Clinic (MHC) is operating three nights a week, providing The custom designed vehicle was inaugurated on 18 December. 599 beneficiaries received medical and social services from the start of the project to date (120% objective achieved, up to the initial plan); 82 medical consultation and treatment, provided on the street, out of which: 18 consultations for people with mental health problems, living on the street and 19 healthcare services provided to addicts; 150 social services provided, consisting of 71 street social counselling, 74 information and guidance services and 5 social initiatives – support for employment.

Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO 25 - 04)

- Network building created - the promoter continue to gather data for the creation of database on special issues;
- Sociological Investigation, Survey;
- Social workers component: The survey on social workers was finalized with relative success in the sense that 92% of the 3181 local administrative units from Romania had been validated (considered complete and complying with previous census and research data).
- Graphical representation, GIS maps - This section implies processing and contextualizing of secondary databases (1997, 2002, 2011 census data: ethnic and language - data for the Roma population from Romania) and analysing, mapping the preliminary data of SocioRoMap surveys (social workers component, health mediators component). In the reporting period, the researcher's team already realized a set of 71 maps at national and local levels
- Interactive data, Crowdsourcing - the online platform (socioromap.ro) was created that contains all three major components: presentation of the project and interaction, data collection and publication, data keeping. In the next period, the maps and all collected data will be available to the public.
- Community Studies - The methodology of community studies consists of a modular guide for research, which has been finalized.
- Testing Monitoring System - In the research first phase all data was validated through a panel of experts.

Roma Education Fund (RO25-05)

- Expanding access to quality preschool education - 9 construction works procurement procedures have been launched & contracts awarded. For 1 locality the construction works have been finalized and the constructions had the reception at the finalizing of the works (by the State Constructions Inspectorate). For 2 localities, the construction works have been partially finalized, being subject to partial reception and being scheduled to be subject to reception at the finalizing of the works in the next reporting. For the rest of the 6 localities (out of the 9 that commenced the construction works), the interventions will continue until reception at the finalizing of the works (by the State Constructions Inspectorate). The RSG project team continued to plan the order & delivery of the remaining pieces of furniture, which have not yet been delivered to all 14 kindergarten groups because of the space availability (while the minimum necessary was already delivered at the start of temporary services). The rest of the furniture will be delivered on the next reporting period, in parallel with the finalizing of the works.
- Quality ECD programs for children living in marginalized communities - In order to start activities in the temporary project locations, 64 persons were hired to cover the following positions: Educators; Pre-school mediators/TL Assistants; Community Facilitators; Your Story Facilitators
- Improving ECD parenting skills - the first community events took place. In total, on the reporting period, 66 community events were organised.

- Communication and advocacy, dissemination of results - RSG Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/Ready-Set-Go-1631293610472840/>, and Tumblr page dedicated to ECD initiatives pursued by REF throughout time - <http://readyssetgo-ro.tumblr.com/RSG>
- Monitoring and Evaluation - Two tools have been developed within the project (tool for caregivers & adapted IDELA tool). They have been used by the survey company to assess the current status of the project direct beneficiaries, in the framework of impact study.

City of Oslo (RO25-06)

Activity 1. WS1 – Networking and establishing partnership

- Anniken Sand is the new project manager. Partnership agreements have been signed and approved with City of Craiova and City of Timisoara. Both partners have been allocated EUR 60,000 for implementing the pilot projects.
- An addenda was signed approving the partnerships, a new budget, a new timeline, a more clear description of the project activities. A third pilot project has been budgeted and described – preparing the main project.
- During the reporting period, the project was presented in Brussels, at an EC event „Working to cooperate the most deprived people at local level” and at the Promoters` annual spring meeting.
- The project`s homepage was established (www.edutrainromania.org) and also a launch event of the project took place in Timisoara.
- „Pilot 3. Establishing partnerships for work and skills training”. Finding and establishing possible partnerships has begun, plans for the pilot have been written. Several potential partners have been found, started looking for models for work training for both adults and young adults.
- Both partners participated in a visit to Oslo, meant to strengthen their knowledge in the interest areas for the project. Various visits from Oslo have taken place in the partner cities.
- In Timisoara, the target group has been chosen and the parenting sessions have begun. Initial assessment of children at risk has been performed. Obtaining identification papers for the children in need has also begun.
- Activities in Craiova are delayed, but the plan is for them to begin once the school year starts. 26 teachers have been selected to be part of the project, computers have been bought and procurement has started for training services.

4 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Management and control systems

The process of setting-up the Programme Operators' structures and the management and control systems was finalised in 2014. No major changes to the management and control system occurred in the reporting period. Because the implementation phase has started the capacity of NFP as well as the Programmes Operators has been strengthened accordingly.

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 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 accumulation 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 aid 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

During the year 2016, CPA reported the irregularities and suspicions of irregularities to FMO, according with the provisions of the Implementing Regulations, based on the reports on irregularities received from POs. Thus, in 2016, there are reported via DoRIS System 30 cases of suspicions of irregularities/irregularities and 4 suspicions of fraud, either as new irregularities or follow-ups of existing irregularity cases.

For the period 2013-2016, the total amount that had an impact on the SEE/MFN Programme investigated and confirmed as cases of irregularities is of 173.874 euro grand total (147.793 euro for SEE/MFN budget and 26.081 euro for state budget cofinancing). This represents 0,05% of the SEE/MFN Net amount allocated of 283.003.750 euro.

