

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

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
CN – Concept Note
COPE - European Projects Implementation Centre, Poland
CZSW - Central Board of the Prison Service, Poland
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
MCS - Management and Control System
MIIR - Ministry of Economic Development, Poland
MKiDN - Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Poland
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
MŚ - Ministry of Environment, Poland
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
PDP – predefined project
PO – Programme Operator
RA - Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage
RANNIS - Icelandic Centre for Research
RCN - Research Council of Norway
SG – Border Guards, Poland
SIU - Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education
Uds.C – Office for Foreigners, Poland

1. Executive summary

Norwegian Financial Mechanism and EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 in Poland were launched upon signing on December the 20th, 2017, Memoranda of Understanding for both instruments. The documents indicated priority sectors, organisation scheme and main responsibilities of the signing parties. Likewise in the recent financial perspective, the contribution serves both reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and strengthening of bilateral relations between the Donor states and Poland.

In accordance with Article 2.6 of the Regulation, the National Focal Point submits this Strategic Report to provide information on the progress made, challenges met and risks foreseen while implementing the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 and EEA Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 in Poland.

Meanwhile, as 2 programme agreements were concluded in March 2019, and thus implementing phase is yet ahead, no results are to be reported under this report. With this document however, Polish Focal Point's aim is to present works on programmes development and milestones to be achieved, identify challenges and address main risks in the accomplishment of the programmes' objectives.

In general, 2018 was a programming year in Poland and the Concept Note for all 9 programmes¹ were prepared by POs and discussed with all the stakeholders. As a result, until end of March 2019, six CNs for *Education, Culture, Local Development, Research, Business Development and Innovations, Home Affairs* were officially submitted to Donors and received positive Donor assessment and entered the PA preparation phase. The *Education* programme and *Local Development* programme are the first, where PAs were signed between NFP and the Donors. For other programmes – *Health, Justice and Environment, Energy and Climate Change* the programming process is still ongoing, in line with the settlements with the Donors..

The bilateral cooperation has been launched. After organising the first meeting of Joint Committee for Bilateral Fund and the Work Plan approval, the first bilateral initiatives started their implementation. The engagement of the Bilateral Funds in one of the the largest international business conferences in Central Europe, organized yearly since 2011 - European Forum for New Ideas in Sopot, on September the 26th-28th, 2018 can become a visible example.

The works on building the implementation system for EEA and Norway grants were ongoing. Polish Focal Point elaborated on the description of the management and control system covering National Focal Point, Certifying Authority, Irregularities Authority and Audit Authority and having recently obtained FMO positive opinion, fulfilled the obligation determined in Article 5.7.1 of the Regulation. Moreover, Polish side secured budget for the prefinancing of the activities within all Polish Programmes and Funds and provided the Programme Operators with guidelines on management costs, open call and application assessment, Bilateral Fund implementation and public procurement to support POs and make the process of implementation transparent and coherent.

As for the risk management issue, the time factor has been identified as the most important risk. The longer the programming period is, the less time is devoted to the implementation, being a key phase delivering the set results and objectives. Here the tight cooperation with all stakeholders at Polish and Donor side level and the ability to close already agreed issues within the programmes and to enter next steps in the programming process is crucial. It's worth noting that quality of the programming process was preserved at every stage.

The next 2019 year is expected to be indeed the first year of the actual implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland.

¹ *Education, Culture, Local Development, Research, Business Development and Innovations, Home Affairs, Health, Justice, Environment, Energy and Climate Change*

It will be a year, when the programmes launching events are planned and the general public is then to be informed about the open calls. The main promotional event opening the 3rd perspective of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland is planned for the Autumn 2019.

2. Political, economic and social context

In 2018 the Polish government (of the right-wing coalition of Law and Justice², United Poland³ and [Agreement/Poland Together](#)⁴) was headed by Mateusz Morawiecki, who took the office in December 2017, replacing Beata Szydło, who was moved to the post of deputy prime minister. The tasks of the coordination of the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, as in the previous years, were performed by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, headed by Jerzy Kwieciński.

Among the most important events of 2018 in Poland, in the context of the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, the local elections should be indicated in particular. The outcome of the elections in question, held in October 2018 for Law and Justice was 34,13%, whereas Civic Coalition (Civic Platform together with .Modern) received 26.97% of votes. Given that the local government units are the potential beneficiaries in a few programmes of the 3rd edition of the Financial Mechanisms in Poland, including the programmes with the largest budgets like the 'Local Development' or the 'Environment, Energy and Climate Change', efficient management of the local government units by their new rulers may be of high importance also for the Financial Mechanisms.

In December 2018, the Polish Council of Ministers adopted the assumptions of Polish foreign policy for 2019. This document was a basis for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to prepare the government's information on foreign policy directions, articulated as the exposé of the Polish MFA, Jacek Czaputowicz, in parliament – in March 2019. The themes that remain among the most important goals of Polish foreign policy are concentrated in the so-called triad – firstly, security, understood as measures to expand own defence capabilities, strengthen the potential of allied relations within NATO and the European Union, and conduct an active regional policy; secondly, development, comprehended as an activity supporting the building of the economic and social power of the Republic of Poland in the European Union; thirdly, strengthening the favourable image of Poland, its credibility on European and global scale. The goals formulated in this way seem to be largely consistent with the general objective of the EEA and Norway Grants of reducing economic and social disparities in Europe, as well as the objectives set for the particular programmes.

2019 will be a year of double elections in Poland – in spring (May 26) the elections to the European Parliament will be held, and in autumn (between October 12 and November 12) – *elections* to the Sejm and the Senate (Polish parliament).

Going into the social and economic context of the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, it should be noted that in the process of monitoring the cohesion objective progress, macroeconomic and social indicators illustrating the country development level and life quality, convergence with the average EU level, economic growth, unemployment, poverty and income inequalities, among others are used. The purpose of annual reports is to present the progress made in these fields and the attempt to determine the impact of the above-mentioned grants on its achievement.

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

² Prawo i Sprawiedliwość

³ Solidarna Polska

⁴ Porozumienie

convergence which should be the fundamental measure of achievements. The second important factor affecting the convergence level in the period of 2009-2017 was the global economic crisis which particularly severely influenced economies of some EU member states.

Below we present the developments of selected indicators monitoring the progress made in Poland in comparison to other beneficiary states (including Spain, which now is not a beneficiary state, it but was in two previous editions of EEA and Norway Grants) as well as donor states in period 2009-2017. 2008 is treated as the base year for the analysed period of 2009-2014 implementation of the discussed funds. The source data for the analysis of monitoring indicators is the EUROSTAT data base.

Human Development Index (HDI), being a synthetic measure, makes it possible to describe changes in social and economic development of individual countries. HDI indicator evaluates countries on three planes: long and healthy life, knowledge and prosperous life standard. Since 2010 the following indicators have been used to measure them: [life expectancy](#), average number of years of education received by inhabitants aged 25 and older, expected number of years of education for children beginning the education process and [national income](#) per capita in [USD](#) calculated according to [purchasing power parity](#) of a given currency.

Table 1. Human Development Index (HDI)

	2005	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change of the index in years 2009-2017
Bulgaria	0,75	0,77	0,78	0,78	0,79	0,81	0,81	0,04
Croatia	0,78	0,80	0,81	0,82	0,83	0,83	0,83	0,03
Cyprus	0,83	0,85	0,85	0,85	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,02
Czech Republic	0,84	0,85	0,86	0,87	0,88	0,89	0,89	0,03
Estonia	0,82	0,84	0,84	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,03
Greece	0,85	0,86	0,85	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,87	0,01
Hungary	0,81	0,82	0,82	0,83	0,84	0,84	0,84	0,02
Latvia	0,79	0,82	0,81	0,82	0,83	0,85	0,85	0,03
Lithuania	0,81	0,83	0,83	0,84	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,03
Malta	0,80	0,83	0,83	0,84	0,86	0,88	0,88	0,05
Poland	0,80	0,82	0,83	0,84	0,86	0,87	0,87	0,04
Portugal	0,79	0,81	0,82	0,83	0,84	0,85	0,85	0,03
Romania	0,75	0,8	0,78	0,79	0,80	0,81	0,81	0,02
Slovakia	0,80	0,82	0,83	0,84	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,03
Slovenia	0,85	0,88	0,87	0,88	0,89	0,90	0,90	0,02
Spain	0,84	0,86	0,87	0,88	0,88	0,89	0,89	0,04
Norway	0,93	0,94	0,95	0,95	0,95	0,95	0,95	0,01
Iceland	0,89	0,89	0,92	0,93	0,93	0,93	0,94	0,03
Liechtenstein	0,89	0,90	0,91	0,91	0,91	0,92	0,92	0,02

Source: UNDP

It should be noted that both the difference between the indicators for individual countries, as well as the gap between Poland and Norway decreased. Norway, as a leader of the world ranking, may be treated as a reference point (benchmark) for evaluations of progress in implementation of sustainable development strategies. Therefore, the fundamental objective of cohesion policy which is contributing to the reduction of economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area is being implemented.

Another important indicator of economic cohesion is GDP per capita in relation to the EU average, including differences in purchasing power parity of currencies. In the group of the analysed countries, significant differences are visible. In 2009 the lowest economic development indicator – about 4 times lower than in the case of Norway – was recorded by Bulgaria (43% of the EU average) and Romania (51% of the EU average). In 2017 these differences substantially decreased – indicators for Bulgaria (50%) and Romania (62%) were about 3 times lower than for Norway (149%). However, they are still very high.

Table 2. GDP per capita (in PPS) in relation to the EU average (%).

