

Iceland  
Liechtenstein  
Norway grants



Norway  
grants



Ministry of  
Development Funds  
and Regional Policy

# Strategic Report for Republic of Poland EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021

Warsaw, 30 June 2023

## **Abbreviations glossary**

AA - Audit Authority  
ABW - Internal Security Agency  
ACP – Association of Polish Cities, Poland  
AIBA - National Agency of International Education Affairs, Lichtenstein  
CA – Certifying Authority  
ACN - Arts Council Norway  
ACF – Active Citizens Fund  
CN – Concept Note  
COPE - European Projects Implementation Centre, Poland  
CZSW - Central Board of the Prison Service, Poland  
BFIA – Bilateral Fund Implementation Agreement  
DA - Norwegian Courts Administration  
DPP – Donor Programme Partner  
DSB - Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection  
EEA FM – European Economy Area Financial Mechanism  
FFI - Norwegian Defence Research Establishment  
FMC – Financial Mechanism Committee  
FMO – Financial Mechanism Office  
FRSE - Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Poland  
HDIR - Norwegian Directorate of Health  
IA - Irregularities Authority  
IFR – Interim Financial Report  
IN - Innovation Norway  
IPO – International Partner Organisation  
JCBF – Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds  
JD - Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security  
KDI - Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service  
KRS - National Council of the Judiciary of Poland  
KS - Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities  
LGU – Local Government Unit  
MCS – Management and Control System  
MFiPR – Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland  
MKDNiS – Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Poland  
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding  
MS – Ministry of Justice, Poland  
MSWiA – Ministry of Interior and Administration, Poland  
MZ – Ministry of Health, Poland  
NCBiR – National Centre for Research and Development, Poland  
NCN – National Science Centre, Poland  
NEA – Norwegian Environment Agency  
NVE – Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate  
OS - National Energy Authority of Iceland  
NFM – Norwegian Financial Mechanism  
NFOŚ - National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, Poland  
NFP – National Focal Point in Poland  
NMFA – Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
NO Emb – Embassy of Kingdom of Norway in Poland  
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
PA – Programme Agreement  
PARP – Polish Agency for Enterprise Development  
PC – Programme Committee  
PIA - Programme Implementation Agreement  
PDP – predefined project  
PO – Programme Operator  
RA - Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage  
RANNIS - Icelandic Centre for Research  
RCN - Research Council of Norway  
SIU - Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education

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## 1. Executive summary

This Strategic Report presents the recent development of EEA and Norway Funds in Poland from July 2022-till June 2023 in the period of great challenges.

In 2022 we have completed all the calls and moved into implementation phase. Almost 900 projects were awarded grant, over 60% of them were bilateral. Total expenditures in financing period amounted to over € 298 million. Slow growth of expenditures is noticeable and results from launching of advance payment process to project promoters in many programs. Nevertheless incurred amount (grant) constitutes only 37,44% of the allocation and it confirms delays comparing to the previous perspective of FMs.

Tight schedule of the EEA and Norway Grants programmes implementation is main challenge. The war in Ukraine, inflation and the global energy crisis make it difficult for huge investment (like in environment, local development, culture and justice sector) to make on time. The decision of non-extension eligibility period means that the tight schedule of the EEA and Norway Grants implementation became even more challenging. Nevertheless our ultimate goal is to use the allocation of this financial perspective as efficiently and effectively as possible. The risk management of grants and efficient cooperation with all the stakeholders and decisionmakers is essential for now and for the nearest future.

We see the flexibility package offered by Donors as a good step. We appreciate the possibility of reshaping some of the programmes without mandatory PA amendment, the use of savings for price increase where no targets are to be modified, possibility of analysing by Donors the reallocation proposals after April 2023 in programmes with high risk assessment. We appreciate Donors flexibility regarding modification of the Regulations enabling eligibility of payment done if the results are delivered till December 2024.

We count on further cooperation regarding the closure of non-completed projects as it was with the interpretation of what can be counted in projects as completed, viable and identifiable in relation to the occupancy permit. We are awaiting for the final report template.

We see further challenges as regards the smooth modification, reallocation process – current procedures do not envisage quick and efficient funds reallocations, including the Bilateral Fund. The bureaucracy is not helping us and we need to think how to avoid modification of the MoU and the PA each time when reallocation is needed. One modification of MoU at the end of reallocation process (including reallocation to BF) would be the most appreciated solution.

As for the future perspective it is extremely important we need to do all we can to make the programming process of the next round smooth and timely. There is a huge challenge of maintaining human capital (at PO, NFP side as well) – as we need to plan the cost of our experts in advance in budgetary planning already now for 2025. And the non-completion of EU-EFTA states negotiations puts us at great risk of losing experienced people and assets worked out till now in various areas of cooperation.

## 2. Country developments and effects of the Grants

In 2022 till now Poland has been ruled by a right-wing coalition government, formed by the Law and Justice party and headed by Mateusz Morawiecki. The next parliamentary election will take place in autumn 2023 – the pooling day hasn't been pointed out yet. The economic situation was deeply connected with the war in Ukraine – the energy crises, big inflation, breakup of supply chains, the influx of refugees – all the factors had big influence on our country and were impossible to predict.

The Partnership Agreement – the most important document defining how Poland will invest the European Funds 2021-2027 – was signed in mid-2022. The Operational Programmes have been accepted by EC. Additionally, in December 2022 Poland and Switzerland signed an agreement on the implementation of

Swiss Contribution. The rules of implementation are being developed. Poland stays in dialogue with EC on the Polish recovery and resilience plan.

One of the goals of Polish foreign policy in 2022 was supporting socio-economic development as part of reducing the effects of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and promotion of the domestic enterprises on foreign markets. Poland played an important role on the international arena connected with the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2022. Poland used this forum to support Ukraine as a victim of Russian aggression since 2022. Moreover, Poland has engaged actively in economic and political support of Ukraine in the ongoing war.

Going into the economic and social context, it should be reminded that the overall objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA (objective – cohesion), which seems to be of enormous value, especially in current circumstances. The process of monitoring the cohesion objective progress uses macroeconomic and social indicators illustrating, among others, economic growth, unemployment, poverty and income inequalities.

While analysing cohesion indicators, attention should be given to a few aspects, e.g. substantial differentiation of the initial situation which for the purposes of monitoring was established for 2005. The gap which existed between particular states at that time had a significant impact on the pace of convergence that should be the fundamental measure of achievements. The developments of selected indicators monitoring the progress made in Poland in comparison to other beneficiary states as well as donor states in the period of 2008-2021 are presented below.

The Human Development Index describes changes in the socio-economic development of individual countries and assesses countries on three levels: long and healthy life, knowledge, education and affluent standard of living and national income per capita in USD, calculated at purchasing power parity currency. Both the differentiation of indicators for individual countries and the distance between Poland and Norway, which as the leader of the world ranking can be treated as a benchmark for assessing progress in the implementation of the sustainable development strategy, has decreased.

Human Development Index	2009	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change in 2009-2021
Bulgaria	0,77	0,79	0,81	0,81	0,81	0,82	0,80	0,79	0,02
Croatia	0,80	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,84	0,86	0,85	0,85	0,05
Cyprus	0,85	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,89	0,89	0,90	0,05
Czechia	0,85	0,88	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,90	0,89	0,89	0,04
Estonia	0,84	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,88	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,05
Greece	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,89	0,89	0,89	0,03
Hungary	0,82	0,84	0,84	0,84	0,84	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,03
Latvia	0,82	0,83	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,87	0,87	0,86	0,04
Lithuania	0,83	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,87	0,88	0,88	0,87	0,04
Malta	0,83	0,86	0,88	0,88	0,88	0,89	0,91	0,92	0,09
Poland	0,82	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,88	0,88	0,88	0,06
Portugal	0,81	0,84	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,87	0,06
Romania	0,80	0,80	0,81	0,81	0,82	0,83	0,82	0,82	0,02
Slovakia	0,82	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,86	0,85	0,03
Slovenia	0,88	0,89	0,90	0,90	0,90	0,92	0,91	0,92	0,04
Norway	0,94	0,95	0,95	0,95	0,95	0,96	0,96	0,96	0,02
Iceland	0,89	0,93	0,93	0,94	0,94	0,95	0,96	0,96	0,07

Lichtenstein	0,90	0,91	0,92	0,92	0,92	0,91	0,93	0,93	0,03
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Source: UNDP

Another important indicator of economic cohesion is GDP per capita in relation to the EU average, taking into account differences in purchasing power. In the period from 2009, Poland is in the group of countries that have made significant progress in economic convergence.

GDP per capita (PPS) in relation to the UE average (%)	2009	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change in 2009-2022 [pp]
Bulgaria	43	47	48	50	51	53	55	57	59	16
Croatia	62	59	60	61	63	65	64	70	73	11
Cyprus	105	82	84	85	89	90	88	91	92	-13
Czechia	85	87	87	88	91	93	93	92	91	6
Estonia	63	76	77	79	82	84	84	89	87	24
Greece	94	70	68	68	68	67	62	64	68	-26
Hungary	64	68	67	68	71	73	74	75	78	14
Latvia	52	64	65	67	69	69	70	72	74	22
Lithuania	56	75	76	79	80	84	87	89	90	34
Malta	81	93	94	95	98	100	97	102	102	21
Poland	59	68	68	70	70	73	76	77	79	20
Portugal	82	77	78	77	77	79	76	75	77	-5
Romania	51	56	58	62	65	70	72	74	77	26
Slovakia	71	77	77	77	73	70	70	70	68	-3
Slovenia	85	82	82	84	87	89	89	90	92	7
Norway	172	160	148	149	151	147	142	167	b.d.	-5*
Iceland	130	126	130	131	130	126	120	119	b.d.	-11*
Lichtenstein	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.

Source: Eurostat

\*change in 2009-2021

Similarly the difference in terms of economic development (regarding GDP growth, Gini coefficient and unemployment level) between the group of beneficiary states and donor states significantly decreased. The results of analysis of the selected monitoring indicators indicate the progress in the group of 15 beneficiary states of the EEA and Norway Grants in the scope of reducing economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area in the period of 2009-2020. In this regard Poland belongs to the leaders.

Thanks to bilateral cooperation between partners from Poland in Norwegian in different fields of activities like in education, research, business, NGO sector the links between beneficiaries' countries and donors' countries are stronger, the fruits of exchange of knowledge and experiences are visible in different sectors. There are numerous examples of excellent initiatives like the one from the environmental sector, such as the implementation of a project that involves the integration of automatic and simultaneous sorting technology along with an intelligent system for the regranulation of plastic waste derived from the processing of used refrigeration appliances. Another ones worth to mention could be a series of projects from the basic research sector related to polar studies.

### 3. Status of programmes

#### 3.1 Overview

Poland is to receive € 809.3 million of a total contribution of € 2.8 billion that has been agreed for the period 2014-2021. It makes Poland the biggest beneficiary country consuming ca. 30% of the funds available.

#### EEA and Norway grants 2014-2021 programmes in Poland

FM	PA	programme	grant €	national contribution €	bilateral ambitions €	PO	DPP	IPO
NFM	Business Development, Innovation and SMEs	<b>Business Development and Innovation</b>	95,000,000	16,764,706	600,000	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Innovation Norway	N/A
NFM /EEA FM	Applied Research	<b>Applied Research</b>	69,183,666	12,208,882	390,000	National Centre for Research and Development	Research Council of Norway (RCN)	N/A
NFM /EEA FM	Basic Research	<b>Basic Research</b>	51,510,282	9,090,050	260,000	National Science Centre (NCN)	Research Council of Norway (RCN)	N/A
NFM	European Public Health Challenges	<b>Health</b>	15,632,000	2,758,588	300,000	Ministry of Health	Norwegian Directorate of Health (HDIR)	N/A
NMF /EEA FM	Local Development and Poverty Reduction, Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency	<b>Local Development</b>	104,368,000	18,417,882	400,000	Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
NMF	Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention; Domestic and Gender-based Violence	<b>Justice</b>	58,221,052	10,450,774	400,000	Ministry of Justice	Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI)	N/A
NMF	Asylum and Migration International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime	<b>Home Affairs</b>	20,000,000	3,529,412	600 470	Ministry of Interior and Administration with support from the European Projects Implementation Centre	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB), Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)	N/A

	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness							
EEA FM	Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship	<b>Education</b>	<b>20,242,750</b>	<b>3,572,250</b>	1 850 000	Foundation for the Development of the Education System	Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-DIR), the National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA) and the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)	N/A
EEA FM	Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security; Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; Environment and Ecosystems	<b>Environment, Energy and Climate Change</b>	<b>146,042,000</b>	<b>25,772,118</b>	900,000	Ministry of Climate and Environment with support from the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management	Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA), Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE), National Energy Authority of Iceland (OS)	N/A
EEA FM	Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	<b>Culture</b>	<b>74,757,250</b>	<b>13,192,456</b>	600,000	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Arts and Culture Norway (ACN), Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage (RA)	N/A
EEA FM	Civil Society	<b>Civil Society</b>	<b>59,200,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	Stefan Batory Foundation (leader), the Shipyard Foundation, and the Academy of Civic Organizations Foundation for NF  And Local Democracy Development Foundation, Information Society Development Foundation, and Education for Democracy Foundation for RF	N/A	N/A



NMF	Social Dialogue – Decent Work	<b>Social Dialogue - Decent Work</b>	5,120,000	N/A	N/A	FMO in accordance with Article 6.13 of the Regulation. Innovation Norway is appointed Fund Operator in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 6.13 of the Regulation	N/A	N/A
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### 3.1.1 Overall challenges, mitigation measures

EEA and Norway Grants in Poland in 2022/2023 were in the implementation phase, marked by still recovery after COVID, the war in Ukraine, global inflation .