Out of the total amount, 110.491,95 euro (93.918,16 euro SEE/MFN budget and 16.573,8 euro state budget cofinancing) were recovered, representing 63,8% of grand total. The amount of 36.029,01 euro (30.624,66 euro SEE/MFN budget and 5.404,35 euro state budget cofinancing) is still pending to be recovered/corrected, representing 20,79%. The remaining amount of 27.353,27 euro (23.250,28 euro SEE/MFN budget and 4.103,00 euro state budget cofinancing) is still under investigation to be confirmed or is not confirmed as irregularity.

In relation to the suspicions of fraud, beside the three cases already reported in DoRIS in 2015 for RO12 Programme (case no IR-0278 in DoRIS), RO13 programme (case no IR-0282 in DoRIS) and RO23 Programme (case no. IR-0238 in DoRIS), which are still under investigations, in 2016 it was reported a new case of suspicion of fraud for RO19 Programme (case no. IR-0582). The new suspicion of fraud relate to the infringement of General principles on the eligibility of expenditures and of the financing contract; i.e. providing services without signed contracts and backdating employment contracts signing date in order to give the appearance of legality. The non-eligible expenditure is in amount of 1.576,93 euro (equivalent of 7.007,10 lei) and the case is under investigations by the Fight Against Fraud Department (DLAF).

The suspicions of irregularities/irregularities reported in 2016 by CPA to FMO via DoRIS either as new irregularities or follow-ups of existing irregularity cases are the result of the followings:

A. On the spot verification missions performed by CPA (6 cases):

- one suspicion of irregularity - **Ministry of Environment (RO02, RO04)**, IR-0277 in DoRIS: incorrect estimation of the budget (excessive costs, unreasonable prices) for procurement of the website dedicated to the three Programmes; the case was investigated by the General Directorate of Economic and Financial Inspection (DGIEF) from the Ministry of Public Finance and the irregularity was not confirmed (**case closed**).
- 2 suspicions of irregularity - **ANCSI - National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation (RO14)**: ineligible expenditure: unjustified personnel expenditures authorized by the PO in relation to the activities developed by the programme co-manager (IR-0275 in DoRIS) and the quality of the audit performed by an independent external auditor which issued a certificate of financial audit without referring to any ineligible expenditure while certain expenditures have been considered by CPA on the spot report as necessary to be further investigated in terms of eligibility (IR-0276 in DoRIS). The cases were under investigations by the PO that issued the control note by which the irregularities were not confirmed.
- one irregularity - **FRDS - Romanian Fund for Social Development (RO10)**, IR-0274 in DoRIS: the costs related to the payment of two experts which were public servants contrary to the contractual provisions; the case was investigated by the GDIEF from Ministry of Public Finance which confirmed the irregularity (the amount of 1.302,04 euro – grant and cofinancing - was entirely recovered) (**case closed**).
- 2 irregularities - **Ministry of Culture (RO12 and RO13)** with regard to management expenditures - the two suspicions were confirmed by the General Directorate of Economic and Financial Inspection (DGIEF) from the Ministry of Public Finance and they are as follows:

- RO13 - IR-0581 in DoRIS: it was identified that for the acquisition of expert services, the PO selected external experts for monitoring the project implementation, verification of progress reports and procurement procedures based on an announcement on the PO website, without applying the procurement law provisions. The control note established an outstanding debt of 22.368,23 euro (equivalent of 100.668,25 lei) - the PO appealed administratively the decision to the on 21.12.2016;
- RO12 - IR-0579 in DoRIS: it was identified the fact that the PO director was paid for his activity within PA16 programme based on a service contract and not a labour contract, having in view the type of activity and the legal provisions in this respect. As per the control note, the ineligible amount is of 5.496,55 euro (equivalent of 24.829 lei), which was returned in the bank account of the Programme on 19.12.2016.

B. Verifications performed by PO at the level of PP (13 cases):

- **2 from FRDS - Romanian Fund for Social Development (RO10):**

- IR-0203 in DoRIS: possible conflict of interest at the PP partner level; the suspicion was not confirmed by the PO control team and
- IR-0204 in DoRIS: public procurement deviation: the winning offer has been designated without observing the equal treatment principle established according with the national legislation and a correction has been applied (5% of the contract value) in amount of 6.750,71 euro (grant + cofinancing) which was recovered. Both cases are **closed**.

- **3 from Ministry of Justice (RO 24):**

- IR-0273 in DoRIS: public procurement procedure deviations: PP procurement of IT, technical equipment and furniture and it consists of: the introduction of a restrictive requirement in the tender dossier and the lack of signature by two members of the evaluation commission on the award procedure report. The conclusion of the control note was that the detected irregularities did not have a financial impact and therefore no financial correction was applied (case closed).
- IR-0337 in DoRIS: public procurement procedure deviations: PP procurement of support services to organize training activities included in pre-defined projects. The control note and the rectifying note established a financial correction of 5.035,21 euro (equivalent of 22.616,17 lei), which was recovered on 8.12.2016.
- IR-0409 in DoRIS: public procurement procedure deviations : PP's direct purchase of a flight ticket Bucharest-Warsaw during 11-13.09.2014: even if the PP received 2 offers for the same flight coordinates (461 euro and 552 euro), the most expensive one was selected (552 euro). The control note established a financial correction of 55,45 euro (equivalent of 242,92 lei), which was recovered on 22.11.2016.