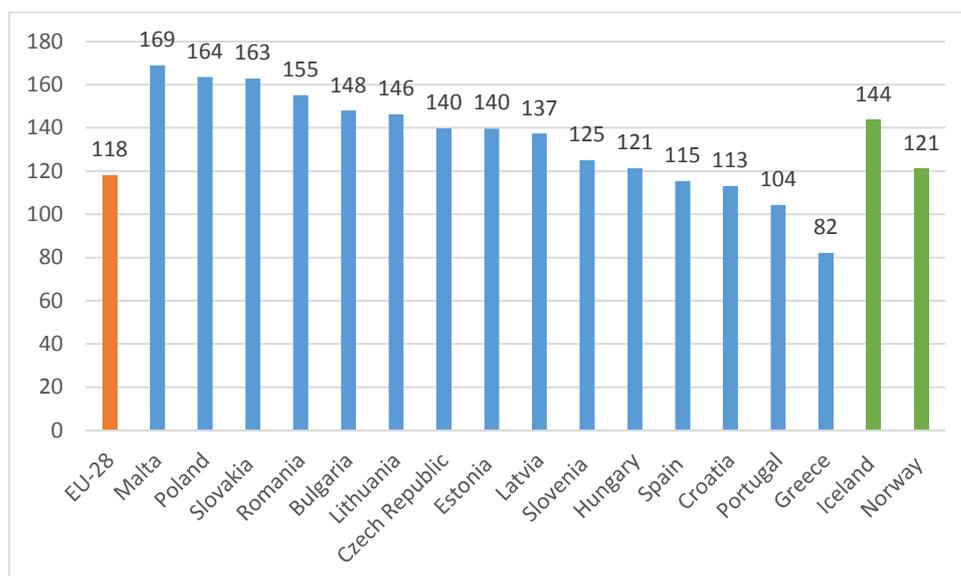
	2005	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change of the index in years 2009-2017
Bulgaria	37	43	45	47	47	48	50	7
Croatia	55	62	60	59	59	60	61	-1
Cyprus	101	105	84	81	82	84	85	-20
Czech Republic	79	85	84	86	87	87	88	3
Estonia	60	63	75	77	76	77	79	16
Greece	93	94	72	71	70	68	68	-26
Hungary	62	64	67	68	68	67	68	4
Latvia	50	52	62	63	64	65	67	15
Lithuania	53	56	73	75	75	76	79	22
Malta	81	81	85	88	93	94	95	14
Poland	50	59	67	67	68	68	70	11
Portugal	82	82	76	77	77	78	77	-5
Romania	35	51	54	55	56	58	62	11
Slovakia	60	71	76	77	77	77	77	5
Slovenia	87	85	82	82	82	82	84	-1
Spain	100	100	89	90	91	91	92	-8
Norway	173	172	184	176	160	148	149	-23
Iceland	135	130	121	122	126	130	131	1
Liechtenstein	b.d.							

Source: Eurostat

In the period from 2009 Poland – next to Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia – belongs to the group of countries which made significant progress in economic convergence. In relation to EU average, southern countries affected by economic recession as a result of the crisis (Greece, Cyprus, Spain) and the most developed countries (including Norway), lost due to the lower pace of growth in comparison to the so-called catching-up countries.

Cohesion in the economic sphere is conditioned mostly by the pace of economic growth. Figure below presents the higher pace of GDP growth (cumulated, 2017 in comparison to 2005) in the majority of beneficiary states than in the case of Norway. It must be however noted, that the difference in GDP per capita is still considerable between developed European countries and developing countries (eg. Norway has more than two times higher GDP per capita than Poland).

Figure. The change in GDP in the analysed group of countries in 2017 in relation to 2005 (%)



Source: Eurostat

It must be emphasized that in the years 2009-2017 the difference in terms of economic development between the group of beneficiary states and donor states significantly decreased.

Substantial differences between countries are also visible in the change of the situation on the labour market. In comparison to 2009, i.e. the pre-crisis situation, in 2017 the majority of countries of the researched group noted a significant increase in unemployment rate, while in Greece and Cyprus it was more than double. Poland – which in 2005 was the country with the highest rate of unemployment in the researched group of countries, noted the greatest improvement of this indicator in relation to the period before the economic downturn. Furthermore, for a few years the unemployment rate in Poland has been below the average of the EU countries. The gap between the level of the unemployment rate in Poland and Norway significantly reduced.

Table 3. Unemployment rate in total (BAEL, %)

	2005	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	change 2009-2017 [%]
UE-28	9,0	9,0	10,9	10,2	9,4	8,6	7,6	-1,4
Bulgaria	10,1	6,8	13,0	11,4	9,2	7,6	6,2	-0,6
Croatia	13,0	9,3	17,4	17,2	16,1	13,4	11,0	1,7
Cyprus	5,3	5,4	15,9	16,1	15,0	13,0	11,1	5,7
Czech Republic	7,9	6,7	7,0	6,1	5,1	4,0	2,9	-3,8
Estonia	8,0	13,5	8,6	7,4	6,2	6,8	5,8	-7,7
Greece	10,0	9,6	27,5	26,5	24,9	23,6	21,5	11,9
Hungary	7,2	10,0	10,2	7,7	6,8	5,1	4,2	-5,8
Latvia	10,0	17,5	11,9	10,8	9,9	9,6	8,7	-8,8
Lithuania	8,3	13,8	11,8	10,7	9,1	7,9	7,1	-6,7
Malta	6,9	6,9	6,1	5,7	5,4	4,7	4,0	-2,9
Poland	17,9	8,1	10,3	9,0	7,5	6,2	4,9	-3,2
Portugal	8,8	10,7	16,4	14,1	12,6	11,2	9,0	-1,7
Romania	7,1	6,5	7,1	6,8	6,8	5,9	4,9	-1,6
Slovakia	16,4	12,1	14,2	13,2	11,5	9,7	8,1	-4,0
Slovenia	6,5	5,9	10,1	9,7	9,0	8,0	6,6	0,7
Spain	9,2	17,9	26,1	24,5	22,1	19,6	17,2	-0,7

Iceland	2,6	7,2	5,4	5,0	4,0	3,0	2,8	-4,4
Norway	4,5	3,3	3,5	3,5	4,4	4,7	4,2	0,9
Lichtenstein	b.d.							

Source: Eurostat

Analysing risk of poverty and social exclusion, the substantial diversification of particular countries in this regard as well as the divergent course of processes in the years 2009-2017 must be indicated. In some countries the situation in this regard was deteriorating, e.g. in Greece, Spain and Cyprus. In this respect, Poland stands out positively, recording the greatest, alongside Latvia, improvement by over 8%, from the level of over 27,8% in 2009 to only 19,5% in 2017.

Thereby, Poland shifted from the group of countries with the highest risk of poverty and exclusion to the group countries with the indicator below the EU average (22,4%).

Table 4. The proportion of the population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (%)

1.	2005	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	zmiana 2009-2017 [%]
UE-28	25,8	23,3	24,6	24,4	23,8	23,5	22,4	-0,9
Bulgaria	b.d.	46,2	48,0	40,1	41,3	40,4	38,9	-7,3
Croatia	b.d.	b.d.	29,9	29,3	29,1	27,9	26,4	x
Cyprus	25,3	23,5	27,8	27,4	28,9	27,7	25,2	1,7
Czech Republic	19,6	14,0	14,6	14,8	14,0	13,3	12,2	-1,8
Estonia	25,9	23,4	23,5	26,0	24,2	24,4	23,4	0,0
Greece	29,4	27,6	35,7	36,0	35,7	35,6	34,8	7,2
Hungary	32,1	29,6	34,8	31,8	28,2	26,3	25,6	-4,0
Latvia	46,3	37,9	35,1	32,7	30,9	28,5	28,2	-9,7
Lithuania	41,0	29,6	30,8	27,3	29,3	30,1	29,6	0,0
Malta	20,5	20,3	24,0	23,8	22,4	20,1	19,2	-1,1
Poland	45,3	27,8	25,8	24,7	23,4	21,9	19,5	-8,3
Portugal	26,1	24,9	27,5	27,5	26,6	25,1	23,3	-1,6
Romania	b.d.	43,0	41,9	40,3	37,4	38,8	35,7	-7,3
Slovakia	32,0	19,6	19,8	18,4	18,4	18,1	16,3	-3,3
Slovenia	18,5	17,1	20,4	20,4	19,2	18,4	17,1	0,0
Spain	24,3	24,7	27,3	29,2	28,6	27,9	26,6	1,9
Iceland	13,3	11,6	13	11,2	12,5	12,2	b.d.	x
Norway	16,2	15,2	14,1	13,5	15	15,3	16	0,9
Lichtenstein	b.d.							

Source: Eurostat

Income inequalities in the researched group of countries measured by Gini coefficient in year 2017 ranged from over 23% in the case of Slovakia and Slovenia to over 40% for Bulgaria. In the period 2009-2017 these inequalities increased (e.g. Cyprus, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania). Only in six countries of the analysed group, including Poland, income inequalities in year 2017 were lower than in year 2009. Gini coefficient for Poland decreased from the level of 31,4% in 2008 to 29.2% in 2017. Thus, in this group of countries the scale of improvement of the inequality problem was the highest in Poland. Nowadays its level is below the average for the entire EU.

Table 5. Gini coefficient (%)

	2005	2009	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	change 2009-2017
UE-28	b.d.	b.d.	30,5	31,0	31,0	30,8	30,7	x

Bulgaria	b.d.	33,4	35,4	35,4	37,0	37,7	40,2	6,8
Croatia	b.d.	b.d.	30,9	30,2	30,4	29,8	29,9	x
Cyprus	28,7	29,5	32,4	34,8	33,6	32,1	30,8	1,3
Czech Republic	26,0	25,1	24,6	25,1	25,0	25,1	24,5	-0,6
Estonia	34,1	31,4	32,9	35,6	34,8	32,7	31,6	0,2
Greece	33,2	33,1	34,4	34,5	34,2	34,3	33,4	0,3
Hungary	27,6	24,7	28,3	28,6	28,2	28,2	28,1	3,4
Latvia	36,2	37,5	35,2	35,5	35,4	34,5	34,5	-3,0
Lithuania	36,3	35,9	34,6	35,0	37,9	37,0	37,6	1,7
Malta	27,0	27,4	27,9	27,7	28,1	28,5	28,3	0,9
Poland	35,6	31,4	30,7	30,8	30,6	29,8	29,2	-2,2
Portugal	38,1	35,4	34,2	34,5	34,0	33,9	33,5	-1,9
Romania	b.d.	34,5	34,6	35,0	37,4	34,7	33,1	-1,4
Slovakia	26,2	24,8	24,2	26,1	23,7	24,3	23,2	-1,6
Slovenia	23,8	22,7	24,4	25,0	24,5	24,4	23,7	1,0
Spain	32,2	32,9	33,7	34,7	34,6	34,5	34,1	1,2
Iceland	25,1	29,6	24,0	22,7	24,7	24,1	b.d.	x
Norway	28,2	24,1	22,7	23,5	23,9	25,0	26,1	2,0
Lichtenstein	b.d.							