2022 was a year marked by the war in Ukraine. Since February 2022 Ukrainians have been fighting with NATO’s help against military Russian invasion. Poland is one of the most active NATO members in this regards and supports Ukraine in military, political and economic way. Ukrainian refugees who came to Poland after February 2022 also found a big social and economic support. It is estimate that over 1 million refugees still stays in Poland. Most of them found a job, however, there are still numerous Ukrainians who need a financial or social support from the government or NGOs. Particularly difficult situation is in education area – almost 200 thousand children from Ukraine don’t go to Polish schools at the same time probably taking part in remote Ukrainian lessons. War in Ukraine has a big impact on economy too. A lot of Ukrainian men who worked in Poland in transport and construction came back to fight against the aggressor. In consequence a lack of work force particularly in construction works appeared a big problem at the Polish market. Russia and Ukraine are large producers and exporters of key food items, minerals and energy. The war has already resulted in sizeable economic and financial shocks, particularly in commodity markets, with the prices of oil, gas and wheat soaring. The rate of inflation quite high after the monetary easing policy during COVID-19 had risen up reaching the level of a dozen or so percent in Middle-Eastern Europe. The high level of prices is a big challenge because it exceeds the costs of projects estimated few years ago in different conditions. The challenges we are facing at the phase of implementation of funds demanding flexible approach.

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The NFP keeps informing FMC about the risks resulting from COVID-19 and the ongoing war and their consequences. In spring 2022 NFP sent 3 letters to FMC presenting the situation in programmes and risks - it was emphasised that tight schedule of implementation is the main risk factor and an extension of eligibility period request has been made as the adequate and most effective tool to be used in the risk management.

The answer to the inflation risk was the letter of FMO from June 2022 in which the Donors let the PO to allocate additional funds to already approved projects due to cost increase. Unfortunately with letter of 6 September 2022 the decision on non-extension of the eligibility period was communicated to NFP. This was a big disappointment to Polish side and the tight schedule of the EEA and Norway Grants implementation became a challenge we are struggling with and now its consequences are even more visible.

In autumn 2022 FMO provided flexibility tools (that we appreciate) aiming at absorbing more funds including reallocation within and between projects (without necessity to modify PA) and programmes,

possibility to finance projects from both sources NMF and EEA Grants, possibility to finish non-completed projects not finished until eligibility period from other sources without losing the grant provided that they are finish until the submission of the Final Programme Report, modification of the Regulations which allows to fund the delivery (in case of good) or performance (in case of works and services) provided that the costs are invoiced and paid till 31th December 2024.

We see the need for analysing the absorption potential within the programmes on a constant basis. We are aware of the reallocation deadline from the Regulations, nevertheless we appreciate Donors willingness to assess any reallocation requests that may still come out within Polish portfolio. When there is no option to use the funds within the programme, the reallocation is most efficient tool to be used to minimise the risk of non-spending the allocation. NFP is in a close contact with POs and makes the risk analysis and is going to request for reallocations, if justified.

The use of the Bilateral Fund (with longer eligibility period) is also one of the options being thoroughly analysed by NFP and POs. The rules of such shift needs to be redefined – as there are separate allocations in MoU and PA/BF Agreement given, JCBF engagement is necessary. And POs need to declare the readiness to make good use of the funds for the bilateral activities within the given framework. The dialogue with FMO is to be continued.

### 3.1.2 Legal framework

In the described period modifications of Regulations took place. In February 2023 there was modified art.8.2.3 of EEA and NMF Regulation which let to fund delivery (in case of goods) or performance (in case of services and works) in the period between 30 April 2024 and 31 December 2024, provided that the costs are invoiced and paid within the period of eligibility.

PAs modification took place in Health (reallocation 4,3 million euro grant to Local Development programme), Home Affaires concerned the pdp 2 (activities and indicators were adjusted to the current needs and situation within the project), Culture (reallocation of 242 750 Euro from Culture Management costs to Education), Basic research (transfer 1,2 million euro from Idealab to CRIOS), Justice (change of the number of correctional complexes from 5 to 4, change of the SGSs allocation (shift from SGS2 to SGS1) and change of the PDP3 Promoter from Ministry of Family and Social Policy to Ministry of Justice the Programme Operator).

NFP experience shows that the necessity of modifications of PAs is a result of excessive level of detail of these documents. As a lesson learnt for the future perspective, the conclusion is that less detailed agreements will allow for more efficient processing of the necessary amendments.

NFP and Polish POs participate in all workshops provided hitherto by the FMO. In December 2022 we took part in a workshop in Brussels and in January 2023 NFP and PO took part in an on line session regarding annual reports. NFP and PO share an opinion that organisation by FMO of stationary workshop regarding closure of programmes and final reports would be very helpful and useful.

The lessons learned from the current round of EEA and Norway grants shall be taken into consideration while preparing the framework for the next period, waiting for the finalisation of EFTA states – EU negotiations. PL NFP shared its observations and proposals with FMO at the beginning of 2023 (also including BF) and is ready to continue the dialogue in this regard.

### 3.2 Calls for proposals and predefined projects.

All planned calls were launched and the winners of the competitions have been selected. Almost 3600 applications hitherto received in the programmes managed by the Polish side is quite an impressive result.

Till now there are almost 900 projects awarded a grant, there are still some contacts to be signed in Innovation programme – from reserve lists. We still observe withdrawals from the contacts (for instance Climate, Innovation) however the funds are allocated to new projects. On the other hand POs (for instance Climate, Research, Home Affairs, Culture, Education) organise or plan to organise additional calls for already implemented projects to manage savings.

Bilateral cooperation is excellent - a number of submitted partnerships' projects is over 60% in spite of the fact that in many projects partnership was not obligatory.

16 Predefined projects are implemented, some of them are behind schedule but generally the implementation level is satisfactory. The NFP finds predefined projects as a good solution especially in the sectors where the number of potential beneficiaries is limited and a strategic approach can be used for instance Home Affairs, Justice. We need to have in mind that preparing of PDPs is more challenging at the programming phase and the process to be used here needs streamlining for the future.

In general, the results of the programs and projects are just now starting to be visible. NFP keeps dialogue with POs on sharing projects stories and expect within the next period the communication will be focused on the EEA and Norway grants effects.

### 3.3 Programmes implementation status.

NFP analysed progress of each programme, assessed their implementation phase in one to three scale, where:

**1 means high risk programmes** - there are 5 programmes still in the initial phase (Local development, Justice, Innovations, Health and Environment). These programmes are at the highest risk of not completing the projects on time of the eligibility date bearing in mind projects' required implementation period or not signing the contracts, not completing the public procurement procedures and non-use of the total allocation. Limited results are achieved so far, delays are significant, reallocation is ongoing, low level of expenditures is noted. We can say now with no doubt that some results in these programmes will not be achieved.

**2 means medium risk programmes** – there are 2 programmes in the middle implementation phase which means that projects are contracted, results are in progress, level of expenditure is around 30-40% of grant value and some delays are recorded but we assess most of the projects as still feasible (Culture, Home Affairs). (Here we put also Home Affairs due to the level of spending – but looking at the implementation stage it could be also put into the Green part).

**3 means limited risk programmes** – there are 3 programmes well advanced, projects are contracted; implementation is advanced, their results are already partly visible, some expenditures are up to 70% (both Researches, and Education).

	risk assessment		
	high risk (1)	midium risk (2)	limited risk (3)
EDUCATION			
BASIC RESEARCH			
APPLIED RESEARCH			
CULTURE			
BD&INNOVATION			
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT			
HOME AFFAIRS			
ENVIRONMENT			
HEALTH			
JUSTICE			

Unfortunately the less time we have the more programmes are becoming riskier. Comparing to the former SR – Health and Innovation were placed in red part.

- **Applied Research**

The programme reported EUR Mln 49,7 of grant expenditures, which constitutes almost 72% of its allocation.

Contracting phase is finished - total number of 81 project contracts were signed. Currently identified savings are parts of project grants that have been cancelled due to irregularities identified during financial controls and audits (14 098,62 EUR). The PO does not identify savings of project grants that have upon project closure not been fully utilized. All projects are still under implementation, and many of them apply for extension of project period until the final eligibility date.

In connection with the allocation of the reserve from the NFM for funding of three IdeaLab reserve projects, with the need to ensure financing of each project from one financial mechanism at that time, there was an unspent amount of 70 722,2 EUR from the NFM – the funds were allocated to increase the budget of projects implemented under POLNOR, POLNOR CCS i IdeaLab.

The amount of exchange rate surplus in the Programme at the end of February 2023 was 2 957 002,94 EUR. PO organized an additional mini call in order to increase funding for already approved POLNOR, POLNOR CCS and IdeaLab projects.

Currently, the PO does not identify projects for which there is a risk of failure to complete within the expenditure eligibility deadline.

In case of three IdeaLab projects, the funding of which was possible only after granting an additional allocation by the Donors and the planned completion dates do not exceed April 30, 2024, but their duration is shorter than the originally assumed 36 months, the PO still identifies the risk of not achieving all results.

PO has a flexible approach to introduce changes in projects. In addition, the PO annexed project contracts with the Project Promoters, expanding the catalogue of changes in projects that do not require amendment to project contract, but notification of the change to the PO. It shortens and simplifies the implementation of changes in projects.

The PO has completed the Scheme: Support for Ukrainian researchers under the Fund for bilateral relations. As the final date of eligibility for support under Fund for bilateral relations is later than under

the Programme, the PO agreed with the Donor Programme Partner (RCN), that the analysis of the use of the remaining Fund for bilateral relations will take place later, taking into account the actual amount that will remain unused and the organizational capacity of the PO and RCN.

The PO carries out informational and promotional activities. The conference promoting Applied Research programme will take place in IV quarter of 2023.

The next PC meeting would take place on 27-28 September 2023.

#### • **Basic Research**

The programme reported EUR Mln 37,2 of grant expenditures, which constitutes over 72% of its allocation.

The contracting phase is completed. Within the GRIEG call, 35 project contracts have been signed, including 7 projects from the waiting list due to the additional allocation. There are no additional projects on the reserve list.

The unspent allocation under the EEA FM (unspent fund within IdeaLab call) in the amount of EUR 1 271 625 was allocated on the pre-defined polar project CRIOS. The contract for the implementation of the CRIOS project was signed on November 2022. The project started immediately.

The unused allocation under the NFM is 660 809 Euros. In case of the Basic Research Programme, the amount at risk will be known after the projects' completion and evaluation of final reports in the second half of 2024.

The exchange rate savings range from 1 063 904 Euros (at the PLN/Euro ratio of 4.5) to 1 259 229 Euros (at the PLN/Euro ratio of 4.7) - the amount can change due to exchange rate changes.

The Programme Operator announced a call for applications to allocate additional funds (exchange rate gains) to already approved projects which have the potential for absorbing additional funds and scaling up results or whose costs have increased due to the exceptional price increases with reference to the FMO's letter dated on June 9, 2022. The call for increased funding for the implementation of projects realised under the GRIEG, IdeaLab, and POLS calls was announced in November 2022. About 90% of beneficiaries applied for the additional funds in PLN (53 application forms for the total amount of approx. PLN 14,5 million), with the condition that the maximum increase that a project can apply for may be at most 10% of the total funding granted by the NCN. The limit in EURO specified in the project contracts remains unchanged.

Currently, the PO's aim is to transfer the unspent NFM's allocation and the exchange rate savings to the BF managed by PO to finance the complementary predefined initiative supporting polar research, being the continuation of the CRIOS and other bilateral activities.

The BF was consumed by the special fellowship programme supporting Ukrainian students and researchers without the PhD with total sum of 465 500 Euros.

The PC meetings are planned in 2023- first in June online and second one in October in Trondheim.

#### • **Business Development and Innovation**

The programme reported EUR Mln 25,5 of grant expenditures which constitutes almost 27% of its allocation.