- **7 from Ministry of Culture (RO 12 and RO 13):**

- RO 13 - IR-0338 in DoRIS: an error by PO in authorizing an expenditure for the project website housing which covered a period of time exceeding the duration of the implementation of the project. The amount of the expenditure wrongfully incurred is 85,79 euro (grant + cofinancing) and the PO recovered the debt from a subsequent payment to PP.
- RO 12 - IR-0406 in DoRIS: an error by PO in authorizing an ineligible amount related to equipment insurance in the content of the authorizing note corresponding to the second and third interim progress report of the PP, the insurance amount representing in fact the total insurance premium for the entire insurance period, which exceeds the eligibility period of the project. As per the control note, the ineligible amount was established at 365,63 euro (equivalent of 1.619,76 lei), which was recovered through a diminished subsequent payment to PP.
- RO 12 - IR-0407 in DoRIS: The amount of 316,27 euro (equivalent of 1.393,19 lei) refers to PP own contribution which was incorrectly authorized by PO and does not affect the EEA grant amount that has been or will be paid as reflected by the corrective authorizing note. The irregularity case is closed (it represents an error not an irregularity).

- RO 12 - IR-0408 in DoRIS: The amount of 234,96 euro (equivalent of 1.036,74 lei) refers to PP own contribution which was incorrectly authorized by PO and does not affect the EEA grant amount that has been or will be paid as reflected by the corrective authorizing note. The irregularity case is closed (it represents an error not an irregularity).
- RO 13 - IR-0504 in DoRIS: an error by PO in authorizing expenditures - costs that refer to international travel, accommodation, per diem and medical insurance, for two of the members of the project management team travelling to Norway (for which service provider contracts have been concluded, as freelancers). Following the control note, the PP incorrectly transferred the amount of 1.558,83 euro (equivalent of 6.971,56 lei) in the project account, not in the PO accounts. Therefore, the PO will recover the amount by diminishing the subsequent payment to PP.
- RO 12 - IR-0578 in DoRIS: Following the verification of the final report submitted by Turda Municipality, the PO concluded that one project indicator was not 100% achieved. Mainly, the website of the project is only functional in Romanian, while the English version was not operational by the end of the implementation period. Thus, it was established that 50% of the costs related to website creation and maintenance, representing 370,54 euro (equivalent of 1.650 lei), are not eligible (as per the control note). The amount was recovered through a diminished subsequent payment to PP.
- RO 12 *new irregularity to be reported in DoRIS as it refers to Q4 2016*: Following the verification of the final report submitted by Hungarian University Federation from Cluj-Napoca, the PO concluded that two project indicators were not 100% achieved. As per control note, the monitoring officer recommended a financial correction of 25% for the costs with salaries of the implementation team, in amount of 282,8 euro (equivalent of 1.261,25 lei). The amount will be recovered by diminishing the final payment from PO to PP.
- **one from Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests (RO 02), IR-0445 in DoRIS**: OP has drawn suspicion irregularity no. 150252/11.07.2016. The suspicion of irregularity was evaluated according to the national regulations by a control team from the PO. Investigations have been completed and PO issued the Control report. Following the investigations, it has resulted that the irregularity is not confirmed because the land acquisition did not materialise and payments were not made for the land acquisition.

C. Verifications performed by Audit Authority at the level of PO/ PP (11 cases):

- one irregularity from **Ministry of Interior (RO 21), IR-0505 in DoRIS**: public procurement procedure deviations: the auditors identified some calculation errors in the statements that were corrected during the audit mission and inconsistencies regarding the accommodation expenses; the PP misapplied the provisions of art. 19 of Emergency Ordinance No. 34/2006, for air transport services. The total amount of the expenditure presumably wrongfully incurred was in amount of 44.138,93 lei: - the amount of 9.253 euro (equivalent of 40.970,68 lei), representing transport expenses, was recovered by PO on 05.09.2016;- for the amount of 3.168,25 lei, representing accommodation expenses, the suspicion of irregularity was not confirmed (**case closed**).
- 3 suspicions of irregularities from **ANCSI - National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation (RO14)**, which are still under investigations:
 - IR-0512 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that 10 euro (equivalent of 44 lei) representing salary expenditure of the PP were authorised by PO in addition to the payroll of November 2014 under the Project Snowball;
 - IR-0513 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that for the amount of 173,51 euro (equivalent of 762,78 lei) representing indirect expenses (repairing of laptop battery) performed and declared by the PP and authorised by the PO, there are no justifying documents to certify the expense performed under the Project Snowball;
 - IR-0514 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that for the amount of 6.184,26 euro (equivalent of 27.186,65 lei) representing indirect expenses declared by the project partner P4 - UVT during the

period July - October 2014 and authorised by the PO, there are no justifying documents to certify the accounting record and payment.

- 2 irregularities from **UMP - Ministry of Culture (RO 12 and RO 13):**

- RO 12 - IR-0502 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the amount of 322,50 euro (equivalent of 1.425,64 lei) representing salary expenditures, employer and employee contributions is not eligible. The amount was recovered by PO deducting the amount of 1.425,64 lei from a subsequent payment to PP.
- RO 13 - IR-0580 in DoRIS: the Audit Authority identified several non-eligible expenditures for PA17/RO13 – LP106/08.04.2014 project, in total amount of 350,95 euro (equivalent of 1.551,41 lei), resulting from the following: difference between the wrongfully reported amount regarding the net salary and the employer contributions and the correct amount set by the audit experts; one invoice that was paid outside the reporting period; an amount paid to one of the facilitators within the Summer School, but no proof could be found as to the actual performance of such service. The PO recovered the debt by deduction from a subsequent payment to PP.