Source: Eurostat

Therefore, the analysis of the selected monitoring indicators indicates the progress in the group of 16 beneficiary states of the EEA and Norway Grants (including Spain, which was a beneficiary state of the analysed period) in reducing economic and social disparities within the European Economic Area in the period of 2009-2017. In this regard Poland is a leader.

3. Effects of the Grants

As in 2018 still no programme agreement was concluded, and thus implementing phase for EEA and Norway Grants is yet ahead, no results are to be reported. For *Education* programme and *Local Development* programme, where PA were signed in March 2019, results will be reported at the later stage. First bilateral initiatives under JCBF launched in 2018 are elaborated on in the *Status of bilateral funds* section.

The *Social Dialogue – Decent Work* programme and *Civil Society* programme, included in the allocation to Poland, are managed by FMO in accordance with Article 6.13 of the Regulation. The status is presented below, in point 4.1 of the Report. The general information on the *Fund for Regional Cooperation* is also included.

4. Status of programmes

4.1 Progress in developing and implementing programmes

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.

Programmes in each priority area shall be implemented by Polish public entities (Operators), with an exception of *Civil society* and *Social Dialogue - Decent Work* priority areas, managed by FMO in Brussels and Innovation Norway accordingly.

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	Business Development and Innovation	85,000,000	15,000,000	600,000	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Innovation Norway	N/A
NFM /EEA FM	Research	Research	110,000,000	19,411,765	650,000	National Science Centre (NCN) with support from the National Centre for Research and Development	Research Council of Norway (RCN)	N/A
NFM	European Public Health Challenges	Health	20,000,000	3,529,412	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	Local Development	100,000,000	17,647,058	400,000	Ministry of Economic Development	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
NMF	Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention; Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening Rule of Law; Domestic and Gender-based Violence	Justice	70,000,000	12,352,941	400,000	Ministry of Justice	Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Norwegian Courts Administration (DA), Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI)	N/A
NMF	Strengthened rule of law	Home Affairs	20,000,000	3,529,412	250,000	Ministry of Interior and Administration with support from the European Projects Implementation Centre	Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB)	N/A
EEA FM	Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship	Education	20,000,000	3,529,412	250,000	Foundation for the Development of the Education System	Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), National Agency of International Education Affairs (AIBA), Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)	N/A
EEA FM	Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security; Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation; Environment and Ecosystems	Environment, Energy and Climate Change	140,000,000	24,705,882	900,000	Ministry of 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	Culture	75,000,000	13,235,294	600,000	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Arts Council Norway (ACN), Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage (RA)	N/A
EEA FM	Civil Society	Civil Society	53,000,000	N/A	N/A	FMO in accordance with Article 6.13 of the Regulation	N/A	N/A
NMF	Social Dialogue – Decent Work	Social Dialogue - Decent Work	6,120,000	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

Programming stage - summary

Preparatory phase launched with the MoUs has its dynamics. Though status of individual programmes may differ, but in general they follow the same pattern, procedures and the whole time framework remain valid for all. NFP facilitates the process and tries to make it coherent, working closely with the Operators and FMO. Following MoU signing, early January 2018 NFP organised kick-off meeting followed by programme planning meetings for all programmes. Events engaged all entities involved and helped to elaborate common view on each programme Concept Note development, agreement on deliverables expected, relevant cooperation areas identification, milestones design and discussion as well as preliminary stakeholders mapping.

Having established cooperation committees, Programme Operators and their counterparts (DPPs and IPOs) worked on the programme development bringing together hitherto experience, stakeholders input (through extensive stakeholders consultations in the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2018) and prioritising intervention areas (strategy meeting). Concept Note drafting that followed was the most time-consuming and challenging phase. Numerous meetings with DPPs, FMO and Polish National Focal Point (enumerated by each programme status description - below) as well as constant e-mail coverage show great effort of all parties to elaborate the best – in terms of quality and feasibility – and commonly satisfying programmes.

End November 2018 in Warsaw, NFP in cooperation with FMO organised the information workshop on the procedures following the CN approval. FMO representatives presented subsequent steps to PA conclusion. Scope of Supplementary Information required for PA design was especially thoroughly elaborated on. The meeting was also an excellent occasion to exchange the information and tighten the relations between all the stakeholders.

Meanwhile, Focal Point provided the Programme Operators with the guidelines on management costs, open call and application assessment, Bilateral Fund implementation and public procurement. All of these creates a coherent framework for the implementation of the EEA and Norway grants in Poland, enabling NFP to follow the general supervisory responsibilities, in line with Article 5.3 of the Regulations.

Agreement on the Fund for Bilateral Relations between Polish National Focal Point, Financial Mechanism Committee and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was signed on September the 4th, 2018. *Agreement for the financing of Technical Assistance* between the abovementioned was signed on February the 27th, 2019.

All parties engaged in the process are aware of its significance for efficient programme management and best results achievements. In general, the Concept Note for all 9 programmes were prepared by POs and discussed with all the stakeholders. As a result, until April the 2nd, 2019 seven CNs (for *Education, Culture, Local Development, Research, Business Development and Innovations, Home Affairs, Environment, Energy and Climate Change*) were officially submitted to Donors, out of which six received positive Donor assessment and entered the PA preparation phase. The *Education* programme and *Local Development* programme are the first, where PAs were signed between NFP and the Donors. For two remaining programmes – *Health* and *Justice* – the programming process is still ongoing.

Financing of the programmes - summary

Information on expenditures borne by the Programme Operators and the National Focal Point within the year 2018 will be available upon approval of the Interim Financial Reports submitted by the Operators by September the 15th, 2019. Based on the estimations, total expenditures in this financing period amounted to app. PLN 12 million (due to the reporting system, the expenditures borne by the institutions involved in the Financial Mechanism by the end of 2018 have been not approved yet, therefore the indicated amount of expenditures will be an estimation only). Vast majority of this amount were the management costs of the Programme Operator borne in relation to preparation of Concept Notes, in accordance with Regulation Article 8.10.

The expenditure of the Programme Operators and the Focal Point incurred in relation to the Regulation are pre-financed out of the state budget. The expenditures of the NFP, CA and IA are to be reimbursed from the Technical Assistance agreement while the expenditures of the Programme Operators are to be reimbursed from the respective Programme Agreements. The Polish side addresses the Donors with reimbursement requests concerning reimbursement of the incurred expenditure. The prerequisite for payments receiving from Norway/EEA grants are positive opinion on the national Management and Control System, signature of Programme Agreement and notification of Programme Implementation Agreement signature. The financial resources transferred by the Donors are forwarded to the state budget.

As a result of Management and Control System approval, on March the 7th, 2019 National Focal Point submitted to the FMO two requests for advance payments. The first one concerned advance payment for the Technical Assistance in the amount EUR 700 000. The second was for the Fund for Bilateral Relations and amounted to EUR 800 000. The payment process was completed.

Individual status of programming period

With some of the programmes at the phase of launching, some elaborating programme agreements and several still in the programming stage, Focal Point wished to show a scale of activities implemented and the engagement of all parties since MoU signing. Clear and informative programme by programme presentation might be of assistance to understand versatile nature of challenges and workload of all the stakeholders.

The current state of works is presented in the table below.

	CN preparation and consultation	CN Donors appraisal stage after "green light" from FMO	Supplementary Information stage	PA preparation and consultation	Donors programme approval stage	PA signing
Business Development and Innovation						
Research						
Health						
Local Development						March 25 th , 2019
Justice						
Home Affairs						
Education						March 8 th , 2019

Environment, Energy and Climate Change						
Culture						

Business Development and Innovation

Business Development and Innovation is at the initial stage of PA preparation.

Final 6th version of the Concept Note agreed between the involved parties, including Donor Programme Partner – Innovation Norway – was officially submitted to the FMO on December the 20th, 2018. On February the 25th, 2019 the information on Donors' positive CN appraisal was passed to NFP along with the request for Supplementary Information to be filled in. Document was sent to FMO on March the 22nd, 2019. PO is working closely with DPP (Innovation Norway) in replying to Donor conditions concerning involvement is the assessment process. PO and DPP discuss also on the bilateral activities as well as exchange of ideas on how to involve Norwegian mentors in Small Grant Scheme for female entrepreneurs. Launching event is foreseen for October 2019.

Meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb, NMFA	launching the programming phase
10.01.2018	programme planning meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb	initial arrangements to stakeholder mapping, milestone plan and programme strategy meeting; CC establishment
08.03.2018	stakeholders consultations	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb, stakeholders from various sectors: public including national authorities, private sector including business clusters and associations, research and educational institutions as well civil society organizations	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in 4 different thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
09.03.2018	programme strategy meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder's consultations results
09.04.2018	CC technical meeting in Norway	PO, DPP, NFP	discussion on bilateral ambitions as well as the use of Bilateral Fund
19.04.2018	1 st CN drafting meeting	PO, DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	FMO feedback on the first draft of the results framework was discussed, the issue on project level partnerships was examined including legal issues involved, ideas on bilateral cooperation were mentioned
16.05.2018	2 nd CN drafting meeting	PO, DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	synergy with Research and Environmental Programme; financial instruments; CC meeting planning; bilateral issues and ambitions as well as DPP involvement into the project's assessment
04.06.2018	meeting on synergy between the programmes	NFP, PO of Business programme, Pos of Research programme, PO of Environment programme	common areas of synergy were identified
08.06.2018	meeting on financial instruments	PO, DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	PO presented many arguments that proved the financial instruments are not adequate tool for implementing the programme goals including bilateral ambitions. This standpoint was also supported by DPP and NFP.
18.06.2018	1 st CC	PO and DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	discussion on CC <i>Rules of procedures</i> , initial ideas of the DPP role in the projects appraisal
19.12.2018	2 nd CC	PO and DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	CC <i>Rules of procedure</i> adoption; DPP will assist PO in the Norwegian partners assessment
13.02.2019	working meeting in Norway	PO, DPP	discussions on mentoring component for female entrepreneurs

Research

Research programme is at the stage of PA preparation.

One of the initial challenges in the programme was to define in accordance with MoU the role and responsibilities of NCN and NCBR. It was decided that the programme shall be divided into two components implemented under the responsibility of each entity (Basic Research Programme and

Applied Research Programme accordingly). Due to close cooperation with the partner, on July the 11th, 2018 an agreed joint Concept Note was submitted by the NFP to the FMO and on November the 30th, 2018 the document received the positive Donors' appraisal.