The final phase of the contracting process in the Programme is ongoing. By the end of May 2023 the amount of EUR 90,7 m was contracted to 166 projects (the amount of signed agreements reduced by the

amount of terminated ones). It equals to ca. 86 % of the Programme allocation. Therefore, there is still EUR 14,8 m of the Programme allocation to be contracted. There is 142 projects under implementation, 24 projects completed and still 24 project contracts to be signed.

Due to the fact that the risk of unused Programme allocation still exists because of possible further withdrawals of project promoters (till the end of May there were 42 resignations from signing contracts and 20 terminations of the agreements without project implementation), the mechanism of overcontracting has been agreed between NCU, PO and Ministry of Finance to be used in the second call of the Blue Growth grant scheme. Thanks to this mechanism signing agreements with the projects from the reserve list has been allowed before generating enough savings in the Programme. Currently the sum of overcontracting is estimated amount to 9 220 300,88 EUR (previously the limit of overcontracting amounted to 21 910 563 EUR), which allows to contract all the projects from the blue growth reserve ranking list (the last list of recommended projects was published in mid February 2023).

Additionally, several projects have already been completed and it has been noticed that the average savings calculated after their completion amount to 6% of their initial budget. Moreover, further resignations can be expected. Hence, the Programme Operator estimations indicate that it should be considered that at the end of the Programme implementation even ca. 12% of the Programme budget may not be spent. Therefore, the PO manages the projects in a flexible manner allowing for project modifications as well as extensions of projects completions dates, till 30 April 2024 at the latest. It is expected that the amount of savings that cannot be used within the programme will be estimated very roughly in July 2023 at earliest, to be confirmed by the end of 2023.

Next CC Meeting is planned in autumn 2023.

## • Culture

The programme reported almost over 42,2 EUR mln of grant expenditures which constitutes over 56% of its allocation.

All grant agreements with beneficiaries have been concluded, contractors for investments are chosen. The level of project implementation varies from 75% of financial implementation level to 4%. The completion date for 7 projects is at the end of 2023. The expected completion date for the remaining 14 projects is the first trimester of 2024. So far, only one of the Beneficiaries has applied for the possibility of applying the "non-completed projects" rule, namely the Silesian Museum in Katowice.

The most significant risks for projects implemented under Outcome 1 of the Culture Program of the EEA 2014-2021 MF are delays in project implementation and cost increases due to disruptions in supply chains, soaring prices, material and labour shortages a result of the war in Ukraine. Delays in construction works may also result in the inability to implement soft activities, however up to the date, none of the Beneficiaries reported this kind of risk.

POLIN project is progressing well, with expenditure at the level of 40%. Savings in the budget due to currency exchange rates amount to 0,8 mln EUR – annex to project contract was signed.

In the Bilateral Fund the 2022 Call for Small Initiatives - a programme aimed at providing financial support for bilateral activities with a special focus on small and local activities - was launched and finished. The budget for the call was EUR 297,048. Nine initiatives from Poland and one initiative from Norway received funding.

Currently, the estimated savings in the program (O1 and O2) are approximately 0.5 million EUR. (These is the reserve for the appeal procedure in O1 and savings from projects ending or completed within O2)

The intention of the PO is to allocate these funds to current beneficiaries for additional project activities through a simplified procedure.

Regarding the savings identified in ongoing projects, they are to be used within the projects for additional activities related to the project's nature and scope, or to increase the grant for those investments facing financial liquidity issues due to an unforeseeable increase in costs, which are beyond the beneficiaries' control. This includes also exchange rate savings.

POLIN congress in Warsaw – 18-20 October 2023.

Culture closure conference in Gdańsk 3-4 October 2023, CC Meeting - 5 October 2023.

## • Education

The programme reported nearly EUR Mln 12,8 of grant expenditures which constitutes 63% of its allocation.

The contracting phase is completed. Huge number of high quality projects had to be put on reserve list due to high competition. For this reason the PO decided to reallocate any unused funds (i.e. savings occurred in already approved projects) to the component IV reserve where the competition was the highest. Additional funds granted to the Programme with the latest change of MoU were allocated to the reserve list as well.

The PO actively supports the project promoters. The online platform established after pandemic breakout turned out to be very effective tool for both communication and cooperation. Moreover, when finally it was possible, the PO organized bilateral conference for project promoters and project partners. The conference took place in Krakow in October 2022. Also there are upcoming events this year, including the Education Programmes Operators Meeting in Wrocław on June 27-28, 2023 and Cross-Border Cooperation Congress in Lublin on October 10-12.

The risk of not using the allocation is low. At the moment it is estimated that 38 278 € of savings may not be contracted as this amount is insufficient to finance whole next project from the reserve list. However the PO is considering to have another call for study visits. The issue requires approval of the DPPs and NFP.

It is worth mentioning here PO is very devoted and active in relation to Ukraine. There were summer workshops for children financed from BF (with a positive decision of JCBF).

## • Climate

The Programme reported nearly EUR Mln 20,3 of grant expenditures which constitutes almost 14% of its allocation.

All 11 calls are completed (call for eco fuel production in the form of pellets was cancelled in accordance with Addendum 2 to the PA) and the grant agreements were concluded under the PL-Climate.

Many beneficiaries resigned from implementing projects that received or were supposed to receive funding - so far 35 beneficiaries have resigned (all in energy calls). The PO expects the number of resignations may increase due to the inability to extend the eligibility period.

The PO's response to this risk factor is a launch of a procedure to award additional funding to already selected projects in line with the rules set by the FMO in June 2022 and extend the main ranking list in Output 3.1 Improved energy efficiency in school buildings.

At the 14th CCM on 5th of December 2022, 4 resolutions were adopted:

- transfers within and between outcomes
- extension of the main ranking list in the Improved energy efficiency in school buildings open call,
- support for a proposal of a bilateral initiative “Workshop on Preparation for the deployment of CO2 Infrastructure in Poland”,
- using any savings to extend the main ranking list in the Improved energy efficiency in school buildings open call.

The PO announced additional open calls for increase funding in Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4. Calls for proposals have been completed. The assessment of the applications in Outcome 3 is also completed, in Outcome 1, 2 and 4 is in progress. In Output 3.1 Improving energy efficiency in school buildings, PO conducted another call for proposal. Within the Programme, 3 PDPs are being implemented: strengthening the assessment of air pollution, description of services provided by ecosystems, building administrative capacity in the area of geothermal energy. In accordance with Resolution no 2/2022, the grant amount for each pre-defined project was increased by 20%.

On 11th of May 2023 another resolution was adopted which concerns transfers within and between outcomes (increase the budget of the Outcome 1 by EUR 4 849 061, decrease the budget of the Outcome 2 by EUR 613 418, decrease the budget of the Outcome 3 by EUR 3 941 621, decrease the budget of the Outcome 4 by EUR 294 022).

It needs to be outlined that for Climate programme the flexibility of non-proceeding with PA modification when budgetary shifts appear is crucial and makes the implementation more efficient.

Savings are transferred to projects where is a chance to spend them. PO does not identify savings at the moment.

Regarding the bilateral initiatives, two predefined projects are being implemented:

Bilateral cooperation:

- “Laboratory of Clean Transport Zones” - pursue by the Institute Of Environmental Protection – National Research Institute in partnership with Polish Alternative Fuel Association (PSPA) and Norwegian EV Association - Norsk Elbilforening as a Donor project partner (end of the project: November 2023);
- “Optimal management of low-temperature geothermal reservoirs – Polish-Icelandic cooperation on reservoir modelling” - pursue by the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences in partnership with ISOR - Iceland GeoSurvey as a Donor project partner (end of the project: February 2025).

PO also applied to the NFP for an additional funds of €35,000. The funds will be used to organize and host a two-day event on preparation for the deployment of CO2 Infrastructure in Poland. The event will be organized by The Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment and The Research Council of Norway, with assistance from the CSLF Secretariat and is planned to take place in Warsaw in second quarter of 2023. Expression of interest has been approved on 25 th April 2023.

There were also 3 initiatives implemented within the bilateral open call: "From Wisłoka to Wieprz - active protection of endangered bird species in the Vistula river valley", "Networking on SPAs for breeding and migratory birds in Poland and nature protection areas for breeding and migratory birds in Iceland and Norway", "Exchange of experience between Iceland and Poland in the sphere of wetlands' restoration for biodiversity and climate". All of the above projects have been completed.

Next CCM is planned on 9-11 October 2023 in Gdańsk.



## • Health

The programme reported barely EUR Mln 3,1 of grant expenditures which constitutes 20% of its allocation.

The project contracting is completed. Finally the PO signed 10 contracts for implementation of telemedical models ( 9 applicants withdrew, 3 applicants from reserve list had no intention to sign the contract). The signed contracts include 5 out of 6 telemedical models – diabetological model will not be tested. Consequently there were 4,3 million savings of the call. The savings were reallocated to Local Development Programme. The PO declare to implement all 10 projects in spite of short time. Due to big inflation the PO considers an increase of beneficiaries budgets if new savings appear.

As for PDP 1: documentation for tenders for evaluation of models is being prepared, planned events are organized according to the schedule, Programme Promotor proposed a replacement solution instead of Palliative Model – preparation of report about palliative care in Poland and possibilities of using telemedical solutions in this area.

As for PDP2:

I module Healthy diet - an organization of workshops and trainings for kids, parents and teachers in the kindergartens is ongoing.

II module Tobacco - the internet portal for children, adolescents, parents and guardians at schools on the harmfulness of tobacco usage is created, over 200 000 visits on the website were recorded. The nationwide campaign on combating the use of tobacco by youth is being organized by the chosen contractor.

III module – Mental health - The website dedicated to the mental health protection of children and adolescents is being created. The contract for workshops for kids, parents and teachers is being prepared for the contractor who won the tender. The trainings are to start in II quarter 2023.

After completion of tender savings of 340 000 euro within PDP 2 were released. PO together with DPP would like to spend it on additional activities within PDP 2.

BF initiative is being implemented. The deadline of initiative on antibiotics and vaccine was prolonged till December 2023 due to delays. The beneficiary of another initiative addressing social inequalities withdrew from the contract due to lack of staff.

Next CC meeting is planned in autumn 2023.

## • Home Affairs

The programme reported barely close to EUR Mln 7,4 of grant expenditures. which constitutes 37% of its allocation.

6 PDPs are implemented within the programme. One of them - PDP IV “Documents – Safety and Control, including Tactical ID-control” run by Polish Metropolitan Police was successfully completed on 31 December 2022. 99% of expenditures have been certified. As a result of the project, its participants have upgraded their ability to recognition false documents, cooperation between countries was strengthened, and trainees have been equipped with devices enabling effective documents control, the knowledge of police officers in the field of tactical ID-control have been increased and the ability to detect imposters have been enhanced. This project was implemented in partnership with Norway ID Centre.

As far as the PDP II is concerned, in August 2022 the PA was modified in this scope. Currently, the project is implemented according to the schedule. The project is constantly monitored, however the coming months are crucial for implementation.

Within outcome 2 – the project “ANPRS-as a tool to fight against organized crime” carried out by Polish Metropolitan Police has been successfully completed. 91% of planned expenditures have been certified. Within the project registration number recognition system has been purchased together with specially equipped cars. Project consisted also of trainings aiming to teach police officers how to use new equipment. Additional result of the project is a platform created for on-line trainings that can be also used to train police officers after concluding project.

PO declares the use of the allocation. The procedure on savings allocation is to be used (the procedure itself was agreed at CC) – so far for 60 000 EUR, within the implemented projects under PA20.

Two bilateral initiatives are implemented: “Road Safety initiative”, “International conference on disaster prevention”. The beneficiaries do not signal increasing risks related to the implementation of these initiatives.

The PO informed about the 2 new ideas of bilateral initiatives for potential financing within bilateral fund (tbd):

- Warsaw Metropolitan Police - in the area Norwegian Police’ experiences in logistic management system of uniformed services and experiences of other EU countries in the public procurement.
- DSB (Directorate of Security and Preparedness) - in the idea of using drone sensors as an integrated part of the crisis management.

The CC meeting was held on 20 April 2023.

## • Justice

The programme reported 3,2 million EUR of expenditures ( 5,6% of allocation).

PDP 1 - more than 90% of the funds have been engaged. According to the PO, risk is limited – investments are to be delivered on time. Kamisk localisation seems the most risky – there will be no production hall build (due to economic turnover; jobs for prisoners will be offered in existing facilities).

Cancelation of the trainings for inmates is predicted (indicator - rehabilitation programmes supported), which will be conducted from different fund: the complexes would be operational at the project end date and the trainings for inmates would be conducted in the new ones after the eligibility period.

Module 2 - work has begun to identify staff to be employed in the new pavilions. Curriculum and trainings schedule -also Ambassadors Programme - were agreed.

Module 3 - Implementation phase of the risk assessment tool in the IT system – to be fully operational by the end of June 2023.

PDP 2 is progressing well and former challenges within PDP partners were overcome.