- 5 irregularities from **Ministry of Health (RO 19):**

- IR-0585 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the amount of 8.619,33 euro (equivalent of 37.936 lei), representing salary costs, do not observe art. 7.2, section 2, para. (A) of the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, these expenditures were performed outside the eligibility period of project; amount recovered **(case closed)**.
- IR-0586 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the amount of 187,51 euro (equivalent of 825,34 lei) were partly paid outside the eligibility period of the financing contract and partly fell under art. 7.6 "Excluded Expenses" Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, pt. 2, paragraph (h) - "excessive and reckless spending." amount recovered **(case closed)**.
- IR-0587 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the amount of 9,32 euro (equivalent of 41 lei) representing bank fees are not eligible as per art. 7.2 of Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, as well as according to Art. 5.12, point b) of the financing contract "commissions related to financial transactions and other costs strictly financial, except costs imposed by the FMO accounts, PNC or required by applicable law and contractual funding costs will not be eligible"; amount recovered **(case closed)**.
- IR-0583 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the amount of 52,91 euro (equivalent of 236 lei) is not eligible (represents undue pecuniary rights granted to a person within the Foundation PARADA by ignoring Decision No. 77 /12.01.2014 issued by the Executive Director, which stipulated that this person is working for the project 4 hours / day, yet the salary paid was calculated for 8 hours / day worked for the project); amount recovered **(case closed)**.
- IR-0584 in DoRIS: the auditors identified that the ineligible amount of 17.388,32 euro (equivalent of 77.557,16 lei) represents services for organizing training seminars for general practitioners in nine regional centres delivered by SC BORDUN TEHNOLOGICA SRL from Braila county is considered ineligible; amount recovered **(case closed)**.

The remaining cases of irregularities reported in DoRIS by CPA (3 irregularities: IR-0064, IR-0081, IR-0082) are registered in DoRIS as closed since 2015 and no follow-ups were uploaded in 2016. With regard to the irregularity cases IR-0203, IR-0274 and IR-0277, they are also closed by DoRIS in 2016 and no follow-ups will be uploaded.

4.4 Audit, monitoring, review and evaluation

During 2016, the NFP continued the permanent monitoring of the implementation of Programmes, through monitoring meetings, quarterly monitoring reports submitted by POs, reviews of implementation calendars, as well as permanent contact with POs in order to be able to take corrective measures where needed.

Quarterly Programme reports submitted by the POs constitute the basis for the discussion of the monitoring meetings organised by the NFP with all POs representatives; each Programme Officer within the NFP performs an analysis of the reports.

The NFP also keeps updated information on the following topics, based on reports from POs: payments made by POs (monthly), implementation of the Fund for Bilateral Relations at Programme Level (quarterly), etc.

In 2016, in addition to above mentioned monitoring activities, the NFP conducted monitoring visits at projects level, for the verification of progress in their implementation, as detailed in Attachment 7.

4.5 Information and communication

During 2016, communication was targeted towards publicizing the developments in the implementation of the Grants in Romania, with focus on positive news regarding the progress and results achieved.

For this purpose, the main communication tools used have been the **eeagrants.ro website**, as well as the **Facebook** account of the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania (launched in May 2016), managed by the NFP.

The website was constantly updated with information and press releases with the occasion of relevant events in programmes and projects. Also, significant news and information regarding successful projects, project visits, etc. were posted. **35 such articles** were published in 2016.

As a result, the website has gathered the following results:

- number of sessions of the website is 40,474
- number of users: 24,793
- pageviews: 142,410

The dedicated **Facebook page** „Granturi SEE&Norvegiene” was constantly updated with 84 posts on relevant news, events, information on calls for proposals and photographs related to Programmes and projects, achieving the following organic results:

- 690 followers
- 780 likes to posts
- Reviews - 5 stars
- The posts with the most significant impact were the launching of the call for proposals on the Bilateral Fund on Programme RO05 - **8400 views** and the launching of the projects map - **5400 views**

The NFP is also managing the dedicated helpdesk e-mail address „asistenta.see@fonduri-ue.ro”, where those interested are provided with quick answers to requests for information regarding the EEA and Norway Grants in Romania.

In order to coordinate the informational and publicity activities, the NFP communications officers have participated in all Programme and project level monitoring visits, conducting specific verifications on the correct implementation of the Communication and Design Manual and to advise on any problems occurring during implementation. The communication requirements at the level of the Programmes are monitored through reports from POs.

The NFP has followed-up the fulfillment of the requirement related to the development of Programmes dedicated websites, launching events, seminars, leaflets and press releases for the Programmes.

4.6 Information and communication activities implemented by the Programme Operators

Programme RO02

- Website: the dedicated website (www.eeagrantsmediu.ro) was created and is updating with current information about projects implemented. There are posted all activities on communication/advertising conducted by the PP (workshops, round tables, seminars, press releases etc.);
- Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SEEMediu), with all relevant information about ongoing projects, including photo images from events, video clips, as well as information on the studies, guides and other materials from projects;
- Facebook pages for Projects, newspaper releases and public events in order to promote the Projects and the results.

- Closing conferences for finalized projects.

Programme RO04

- Website: the dedicated website (www.eeagrantsmediu.ro) was created and is updating with current information about projects implemented. There are posted all activities on communication/advertising conducted by the PP (workshops, round tables, seminars, press releases etc.);
- Positing of all relevant information about ongoing projects on a dedicated Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SEEMediu), including photo images from events, video clips, as well as information on the studies, guides and other materials from projects;
- Press releases and media events: 9 press releases was elaborated and disseminated on the activities developed;
- Workshop/exhibition for presentations, debates to show the interim results of the Project implements within the Programme RO04: participation in the Romania Powered by Nature Exhibition (Bucharest, 27 May -30 June 2016);
- Participation to workshops/conferences: during 27-30 October 2016 the Programme Operator participated to the International Conference "Innovations in green" which was held in Godollo in Hungary and organized by the Szent István University, the Programme Operator for Green Industry Innovation.