In the second half of 2018 NCN and NCBR accelerated works on content of the programme, support areas, programme indicators, IdeLab call concept development, information and data needed to supplementary information Annotated Template. Consequently on December the 17th, 2018 FMO received required supplementary information (two separate documents for basic and applied components) along with communication plan. After an exchange of information with the Donors on February the 18th, 2019 the FMO presented first drafts of annexes to PAs. Finalization of PA preparation and signing the agreement is expected.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08-09.01.2018	kick-off meeting and programme planning meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, POs, NO Emb, NMFA	launching the programming phase; initial arrangements to stakeholder mapping, milestone plan and programme strategy meeting; CC establishment
06.02.2018	meeting during the POs workshops in Oslo	POs, DPP, NFP, FMO	milestone plan, stakeholders meeting preparation
01.03.2018	stakeholders consultations	NFP, DPP, FMO, POs, NO Emb, stakeholders from various sectors: public including national authorities, private sector including business clusters and associations, research and educational institutions as well civil society organizations	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
02.03.2018	programme strategy meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, POs, NO Emb	discussion on stakeholder meeting, milestones ahead
17.04.2018	working meeting in Warsaw	NCN, DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	1 st CN draft discussion, role of the NCN in basic and applied part of the programme
24.04.2018	working meeting (videoconference)	NCN, NO Emb, FMO, NFP	proper implementation of the applied programme part and NCBR involvement
23.05.2018	working meeting (videoconference)	POs, DPP, NFP	IdeLab concept development
29.05.2018	drafting meeting in Brussels	POs, DPP, FMO, NO Emb, NFP	3 rd CN draft version, final CN version was then submitted to the FMO on July the 11 th , 2018.
17.10.2018	working meeting in Oslo	POs, DPP, FMO, NFP	discussion on results framework, reporting and content related issues: social sciences, DPP policy and activities
16.11.2018	working meeting in Brussels	POs, DPP, FMO, NFP	discussion on results framework, financial issues, interpretation of <i>Guidelines for Research Programmes</i>
06.12.2018	working meeting (videoconference)	POs, DPP, FMO, NFP	discussion on conditions set by the donors; FMO shall inform how the conditions shall be incorporated to the programme
7.01.2019	Programme Committee for Basic Research Programme	Committee members, POs, DPP, FMO, NFP, Emb	first meeting, acceptance of the rules of operation, new members introduction, discussion on IdeLab call
14.02.2019	working meeting (videoconference)	NCBR, DPP, FMO, NFP	discussion on support area regarding CCS

Health

The Health programme in 2018 was at the programming stage.

It was discussed thoroughly especially as regards the priorities of e-health in Poland. The programme assumptions had to be changed and eventually 6th version of the CN has been prepared in March 2019. It needs to be stressed that PO was able to introduce Donor side priorities such as tobacco issue into predefined project, the vaccinations (including the antimicrobial resistance) in the framework bilateral fund, continuation of last PL13 programme within bilateral fund as well. Polish side received last FMO comments to CN on March the 15th, 2019. Final version of CN was submitted to FMO on March the 29th, 2019. The programme awaits the green light from FMO to be send officially to Donors.

Taking into consideration the planned scheme of the programme implementation and the coordination of tasks between predefined project and the open call - the implementation of the programme needs to start in the second half of 2019, at the latest.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting; programme planning meeting	PO, DPP, FMO, NFP	launching the programming phase, assumptions of the programme was presented; CC establishment
27.02.2018	stakeholders consultations	PO, DPP, FMO, NFP, stakeholders from various sectors: public and private sector, civil society, research and science, International organizations, potential end beneficiaries	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
28.02.2018	programme strategy meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder's consultations results
13.04.2018	CC in Oslo	PO, DPP, FMO, NFP	priorities were discussed at the meeting at a political level between Polish and Norwegian representatives of Ministers; and on April the 30 th , first CN draft was presented to the entities involved
21.05.2018	Working meeting	PO, NFP	CN scope and adjustments
4.10.2018	Working meeting	PO, NFP	CN scope and adjustments to FMO feedback from September 2018
25.10.2018	CC and CN drafting meeting	PO, DPP, FMO, NFP	CN development followed the submission of the 4 th CN version on November the 22 nd , 2018 and then – after FMO feedback of January the 15 th , 2019, 5 th version on February the 22 nd
6.02.2019	Working meeting	PO, NFP	CN scope and adjustments

Local Development

Local Development programme enters the implementation phase after signing the PA on March 25th, 2019.

In the reporting period the programme development has been finished. The Concept Note was elaborated by the Program Operator in close cooperation with the partners and was submitted officially to FMO on July 30th, 2018. On December the 17th, 2018 the document received the positive Donors' appraisal and the programme entered PA preparation phase.

The launching event for the programme is planned for April the 25th, 2019. Call launching is foreseen in the nearest future – documentation was submitted for the approval of Cooperation Committee in March. Next CC meeting is scheduled for April the 4th, 2019.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting; programme planning meeting	PO, DPP, FMO, NFP, OECD	launching the programming phase, assumptions of the programme was presented; CC establishment
22.01.2018	working meeting (teleconf.)	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, OECD	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder's consultations results
15.02.2018	stakeholders consultations and strategy meeting	PO, DPP, APC, FMO, NFP, OECD, stakeholders from various sectors	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
26.02.2018	working meeting (Warszawa)	PO,NFP,FMO	results framework development followed submitting CN 1 st version on March the 20 th , 2018
22.03.2018	drafting meeting	PO,NFP, APC, DPP, OECD, FMO	CN development
09.04.2018	working meeting (teleconference)	PO,NFP, APC, DPP, OECD, FMO	CN development followed by submitting the 2 nd CN version on April the 24 th , 2018.
14.05.2018	working meeting (teleconference)	PO,NFP, APC, DPP, OECD, FMO	CN development followed by submitting the 3rd CN version on May the 22nd, 2018 and - with FMO feedback - CN final version on June the 8 th , 2018; formal CN submission on July the 30 th , 2018 and approval of December the 14 th , 2018
7.01.2019	working meeting (teleconference)	PO,NFP, FMO	discussion on conditions set by the donors; FMO shall inform how the conditions shall be incorporated to the programme

06.02.2019	working meeting (teleconference)	FMO, PO, NFP	Discussion on Annexes I and II to the Programme Agreement
------------	----------------------------------	--------------	---

Justice

The programme was at the stage of concept note development.

Despite the intensive work and efforts, the Concept Note was not yet approved by the Donors. In March 2019 6th version of the concept note was submitted and then final improvements discussed at the drafting meeting in Brussels in March 2019. At this stage, CN for the programme is a result of a thorough discussion and its scope is optimal and constitute a compromise to all of the parties engaged. All parties are very much engaged in pushing CN further and enter the next steps i.e. CN official submission, supplementary information stage and PA preparation. To strengthen bilateral relations PO decided to join SYNERGY - strategic multilateral network working against gender-based and domestic violence under the EEA/Norway Grants 2014-21, which was initiated by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security. To facilitate synergy within the programme and with the programme *Home Affairs* in order to strengthen the justice chain, the PO established Justice Chain working group, involving representatives of Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Police Headquarters, Correctional Service, Courts (Judges) and Prosecutors Office.

In case of the *Justice* programme time is crucial especially taking into consideration the investments in building of prisons, production halls and half-way houses and reported by PO necessity to start the implementation of training activities already from other sources, outside the programme.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting, programme planning meeting	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO, NO Emb, NMFA	launching the programming phase; discussion on the programme, work plan; CC establishment
10.01.2018	meetings on violence area and correctional service	PO, DPPs, PP, NFP	presentation of the PDP. DPP suggested to merge the 2 violence projects
07.02.2018	working meeting	PO, PP(CZSW), NFP	discussion on creation of 5 modern pilot correctional complexes, each consisting of a pilot prison, the production hall and a half way house for the rehabilitation of inmates.
19.02.2018	stakeholders consultations in the area of Correctional Service	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb, stakeholders from relevant sectors	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
20.02.2018	programme strategy meeting	PO, PP, NFP, FMO, DPP	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder's consultations results
27.02.2018	stakeholders consultations in the area of justice	PO, PP, NFP, FMO, stakeholders, DPP	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
28.02.2018	programme strategy meeting, CC meeting	NFP, DPP, FMO, PO, NO Emb	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder's consultations results; bilateral issues
08.03.2018	working meetings and conference in Oslo	PO, DPP, PP, NFP	meetings on domestic and gender based violence/first meeting of SYNERGY networking, conference on violence
16.04.2018	working meeting	OP, NFP	CN development, followed by submitting the 1 st CN version on 16 th April 2018, commented on 20 th April by FMO and DPP
23.04.2018	CN in Brussels	PO, PP, NFP, FMO, DPPs, NO Emb	FMO consultations, no regranting in PDP
10.05.2018	working meeting		CN development, followed by submitting 2 nd CN version on 11 th May 2018
14.05.2018	working meetings in Oslo	PO, DPP, NFP, NO Emb, KRS	CN consultations followed by submitting of the 3 rd CN version on 5 th June 2018
07.06.2018	meeting of the Justice Chain group	PO, CZSW, Police, Judges, PPs, NFP	Justice Chain working group established
10.08.2018	working meeting	PO, NFP, NO Emb, PP (CZSW), DPP (KDI), NFP	DPP: Correctional Service project should be divided into 3 or 2 separate projects
24.10.2018	working meeting	OP, NFP	CN development
03.12.2018	working meeting	DPP (NCA), OP, NFP	CN development, legal education project not supported, followed by submitting of the 4 th CN

			version on 18 th December 2018 and FMO comments on 17 th January 2019 and DPPs comments on 23 rd January 2019
14.01.2019	working meeting	PO: MS&MSWiA, NFP	joint actions that could be taken within both program areas, CN negotiations to be finalised soonest possible
25.01.2019	Meeting of the Justice Chain group	PO, CZSW, Police, Judges, MSWiA, Project Promoters, NFP	time -the main risk in the programme, need to finalise negotiations and implement; Prison services engagement in domestic violence prevention activities; expanding training catalogue; further consultations on child friendly hearing rooms
22.02.2019	working meeting	PO, NFP	CN development followed by submitting the 5th CN version on 26 th February 2019 and DPPs comments on 8 th March 2019
12.03.2019	drafting meeting, CC	PO, NFP, FMO, DPP	FMO to send a list of issues to be adjusted and possible timeline for what needs to be done by whom before the agreement is signed.