PDP 3 transferred from the Ministry of Family and Social Policy to the Ministry of Justice. The project activities are very much delayed and current project schedule is extremely tight. PO prepared next recovery plan (where all public procurement contracts are to be signed by half of September 2023) , nevertheless it is still very risky and the dialogue in this regard with all stakeholders is to be continued.

SGS1 and SGS2 projects are being implemented, advance payments were made, total value of the 22 projects: 2,8 million EUR . The SGS savings are to be used for increase of the budgets of SGS projects within the set procedure.

Savings under PDP1 within the Programme are planned to be used for new activities such as the development of the restorative justice concept (mediation in the Prison Service) and complementary building in Chmielów facility - the activities are being consulted with DPPs. More flexible approach to the “hard measures” condition (currently 70%) is proposed. PA modification is to be proceeded (ongoing).

Bilateral Fund is planned to be mainly used for the implementation of the Ambassador Program after April 2024.

CC meeting was held on 31 May 2023.

## • Local Development

The programme reported EUR Mln 38,7 of grant expenditures which constitutes 37% of its allocation.

PO transferred another tranche of the requested co-financing only for 7 beneficiaries at the amount of EUR mln 7 by the end of 2022 and for 10 beneficiaries at the amount of EUR mln 12 by the end of May 2023 – which means that about 10 of the project promoters haven’t used 70% of advance payments given so far. This shows that the projects implementation is going slowly and the payments are expected rather by the end of eligibility period.

PO is ready to absorb additional funds which are to be reallocated from Health programme in the amount of Euro Mln 4,3 and also other funds if appear. PO does not request the increase of the management costs, as the additional tasks are to be done within the current limit. The rules of distribution of funds were agreed at CC.

In accordance with the principle of flexibility agreed with the Donors, modifications to the projects are ongoing. Significant changes to the projects were notified by the beneficiaries by the end of March 2023 to allow possible annexes to the projects agreements. There is no information now on how many projects will be non-completed on time, nevertheless it is assumed that there will be such.

At this stage, PO declares the programme still can absorb additional funds (regardless current reallocation of 4,3 mln EUR grant from Health). The public procurement contracts within the projects are signed or will be signed in the nearest future for higher amounts than assumed within the projects’ budgets, with the use of own funds of the cities or bank loans. PO is in constant dialogue with the local communities. Any additional funds will release the beneficiaries from this extra cost.

As for bilateral co-operation 17 partnership agreements have been concluded. In order to further develop bilateral cooperation, with the consent of the CC, the pre-defined project budget was extended to enable bilateral activities also to 12 beneficiaries for whom partners could not be found. Bilateral activities will also cover 54 cities - finalists of the call in the Programme - participation in the conference organized in Piła on smart cities and two conferences in Norway. Activities in this area (study trips/internships/conferences) are currently being implemented.

The call of proposals for grants on activities improving accessibility standards in cities has been announced for cities which submitted applications within the Programme but didn’t obtain the support for the main project within the Programme. The allocation for this purpose is EUR 510,000. Contracting under the grants has been completed, 20 beneficiaries have been paid an advance payment in the amount of EUR 327,297.

As part of bilateral cooperation 15 partnership agreements were signed - the signing of further agreements is being finalized. Since May 2022, the contractual partners have taken part in a total of 40 study visits to both Poland and Norway and online meetings. CC highly values partnership cooperation. Under the FWD, support is also offered to those cities that do not have partners in the Donor States. It consists in organizing study visits as well as internships abroad.

#### • Programmes implemented by the Donors

In programmes managed by the Donors: Active Citizens National and Regional Fund, Social Dialogue and Decent Work, Fund for Regional Cooperation and Fund for Youth Employment most of projects is completed, disbursement is high even up to 90% , saving are going to be managed. Within Social Dialogue and Decent Work 1 mln EUR from withdrawn predefined project was allocated to Polish projects. Donors highlighted the importance of NGO's projects for EEA and Norway Grants.

#### 3.4 Financing of the programmes – summary

Total expenditures till the end of March 2023 amounted over EUR 298 million<sup>1</sup> (PLN 1,384 billion). Nevertheless incurred amount (grant) constitutes only 37% of the allocation and it reflects delays comparing to time that left for the programmes completion. The delays in the implementation of projects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have started to be recovered, but overall, financial disbursement is still relatively low. Complex and high-impact projects involving infrastructure works are facing additional risks and difficulties due to the increase of prices in construction and energy, the shortage of qualified labour in the construction sector, problems with timely deliveries and increasing inflation. Applied research and Culture programs have the highest share in the total of so far incurred expenditures.

Programme	Total eligible expenditures EUR	Share in total
Research Applied	58 488 461	22,94%
Research Basic	43 809 375	17,18%
Education	15 098 051	5,92%
TAF	5 917 227	2,32%
BF	9 814 186	3,85%
Culture	49 685 093	19,49%
Local Development	45 594 284	17,88%
Business Development and Innovation	30 070 283	11,79%
Home affairs	3 832 481	1,50%
Health	8 731 289	3,42%
Environment, Energy and Climate Change	23 912 721	9,38%
Justice	3 682 632	1,44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>298 636 083</b>	

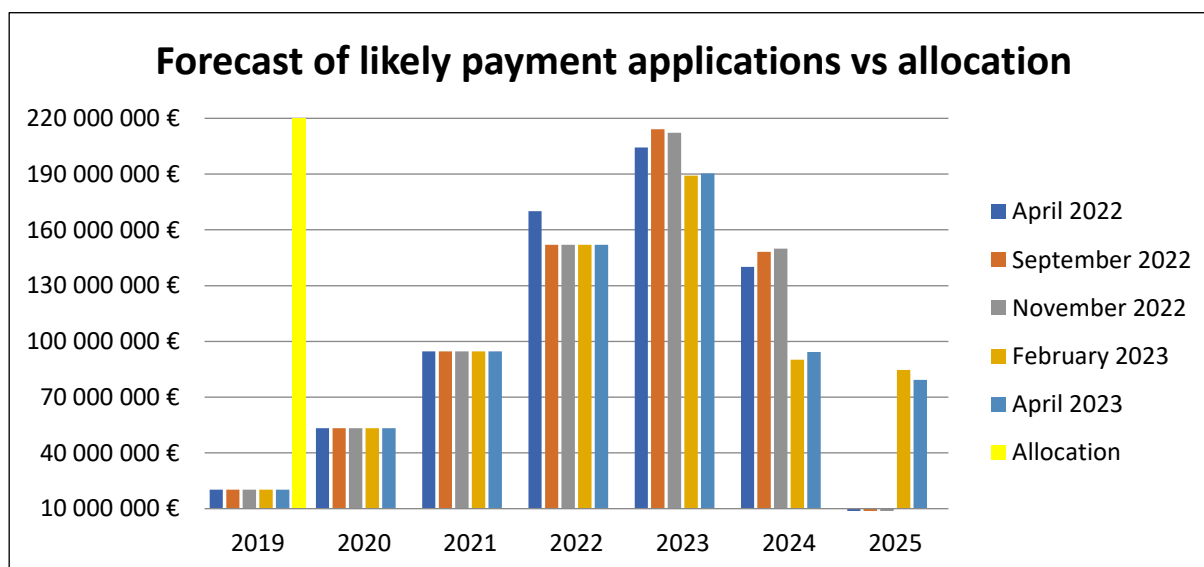
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<sup>1</sup> The amount includes expenditures certified in IFRs in March 2023 and amounts incurred by the PO in the first quarter of 2023 which are in the process of verification.

In terms of usage of allocation situation looks a bit different. The most advanced programmes are Research (both) and Education.

Programme	Incurred grant EUR till 31.03.23	Allocation	The amount of expenses incurred
Research Applied	49 715 192	69 183 666	71,86%
Research Basic	37 237 969	51 510 282	72,29%
Education	12 833 344	20 242 750	63,40%
TAF	5 917 227	12 139 500	48,74%
BF	9 814 186	17 186 000	57,11%
Culture	42 232 329	74 757 250	56,49%
Local Development	38 755 142	104 368 000	37,13%
Business Development and Innovation	25 559 741	95 000 000	26,90%
Justice	3 257 609	58 221 052	5,60%
Home affairs	7 421 596	20 000 000	37,11%
Environment, Energy and Climate Change	20 325 813	146 042 000	13,92%
Health	3 130 237	15 632 000	20,02%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>256 200 383</b>	<b>684 282 500</b>	<b>37,44%</b>

The slowdown in programme certification of expenditures is reflected in the amounts of payment forecasts provided by the Operators. 61% of the available grant budget has been already disbursed by the donors (EUR 422 million). The forecast made in April 2021 for year 2022 was realized in 89,5%. The highest amount of payments is assumed for year 2023. However, as might be observed, on the graph below, shift of payments to final years of implementation is visible.



More resignations from implementation of projects occurs due to unstable economic situation and deteriorating financial situation of some beneficiaries. The beneficiaries request for changing the scope of their projects. This could cause reduction in the amount of payments. As already emphasized delays in projects' implementation are noticeable and their completion within the date of eligibility is at risk. Therefore Programme Operators in dialogue with the Focal Point analyse utilization of amounts and try to propose and apply measures heading to maximalization of Mechanisms' effects.

### 3.5 MoU special concerns and/or conditions set in the PAs

All requirements specified in the MoU (the special concerns) and conditions set in PA (where relevant) have been addressed adequately. Detailed reference in the table attached (MoU conditions marked in green).

### 4. Status of bilateral funds in JCBF

The 2022/2023 was primarily characterized by bilateral efforts addressing helping Ukraine fighting Russian aggression and still the recovery from the pandemic.

NFP has managed to conclude all bilateral initiatives directly pertained to these tumultuous events and following results have been reached:

- Support for the activities of the Polish Medical Mission (1 million EUR) to purchase medicines for hospitals and medical units in Ukraine located directly in the battle areas. Results: 54 deliveries to 50 hospitals within the 23 Ukrainian Oblasts.
- Support for the Polish Medical Mission (1 million EUR) for activities related to supporting refugees in Poland - care for young children and their guardians in the form of financing the clubs and workshops for parents/children - in cooperation with NGOs/municipalities - in order to relieve the burden on the state education system and support integration. Results: Established 9 clubs in different Polish towns, providing support to 100 children and 1,300 adults.
- Support for PCK Polish Red Cross (1 million EUR) to fund vouchers for refugee families in Poland (current needs in the form of buying food, but also needs related to e.g. going to school for children). Results: financial vouchers (PLN 500 each) delivered to 9,000 people, hygiene packages delivered to 1,066 people, food packages delivered to 55 people. In total, assistance was provided to 10,121 people and their families.
- Support for Lewiatan Confederation (400 000 EUR) for activities aimed at activation of Ukrainians (help in finding housing and jobs) and preparation of companies to employ Ukrainians in the form of guidelines. Results – 44 refugees employed, 140 refugees activations support, 7500 companies received newsletters with information about rules of refugees employment
- Support for Education Programme Operator to organize an open call to organize summer workshops for refugees in Poland (1,6 million EUR) - carried out under the “expression of interest” format. The activities were encompassing organisation of 56 camps, number of refugees who benefited - 2803, number of women taking part in workshops – 1131, number of children taking part in workshops – 1672.

In relation to the above mentioned the changes in BF Agreement have been finalized, following budgetary changes introduced in the MoU - additional 1 mln EUR after MTR review and 2,5 mln EUR transfer from TA.

PL BF strategy for the 2022-2025 period, adopted in 2022 is still valid. The JCBF agreed priorities are: 1. Green transition and sustainable energy, 2. Civil society development, 3. Other areas of common interest, for instance cultural exchange, education and research.

In line with this strategy, a green call was concluded. JCBF has approved 12 initiatives for financing for the total value of 2.7 million Euros. The initiatives are to be realized within 12 months in 2023/2024.

Bilateral Fund is a crucial tool that significantly contributes to the objectives of the EEA and Norway grants. NFP sees the relations tightened and there is huge potential for future activities. JCBF plays an important role in the set up and gives the strategic input into BF at the national level. NFP sees the potential for

some simplifications of the whole framework and the proposal of "lessons learned" has been already shared with FMO at the beginning of 2023.

### Summary of the implementation of the work plan – budgetary state of play

The budget of the Fund for Bilateral Relations for Poland is EUR 19,686,000, covering EUR 4,350,000 allocated to the programmes in the MoU and EUR 15,336,000 to be managed by the NFP and under JCBF supervision.

Expenditures totalling EUR 9,814,186 have been reported, with EUR 3,886,337 of that being the share of the Programme Operators (PO's). This constitutes 50% of the total BF allocation

The BF budget is pictured in the table below. At the general level 90 percent of the total BF budget is allocated. It should be noted that there are new initiatives which are the subject of discussion at JCBF, so the indicated amounts may change very quickly.