Programme RO05

During 2016, the following activities were performed:

- The launching announcement regarding the project was published in a national newspaper and on the RIS website;
- A section dedicated to the predefined project was established
- A roll-up panel was placed in the hospital

The following activities will be performed in 2017

- Conference on project closure
- The closure announcement
- Informative plaque
- Dissemination of results
- In less than six months after the end of the project, the project promoter will replace the panel with a plaque, visible, significant size, as required by the Manual of communication and visual identity

Programme RO06

Major information activities increased the access of beneficiaries and target groups regarding the Programme:

- Attending the International training conference conducted within PL04 "Saving energy and promoting renewable energy source", Krakow, Poland, 30th - 31th March 2016;
- Participation at "The third Iceland Geothermal Conference – IGC 2016" organized Reykjavik, Iceland, 26th -29th April 2016;
- Attending as partner the event International Conferences "Small hydropower and geothermal energy in Romania", ExpoEnergiE, Romexpo, organized in Bucharest between 13th - 14th October 2016;
- Assisting all Project Promoters in their information and publicity requirements: promotional and informative items, information panels, websites and activities, according to Annex 4, (8th March – Geothermal Component –press conference for announcing the investment held by Project Promoter The City Hall of Oradea (generated 8 headlines); April – Predefined Project - press conference held by Project Promoter University of Oradea - generated 5 headlines);
- Releasing short announcements for the actions listed above to the database generated from the online registration of the website, available in Romanian and in English and updated on the programme website.
- Updating the website www.rondine.ro (available in Romanian and English) and the Facebook page of Rondine programme, with posts about the activities within the programme and the media coverage of these events;
- Informing all the time the Communication representative of National Focal Point of all activities for information and publicity regarding Rondine Programme.

Programme RO07

- The dedicated website (www.eeagrantsmediu.ro) was created and is updated with current information about the Programme, including all activities on communication/advertising conducted by the PP (workshops, round tables, seminars, press releases, Photo/video contests etc.);
- A dedicated Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SEEMediu) was achieved. There are posting all relevant information about ongoing project, including photo images from events, video clips, as well as information on the studies, guides and other materials from Project;
- Networking between POs of similar programmes in other beneficiary states and relevant institutions in the donor states: During 27-30 October 2016 the Programme Operator participated to the International Conference "Innovations in green" which was held in Godollo in Hungary and organized by the Szent István University, the Programme Operator for Green Industry Innovation.

Programme RO09

- Best practices financed within NGO Fund were constantly promoted via Facebook and media, and NO Hate Speech Movement messages were disseminated;
- International Conference "Public policies for accessible social services";
- NGO Fest 2016;
- Regional Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development and Civil Society Forum from Central and Eastern Europe 2016;
- Over 80 articles related the projects funded within the Programme and the events organized under the Complementary Actions were released mainly in online media;
- The NGO Fund Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FondulOng>) had almost 600,000 unique users and generated almost 1,700,000 impressions;
- The website www.fondong.fdsc.ro reached over 31,500 unique users and generated almost 96,000 page views.

Programme RO10

In accordance with the objectives of the Communication Plan of the Programme and in order to increase the general public awareness on the EEA Grants and on the Programme, the PO took during the reporting period a series of measures of information and publicity.

- Film, blog & online library - For promoting the Programme within national and international events, the PO produced in March 2016 a presentation movie with a focus on results of the Programme at that time. Available on the Programme's site and YouTube channel, the 25 minutes film takes the audience on a journey through Romania in search of projects carried out. Launched on October 11, 2016, the movie reached 381 views on YouTube.

Also, for the promotion of the real stories behind the financed projects, the PO opened a Blog section hosted by the Programme's website, during the reporting period being published 8 stories received from the Projects Promoters and edited by the PO.

For the use of public and other stakeholders, the PO created an online Library hosted by the Programme's website in which are gathered the 63 guides, manuals, brochures made by the Project Promoters on themes as children education, anti-discrimination, project results, parenting and social inclusion.

- Website - The website of the Programme was an important tool for the PO in addressing the assumed objectives of publicity and communication. The web page (www.granturi-corai.ro) is a communication channel between PO and public and contains all the information regarding the Programme, the result of calls for proposals, announcements, career opportunities, news, events developed by the PO and a section of tools to be used by the PPs. In the period of January 1 - December 31, 2016, the web page of the Programme has been visited by 9.611 unique visitors. Besides the web page, an intense communication with the PPs is made by e-mail and fax and phone and all the information about new tools/ modifications to the existing tools are sent to PPs also by e-mail.
- Social Media - Alongside the existing social media accounts of the Programme (Facebook and Twitter), the PO created a YouTube channel and a Google Plus account, communication tools which maintain a permanent link between PO and public through news, updates, photos of the PO and PPs' events, announcements, and videos of Programme and projects. The Facebook page gathered 889 likes and

was published 221 news/announces reaching 44.200 people and being shared by 300 times. The Twitter account acquired 415 followers and published 101 news/ announces. In the reporting period, in YouTube channel were published 23 videos of the Programme and the financed projects that gathered 2,122 views. As for the Google Plus account, the PO published 82 announcements/news that gathered 4,965 views.

- Press announcement - A press announcement regarding the financed projects under the PLUS and PLUS 2 funding facilities of the Programme and their total amount was published in December 2016 in mass media (newspaper with national coverage) and was took over by the mass-media online (www.cdnews.ro).

An important achievement regarding the promotion of the projects and implicitly of the Programme is the visibility of the activities of the projects in mass-media. At the national level, 12 articles/press releases regarding the projects financed through the Programme were published, while at the local level, 72 articles/press releases were published.