Home Affairs

Home Affairs programme is at the initial PA preparation stage.

The stakeholders were concerned about possible overlaps of activities envisaged in the programme and those potentially falling under the funding umbrella of complementary funds such as the Internal Security Fund (ISF) or the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The main issues raised by the stakeholders have been transferred into predefined projects or initial schemes of open calls. The first draft of the CN have been submitted to the FMO in the beginning of April 2018.

Concept Note final version was submitted to Donors on January the 29th, 2019 gaining on February the 26th Donors' positive appraisal. Supplementary Information is being prepared and was sent to FMO on March the 29th, 2019. Programme expects PA signing in the first half of 2019.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting	NFP, OP, COPE, FMO	Information meeting about the scope and main assumptions of the FMs
09.01.2018	programme planning meeting	NFP, OP, COPE, FMO, DPPs	Discussion about the main assumptions of the programme CC establishment
9.01.2018	CC	NFP, OP, COPE, FMO, DPPs	adoption of rules of the CC
01.03.2018	stakeholders consultations	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO, NO Emb, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the HA programme (identification of the gaps and needs of the HA area)
02.03.2018	programme strategy meeting	NFP, OP, COPE, FMO, DPPs	stakeholders consultation conclusion adoption
12.04.2018	meeting with the PDPs' beneficiaries	Office for Foreigner, Police, SG	discussion on the PDPs, additional info delivered by the beneficiaries
17.04.2018	meeting with DSB (PDP CBRNE)	ABW, DSB, FFi, PO	Discussion on cooperation within PDP VI
20.04.2018	meeting with the PDPs' beneficiaries	Police, NFP, PO	discussion on the PDPs, additional info delivered by the beneficiaries
23.03.2018	meeting	NFP, PO	Progress discussion, improvements within the CN preparation process
24-25.04.2018	drafting meeting in Brussels	NFP, PO, COPE, DPPs, NO Emb	HA programme development
25.04.2018	CC meeting	NFP, PO, COPE, DPPs, NO Emb	programme development
6.06.2018	teleconference	NFP, PO, FMO	discussion of the FMO comments to the CN
13.06.2018	meeting on PDP CBRNE	DSB, FFi, NFP, PO, ABW	Discussion on cooperation and the scope of the PDP VI
1.07.2018	working meeting	NFP, PO, FMO, NO Emb	Discussion the progress within the programme
5.09.2018	teleconference	NFP, PO, FMO	Discussion of the FMO comments to the CN
11.09.2018	working meeting	DSB, FFi, ABW, PO, COPE	Discussion on cooperation and the scope of the PDP VI
8.10.2018	working meeting	NFP, PO	Progress discussion, improvements within the CN preparation process
7.11.2018	working meeting	NFP, PO, FMO, NO Emb, Uds.C	discussion the progress within the programme and additional info provided by the PO and Office for Foreigners to the FMO
27.11.2018	working meeting	DSB,FFi, NFP, PO, ABW, COPE	discussion on cooperation and the scope of the PDP VI

6-7.02.2019	meeting on PDP CBRNE	PO, COPE, ABW, NFP	discussion on implementation arrangements
12.03.2019	meeting on PDP I	PO, COPE, Uds.C, NFP	discussion on implementation arrangements
13.03.2019	meeting on PDP II	PO, COPE, Police, NFP	discussion on implementation arrangements
19.03.2019	CC meeting	NFP, PO, COPE, DPPs, NO Emb	programme development
28.03.2019	meeting on PDP V	PO, COPE, Border Guard, NFP	discussion on implementation arrangements

Education

Education programme enters the implementation phase after signing the PA on March 8th, 2019.

In the reporting period the programme development has been finished. The Concept Note was elaborated by the Program Operator in close cooperation with the partners and was submitted officially to FMO on 6th July 2018. On September the 24th, 2018 it received the positive Donors' appraisal and entered PA preparation phase. The launching event for the programme is planned for the April 5th, 2019. First calls are to be announced April/May 2019.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08-09.01.2018	kick-off meeting, programme planning meeting	PO, DPPs, FMO, Donor states embassies, NFP	milestones & stakeholders list elaborated, CC establishment
23.02.2018	working meeting	PO, NFP	initial arrangements to stakeholder mapping
27.02.2018	stakeholders consultation	PO, DPPs, FMO, NFP, Donor states embassies, stakeholders representing relevant sectors	input to the results framework
28.02.2018	programme strategy meeting	PO, DPPs, FMO, NFP	
11.04.2018	videoconference	PO, DPPs, FMO, NFP	results framework development
18.10.2018	videoconference	PO, DPPs, FMO, NFP	supplementary information development and clarification, child welfare education included
10.12.2018	teleconference	PO, FMO, NFP	draft annexes development and clarification before its formal submission

Environment, Energy and Climate Change

Concept Note awaits approval by the Donors.

First version of the Concept Note was shared with the institutions involved on April 13th, 2018. Numerous discussions, during five drafting meetings, on the programme content and foreseen results led to the document improvements. Final version of the Concept Note was submitted to the FMO on 2nd April, 2019.

Programme Operator included and approved number of issues required by the FMO and DPPs, the major ones include: financial Instruments that Polish side decided to cover from national sources, changes in the budget allocation including increased allocation for cogeneration with substantial CO2 efficiency and decreased budget for thermomodernization of the buildings, setting ambitious CO2 reduction target, withdrawal of two pre-defined projects proposed by PO, including circular economy issues.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08-09.01 2018	Kick-off and programme planning meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	launching the programming phase, discussion on milestones, financial instruments, CO2 reduction ambitions, initial arrangements to stakeholder mapping, CC establishment
10.01.2018	CC meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	organisation of the CC, plans for bilateral activities
08.03.2018	strategy meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	milestones and results framework development
09.05.2018	drafting meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	discussion on the needs analysis in CN, budget allocations, financial Instruments
12.06.2018	drafting meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	CN development, issue of financial instruments run by European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
10.09.2018	drafting meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	CN development, Clean Air programme presentation, general outline on financial instruments financed from national sources

11.09.2018	CC meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	rules of procedure approval, discussion on Just Transition initiative
05.12.2018	drafting meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP, Polish Academy of Science, Chamber of Commerce Polish District Heating	CN development, PO and NFP standpoint on European Bank for Reconstruction and Development proposal, national co-financing at programme level
13.12.2018	teleconference	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	set-up deadlines for CN comments, timing for next drafting meeting
24-25.01.2019	drafting meeting	FMO, NO Emb, DPPs, PO, NFOŚ, NFP	budget, modalities, Result Framework, financial instruments, PDPs, bilateral ambitions, milestones

Culture

Culture programme is at the initial PA phase.

First version of the Concept Note was shared with the institutions involved on February the 26th, 2018. Numerous discussions on the programme content and foreseen results led to the document improvement, so that the draft concept note was eventually given the green light by the FMO Programme Committee and could be officially presented to the FMO on December the 4th, 2018. The positive Donor assessment was made on March 21st 2019. Supplementary information needed for the Programme Agreement drafting is being prepared.

Main issues that required deeper insight was a predefined project on Jewish cultural heritage, focus of the infrastructure projects (including support for non-historical infrastructure or construction work in new buildings), split between hard and soft measures, selection procedure, assessment criteria, results framework, co-financing at project level, key-words definitions (“local monument” for instance).

Here the time factor is crucial. The investment projects need time for the implementation, the predefined project POLIN (with the allocation of EUR M 10) requires a numerous activities to be delivered.

meeting date	occasion	participation	main issues
08.01.2018	kick-off meeting and programme planning meeting	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO, NO Emb, NMFA	launching the programming phase, presentation and discussion on the programme, milestones and work plan
09.01.2018	programme planning meeting	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO	initial arrangements to stakeholder mapping, milestone plan and programme strategy meeting; CC establishment
07.02.2018	stakeholders consultations	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO, NO Emb, stakeholders from various sectors: museums, heritage protection entities, artists associations, artistic education entities	needs and challenges in Poland within the scope of the programme were identified by the participants in different thematic groups reflecting programme focus areas as well as solutions
08.03.2018	programme strategy meeting	NFP, DPPs, FMO, PO, NO Emb	initial arrangements of the programme content based on the analysis of the stakeholder’s consultations results, defining challenges
13.03.2018	working meeting	PO, NFP, NO Emb	POLIN predefined project
22.03.2018	high-level meeting	PM dep. P.Gliński Min. J.Kwieciński	POLIN predefined project: defining challenges
23.03.2018	1st CC in Warsaw	PO, DPPs, NFP, FMO	challenges to be addressed after first CN draft
22.05.2018	high-level meeting	Min. J.Kwieciński HE O.Myklebust	POLIN predefined project set-up
24.05.2018	drafting meeting	OP, NFP, FMO, NO Emb	CN development
19.10.2018	2 nd CC in Oslo	PO, DPPs, NFP, FMO	CN development
06-07.12.2018	3 rd CC in Kraków	PO, DPPs, NFP, FMO	CN development

All above mentioned programmes have their own individual implementation schedule and plans regarding the launching of the programme activities.

Information on the programmes operated by the Donor side.

Social Dialogue – Decent Work

In line with the Article 6.13 of the Regulation, *Social Dialog - Decent Work* Programme is implemented directly by the FMO. The Innovation Norway has been appointed as a Fund Operator for that

Programme. The Programme is implemented through projects chosen within the open call as well as through pre-defined projects.

Currently the open call has been closed and the applications submitted by 11 beneficiary countries are under assessment. In Poland 22 entities applied for support within this area and requested support constituting almost EUR Mln 4.

Two predefined projects are included in the MoU under *Social Dialog - Decent Work* Programme. The first one is being elaborated by the Chief Labour Inspectorate with potential involvement of the Norwegian Labour Inspectorate. Description of the planned project scope along with the invitation to accomplish it with bilateral initiatives has been sent to the Norwegian partner on 17th May 2019.

The second project is developed by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. At the moment the project promoter is exploring the new possibility to implement the project in partnership with Norwegian institution after unsuccessful effort to establish cooperation with Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In the nearest future the Ministry plans to send a scope of the project in order to find the most suitable institution on Norwegian side which is to implement planned activities in a bilateral formula.