Title	Budget €	Expenditures as of Q1'2023	Disbursed
<b>Activities carried out by the NFP</b>	<b>46 463</b>	<b>46 463</b>	<b>100%</b>
Call for proposals (national level)	4 770 000	49 520	1%
Pre-defined activities (national level)	6 210 071	5 831 867	94%
<b>Bilateral funds for programmes</b>	<b>6 550 470</b>	<b>3 886 337</b>	<b>59%</b>
<i>Local Development</i>	400 000	388 765	97%
<i>Business Development and Innovation</i>	600 000	413 188	69%
<i>Health</i>	300 000	80 986	27%
<i>Justice</i>	400 000	25 748	6%
<i>Home Affairs</i>	600 470	140 522	23%
<i>Education</i>	1 850 000	1 606 641	87%
<i>Environment, Energy and Climate Change</i>	935 000	155 203	17%
<i>Culture</i>	600 000	515 238	86%
<i>Applied Research</i>	390 000	294 923	76%
<i>Basic Research</i>	475 000	265 121	56%
<b>Funds still to be allocated</b>	<b>2 108 996</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19 686 000</b>	<b>9 814 186</b>	<b>50%</b>

As can be observed, the disbursed funds attributed to the calls of proposals significantly deviate to the disadvantage in terms of expenditure compared to other categories. However, it's important to note, as indicated above, the green call has just been concluded and the advance payments are to be paid very soon (in 2Q/3Q 2023). At the same time, BeFORMe call is entering its final preparation phase, with its announcement planned for the fall 2023.

In terms of BF allocation there is also one remark of significant importance. As the eligibility period is approaching, NFP is exploring the reallocation of surplus or unused Programmes' funds to Bilateral Fund. However there must be certain assumptions taken into account. At AM 2023, NFP proposes the procedure requiring a proposal of PO initiative to be approved by JCBF and realized by PO in the "expression of interest" format. However, the quite heavy bureaucracy - like PA and MoU modifications, JCBF decision, GRACE limitations with EEA/NOR split etc. – needs a revision. Donors declared to challenge FMO to look at the system to work on the efficient solutions to be used in a flexible manner.

## Bilateral Fund part allocated to the programmes

Overall, the level of the expenditure within Programme areas BF is diverse. There has been a general acceleration in spending, with a significant portion of sectors having already expended a substantial amount of their budget. Sectors such as Culture, both Research programs, Education, Business Development and Innovation, and of course, Local Development, are nearing the exhaustion of their allocations. However Justice and Health are still in need to speed up. The close cooperation with DPP in this regard is crucial.

## Predefined initiatives at national level

Bilateral Fund is being implemented on the basis of Work Plan, approved in April 2023, to be modified in June (after JCBF meeting). Below table presents the overview of the activities approved (finished initiatives marked dark).

	Title	Implementing Entity	Partner	Budget €
Predefined initiatives (indicative threshold: € 3 550 800)	Independent living of disabled students and graduates of higher education institutions	Institute of Applied Social Science, University of Warsaw (ISNS UW)	ULOBA, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Medvind Assistance Holding AS	128 876
	Trust across borders: State institutions, families and child welfare services in Poland and Norway	PRIO	Researchers from the University of Gdańsk	115 177,31
	Events linked to the European Forum for New Ideas (EFNI)	Polish Confederation „Lewiatan”	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)...	150 000
	Innovation, valorization and business creation of side streams of food production and food processing	Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research, Polish Academy of Sciences	Matis Ltd. - Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D, University of Iceland	140 520
	MiDeShare. Migration and Development: Sharing knowledge between Norway and Poland	Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM)	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)	93 599
	(...) combating organized drug crime	Polish National Police Headquarters	Capital Region Police Headquarters in Reykjavik	119 455
	Workshop Utøya: Young and Engaged V4 Citizens against hate speech and extremism	European Wergeland Centre	Chance Association, Poland	5 110,33
	Exchange of best practices: make cultural experience accessible to the general public	Schlösslekeller Foundation, Vaduz	„Dundun" Asociacion (Stowarzyszenie Promocji Artystów Ulicznych „Dundun"), Wrocław	3 538,12
	SHARE. Contest for youth	National Focal Point, Poland	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (tbc), Atlanten videregående skole	46 462,65
	Pilot project on Polish-Norwegian Literature Events for Children	House of Literature, Oslo, Norway	Polsk Iordagsskole Oslo/ Polish School, Oslo	44 333,96
	Education strategy for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim, including the usage of innovative technologies: virtual reality and internet/mobile platforms Implementing entity	Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation	Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL Senteret); SWPS University, Warsaw	145 076
	People stories	Embassy of Norway, Warsaw	Polish National Focal Point	92 000
	Youth for the City, City for Youth	Lublin Municipal Office (Poland)	European Wergeland Centre (Norway)	850 000
	Exploring Liechtenstein's and Poland's Perspectives on European Integration	Liechtenstein Institute, Liechtenstein	Institute of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Opole, Poland	38 500
	Oslo-Sopot Legal Education Summer School	University of Oslo	SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw	83 860



	Circularity GAP report Poland	Natural State( Norway)	Institute of Innovation and Responsible Development INNOWO( Poland), Circle Economy (Norway)	427 626
	Direct medical aid to affected population in connection with the war in Ukraine	Polish Medical Mission	Direct Donor transfer	1 000 000
	Child Friendly Spaces in Poland for Host and Refugee Communities	Polish Medical Mission	Direct Donor transfer	1 000 000
	Direct help assistance	Polish Red Cross	Direct Donor transfer	1 000 000
	Direct aid and other forms of support in connection with the war in Ukraine	Lewiatan Confederation	Direct Donor transfer	400 000
	NorPolFactor	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs	Pulaski Foundation	372 400
	<b>in total:</b>			<b>6 256 534</b>
<b>Open calls</b> (€ 5 918 000)	BeFORme - local initiatives supporting inter-generation learning	National Focal Point in Poland	NOVA, Oslo Metropolitan University (in component)	2 000 000
	Green call	National Focal Point in Poland in cooperation with NOR Embassy		2 770 000
	<b>in total:</b>			<b>4 770 000</b>
<b>Expression of interest</b> (€ 3 237 200)	Home Affairs expression of interest	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) with Government Centre for Security of Poland		350 470
	PO Education expression of interest	Foundation for the Development of the Education System		1 600 000
	PO Basic Research expression of interest	National Science Centre		215 000
	PO Environment, Energy and Climate Change	Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment and The Research Council of Norway		35 000
	<b>in total:</b>			<b>2 200 470</b>

Discussing the Work Plan initiatives status, it should be pointed out that 18 are already concluded and 3 are ongoing.

- EFNI, PRIO, European Wergeland Centre initiative, Buskers festivals, Polish-Norwegian Literature Events for Children, SHARE, Food side-stream, MiDeShare, Circular restart! Poland circularity GAP report were completed and reported on in the previous Strategic Report.
- On the research **Warsaw University/ULOBA** initiative, works had to be redefined and rescheduled due to pandemic - the initiative was extended till December 2022. The initiative was about developing a model to support the employment of the students and university graduates in Poland, taking into account Norway's good practices and experience. It included elaborating diagnostic materials; preparing a scientific monograph on comparative public policy in the field of vocational activation and employment of university students and graduates with disabilities; developing a model of support in the period of education and entering the labour market. **With the conclusion of 2022, the implementation of the project has been finalized.**
- **Initiative on combating organized drug crime**, after suspension for a year due to pandemic, was re-opened. The cooperation on workshops in Reykjavik and in Poland as well as job shadowing

component has been completed. The initiative is about to be finalized in June 2023, all project activities has been successfully implemented.

- **The Auschwitz Foundation** The initiative "Educational Strategy for the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum with the Use of Innovative Technologies" **was successfully completed**. The project aimed at developing an innovative educational strategy that incorporated virtual reality and web/mobile platforms and carrying out training for staff at the Auschwitz and Holocaust International Education Center. The Norwegian partner successfully created digital technology for education based on this project's outcomes.. The project resulted in high-quality short films about the Holocaust in Norway and a digital educational path utilizing QR codes around the building.
- Initiative "**Exploring Liechtenstein's and Poland's Perspectives on European Integration**" - provides for two events each in Liechtenstein and Poland as well as numerous publications on topics related to European integration of the two countries. Activities covers: public lectures in Gamprin (Liechtenstein) and the University of Opole (Poland), fact sheets about political system, integration in Europe and economic development of the respective country, online working papers covering various aspects of Poland and Liechtenstein integration with the EU, publication addressing attitudes towards European integration in Member States and non-Member States with focus on Poland and Liechtenstein. Initiative is due to be implemented till October 2023.
- The **short video stories** to the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) of Poles connected to Norway and Norwegians connected to Poland – in "People stories" initiative of Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw – **has been finished in 2023**. The main purpose of the initiative was to increase the mutual knowledge about Poland and the Polish society and Norway and the Norwegian society.
- Donors shared also the idea to engage young people in local decision-making on the occasion of Lublin being an Youth Capital of Europe in 2023. Hence the Initiative "**Youth for the City, City for Youth** – projects and initiatives engaging and including the local communities" was launched at the beginning of 2022. It covers creation of a "Youth Space" for meetings, integration and cooperation of young people in Lublin; increasing the number of youth initiatives, increasing the level of knowledge of young people and people working with young people in the field of, inter alia: civic education, volunteering, labour market and career counselling. It also aims at cooperation, exchange of experience and good practices between youth and youth workers from EEA countries (Poland, Norway) and the Eastern Partnership countries (Belarus, Ukraine) by organizing international events, study visits and youth exchanges. It will be implemented till April 2024.
- **Oslo-Sopot Legal Education Summer School**, initiative carried out by University of Oslo in Partnership with SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw intends to integrate scholars, postgraduate (or last years) students and professionals. In a nutshell it is an educational project with additional research and networking purposes, it has been concluded at the end of 2022.
- **NorPolFactor initiative** has been launched. The aim of the initiative is to acquire new knowledge of the security-related challenges, risks and threats Poland and Norway face in their strategic environment in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Research strategy involves conducting a comparative examination of national, Polish and Norwegian, perceptions of security and the impact Russian invasion of Ukraine has had on these perceptions. Initiative will be implemented till the end of 2024.

## Expressions of interests

Expression of interest PL Home Affairs PO – initiative of Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection DSB with Government Centre for Security of Poland – the international conference on disaster risk prevention was held in May 2023. The conference focused on development of disaster data databases for better preparedness and risk informed decision-making, resilient infrastructure, including private-public partnerships with the aim of capacity and knowledge building.

Basic Research Programme expression of interest: Scheme for young Ukrainian Researchers – continuation of the call – has been initiated in 2023. Special Scholarship Programme addressed to students and researchers from Ukraine without a PhD degree was launched on July 2022. Twenty-two scholarships were awarded, which absorbed the program's total budget. Another 18 scientists deserving of support are on the waiting list. Additional allocation enables 18 scholarships for students and aspiring researchers from Ukraine.

Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment expression of interest is aimed at organising technical group meeting of the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum and CCS workshops in Central and Eastern Europe in June 2023.

## Open calls

**BeFORme - local initiatives supporting inter-generation learning** - the overall aim is to engage people in activities for the benefit of their local communities, to facilitate the cooperation, to enhance inter-generation knowledge transfer in both directions, to motivate elderly people to participate actively in local life and create a unique cultural and societal bond that stands as an example of solidarity and respect. It was planned for 2021/2022 nevertheless the idea needed revision in relation to current needs, also resulting from war in Ukraine. The final scope of the call is to be finalized. Comprehensive report listing the 'good practices' in intergenerational learning carried out by The NOVA team from Oslo Metropolitan University is also a part of these complex initiative. Report has been already delivered in 2022. The call is in the preparatory phase, the announcement of the call is planned for the fall. The signing of contracts is planned for the first and second quarters of 2024. To be implemented by the NFP.

**Green call** is aimed at exchanging experiences and building up for new future initiatives/projects in the area of green transition, environment, renewable and sustainable energy – to counteract global climate crisis is planned. The Joint Committee of the Bilateral Fund has approved, via written procedure, a list of applicants who have been selected for grants. This list includes 12 entities, and the total value of their initiatives exceeds 2.7 million Euros (as the last 5 applicants received identical scores). Contracts signing is ongoing. The initiatives are to be realized within 12 months in 2023/2024. Joint activity of the Norwegian Embassy and the NFP.

## 5. Management and implementation

### a. Management and control systems (MCS)

The description of the Management and control system (MCS) at national level was not subject to changes in the period 1.07.2022 – 30.06.2023

### b. Complaints

Two complaints were submitted to the NFP. One complaint regarding the implementation of project financed within Active Citizens Fund – National Programme was forwarded to the Stefan Batory Foundation. Second complaint on delays in payments for project promoter and project partner in Programme Climate is being examined by the NFP.