Programme RO11

The promoters have held seminars, workshops, focus groups as well as other kind of initiatives such as waste collection in some communities, outdoor activities with children and their families, etc.

Some of the workshops were specifically designed for the personnel that is to operate in the daycare centers, but most of them also involved members of the community, relevant stakeholders at a local level, parents and informal Roma leaders.

Through the communication and promotion activities, the promoters tried to build a close relationship with the parents of children that are to attend the centers, and most importantly to build a trust bridge with the local Roma communities, as in some cases the members are more reticent in letting their children attend the daycare centers. Most of the promoters were proactive and went in the Roma communities to discuss with their informal leaders and members as to understand the needs and requirements they have, instead of waiting for the roma to come to them. As a result, the demand for Roma children to be enrolled is higher than the capacity of the daycare centers.

Programme RO12

- Updating the information on the Programme website (www.patrimoniu-fonduri.ro);
- Updating the Programme's page on social networks (www.facebook.com/fonduripatrimoniu);
- Disseminating promotional materials presenting the Programme and the EEA Financial Mechanism;
- On March 17, 2016 a training seminar was organized in a central location in Bucharest, in order to improve the implementation and reporting carried out by the promoters. The event was attended by 60 representatives of PPs;
- Study on the impact assessment the projects implemented under the Programme had in the local communities.

Programme RO13

- 1 bilingual website (www.fonduri-diversitate.ro) and 1 Facebook profile (www.facebook.com/fonduridiversitate) were dedicated to the PA17/RO13 Programme; In order to ensure open communication and support, the PO constantly updated the online information. As a result, the Programme website registered over 94,246 visitors out of which 44,159 are singular visitors, 287,637 total views, while the Facebook page gathered more than 1,830 fans and over 44,000 reaches.
- printed bilingual materials - The materials present both the funding and cooperation opportunities of the Programme and the results gathered within the projects, as follows: 1,250 pcs portfolios bearing the logos of EEA Grants, the PO and the Programme, 1,000 pcs flyers presenting the objectives, financing and bilateral cooperation opportunities; 2 roll-ups used to all public events organized by the PO; 300 pcs catalogues telling the story with precise facts and figures of 27 out of the 81 projects financed within the Programme.
- Promotional objects - for promotion purposes, various gadgets were labelled with the names and logos of EEA Grants, the PO and the Programme, as follows: 1,000 pcs ballpoints; 300 pcs memory sticks; 300 pcs markers; 100 pcs power packs; 200 pcs notes with magnets; 400 pcs card wallets.

- A launching conference was organized on November 4th 2013, whereas a closing conference will be taking place in September / October 2017;
- With the purpose of promoting the funding opportunities within the PA17/RO13 Programme, the PO organized a series of 8 information seminars in Braşov, Constanţa, Piteşti, Cluj – Napoca, Timișoara, Iași, Bucureşti (2);
- 2 hand-outs were released in order to publicise the financing opportunities within the Programme: 1 in a generalist newspaper (“Adevărul”), 1 in a cultural magazine (“Observator cultural”), 1 in the online (“Mediafax”);

Programme RO14

- At EARMA conference organized in Lulea, Sweden on June 2016, the Romanian representatives of the Programme Operator had the opportunity to distribute the promotion materials (dedicated Programme poster, roll-up and leaflets) and to exchange information with other research Programme managers and administrators from EU;
- Two workshops were organized in Sibiu in May 2016, dedicated to Ethics in Research and Communication/Publicity;
- The open call under the bilateral relations fund launched on May 10th has been broadly disseminated to the research community via different channels of dissemination (PO website, mailing lists, etc.), including with the support of Horizon 2020 National Contact Points within the Programme Operator institution;
- A partnership with Radio Romania Cultural has been set up in the framework of a communication campaign for the promotion of research projects’ results. A series of interviews has been done at the headquarters of Project Promoters and project partners (5 interviews in Bucharest at the Biochemistry Institute, the National Research and Development Institute for Microbiology and Immunology; 4 interviews in Cluj–Napoca at the University Babes- Bolyai). The ultimate goal of this partnership is to take interviews to all the 23 projects until the end of the Programme.

Programme RO15

- 2 articles were sent to be published on the eeagrants.org webpage; The articles are about two projects implemented by the West University in Timișoara and by Universitatea Politehnica in Bucharest;
- In 2016, we developed a more extended promotion of the financed projects, and their results, concentrating on the students’ experiences; in this respect we focused on gathering more testimonials from the students. Most testimonials were published in the monthly PO newsletter (see the list above) or presented in various contexts. More extended articles (about 2 projects implemented by University Politehnica – Bucharest and West University – Timisoara), were sent to be published on the eeagrants.org webpage;
- the bilingual website www.see-burse.ro (10.000 visitors), updated regularly with relevant information on events, publications, financed projects;
- the Facebook page (unpaid) – <https://www.facebook.com/EEA.Grants.Romania> (with almost 700 followers up to the end of December 2016, and a maximum reach of 1.136 persons – when the public consultation regarding the new Programme was launched);
- 4 testimonials with photos and 2 general information articles published in the PO’s monthly newsletter, InfoALTFEL – <http://www.anpcdefp.ro/avertimail.php> (with more than 10.000 monthly readers).