Civil Society

The MoU established allocation of EUR Mln 30 for the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) National in Poland and EUR Mln 23 for the ACF Regional under the Civil Society programme, with FMO as Programme Operator.

On 19th February 2018, an open tender for the role of Fund Operator of ACF National was launched. As a result of the procedure set in ToR, the donor states have chosen to appoint the Fund Operator for ACF National programme in Poland – the Stefan Batory Foundation, in consortium with Unit for Social Innovation and Research “Shipyard” and the Academy of Civic Organisations Foundation (FAOO). The selected Fund Operator with FMO is now proceeding with the programme development process.

On 26th November 2018, an open tender for the role of Fund Operator of ACF Regional was launched. According to the set procedures, the final deadline for bids expires on the 4th June 2019.

Fund for Regional Cooperation

The Fund for Regional Cooperation supports projects addressing common European challenges through regional cross-border and transnational cooperation in the form of knowledge sharing, exchange of good practice and capacity building across within the following priority sectors:

- Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness;
- Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction;
- Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy;
- Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms;
- Justice and Home Affairs.

The projects foreseen within the fund must be regional cross-border or transnational in nature and involve partners from beneficiary countries, neighboring countries and EEA EFTA countries.

The Fund operates on the basis of calls designed and launched by the EEA EFTA countries with support from their secretariat the FMO. The FMO implements the Fund with assistance of the fund operator, a consortium consisting of Ecorys Polska and JCP.

The total amount of the fund is EUR Mln 31.89, of which EUR Mln 15 was made available for the first call for proposals announced in January 2018. The 700 project proposals have been submitted in June

2018. After 10 months of assessment by the EEA EFTA states, 42 out of 700 projects proposals submitted were shortlisted.

4.2 How MoU special concerns and/or conditions set in the programme agreements have been addressed in programme design or implementation

All requirements specified in the MoU (the special concerns) have been included in the programmes Concept Notes or addressed adequately. Detailed reference in the table below.

programme	MoU special concerns	special concerns reference / application in the programme
Business Development, Innovation and SMEs	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 in the Concept Note (Outcome 1 - open calls)
	The programme shall include a small grant scheme targeting female entrepreneurs.	applied in the Concept Note (Outcome 1 - open calls)
	The possibility of using financial instruments shall be explored when developing the concept note.	addressed in the Concept Note. The PO, FMO, DPP and NFP have assessed the possibility of using a financial instrument. This has been done in written, in a dedicated meeting to the issues on 8 June 2018 and in the concept note. 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. In the PO thorough analysis, several problems with implementing financial instruments has been highlighted. 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. The conclusion is that using the financial instruments in this Programme is not recommended as 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.	addressed in the Concept Note. The Agency 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 proposed 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.
Research	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 in the Concept Note and supplementary Information. 1. polar research shall be supported in the core call (GRIEG) in the Basic Research Programme. 2. separate call regarding CCS shall be announced under the Applied Basic Research. 3. social sciences will be supported in the core calls in both research components (GRIEG in Basic Research and POLNOR in Applied Research) and in the IdeLab 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 are to be signed
	The programme shall include a small grant scheme for female researchers.	applied in the Concept Note (output 2.3. in Applied Research Programme)
	At least 10% of the total eligible expenditure shall be set aside for a separate open call for research in CCS.	applied in the Concept Note (output 2.5 in Applied Research Programme)
	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.	cooperation between both institution has been addressed in the CN and developed in the supplementary information phase
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored during the concept note phase.	no predefined projects foreseen in the programme
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 in the Concept Note in the form of predefined project 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 in the Concept Note in the call requirements; predefined projects do not entail hard measures
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored during the concept note phase.	applied in the Concept Note - 2 predefined projects envisaged
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 Concept Note (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 Concept Note (outcomes 1 and 2)
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) with the Association of Polish	applied in the Concept Note (outcome 2)

	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.	
Justice	The programme will focus under the programme area 'Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening rule of law' on; 1) European judicial culture, aimed at implementing European standard on Effectiveness, Efficiency, Independency and Quality 2) Child friendly justice, and 3) Efficient justice chain.	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes, activities, 2 predefined projects, open call projects envisaged)
	Cooperation with the National Council of the Judiciary shall be explored under program area 'Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening Rule of Law'.	possibility of cooperation has been explored, the Council will not be a partner in pre-defined projects, other kinds of cooperation in the implementation phase of the programme however might be considered
	The programme will strengthen the implementation of agreements on the transfer of sentenced persons and EU framework decisions.	parties intend to work towards bilateral agreement on transfer of sentenced persons - declared in the current Concept Note version
	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.	applied in the Concept Note -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>
	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.	applied in the Concept Note: the Fundamental Rights Agency expressed their willingness to cooperate, the cooperation with the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), initiated in previous perspective of Norway Grants will be continued
	In developing the concept note and during the implementation of the programme, the Programme Operator shall seek to ensure synergies within this programme, and with the programme Home Affairs in order to strengthen the justice chain.	applied in the Concept Note: 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
	There is an ambition to have no more than 60% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme available for infrastructure (hard measures). The maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the concept note.	applied in the Concept Note: funding of infrastructure (hard measures) is foreseen only within one pre-defined project - <i>Improved correctional services</i>
	The possibility of pre-defining further project(s) focused on inter alia mediation, legal education and human rights shall be explored during the concept note phase.	applied in the Concept Note: predefined project regarding human rights, open calls/small grant scheme regarding mediation; legal education project is considered by FMO and DPP outside the remit of Programme Area 21
Home Affairs	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 in the Concept Note: predefined project as well as the open call procedure within the <i>Asylum and Migration PA</i> (additional points in the competitive procedure)
	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.	applied in the Concept Note: predefined projects no. II and IV and the open call procedure
	No more than 60% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme shall be available for infrastructure (hard measures).	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
	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.	applied in the Concept Note: 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
	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.	initial agreement between MI&A and EPIC was signed June the 6th, 2018. The final agreement will be signed after Programme Agreement conclusion; the general idea of the role division is based on the entities' merits responsibility
	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.	The Ministry of Interior and Administration will cooperate with the Polish Ministry of Justice (the PO for the <i>Justice Programme</i>) 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&A is a member of the working group established by the Ministry of Justice
Education	The programme shall include, inter alia, mobility in higher education, apprenticeships, institutional cooperation, and inclusive education (for e.g. disabled and intercultural students).	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes, activities, open call projects envisaged)
	No less than 72% of the total eligible expenditure shall be allocated to	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes 3 and 4, six open calls and are

	the programme area 'Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security'.	envisaged)
	Approximately 19% of the total eligible expenditure shall be allocated to the programme area 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation'.	applied in the Concept Note (outcome 1, open call is envisaged)
	Approximately 9% of the total eligible expenditure shall be allocated to the programme area 'Environment and Ecosystems'.	applied in the Concept Note (outcome 2, open call is envisaged)
	The possibility of using financial instruments shall be explored when developing the concept note.	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes 3 and 4). financial instruments are financed from national sources.
	Special concern shall be given to achieving significant and cost-efficient reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes 3 and 4)
	Special concern shall be given to hydroelectric power and geothermal energy as sources of renewable energy.	applied in the Concept Note (outcomes 3 and 4)
	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.	applied in the Concept Note which is elaborated in cooperation between Ministry of Environment and National Fund for Environment Protection. Details of cooperation shall be provided in the supplementary information
	The possibility of pre-defining project(s) shall be explored when developing the concept note.	applied in the Concept Note, the possibility of few pre-defining projects have been discussed
Culture	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 in the Concept Note (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 in the Concept Note (outcome 1 - open call)
	At least 14% of the total eligible expenditure shall be set aside for cultural cooperation and exchange between the Donor States and Poland.	applied in the Concept Note (outcome 2 - open call)
	The Programme shall include activities and initiatives in arts and culture that explicitly encourage the inclusion of ethnic and national minorities.	applied in the Concept Note (3 outcomes)
	The possibility of pre-defining further project(s) could be explored when developing the concept note.	no additional predefined project envisaged so far

Donors did not impose any conditions in the *Education* Programme Agreement. *Local Development* programme is to be launched in April. Polish Focal Point shall ensure fulfilment of the conditions set in the PA and report it at the later stage.

As other programmes did not enter PA signing phase, the report shall not refer to the conditions.

4.3 Challenges faced related to absorption/disbursements, with implemented/planned solutions

Polish Focal Point shared with Donors' time schedule of programmes implementation⁵ - an actual model presenting all the stages which are really necessary to implement the programmes successfully and which are still doable within the given framework, assuming the engagement of all entities and provision of adequate risk management policy. Hitherto CN arrangements show clearly that each programme schedule is tight and requires prompt implementation.

	2019				2020				2021				2022				2023				2024
	I	II	III	IV	jan-apr																
Programme under EEA and Norway Grants																					

programme agreement
open call set-up (to be agreed with DPP)
open call /application submission
appraisal / assessment / evaluation

⁵ NFP letter of February 12th, 2019; DPT-VII.7021.14.2019.AK

project agreements' signing

projects' implementation

final settlements/savings management

It is crucial for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 to come into the next phase, to sum up the current stage of programming period in Poland and indicate next steps, inevitable for achieving the goals of economic and social development as well as bilateral relations strengthening, set at MoU signed at the end of 2017. It becomes necessary to sign the Programme Agreements with the Donors for all of the Programmes in Poland by the half of 2019, at latest.

The schedule means that according to our analysis the current perspective of EEA and Norway Grants would be divided into the programming period (2014-2019) and the implementation period (2019-2024) – each lasting around 5 years. The general public is waiting anxiously for the calls. The predefined project promoters are ready to start project activities. The good image of EEA and Norway Grants in Poland is a very important asset to build the current activities on.

The individual risk analyses for the programmes constitutes an attachment to the Strategic report, nevertheless National Focal Point, basing on both the experience taken out of the previous perspectives of EEA and Norway Grants in Poland as well as the current status of programming period in relation to the scope of the programmes, identified key risk factors and challenges influencing each of the programmes implementation stage and achievements foreseen:

1. Programme agreement (by half of 2019)

PA signing can be challenging in case of the programmes, where CNs have not been assessed positively by the Donor side yet.

PA signing by the half of 2019 is a prerequisite for all other stages - any delays affect negatively the time schedule and make other steps impossible to be followed.