There has also been an issue with payment delays within Outcome 2 of the Programme Culture. A series of discussions were initiated with the Operator to address this issue, and currently, the problem seems to be resolved. Simultaneously, the Operator has been obligated to monitor these matters.

### c. Irregularities

In this period the IA submitted via GRACE system:

- 1 report on new irregularity detected by the NFP in the management costs of the Education Programme (IR-151),
- 8 reports on new irregularities detected in the projects realized under the programmes: Culture (IR-152, IR-153, IR-186, IR-215), Applied Research (IR-172, IR-188), Basic Research (IR-187) and Local Development (IR-214),
- 1 report on new irregularity detected in the activity PL-BI008 financed under Bilateral Fund managed by the NFP (IR-185).

In each case all procedures foreseen in the Regulations were followed. All reports were submitted to the Donors in standard reporting mode (Article 12.5). These irregularities concerned the infringement of the provisions of the Act – Public Procurement Law, Regulations on the implementation of the EEA FM and NMF 2014-2021 and Guidelines on the award of contracts under EEA FM and NFM 2014-2021.

Simultaneously, the financial correction on the management cost of the Culture Programme was imposed by the FMO (immediate reporting of irregularity according to Article 12.5.1 of the Regulations). Above mentioned irregularity concerned the infringement of the provisions of the Regulations and the financial correction was settled in the IFR no. 6.

The total amount of the imposed financial corrections from July 2022 to June 2023 amounted to ca. EUR 526,000 under the programmes and ca. EUR 1,709 under the Bilateral Fund. In total it is less than 0,1% of the allocation.

Moreover, in the course of the reporting period, the IA presented 16 reports on the progress with regard to the previously reported irregularities under the programmes (Culture, Education, Applied Research and Basic Research) and Bilateral Fund managed by the NFP.

### d. Audit

In 2022, the AA conducted, based on the relevant sample, an audit of operations in order to verify the declared expenses under the management costs and projects implemented as a part of the programmes. The selected sample included: 2 programmes (management costs – Home Affairs and Environment, Energy and Climate Change), Technical Assistance Fund and 25 competition projects, to which one pre-defined project from Justice Programme was added. By the end of 2022, 30 planned audits of operations have been carried out by the AA.

As a result of these audits, only a few random financial error for the project PL-AppliedResearch-0035 has been found. The irregularity concern infringement of the provisions of the Regulations on the implementation of the NFM 2014-2021 (ineligible expenses – error in the calculation of the holiday equivalent) and according to the Article 12.5.3 of the Regulations is non-reportable irregularity, unless requested by the FMC/NMFA.

No systemic error during the audit of operations was identify. A one formal comment concerning data provided for choosing sample was issued to the NFP. Some of the data provided to the AA included advance payments. According to the Sampling Guidance on designing audit sampling strategies under the

EEA FM and NMF 2014-2021, the population to sample includes expenditures declared in the reference period. Other types of expenditure such as proposed expenditure or the pre-financing payments to projects should not be included in the reference population. In the future the NFP will make every effort to provide the AA with financial data in accordance with the principles set out in the Guidance mentioned above.

According to Article 5.5.1(e) of the Regulations, findings of the above mentioned audit were included in the Annual audit report for the period until 31 December 2022 as part of EEA FM and NFM 2014-2021, which was submitted together with the opinion of the AA to the FMO on February 2023.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

### a. Monitoring

In accordance with the provisions of the Description of the Management and Control System, the National Focal Point annually prepares a monitoring plan for programmes and projects implemented under the Financial Mechanisms and such monitoring plan for 2022 was prepared in February 2022.

In the second half of 2022, based on the agreed methodology, a mid-term risk analysis was carried out in August to verify whether there is a need to include additional programmes in the monitoring plan for 2022. Due to the current status of programmes' implementation and the adopted risk factors, none of the programmes achieved the maximum value of the total risk assessment defined in the NFP's audit paths of 70%, so the monitoring plan did not change, aside from minor adjustments to the timing of the monitoring visits. As planned, in the second half of 2022 the National Focal Point conducted visits in four programmes: Home Affairs, Health, Culture and Energy and climate change. The monitoring plan for the second half of 2022 also included five projects: two projects being implemented under the Business Development and Innovation Programme, one project under the Education programme, one project under the Culture Programme and one project under the Energy and Climate Change Programme.

Additionally, one initiative implemented under the Bilateral Fund was subject of visit conducted by the National Focal Point (Knowledge of issues of internal legal order of the partner country, exchange of information, knowledge and experience as the key to increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in combating organized drug crime, being realized by the Police Headquarters).

During the monitoring visits no irregularities were found. Instead, the recommendations were made regarding the ongoing implementation of the programmes, projects and the Bilateral Fund initiative.

The recommendations concerned, inter alia, financial progress, information and promotion, reliability and timeliness regarding the financial implementation, risks specified in the programmes or projects, implementation of the Bilateral Fund.

In February 2023 the National Focal Point approved the monitoring plan for 2023. Based on the agreed methodology it was decided to include four programmes in the plan: Basic research, Applied research, Business Development and Innovation and Education. At the same time, it was agreed, that in case of the Health Programme, the need for a monitoring visit will be analyzed during the mid-term risk analysis in August 2023. In the first half of 2023 the monitoring visits has started in two programmes: Basic research and Applied research.

In addition, nine projects were chosen for the monitoring of the National Focal Point in 2023 and monitoring of five of them has started in the first half of 2023.

The initiative implemented under the Bilateral Fund and beneficiary of the Technical Assistance will be subject of on-spot verification in the second half of 2023.

The National Focal Point during the reporting period also ensured the monitoring of the programmes via various measures: technical meetings, participating at the meetings of the Cooperation Committees and as observers in the Selection Committees, Annual Reports and quarterly reporting on incurred expenditures. The important role, as a monitoring tool, play also daily working contacts of the NFP with the Programme Operators.

#### **b. Evaluation**

The external FMO monitoring on gender programming in the EEA and Norway Grants for the *Justice, Education, Applied Research and ACF National* programmes took place in the summer 2022. The purpose of this evaluation was to review and compare the existing efforts to promote gender equality and reduce gender-based and domestic violence with the past 2009-2014 financial mechanism; and investigate current needs and provide recommendations to improve relevance and effectiveness in the design, planning, and implementation of gender equality programming in the EEA and Norway Grants.

In summer 2022 FMO's monitoring of an external Evaluation of Management and Control Systems of EEA & Norway Grants took place. The evaluation was carried out by Tetra Tech in 7 programmes.

In the spring 2023 an evaluation of bilateral cooperation in the EEA and Norway Grants was started by Ecorys . The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate the effectiveness and sustainability of the current setup of and work related to bilateral cooperation.

FMO, through the external monitoring contractor (Blomeyer & Sanz) conducted in autumn 2022 an external monitoring of the Home Affairs programme 2022. This monitoring included an assessment of whether the programme is being implemented in line with international standards, and assessment of identified risks. This monitoring also assesses the levels of capacity of programme stakeholders, and monitors programme implementation towards the achievement of expected results.

The FAFO report titled "The effects of the EEA and Norway grants 2004-2021" was developed. The report confirms a big value of these grants for both the beneficiaries countries and the Donors.

In autumn 2022 started a mid-term evaluation in Applied Research conducted by EGO, LB&E. The aim was to assess the implementation of the Programme Applied research in terms of taking into account the implementation of the Programme objectives.

## MoU Conditions

<b>Business Development, Innovation and SMEs</b>	The programme shall address Green Industry Innovation and Blue Growth. The programme shall also address Welfare Technology or Ambient Assisted Living to be further defined during the concept note phase.	Applied. The open calls in these fields have been announced.
	The programme shall include a small grant scheme targeting female entrepreneurs.	Applied. The open call for small grants for women has been announced.
	The possibility of using financial instruments shall be explored when developing the concept note.	The possibility of using financial instruments has been explored by the PO in 2018 with involvement of NFP, DPP and FMO. This has been done in writing as well as in a dedicated meeting on 8 June 2018. The issue was also discussed in the Annual Meeting on 12 September 2018 during which it was reiterated by the Polish side that using financial instruments in the business development sector would be challenging in terms of receiving good results in the field of both energy and business, as well as in terms of realization of bilateral ambitions. DPP - Innovation Norway supports PARP's assessment based on knowledge and experience from implementation of the second edition of Norway Grants Programme in Poland in years 2009-2014. All the arguments have been described in the Concept Note submitted to the FMO in December 2018. The conclusion was that using the financial instruments in this Programme is not recommended as in Polish circumstances it is not an appropriate tool to achieve the set goal: increased value creation and sustainable growth among Polish SMEs.
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored when developing the concept note including in areas related to research.	The PO together with the NFP analysed the project that had been considered at the previous stage for the NFM 2014-2021 preparations and negotiations with the Norwegian partners. It has been decided not to develop further the concept of this project in the Business Programme as similar initiative has been considered after stakeholders consultation in Research Programme being more appropriate to address the area of effective use and capacity development of research infrastructure as well as creating bridge between science and business.
	Programme Operator encourages synergies with other programmes in Poland, including for Environment and Energy and Climate Change and Research.	The synergies with other programmes are developed by informing other Programme Operators about the planned scope of their calls and eligible applicants (e.g. PARP participated in informational meetings for potential applicants of NCBR call for proposals – Programme Operator of Applied Research Programme). The synergies were also sought in the field of the Programme content with Environment Programme – PARP participated in the study visit to Norway organised by the Ministry of Climate concerning solutions in circular economy. Moreover, the Programme Operators shared experience on operational implementation issues, but also on substantive matters such as practical information on state aid rules. For example PARP benefited from the experience of the Programme Operator of Environmental Programme in the aid for environmental protection. PARP's representative participated in the Selection Committee operating under the Environment, Energy and Climate Change Programme. When planning the bilateral events and communication activities PARP is analysing the possibilities of encouraging synergies with other Programmes.
<b>Research</b>	The programme shall, inter alia, include support to research in the following areas: polar research, research on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and social sciences.	Applied. 1. polar research were supported in the core call (GRIEG) in the Basic Research Programme. 2. separate call regarding CCS was announced under the Applied Basic Research. 3. social sciences were supported in the core calls in both research components (GRIEG in Basic Research and POLNOR in Applied Research) and in the Idealab call under Basic Research.
	The programme shall support basic research (40% of the total eligible expenditure) and applied research (60% of the total eligible expenditure) selected on the basis of research excellence.	implementation of the programme is divided into two components: basic and applied research implemented by two institutions: National Science Centre and National Centre for Research and Development accordingly. Consequently two respective PAs were signed, which divided the Programme budget according to the proportion included in the MoU.
	The programme shall include a small grant scheme for female researchers.	Applied the open call for female researchers has been conducted by the NCBR

	At least 10% of the total eligible expenditure shall be set aside for a separate open call for research in CCS.	Applied: open call was announced by the NCBR (POLNOR CCS)
	The details of cooperation between the National Science Centre (Programme Operator) and the National Centre for Research and Development and the specific roles and responsibilities shall be defined during the concept note phase.	Applied in PAs.
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored during the concept note phase.	No predefined projects were foreseen during the concept note phase. The predefined project within Basic Research Programme was accepted by the FMO during the implementation of the Programme.
	Pursuant to Article 1.5.2 of the Regulation that the Programme Operator shall ensure that any additional provisions to the implementation of the Programme shall be kept to a minimum, and to this end the Donor Programme Partner shall be closely involved in and effectively contribute to the development of the project contract template and other templates of document(s) relevant to the implementation of the programme, especially those affecting the relation of the project promoter and partner(s).	During the preparation phase the NCN and NCBR closely cooperated with the National Focal Point and the Research Council of Norway and consulted all the relevant documents.
	Programme Operators of the Basic Research Programme and Applied Research Programme in Poland closely cooperate during the implementation of the programme.	NCN collaborated closely on daily basis with the National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR) - PO of the Applied Research to ensure consistency of the Basic and Applied Research programmes, e.g. representatives of both institutions attended their Programme Committees' meetings, representatives from NCBiR participated in the NCN IdeaLab workshop. In addition since the beginning of the pandemic NCN, NCBiR and DPP organise twice a month on-line meetings concerning issues related to programmes implementation e.g. use of BF.
	Programme Operator, before publishing the SGS 'POLS' presents to the Programme Committee a thorough assessment of the added value of this measure vis-à-vis similar national initiatives (offered by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA)) and other European initiatives, in order to establish whether there is a justifiable funding gap for the activities proposed by the SGS 'POLS'.	<i>Basic Research</i> programme: before starting preparation to the SGS POLS, the National Science Centre presented a thorough assessment of the added value of the SGS POLS to the Programme Committee. After reviewing the provided analysis, the Programme Committee decided to announce the SGS POLS call in March 2020. Call has been completed.
Health	The programme shall focus on reducing social inequalities in health and include measures that address telemedicine and e-health policy, healthy lifestyle of children and youth and community based care for mental health.	Applied: predefined projects are to be implemented: one on telemedicine and e-health and the other on healthy life style, including mental health
	No more than 50% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).	Applied.
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored during the concept note phase.	Applied: 2 predefined projects envisaged
	No more than 50% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).	Applied (as above).
	The National Focal Point shall ensure that at least 10% of the total Programme allocation shall address children's health.	Applied (budget).