Programme RO17

- The Programme [webpage](http://www.norwaygrants-greeninnovation.no) <http://www.norwaygrants-greeninnovation.no> was the main communication tool to outline the implementation phase and results obtained through each financed project. In a natural communication development leap the Programme is currently being migrated to <http://www.innovasjon Norge.no/EEA-Norway-Grants> which will be the main project presentation webpage covering all 50 projects implemented under the Programme and linked with EEA Grants project website;
- 4 October 2016 - Journalist round table and success stories. The company Evolution Media has been selected for two specific key promotion tasks. First promotion element was to pitch 12 projects to journalist that would like to write about and inserted their articles into specific mass media channels.

The results were that 11 articles have been generated after the press release and further 2 after the media pitch. Second promotion element was that 5 success stories articles have been written by journalist while thoroughly visiting the projects and 20 media reflections;

- 13 October 2016 – Launch of photo exhibition . 25 green partnership projects have been selected out of the portfolio to illustrate the success of the Programme implementation. The photo exposition was launched on October 13 in Bucharest at a reception held by the Norwegian Embassy for the signing the Memorandum of Understandings and has been displayed also at the Final Results Conference held on 14 October for the Programme;
- 13 October 2016 - Matchmaking event in Bucharest. 69 participants, project promoters and Norwegian partners of the Programme, have been presented the opportunities of Horizon 2020 as an initiative for bilateral cooperation. The main aim of the event was to show the opportunities of SMEs as participants in H2020 instrument and how a winning proposal might look like. Coupled with this event a short matchmaking session has been carried out in the second part, between Norwegian companies and Romanian promoters;
- 13 October 2016 – Green Industry Innovation Programme results. 146 participants have been present at the launch of the announced results and impact of the Green Industry Innovation Programme Romania. The event had a high profile participations starting with Minister of Energy Mr. Victor Grigorescu, a presentation of the future EEA Grants done by Elsbeth Tronstad, the State Secretary of Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And continued with a presentation done by Ms. Cathrine Pia Lund, Division Director, Brand Norway Division. And a presentation of “Scale-Up Romania, a new strategy for a more innovative economy”, done by Mr. Claudiu Vrinceanu, State Secretary, Romanian Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Relations with Business Environment.
- 14 October 2016 - Photo album - Together we did it! A photo album was achieved (in 1500 copies) in order to show that business innovation is necessary to achieve sustainable development. 25 projects have been selected to represent the green partnerships. Available at <http://www.innovasjon Norge.no/PhotoAlbumRomania>. The album was disseminated in 450 copies.

Programme RO18

In accordance with the objectives of the Communication Plan of the Programme and in order to increase the general public's awareness on the EEA Grants and on the Programme, the PO took, in the reporting period, a series of measures of information and publicity. The following publicity and communication activities have been conducted in 2016:

PO level

- updating the NFP website (www.eeagrants.ro) with programme information through news, photos of the PO and PP events and announcements;

CNCAN project

- updating the section dedicated to the project on its website (<http://www.cncan.ro/proiect-norvegia-en/>);
- information and visibility materials for the project have been developed (posters roll-up, etc.) were displayed during the workshops organised within the project;
- the nuclear emergency exercise organised during 4-6 October 2016;
- NRPA has published information on the project in its bulleting and on its website;
- ensuring the project visibility through the equipment purchased;

NAFA project

- updating the section dedicated to the project on its website (www.anaf.ro);
- ensuring the project visibility through the equipment purchased;
- information and visibility materials for the project have been developed (roll-up, etc.) were displayed during the seminars/training sessions organised within the project;
- information of the project were presented during the study visits organised within the project;
- the conference on fighting corruption which organized on the 9th of December (the Anti-corruption International Day) at the headquarters of the Government, with the participation of more than 100 persons.

Programme RO19

In accordance with the objectives of the Communication Plan provided in the Programme Proposal and in order to increase the general public's awareness on the Norway Grants and on the Programme, in 2016, the PO took a series of measures of information and publicity like:

- posting information about the Programme and predefined projects on the Programme website www.initiativeinsanatate.ms.ro, on monthly basis;
- posting news related to the Programme implementation;
- phone calls with stakeholders regarding the Programme;
- transmitting information about the Programme RO 19 and predefined projects for publication on websites www.norwaygrants.ro and www.eeagrants.org (through DORIS reporting system);
- distributing information materials like brochures, posters, flyers, banners, rolls-up, umbrellas, notebooks and pens;
- disseminating the Programme objectives and predefined projects to various events

In the same time, PO has monitored the implementation of the PPs publicity plans and approves the materials from visibility point of view.

Programme RO20

- The dedicated webpage for the Programme on the PO's website is up and running, both in the Romanian and English language version (<http://norwaygrants.just.ro/en-gb/home.aspx>).
- The Programme Operator launched a call for the Bilateral Fund at the level of the Programme RO20 "Domestic and Gender-based violence", opened between August 2015 and November 2nd 2015.
- The promotion of the projects was assured by distributing informative and promotional materials, by disseminating press releases and articles for the events organized within the projects, developing video materials (a documentary movie on anti-trafficking within the project "Best practice model on assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings – Pilot project", a short film/documentary covering experiences of domestic violence victims and interviews with specialists about domestic violence within the project „Together for Change”, a video illustrating the life stories of women within the project „CONSENS: Awareness raising campaign on the negative effects of domestic violence in the regions Bucharest-Ilfov and South Muntenia”), by creating web pages (<http://norwaygrants.politiaromana.ro/>, <http://norwaygrants.anitp.mai.gov.ro/>, www.connect-romania.ro, <http://salvaticopiii.ro/?id2=0002000100000006>, www.dasib.ro/violenta, <http://www.sigurantisiprijin.ro/>, <http://spasbm.ro/proiecte-in-derulare/solutii-integrate-pentru-violenta-in-familie-2/>, <http://www.violenta-in-familie-braila.ro>, <http://php.dctech.ro/grants/index.php>, <http://www.dgaspc-buzau.ro/te-ajutam-sa-fii-in-siguranta/>, <http://ro20.pixozz.com/>, www.faraviolenta.ro, www.proiectconsens.ro, www.sosviolenta.ro etc.) and updating them by publishing information about ongoing projects.
- The promotion of the projects was assured by distributing informative and promotional materials within the awareness campaigns (within the projects "Best practice model on assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings – Pilot project", „National campaign for public awareness and information on domestic violence”. „Together for Change”, „CONSENS: Awareness raising campaign on the negative effects of domestic violence in the regions Bucharest-Ilfov and South Muntenia” etc.), as well as through the organisation of final conferences of the projects that concluded their implementation period.