Delays at this stage impose a risk of a withdrawal of predefined project promoters from implementation of their projects, as due to different budgetary/strategic factors they need to be implemented at a given timeframe, even outside the scope of EEA and Norway Grants.

2. Agreed open call set-up (3 months envisaged)

Various number of calls are to be prepared at the same time by the PO in cooperation with DPPs, IPOs, NFP; it may result in a lack of capacity, lower efficiency or create inevitable delays.

Wide scope of the call documentation needs thorough preparation and assessment; it can take more time especially in case of calls for the investment projects. There is no time reserve for the repetition of the calls.

3. Open call application submission (3 months envisaged)

Finding a partner and partnership project preparation is more challenging; time consuming negotiations of partnership agreement can affect either the stage of application submission or later on - signing the project implementation agreement (depending on call requirements).

For the potential beneficiaries the preparation of the complex project, especially in case of combining both investment and soft part might be challenging.

There are programmes with the extraordinary scheme of application submission (in *Local Development* there are 2 stages of applications submission depend on each other; in case of *Education*, the call needs to be coordinated with the academic year).

4. Appraisal / assessment stage (9 months envisaged)

The assessment of huge number of submitted applications takes time. In case of large allocation programmes, where the public interest in receiving the grant is enormous and there are a few hundreds of applications in one call, the process can take longer - under investment calls or

partnership calls or calls organized by Donors assessment took around one year or even more (taking into consideration the appeals).

The coordination of tasks related to assessment is becoming challenging in case of programmes where there are many actors involved in the process and in case of partnership projects the assessment of the partners is additional element influencing the time schedule.

The special Donor requirements on the assessment procedure can cause delays – a scheme needs to be worked out in case of the engagement of Donor side experts in appraisal of individual projects.

5. Projects' implementation (3 years envisaged)

The complex, investment projects needs more time for the implementation.

In case of large allocation predefined projects, like correctional services project or the open call projects where crucial indicators are to be achieved, there must be a reserve in time at the implementation stage as one of the risk management tools.

Based on the experience, in case of investment projects there is always a risk of delays in investment process, connected with an increase in prices on the construction services market and the public procurement procedures. The proceedings to choose the contractor need to be repeated and the time schedule of projects implementation needs extension.

In case of projects implemented in the historical objects there is always a risk of delays in the investment process due to the necessity to carry out additional works, in agreement with a restorer.

3 years project implementation is “a must” in case of a typical research project and the set-up does not consider any changes or delays in projects' implementation, which are inevitable taking into consideration the number of project engaged entities at the international level, the complex scope of the projects, especially in case of the applied researches.

There are special schemes under individual projects where there are several stages of implementation planned, depending on each other, like preparing models/schemes/rules, then testing phase and finally the evaluation and upgrading (based in some cases on the standardized procedures of IPOs); in this case the implementation phase needs to be even longer than 3 years.

Special requirements from the Donors connected with the stage of implementation of individual projects, like the additional ex ante control of tender documentation, needs to be taken into consideration when preparing the project time schedule.

6. Final settlements/savings

In case of large allocation programmes the savings management is challenging especially that in most cases the savings appear at the final stage of the projects implementation.

We believe that thorough analysis of hitherto experiences referred to ambitious plans set in the Concept Notes might be an invitation for the Donors to continue tight cooperation.

2. Status of bilateral funds

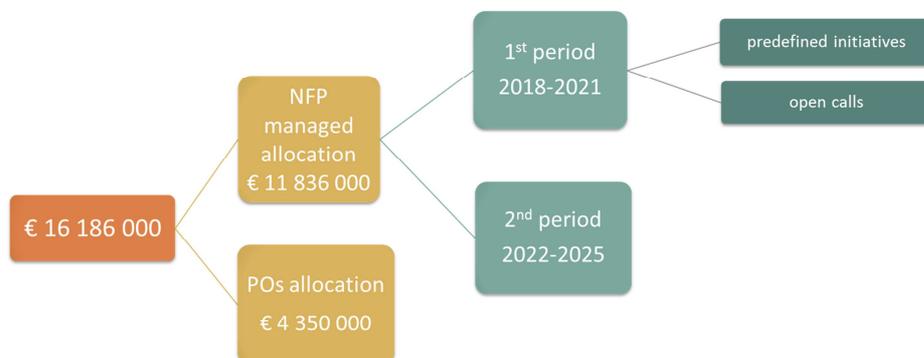
The Bilateral Fund was indeed the first component within the EEA and Norway Grants, implementation of which already started in 2018. All the procedures in the Focal Point were finalized to make the financing of the first bilateral initiatives possible.

In accordance with Article 4.2 of the Regulation, Polish Focal Point established a Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds. First official meeting of the Committee took place on February the 26th and adopted the '*Document on the composition, role and functioning of the Committee*'.

The Work Plan for the Bilateral Fund, indicating brief description of the implementation system, general information on the activities to be organized, as well as the list of first bilateral initiatives to be

supported in the first implementation period (2018-2021), was adopted through a written procedure, announced by the NFP on July the 18th.

Agreement on the Fund for Bilateral Relations between Polish National Focal Point, Financial Mechanism Committee and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was signed on September the 4th, 2018 enabling Polish side to commence the Work Plan implementation.



In 2018, 2 bilateral initiatives at the national level were implemented.

1. Events linked to European Forum for New Ideas (EFNI) - Polish Confederation „Lewiatan”

As a result of the engagement of the Bilateral Fund within this initiative and co-financing of 16 events (like panel discussions, round table, seminar, networking evening) taking place under the framework of European Forum for New Ideas in Sopot on September the 26th-28th, 2018, the visibility of EEA and Norway Grants has been definitely enhanced.

The EFNI conference is one of the largest international business conferences in Central Europe, organized yearly since 2011 and it focuses on sustainable development, economy, equal chances, social innovation, digital society and inclusive markets. The objective is to come up with ideas for a strong Europe and a competitive economy and Europe open to civilizational and technological trends.

Around thousand EFNI participants were able to familiarize with the EEA and Norway grants as the information was given on the conference and marketing materials, on the screens during the panels, on the sponsor boards, in the mobile application and on the website of the Forum. Thanks to the activity of the Norwegian partners, nearly 30 representatives of Norwegian companies and institutions were invited (including Powel, Noratel Sp. z o.o., Arriva Shipping, DNB Bank, Norse Production Sp. z o.o., Q-FREE, Istrail Sp. z o.o., Firmus Group, Scopus and Marine Harvest). The whole 3-day event gathered 168 panelists and lecturers, HE Olav Myklebust, the Norwegian Ambassador to Poland, and Ingebjørg Harto of the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) being among them. Special networking event, hosted by HE Myklebust was devoted to the grants, giving the great opportunity to present both the Norwegian companies, and the cultural and environmental resources of Norway. The stands of Norwegian companies were visited by nearly 500 participants of the evening.

The events received wide media coverage - more than 2500 publications were produced, the customer reach indicator was at the level of more than Mln 2 people.

2. Trust across borders: State institutions, families and child welfare services in Poland and Norway - Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

The initiative was launched in September 2018 by Peace Research Institute Oslo in cooperation with researchers from the University of Gdańsk with the aim to increase mutual knowledge and

cooperation between stakeholders within child welfare, children's rights and migrant support on both the Polish and Norwegian side.

In 2018 partners worked on literature review and conducted a workshop in Oslo, providing insights into existing knowledge and data on trust among migrants. A broader backdrop on migration and migration-related diversity, in both Poland and Norway, was also presented. Alongside with the interdisciplinary team of researchers, in the workshops took part representatives from Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Polish Embassy in Oslo, Norwegian Embassy in Warsaw, Norwegian Caritas, Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Child protection services from Oslo, Gdańsk City Hall, Gdańsk Foundation for Social Innovation, Polish *Let's work together* Foundation, Municipal Centre for Social Services in Gdynia, Polish Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Gdańsk Metropolitan Area.

The next workshop is scheduled mid-March 2019. As the initiative is still ongoing, tangible results are expected late spring 2019.

The Work Plan envisages the implementation of two others initiatives:

3. Independent living of disabled students and graduates of higher education institutions - Institute of Applied Social Science, University of Warsaw (ISNS UW) in cooperation with Independent Living, Drammen (ULOPA, non-governmental organization) and Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

The initiative focusing on public policies related to professional activation and employment of young people with disabilities in Poland and Norway, was in 2018 at the stage of preparation and finalisation of the agreement. The agreement between the Focal Point and University of Warsaw was concluded on February the 20th, 2019. The initiative has been launched in March.

4. Bilateral cooperation on activities in the area of improved accessibility for persons with disabilities - National Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (PFRON) in cooperation with Delta Centre, Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration and Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities.

Due to the fact, that the partnership has not been finally established between the parties, the initiative has been withdrawn from the Work Plan.

The main challenge of Bilateral Fund area is the efficient use of funds within the eligibility period. Therefore the Work Plan is to be treated as a living document and the new initiatives at the strategic level definitely will follow. Here we need to stress the excellent cooperation between JCBF members (including the written procedure decision making process) which is crucial at the time being.

The table below presents the hitherto NFP disbursement (transfers) of the BF regarding the initiatives at national level implemented according to the JCBF decision.

Beneficiary	budget €	disbursed €	%
Lewiatan	150 000,00	150 000,00	100%
PRIO	121 000,00	63 010,60	52%
Warsaw University	145 000,00	33 218,61	23%
	416 000,00	246 229,21	59%

End March 2019 the second JCBF meeting is scheduled providing an opportunity to present and discuss new initiatives and decide on their implementation. It is planned to discuss the idea of cooperation between the Polish Institute of International Affairs and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs on

migration and development policy issues, common initiative of Institute of Animal Reproduction and Food Research in Olsztyn with Matis Institute and University of Iceland on the innovations in the side streams of food processing and other potential fields of cooperation.

As of the Bilateral Fund programmes' allocations, several Programme Operators took advantage of the Bilateral Fund costs eligibility in 2018.