	The National Focal Point shall ensure that at least 10% of the total Programme allocation shall address improved access to health for vulnerable groups/people and deprived areas.	Applied (budget).
	The National Focal Point shall ensure that the programme includes measures that address community based care for mental health.	Applied (programme description).
	For predefined project no. 2 under Section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement, the National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that the appraisal foreseen in Article 6.5.3 of the Regulation is externalised and carried out by a legal entity independent of and unrelated to the Programme Operator.	Applied (notification of the project).
	For predefined project no. 2 under Section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement, the Programme Operator's responsibilities regarding the verification of payment claims described in Article 5.6.1 e) of the Regulation and the Programme Operator's monitoring and control functions described in Article 5.6.1 g) of the Regulation shall be carried out by an entity independent of and unrelated to the Programme Operator.	Applied (notification of the project).
	No more than 37% of the total eligible project cost in the projects selected under the open call shall be available for equipment.	Applied in the open call.
	No costs shall be eligible under predefined project no. 2 (under Section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement) before a revised detailed description and budget for the predefined project, including the role and contribution of the donor project partners, have been agreed with the donor project partners, submitted to the FMO and FMO has confirmed the grant to the project. The Programme Operator shall ensure that efforts are made to secure the participation of a donor project partner in the mental health component of the pre-defined project.	Applied. Eligibility of costs has been confirmed while notifying the agreed and approved project.
Local Development	The programme shall ensure a systemic approach to local development and poverty reduction and may inter alia include measures in energy, environment, SMEs, business, education, housing improvement, employment, health components, transport management systems, public administration reform and support to local administration.	Applied in the open call (outcome 1).
	There is an ambition that at least 40% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for soft measures. All projects selected under the open call should include soft measures.	Applied in the call (outcomes 1 and 2).

<p>The possibility of pre-defining project(s) with the Association of Polish Cities, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) shall be explored when developing the concept note.</p>	<p>Applied.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that an ex ante control of public procurement procedures and documentation<sup>2</sup> carried out for the pre-defined project under section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement, is carried out by a competent independent entity, other than the respective project promoter.</p>	<p>Applied in the open call.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator encourages synergies with other programmes in Poland, including for Education, Business and Innovation, Health, and Environment and Energy and Climate Change.</p>	<p>Applied in the open call.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that Project Promoters:</p> <p>Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;</p> <p>Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</p> <p>Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.</p>	<p>Applied in the project contracts.</p>
<p>For the following Outcome 1 indicators, where the baseline value is “to be determined” (TBD), the Programme Operator shall submit to the FMO the baseline values, together with a description of the data collection methods used, no later than six months after the finalisation of the selection of</p>	<p>Pending – to be done after project contract signing.</p>

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<sup>2</sup> Limited to public procurement procedures (review of tender documentation) pursuant to the national public procurement legislation.

	<p>the relevant projects (municipalities). The updated baseline values shall be agreed upon through a modification of the programme agreement: Annual number of days with favourable air conditions meeting EU standards in selected municipalities. Annual number of published vacancies suitable for people with disabilities in selected municipalities. Level of satisfaction of persons participating in local-level public consultations (in selected municipalities) with the quality of consultations. Share of public and private buildings in selected municipalities with improved energy efficiency. Share of public buildings in selected municipalities meeting accessibility standards. Unemployment rate among graduates in selected municipalities.</p>	
Justice	<p>The programme's objective 'Strengthened rule of law' shall be attained through two outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the programme shall support the 'Improved correctional system' (Outcome 1) by way of one predefined project.</li> <li>• the programme shall support the outcome 'Improved domestic violence prevention system' (Outcome 2) by way of two predefined projects and two small grant schemes.</li> </ul>	Applied (outcomes, activities, 3 predefined projects, two open calls.
	<p>The programme will strengthen the implementation of agreements on the transfer of sentenced persons and EU framework decisions.</p>	Parties intend to work towards bilateral agreement on transfer of sentenced persons - declared in the PA. Draft bilateral agreement on transfer of sentenced persons between Poland and Norway had been prepared and sent to the Norwegian side to consultations. Works on draft bilateral agreement have been withheld by mutual consent.
	<p>Under the programme area 'Domestic and Gender-based Violence' a pre-defined project shall be identified in the concept note. The pre-defined project shall focus on implementation of relevant international conventions, agreements and standards.</p>	Applied in the Concept Note and PA-2 predefined projects envisaged, both comply with the recommendations included in the Council of Europe <i>Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence</i> .
	<p>International organisations with special competence shall be involved in the preparation of the programme. The role of such organisations in the pre-defined projects shall be defined in the concept note.</p>	Applied: Due to excluding Area 21 from the programme no international organisation was involved. The possibility of involvement of a relevant international body was explored. A relevant international body (EPTA) has been involved in trainings in PDP1, Module 3 (PA19).
	<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator seeks to ensure synergies with programme Home Affairs in order to strengthen the justice chain.</p>	Applied Justice chain working group has been established, participation of a representative of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration in the Justice chain working group and also in the meetings of the Cooperation Committee.
	<p>No more than 75% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).</p>	Applied: funding of infrastructure (hard measures) is foreseen only within one pre-defined project - - <i>The pilot rehabilitation complexes for inmates</i>
	<p>The possibility of pre-defining further project(s) focused on inter alia mediation, legal education and human</p>	Due to excluding Area 21 from the programme, the condition is impossible to be fulfilled.

rights shall be explored during the concept note phase.	
The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that an ex ante control of public procurement procedures and documentation (limited to public procurement procedures (review of tender documentation) pursuant to the national public procurement legislation) developed for predefined project no. 1 under section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement, is carried out by a competent entity independent of the project promoter, Programme Operator and National Focal Point. The National Focal Point shall notify the NMFA of the results of such control prior to launching the public procurement	Applied – pending.
For predefined project No.1 under section 5.1 of Annex II of the Programme Agreement, the Programme Operator shall submit a revised detailed budget the latest within 12 months following the positive appraisal pursuant to Article 6.5.3.	Applied – budget for PDP1 has been prepared and accepted.
All activities in the programme shall be in compliance with European legal standards for human rights, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Activities related to the improvement of the correctional system (Outcome 1) shall comply with Council of Europe’s European Prison Rules, Recommendations from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the UN Nelson Mandela Prison Rules.	Applied in the PA.
For predefined project no. 3 under section 5.1 of Annex II of the Programme Agreement, the future involvement of a Norwegian partner shall be further explored in the project or under the bilateral fund.	Applied – no Norwegian partner has been found for PDP3.
For the following indicators the baseline value and target shall be agreed with the FMO within 12 months of receiving a notice of positive appraisal of the relevant predefined project: Indicator under outcome 1: Share of trained penitentiary judges who consider alternative sanctions to be an effective sentencing tool; Indicator under outcome 1: Quality of life among prisoners in pilot facilities (MQPL); Indicator under outcome 1: Quality of life among prison staff in pilot facilities (SQL);	Indicator under output 1.3: The training workshops for 180 judges will be held in September 2023.  Indicators under outcome 1 (MQPL and SQL): the results of surveys are to be submitted to the PO by the end of June 2024 and then the PO will be ready to present the baseline values for the indicators in the 1 <sup>st</sup> week of July 2023.  For outcome 2 indicator (the number of cases of domestic violence officially reported), in order to determine the baseline value the PO is establishing the annual number of domestic violence cases officially reported (based on the number of “blue cards” established in municipalities under the SGS projects) for 2022 – the baseline value is to be presented in the 1 <sup>st</sup> week of July 2023.

	<p>Indicator under outcome 2: Share of target group with negative attitudes towards domestic violence;</p> <p>Indicator under outcome 2: Share of target group trusting the domestic violence protection and support system.</p> <p>For the following indicators, the target value will be provided within 12 months of receiving a note of positive appraisal of the relevant predefined project:</p> <p>Indicator under output 1.3: Number of penitentiary judges, prison service personnel, probation officers trained in alternative sanctions and in risk assessment in regions where pilot prisons are established.</p> <p>For outcome 2 indicator Annual number of cases of domestic violence officially reported (in project intervention areas where the baseline value is “to be determined” (TBD), the Programme Operator shall submit to the FMO for approval the baseline value, together with a description of the data collection method used, no later than 6 months following the selection of projects under the SGS.</p> <p>The updated baseline and target values shall be agreed upon through modifications of the programme agreement.</p>	
	<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that Project Promoters:</p> <p>Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;</p> <p>Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</p> <p>Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.</p>	Applied in the PA.
Home	The programme shall include measures which focus on support to voluntary returns and support and services to unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups.	Applied: predefined project as well as the open call procedure within the <i>Asylum and Migration</i> PA (additional points in the competitive procedure).

<p>The programme shall include measures to improve investigation capacity and to enhance the capacity to work with international organizations as Europol, Eurojust, Interpol and Frontex.</p>	<p>Applied: predefined projects no. II and IV and the open call procedure.</p>
<p>No more than 60% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).</p>	<p>PO will ensure that ratio. Proportion will be maintained at the level of the entire programme. The condition has been taken into consideration in the PDPs' budget</p>
<p>A pre-defined project on strengthening CBRNE safety and security (and combatting hybrid threats), with DSB as donor project partner, shall be explored during the concept note phase.</p>	<p>Applied: PDP VI related to the PA 23; details have been agreed between the DSB, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) and the Polish Internal Security Agency.</p>
<p>The details of cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and Administration (Programme Operator) and the European Projects Implementation Centre and the specific roles and responsibilities shall be defined during the concept note phase.</p>	<p>Applied. The agreement between MI&amp;A and EPIC was signed.</p>
<p>In developing the concept note and during the implementation of the programme, the Programme Operator shall seek to ensure synergies with the programme Justice in order to strengthen the justice chain.</p>	<p>Applied. The Ministry of Interior and Administration will cooperate with the Polish Ministry of Justice (the PO for the <i>Justice</i> Programme) and other institutions involved in the Programme <i>Justice</i> (e.g. Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy) on such issues as those linked to gender-based violence and domestic violence. The MI&amp;A is a member of the working group established by the Ministry of Justice.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator takes all reasonable measures to reallocate any savings under pre-defined project "The Process of Coordination and Standardisation in the Field of CBRNE as an Element of Prevention, Preparedness and Response" (PDPVI) primarily to the open calls or to projects selected under the open calls.</p>	<p>Applied in the PIA.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that an ex ante control of public procurement procedures and documentation (Limited to public procurement procedures (review of tender documentation) pursuant to the national public procurement legislation) carried out for the pre-defined projects under section 5.1 of Annex II to the Programme Agreement, is carried out by a competent independent entity, other than the respective project promoter. The ex-ante control methodology shall be detailed in the management and control system description of the Programme Operator.</p>	<p>Applied.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that Project Promoters: Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall</p>	<p>Applied in the PIA.</p>

	<p>objectives of the project for the same period;</p> <p>Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</p> <p>Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract</p>	
	<p>For the following Outcome 2 indicators, where the baseline value is “to be determined” (TBD), the Programme Operator shall submit to the FMO the baseline values, together with a description of the data collection methods used, no later than three months after signing of the project contracts in the relevant projects.<sup>3</sup> The updated baseline values shall be agreed upon through a modification of the programme agreement:</p> <p>Outcome 2: Level of competence of law enforcement units at a regional level in prevention and detection of organised crime; Level of competences of police officers in the field of false documents detection</p> <p>Outcome 3: Level of competence of participant institutions</p>	<p>The following baseline values for indicators has been determined:</p> <p>Outcome 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of competences of police officers in the field of false documents detection - baseline value has been determined on 4,28.</li> <li>- Level of competence of law enforcement units at a regional level in prevention and detection of organised crime baseline value has been determined on 4,28.</li> </ul> <p>Outcome 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of competence of participant institutions in the field of preventing and combating CBRNE threats – baseline value has been set at 4.95.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<p>The programme shall include, inter alia, mobility in higher education, apprenticeships, institutional cooperation, and inclusive education (for e.g. disabled and intercultural students).</p> <p>The area of ‘child welfare education’ shall be a priority area across all components. The PO shall prioritise applications, which address ‘child welfare education’ in the first round of call for proposals, by giving these extra points in the selection process.</p>	<p>All areas mentioned in the MoU were included in the open call documentation. Additionally child welfare education was prioritised within both call by extra scores granted to the applications where the subject was addressed in a comprehensive way, what was decided by external experts in the appraisal process.</p>
<b>Environment,</b>	<p>The funding shall be allocated to the programme areas Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security’, ‘Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation’ and ‘Environment and Ecosystems’. ‘Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security’ shall receive the largest share of the allocation’.</p>	<p>Applied in the Concept Note and in the Programme Agreement (outcomes 3 and 4, six open calls and are envisaged).</p>

<sup>3</sup> The modification introduced by the Addendum no. 1 to the PA (signed by Norway on 24.11.2020, signed by Poland on 19.01.2021) .

