

Summary of the Minutes 4th Annual Meeting of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009 - 2014

Date:

27 November 2014

Venue:

The Government Office of the Slovak Republic, Hotel Bôrik Bratislava

Agenda:

11:00 – 11:15	Opening Remarks
11:15 – 11:45	Status and Presentation of the Strategic Reports and their Update
11:45 – 12:00	Management and Implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity questions • Information and Communication • Selection procedures
12:00 – 12:30	Programmes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of programme implementation
12:30 – 13:00	Risk Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of risk assessment • Discussion on reallocations and extension of the eligibility period
14:00 – 14:15	Financial Progress and Audits in 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from the Ministry of Finance of the SR, representing the Certifying Authority / Audit Authority
14:15 – 14:45	Bilateral Relations
15:00 – 15:15	Horizontal Concerns and Roma Inclusion
15:15 – 15:45	Status of the Implementation of the Scholarship Programme and NGO Fund
16:00 – 16:15	Miscellaneous
16:15 – 16:30	Closing Remarks
16:30 - 18:00	Project Visit, Capital City of Bratislava SK02

Introduction

The 4th Annual Meeting was aimed at examining progress achieved over the years 2013 and 2014. The subject of discussions were Strategic Reports, including their updates, as well as further steps to be taken in the upcoming period of the EEA and Norway Grants implementation.

On the occasion of the Annual Meeting, a site visit of the project implemented by the Capital City of Bratislava within the programme SK02 Adaptation to Climate Change took place. In addition, two other projects were visited: one implemented by an NGO project promoter “Divé maky” within the programme SK10 NGO Fund, and the other implemented by an NGO “Centrum Slniečko” in Nitra within the programme SK09 Domestic and gender-based violence.

Summary

Opening

After short opening speeches by representatives of the NFP, the all-day meeting began. In the introduction, Mr. Anders Erdal (Chairman of the Financial Mechanism Committee) noted that most of the calls for proposals are closed and the implementation of programmes is effective.

Status and Presentation of the Strategic Reports and their Update

Representatives of the National Focal Point (NFP) presented the update of the Strategic reports covering the period from January 2013 until September 2014. In total, 115 project contracts have been concluded, with the total allocation of almost 27 mil. EUR.

The cooperation with the NMFA, FMO, the Embassy of Norway in SR, as well as the Embassy of the SR in Norway is very smooth and effective. The image of the EEA and Norway Grants is very positive and the Grants are becoming more recognised by the lay public.

The donor institutions are involved in 29 projects (25%). The cooperation with the donor programme partners (DPPs) is excellent and active in most programmes.

The statistics show that projects are implemented within the entire territory of Slovakia and a big portion of funds is going to be spent in the poorest regions.

Management and Implementation

Capacity questions

Most tasks assigned to the NFP are carried out by the Strategic Actions Unit, which was established under EEA and Norway Grants Dept. The EEA and Norway Grants Dept. closely cooperates with other departments of the GO. The NFP informed that the cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of the SR (Certifying Authority and Audit Authority) is very good. Mr. Anders Erdal appreciated the cooperation with the NFP.

Information-sharing and Communication

The Grants website is regularly updated. According to the statistics, the website is visited the most when calls for proposals are published.

Programmes

The NFP briefly informed about the status of each programme implemented. The NFP informed about the status of project contracting within particular programmes as well as about actual problems during the programme implementation.

Financial Progress

The Certifying Authority (CA) provided the participants with the cumulative disbursement overview as of 25 November 2014. The FMO has already disbursed almost 27,5 mil. EUR (almost 42 % of the net allocation) and approx. 6 % of it has been settled.

Bilateral Fund at the National Level

Representatives of the NFP informed about publishing the Announcement on the opening of the bilateral fund at the national level for 2014. In 2015, an announcement for 2015 will be published again (the thematic components will most likely remain unchanged but their scope will be extended). The donors appreciated a very good bilateral cooperation within the Bilateral Commission at the national level. In order to strengthen the involvement of Icelandic institutions in the implementation, the Embassy of Iceland in Vienna will also be invited to attend the meeting of the Bilateral Commission at the national level.

Bilateral Funds at the Programme Level

The Announcements on the opening of the bilateral funds within Measure A were included in the launched calls within individual programmes. The strongest interest from the applicants was recorded within the programme SK08 Cross-border cooperation and the lowest interest within the programme SK09 Domestic and gender-based violence.

Horizontal Concerns and Round-table Discussion

A round-table discussion on the Roma minority education took place on 12 November 2014. The conclusions of the discussion will be published on the NFP website. The next round-table session will be held in spring 2015. The representatives of Donors stressed the importance of the horizontal concerns.

Conclusions

- The representatives of Donors approved the Strategic Reports and their update.