- PO for Environment took part in the "Just Transition" seminar in Kraków (Poland) on October the 25th, held by the Institute for Environmental Protection – National Research Institute together with its Norwegian partner Vista Analyse. The objective of the seminar was to present the concept of transformation process, which takes into account the social costs and a need for new job creation. This concept plays a significant role in the UNFCCC climate policy realization and was one of the point of discussion during the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Polish and Norwegian experts shared good practices knowledge in areas such as electromobility, green city infrastructure, energy efficiency promotion, the use of RES in the electricity generation and the Carbon Capture and Storage Technology (CCS). The seminar attracted the audience of 150 participants.
- POs for Research took part in the workshop regarding the project selection process called IdeLab organized by the Norwegian Research Council (DPP) on October 15-16, 2018. Workshop was conducted by representatives of Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council - a British company specializing in the implementation of the IdeLab method. During the meeting a series of information necessary for the PO's to launch calls in the IdeLab formula was presented. The process was also discussed in relation to the compliance with national law and program rules, as the tool is to be used in the Polish programme as well: IdeLab workshop is foreseen end of 2019.
- The Local Development Committee recommended the implementation of bilateral activities concerning the organization of a study visit in Bodo (Norway) by the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, combined with participation in the ISOCARP congress. Bilateral activities allowed participants of Bodo visit to improve their knowledge of sustainable urban planning and climate change, with the benefit of proper preparation and implementation of the Local Development Program. In addition, Polish and Norwegian partners have created a network of cooperation and exchange of experiences. A visit to Bodo was also an opportunity to meet between the representatives of the Operator and the Programme partners (KS and OECD) in order to determine its future shape.

The table below presents the hitherto disbursement of the BF allocated to programmes in the MoU.

Beneficiary	budget €	expenditures borne by PO €	%
Reserach_NCN	650 000	9 463,00	2,5%
Research_NCBiR		7 527,00	
Local Development	400 000	36 574,00	9,0%
Environment	900 000	55 769,00	6,0%
		109 333,00	

It is expected that more initiatives will be organised by Programme Operators during the programme implementation stage. There are some initiatives already planned for 2019, like :

- PO in Environment is preparing for organization of study visit, seminar and the call for proposals in capacity building activities for Polish stakeholders in the area of geothermal energy and hydropower; match-making event in the energy area.
- PO for Business Development and Innovation envisaged international brokerage events to be organized in Norway by Innovation Norway as the programme partner, for companies involved in Green Industry Innovation (March 2019) and Blue Technologies (May 2019). Polish companies from the industries of blue tech, welfare, green tech and female enterprises will be on missions to Norway to establish partnerships with Norwegian enterprises (respectively in May, June, October and November 2019).
- PO for Culture is thinking of the travel grant for potential project promoters.
- PO for Home Affairs is going to implement the predefined initiative on road safety issues. Polish Police Headquarters and Norwegian National Road Policy Service are working on initiative details and look forward to continue their collaboration.

The scope of activities will in each case be determined with the programmes' partners within the Cooperation Committees.

3. Management and implementation

a. Description of the management and control system of the NFP, CA, IA and AA (MCS)

In June 2018, the NFP provided the Donors with the description of the management and control system covering the following institutions: National Focal Point, Certifying Authority, Irregularities Authority and Audit Authority, thus fulfilled the obligation determined in Article 5.7.1 of the Regulation concerning the submission of the detailed description of the management and control system.

In the following months (on September the 27th, December the 17th, 2018 and on February the 15th, 2019) the FMO shared comments and requirements in relation to the MSC, which were analysed carefully by the NFP and addresses in the modified MCS description that was sent to the FMO on February the 20th, 2019. Finally, on March the 4th, 2019 NFP received official confirmation, that the description of the Management and Control Systems (MCS) for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 accompanied by Audit Report and the Opinion has been approved by the FMO and meets requirements as required by Regulation Article 5.7.5.

b. Descriptions of the management and control system for programmes

As first Programme Agreements were only signed on March the 8th, 2019 and on March the 25th, 2019 the process of drafting the descriptions of management and control systems for operational programmes has started in case of two programmes (*Education* and *Local Development*).

4. Communication

The Communication Strategy for the 3rd edition of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland was developed within six months of the date of last signature of the Memoranda of Understanding and submitted to the FMO on June 20th, 2018⁶. The document is outlining the key strategic goals for the years 2018-2025. It was prepared on the basis of thorough analyses of the actions that have been taken so far, including

⁶ The Memoranda of Understanding were signed in Warsaw on 20 December 2017 by Icelandic Ambassador Martin Eyjólfsson, Norwegian Minister of EEA and EU Affairs Marit Berger Røsland and State Secretary in the Polish Ministry of Economic Development, Jerzy Kwieciński. The solemn event organized in the Royal Łazienki Palace was accompanied by a concert. As a result of a press conference and a press information, which was sent out to journalists, several dozen articles on financing new programmes under the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 in Poland appeared in the Polish press, internet, radio and TV.

the effects of communication conducted in the periods 2004-2009 and 2009-2014, as well as the EEA and Norway Grants recognisability surveys that were commissioned by the NFP in 2018. The Strategy was accepted conditionally by the Donors on November 9th, 2018. The clarifications presented subsequently by the NFP (in parallel with the complemented version of the Strategy) led to the final approval of the document by the FMO on March 12th, 2019.

Having regard to the provisions of the Annex 3 to the Regulations, in 2018 the NFP designated a person to be responsible for information and communication in the Beneficiary State and to act as a coordinator for the Programme Operators information and communication activities. Additionally, there was a contact database created for a network for the Programme Operators' information and communication activities.

The strategic goal determined in the draft Communication Strategy is to increase knowledge and awareness among the general public about the existence of the EEA and Norway Grants and their influence on the reduction of social and economic disparities. The NFP strove for the implementation of this goal in 2018 especially via two major undertakings.

The first of them was a promotion of the EEA and Norway Grants during the 18th New Horizons International Film Festival in Wrocław, the most visited event of such a type in Poland (with over 100,000 spectators each year), which covered, in particular, a creation of an Oslo/Reykjavík section – presenting the achievements of the contemporary cinema of Norway and Iceland and a concert of the Norwegian artist Maja S. K. Ratkje. The event ensured the visibility of the logo and the slogan of the of the EEA and Norway Grants in the whole visual setting of the festival (e.g. in the festival spot broadcasted before all festival screenings, in all image and promotional materials, on the festival website www.nowehoryzonty.pl, in the festival newsletter sent out to over 40,000 subscribers, in an outdoor, internet, press, radio and TV campaign), thus reaching a wide audience and increasing the general public's awareness of the role of the Donor States in reducing social and economic disparities and of their cooperation with Poland. 4

The second undertaking was a publication of a few advertisements and articles in the magazine 'W podróż' ('For a journey'), official on board magazine of the Polish State Railways with monthly edition of 35 000 copies and number of readers per month of about 1,5 million, available also online on PKP Intercity website. The articles focused on the effects of the selected projects supported in the 2nd edition of the EEA and Norway Grants were meant to serve as an inspiration for the potential future beneficiaries.

Regardless of the above, in 2018 the NFP was working on the new website of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland, as well as performing its informational duties (via responding to e-mail and phone inquiries or parliamentary interpellations).

In 2019 the NFP would like to focus on providing information on new financing opportunities in the 3rd edition of the EEA and Norway Grants, the calls for proposals and the principles of applying for grants.

In 2019 we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the European Economic Area Agreement and the birth of the EEA and Norway Grants. This is also the year of the 100th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations of Poland with Norway and with Liechtenstein and 300th anniversary of establishing the Principality of Liechtenstein. These are the messages that the NFP endeavours to add in 2019 to the message on the 3rd edition of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland.

Given the stage of works on the individual programmes of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 at the beginning of 2019, the NFP foresees the concentration in the first months of 2019 in the first place on the horizontal / image activities oriented on the promotion of the Grants brand and results-based projects implemented in the previous edition (2009-2014) throughout the continuation of publications of the articles in the magazine 'W podróż' ('For a journey') and the production of promotional materials (with the new logo and the slogan of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021).

Signing of the first Programme Agreements in 2019 within the 3rd edition of the EEA and Norway Grant in Poland (for Education and Local Development Programmes) was already celebrated by solemn signing

ceremonies – accompanied by press conferences. The events, promoted i.a. via the Ministry’s Facebook and Twitter, attracted quite significant media attention.

The key communication activities in 2019 will be held by the NFP after launching a majority of the Programmes and will cover in particular: (1) a major horizontal launching event publicising the assistance of the Donors through the EEA and Norway Grants, presenting the objectives of the Grants, the programme areas and the possibilities for support and encouraging cooperation with entities in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; (2) internet, press, radio and TV campaign dedicated to the 3rd edition of the EEA and Norway Grants in Poland and the availability of support in particular areas; (3) creation and production of the video material based on the tutorial format on how to apply for the EEA and Norway Grants (horizontal approach). The possibilities of co-organization of or a patronage over cultural events as highly effective tools of raising the general public’s awareness of the existence and impact of the EEA and Norway Grants, will also be explored.

Additionally, the NFP is going to provide information on the new financing opportunities, as well as the news via its website, as well as social media profiles of the Ministry.⁷

In order to ensure the most efficient functioning of the network of the Programme Operators, the NFP intends to organise in 2019 a workshop on information and communication.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Since the programmes are not yet at the implementation phase, no specific monitoring or evaluation activities were undertaken so far.

6. Issues for the annual meeting

The finalization of the programming process is essential discussion point in the agenda for the AM.

Bearing in mind the eligibility deadlines (April 2024 for projects, December 2024 for programmes and April 2025 for Bilateral Fund) and no mechanisms envisaged to prolong them, Programme Agreement signing and prompt implementation is of utmost importance.

Despite over one year programming process, in which both the Polish and the Donor side entities were very much engaged, we have not managed to receive the Donors’ *green light* for submitting Concept Note for 2 programmes (*Health, Justice*). Two programmes (Education, Local Development) out of nine entered the implementation period, after signing Programme Agreement.

Success of seven remaining programmes is dependent on PA conclusion by the half of 2019, as it is prerequisite for all other stages (call set-up, application submission and appraisal, projects implementation, savings management) to be implemented on time. Delays affect negatively the time schedule and make other steps impossible to be followed. The engagement of a number of institutions in various procedures makes the programmes development and implementation extremely challenging. We should all be aware that significant number of partners and institutions involved in decision-making may affect the implementation schedule.

We are fully aware of the programming phase importance - NFP is working closely with the institutions on the Polish side to tighten the relations, to coordinate and speed up the whole process.

⁷ The NFP will seek to develop a dedicated Facebook and Instagram profiles for the EEA and Norway Grants after launching the first projects (which is however dependent on the decision of relevant IT and communication entities in the Ministry).