The possibility of using financial instruments shall be explored when developing the concept note.	In case of calls in outcome 3 and 4 to secure a part or entire own contribution, the Project Promoter may use a financial instrument in the form of The National Fund loans.
Special concern shall be given to achieving significant and cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.	Achieving significant and cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse gas emissions is important part of the designed programme, an appropriate criteria have been provided in the selected calls criteria.
Special concern shall be given to hydroelectric power and geothermal energy as sources of renewable energy.	Within outcome 4 two separate calls have been designed: one dedicated for increasing geothermal energy potential, one for improvements in small hydropower plants.
The National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management shall be actively involved in and effectively contributing to the development and implementation of the programme. The details of cooperation between the Ministry of Environment (Programme Operator) and the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management shall be defined during the concept note phase.	Programme is implemented by Ministry of Climate together with National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management. Both entities take active part in Programme implementation at each stage of its development.
The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored when developing the concept note.	Three pre-defined projects have been prepared, they refers to the following: strengthening atmospheric deposition in Poland, services provided by ecosystems, capacity building in geothermal energy area.
The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that any residual or extracted material from project activities is reused, recycled, treated and/or deposited in an environmentally sound manner.	Applied in the PIA.
The Programme Operator shall monitor results of CO <sub>2</sub> -reductions and the cost efficiency of the interventions in terms of CO <sub>2</sub> reductions and shall report on them in the annual and final programme reports in programme area 12 where the CO <sub>2</sub> indicator is applied.	Applied in the PIA.
The Programme Operator shall organize at least one broad experience sharing events during the programme implementation period, with the aim of showcasing innovative or novel approaches in the projects supported	Pending.
The Programme Operator shall, in the Final Programme Report, report on the impact that the projects supported will have and have had on the dissemination of knowledge about and further investments in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Poland	Applied in the PIA.
The Programme Operator shall encourage bilateral partnerships across all calls for proposals.	Applied in the PIA.
The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that Project Promoters: – Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;	Applied in the PIA.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</li> <li>– Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.</li> </ul>	
	The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator encourages synergies with other programmes in Poland, including "Business Development and Innovation" and "Research".	Applied in the PIA.
	The National Focal Point shall submit the detailed description of the management and control system for the Programme Operator in English following its approval in accordance with Article 5.7.2 of the Regulation. The National Focal Point shall ensure that the description includes detailed and dedicated sections on the implementation of the Financial Instrument described in section 5.2 of Annex II to this Programme Agreement.	Applied.
	The programme shall contribute to achieving significant and cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. The Programme Operator shall ensure that investments in energy production under Outcome 3- intended for use by the promoter directly or for distribution - is only allowed for energy sources based on renewable energy and/or natural gas. All else being equal, support to a project under Outcome 3 shall lead to a corresponding reduction in the use of solid fossil fuels and contribute to the facility's compliance with the EU Energy Efficiency Directive's definitions of high-efficiency district heating and cogeneration systems.	Applied in the PIA.
<b>Culture</b>	The programme shall focus on the role that culture and cultural heritage play in local and regional development including emphasis on employment, cultural entrepreneurship and vocational training.	Applied (outcomes, activities, open call projects envisaged).
	No more than 60% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).	Applied (outcome 1 - open call).
	At least 14% of the total eligible expenditure shall be set aside for	Applied (outcome 2 - open call).

<p>cultural cooperation and exchange between the Donor States and Poland.</p>	
<p>The Programme shall include activities and initiatives in arts and culture that explicitly encourage the inclusion of ethnic and national minorities.</p>	<p>Applied (3 outcomes).</p>
<p>The possibility of pre-defining further project(s) could be explored when developing the concept note.</p>	<p>No additional predefined project envisaged so far.</p>
<p>The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures that Project Promoters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project in their ownership for a period of at least 5 years following the completion of the project and continue to use such buildings for the benefit of the overall objectives of the project for the same period;</li> <li>– Keep any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project properly insured against losses such as fire, theft and other normally insurable incidents both during project implementation and for at least 5 years following the completion of the project; and</li> <li>– Set aside appropriate resources for the maintenance of any buildings purchased, constructed, renovated or reconstructed under the project for at least 5 years following the completion of the project. The specific means for implementation of this obligation shall be specified in the project contract.</li> </ul>	<p>Applied in the Outcome 1 open call documentation and project implementation agreement draft.</p>
<p>For Outcome 1 indicators "Annual number of visitors to supported projects" and "Annual income generated by supported projects" where the baseline value is "to be determined" (TBD), the Programme Operator shall submit to the FMO for approval the baseline value, together with a description of the data collection method used, no later than 6 months following the selection of projects under the call. The updated baseline values shall be agreed upon through modifications of the programme agreement.</p>	<p>Applied. Outcome 1 baseline value for indicators „Annual number of visitors to supported projects" and „Annual income generated by supported projects" has been determined.</p>

## Communication

### Best projects

Projects from Poland, that can be used for communication purposes by the Donors and the FMO. Both of them have been implemented in cooperation with the Donor State partners.

#### **Project “Co-designing Inclusive Mobility” (Applied research)**

##### **Project ID from GrACE: NOR/IdeaLab/CoMobility/0001/2020-00**

Beneficiary: the project’s team consists of scientists from three Warsaw universities (UW, WUT and SGH), physicists (NILU) and anthropologists (FNI) from Norway, members of the Warsaw non-governmental "On-site Foundation", and representatives of the City of Lublin. They work closely with the City of Warsaw, and we also stay in touch with the City of Krakow and the Association of Polish Cities.

Project partners from Norway:

- Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU - STIFTELSEN NORSK INSTITUTT FOR LUFTFORSKNING),
- The Fridtjof Nansen Foundation at Polhørgda

### Short description of the project

CoMobility is a transdisciplinary international research project in which the beneficiary’s team analyses attitudes and behaviours related to mobility, with a particular focus on alternatives to the use of private cars. In the co-creation process, the beneficiary’s team plans to identify barriers and opportunities for different mobility choices. Also, it will co-design interventions and solutions that will facilitate a permanent habitual change.

In 2016 there were 571 passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants in Poland which accounted to a total of 21 million cars. Car trips account to 77.3% of all passenger-kilometers travelled (2015) and the use of buses and coaches to 14.5% which is more than the EU28 average (9.4%) (EC, 2019). Since parents driving to schools generate a substantial portion of traffic this project focuses on school communities. Together with parents, municipalities, and local businesses the beneficiary will co-create and examine possible changes in school neighborhood to reduce car usage. As a result the beneficiary’s team will deliver a package of tools and methods that can help to change citizens’ mobility choices such as a method for co-designing inclusive and evolving mobility in local communities; air quality and climate change projections for future mobility scenarios; identification of barriers and opportunities for reduction of car ownership in Poland; promotion of active mobility and public transport in local communities; etc. All partners will benefit from the project’s unique opportunity to co-design interdisciplinary processes by being exposed to and learning from each other’s expertise. Each researcher will benefit from the holistic approach of the project and the access to the project’s data. The new partnerships between different scientific institutions and disciplines aim at expanding their collaboration beyond this project. The project is an excellent example of good bilateral cooperation between Polish and Norwegian sides. The CoMobility team was nominated for the Polish Smart Development Award 2023 in the "Social Innovation" category. The award will be presented at the 8th Intelligent Development Forum to be held in October 2023.

Project website: <https://comobility.edu.pl/en/homepage/>

**Project "Strengthening of atmospheric deposition assessment in Poland based on Norwegian experience" (Environment, Energy and Climate Change)**

**Project ID from GrACE: PL-CLIMATE-0001**

**Beneficiary: Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection**

**Partner from Norway: Norwegian Institute for Air Research (NILU)**

### **Short description of the project**

The main objective of the project is to increase knowledge on harmful substances that seep into the ground with precipitation and may affect climate change and the degradation of ecosystems. The project will design and create a new system for assessing atmospheric deposition in Poland. Planned outcomes of the project include the creation of a new national system for measuring and modelling atmospheric deposition in Poland along with making the data available on a widely accessible portal.

There will be also conferences and training on methods of assessing atmospheric deposition based on Norwegian experience. Their purpose is to increase knowledge on methods of measuring and assessing atmospheric deposition. A study visit to Norway will also be held to exchange experiences.

The project is an excellent example of good bilateral cooperation between Polish and Norwegian sides.

Project website: <https://mfeog.gios.gov.pl/index.php/en/information-about-project/general-information>

### **Visibility of the Grants and the Donors**

The communication activities (both offline and online) undertaken by the National Focal Point to increase the visibility of the Donors and the Grants in the reporting period:

- (1) a temporary exhibition of painting by the artists of the Nordic countries under the patronage of the EEA and Norway Grants in part covering Icelandic and Norwegian painting– in cooperation with the National Museum in Warsaw (open between 18 November 2022 - 5 March 2023);
- (2) new series of long, in-depth, captivating storytelling articles #HistorieZPasją (also translated into English and shared with the embassies of Iceland and Norway and the FMO)
- (3) promotion in the PLL LOT (Polish national airlines) onboard magazine "Kaleidoscope"
- (4) preparatory works on the exhibition promoting PL – Donors bilateral relations (exhibition will take place in 2024)
- (5) preparatory works on the New Horizons International Film Festival patronage – there will be a special movie section consisting of Norwegian and Icelandic movies (the festival will take place at the end of July 2023 in Wrocław)

- (6) preparatory works on the Young Horizons film festival patronage (the festival will take place in September 2023)
- (7) continuation of adoption of a reindeer herd (as animals associated with Norway and Iceland) by the EEA and Norway Grants in the zoo in Wrocław in 2023 and the promotion of this patronage;
- (8) launching the EEA and Norway Grants Instagram profile;
- (9) series of meetings with POs about communication;
- (10) maintaining and updating the PL EEA and Norway Grants website (with the dedicated newsletter) and Facebook profile including competitions with awards.

Number of project stories published on website/webpage and Facebook in the reporting year

<a href="http://www.eog.gov.pl">www.eog.gov.pl</a> (eeagrants.pl)	10 posts
Facebook Fundusze Norweskie i EOG	36 posts

### Media coverage

Please add links to examples of local, regional, or national media coverage of the EEA and Norway Grants in the reporting period.

- <https://www.wroclaw.pl/go/wydarzenia/teatr/1357326-jest-tak-jak-wam-sie-wydaje>
- <https://bielskobiala.wyborcza.pl/bielskobiala/7,88025,29755229,interaktywne-muzeum-z-parkiem-rozrywki-w-bielsku-bialej-powstaje.html>
- <https://www.nasztomaszow.pl/arttykul/41779,jak-bedzie-wygladal-park-miejski-po-rewitalizacji>
- <https://www.gdynia.pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty,4100/sfotografuj-codziennosc-konkurs-dla-mlodziezy-z-ukrainy,573695>
- <https://mlodziwlodzi.pl/premiera-operowa-w-trondheim-z-udzialem-spiewakow-z-akademii-muzycznej-w-lodzi/>
- <https://zielonagora.wyborcza.pl/zielonagora/7,35182,29551696,duza-inwestycja-w-elektrowni-wodnej-na-granicy-polsko-niemieckiej.html>
- <http://radio.lublin.pl/2023/04/przekształca-stare-lodowki-na-nowe-polska-korporacja-recyklingu-wdraza-nowoczesna-technologie/>

### Website and social media

Link to the National Focal Point's (EEA and Norway Grants) webpage	Total number of page views in the reporting year
eeagrants.pl (norwaygrants.pl)	82 938 (Polish version) 5 227 (English version)

	Applicable	Link or account handle	Number of posts published in the reporting year	Number of followers
Facebook	Yes	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/FunduszenorweskieEOG">https://www.facebook.com/FunduszenorweskieEOG</a>	94	7199
Twitter	n/a			
Instagram	Yes	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/fundusze_norweskie_i_eog/">https://www.instagram.com/fundusze_norweskie_i_eog/</a>	8	75
LinkedIn	n/a			
Snapchat	n/a			
Tiktok	n/a			
Other	n/a			

## Visuals

Link to interesting programme and/or project-related multimedia assets in EEA and Norway Grants media library (eealibrary.org) that can be used for communication purposes by the Donors and the FMO.

Activities of the Polin Museum in Warsaw

<https://eealibrary.org/?freetext=Polin%20Museum&count=100&page=1>