Programme RO21

- On 8-10 November 2016 a seminar on minorities' issues, with specific concern on Roma issues, was organized by the PO in partnership with DPP-POD, during which there were performed also promotional activities (press release, visibility materials);
- In April 2016, two closing events were organized for projects PDP#5 and PDP#6, in order to share the results of the implementation;
- In November 2016, an International Conference on cross-border crime issue in Europe was organized (activity on project PDP#1), during which promotional activities were also performed. The activity was organised in Romania, with the participation of Romanian and foreign police officers acting in the field of criminal investigation and provided the possibility for sharing best practices and gained experience;

- the PO and PPs websites are permanently updated.

Programme RO23

Except for the Programme's dedicated webpage which has been regularly updated by the Programme Operator, there were no other measures foreseen for 2016 in the Communication Plan of the Programme.

Programme RO24

Update and maintenance of the dedicated internet webpage (<http://norwaygrants.just.ro/en-gb/home.aspx>) .

Programme RO25

- One of the major visibility events was Promoters Annual Meeting. In the period 19-20 April 2016, the Promoter Annual Meeting took place in Bucharest and it brought together over 70 participants representing Promoters, partners and representatives of important public institutions;
- Field visits, where 34 participants, mainly representatives of promoters and partners gathered, were fruitful moments to share practical experiences of promoters and experts and to identify common problems, as well as ways to solve them.
- The Fund Operator has contracted the services of two journalists for a better promotion of the program. The journalists were drafting the press release, sending it to news agencies and in May-July, they will develop and publish in newspapers and magazines press articles about the activities implemented through the projects (specifically targeted business magazines and specialized websites).

Assessment of the results of the communication and publicity activities

Based on the above, the NFPs assessment is that the communication and measures undertaken have ensured an appropriate level of knowledge regarding the Grants both for potential applicants and the general public.

Work plan

In 2017, the main activities in Programmes will be related to the finalization of the projects and preparation for closure of Programmes. The NFP will continue the monitoring of Programmes through quarterly progress reports, monitoring visits, meetings with POs, etc.

The Audit Authority plans to organise audit missions as presented in **Attachment 6**.

Activity	Implementation period
Meetings between NFP and Programme Operators	Quarterly or as needed
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 2017
Preparation and submission of the Strategic Report	March 2017
Annual Meeting on the EEA and Norway Grants	June 2017
Modifications of Programme Agreements	As needed
Cooperation Committee meetings organised by the Programme Operators	As established by the Programme Operators
Information activities: press releases, information seminars, final conferences, etc.	As established by the Programme Operators or the National Focal Point
Verification of final programme reports	December 2017 – February 2018

5 SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The NFP monitored closely the implementation of Programmes, through quarterly reports, monitoring visits and technical meetings with the Programme Operators. Quarterly, the Programme Operators submitted monitoring reports which serve as a monitoring tool. Also, the NFP maintains, through its dedicated programme officers and management, a constant communication with the Programme Operators on topical issues and risks affecting the implementation.

As more than half of all contracted projects were finalised during 2016, a significant part remain to be finalized by the end of April 2017. In preparation of Programme closure/final reports, the most important issue will be the treatment of non-completed projects. In accordance with the Regulation, if projects cannot be completed before the final date of eligibility, the Programme Operators shall ensure that funds are made available to complete the projects in a timely manner. The NFP will monitor this issue, in order to have an overview of possible non-completed projects and the measures taken by POs. Also, clarifications and guidance from the FMO will be needed in what concerns the correct approach in this matter.

With regard to overall progress in implementation, public procurement continues to remain the most important issue delaying the implementation of projects and preventing the achievement of results. The new legislation on public procurement adopted in 2016 did not prove to make any positive changes in this process. Project promoters /partners as contracting authorities continue to face serious difficulties and uncertainties in applying the provisions of this legislation, while the necessary activities for preparation and carrying out of public procurement, including appeals, and are very lengthy and time-consuming.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT

1. For each Programme, a table showing the breakdown in respect of applications received and projects selected / contracted, as well as types of intervention supported
2. For each Programme, a table providing information in respect of donor partnership projects (names of Donor State entities, number and proportion of partnership projects)
3. A summary table on Donor partnership projects on the Beneficiary State level
4. A list of irregularities detected at the Beneficiary State level and at Programme level during the reporting period and financial corrections made. Provide an update on previously reported irregularities
5. For each Programme, a list of irregularities detected at project level during the reporting period and financial corrections made. Provide an update on previously reported irregularities
6. A plan setting out the monitoring and audit activities in the Beneficiary State for the coming reporting period
7. A list of monitoring visits by NFP
8. A risk assessment at the national level
9. Report on Roma target
10. Overview of activities under the Fund for Bilateral Relations at National Level
11. Overview of activities under the Fund for bilateral relations at the level of Programmes
12. Disbursements and payments
13. TA report 2016