

MINUTES 7th ANNUAL MEETING

EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014

Prague, 21 November 2018, 17:00 p.m.

Ministry of Finance, Letenská 15, Room 116/B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Institution	Name
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway	HOLM Pia Gjesme
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway	KLEVEN Birgit
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague	ANDREASSEN Vegar
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Prague	GANICKÁ Helena
Mission of Liechtenstein to the EU	LOREZ Helen
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Iceland	H.E. IBSEN Thórir
Financial Mechanism Office	ÁRNASON Árni Páll
Financial Mechanism Office	TROŠT Jana
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CR	KOPECKÝ Robert
Ministry of Finance - NFP	MATYÁŠOVÁ Zuzana
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA1	SOVOVÁ Šárka
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA1	TESAŘ Tomáš
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA1	TOUŠOVÁ Monika
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA1	VANĚK Vlastimil
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA2	HRAZDIROVÁ Hana
Ministry of Finance – NFP-CFA2	CAPUTOVÁ Dominika
Ministry of Finance - CA	VRÁNEK Petr
Ministry of Finance - CA	HARTMANNOVÁ Kristýna
Ministry of Finance - AA	PAVLÍK Jaroslav
Ministry of Finance - AA	PROKOP Michal

OPENING / ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Annual meeting was opened by the Head of the National Focal Point (NFP) in the Czech Republic, **Ms Zuzana Matyášová**, who chaired the meeting. As the 7th Annual meeting of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 followed the 1st Annual meeting of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 the introduction was only brief. Ms Matyášová welcomed again all the participants and passed the word to the Assistant Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, **Ms Pia Gjesme Holm**, who thanked again for the organization of the meeting.

The Agenda of the 7th (last) Annual meeting of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 was agreed by all the participants without comments.

DRAFT FINAL STRATEGIC REPORTS

Ms Matyášová briefly introduced that the Final Strategic Reports (both EEA Grants and Norway Grants) were submitted to the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) on 27 June 2018. The Update to the Final Strategic Reports was submitted to the FMO on 25 October 2018. She added that the Reports contain both the information about the development in the last reporting period 2017/2018 as well as the overall assessment of the whole implementation period. She noted that printed versions of both Strategic Reports and their Update are available at the Annual meeting. Ms Matyášová asked the Donors for their feedback and comments.

Ms Holm summed up that the Final Strategic Reports for the period 2009-2014 give a good overview of the achieved results in the Czech Republic. The Donors appreciated mainly that all programmes were highly relevant for the Czech Republic. She added that the Report emphasised challenges in the implementation of the grants and provided lessons learnt. For the next strategic report, she recommended to include a more critical assessment of the challenges faced and progress made to address them. She also pointed out that there are several good recommendations as a result of monitoring and evaluations, and asked the Czech authorities to use these lessons learned for the new period of mechanisms.

Ms Holm also added that there are still some irregularities that need to be solved and closed before the approval of the Final Programme Reports and closure of the respective programmes.

Finally, the Final Strategic Reports were approved by the Donors.

RESULTS ACHIEVED ON PROGRAMME LEVEL AND ON BILATERAL COOPERATION

Ms Hana Hrazdírová, Acting Head of the Centre for Foreign Assistance – Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, presented information about the results achieved on programme level and on bilateral cooperation (attachment No. 1). She summed up the overview of all programmes and their results, analysed the occurrence of horizontal concerns / policy markers and showed also the results of bilateral cooperation.

Ms Holm congratulated to the Programme Operators, the NFP, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority for their good work and for the process of finalizing and closing the programmes as the final results are very good from the Donors' point of view. She noted that this success is joint effort of all entities involved in the implementation. She pointed out that the overall absorption of the EEA and Norway Grants for 2009-2014 is above 91 % (according to the information from September 2018) which puts the Czech Republic to the upper scale of the Beneficiary States. She was also satisfied with the level of bilateral cooperation where a total of 53 % of all projects were

implemented in partnership and beside that there were more than 340 bilateral initiatives implemented both at national and programme level. But, on the other hand, the Czech Republic is one of the countries that have been suffering from overly bureaucratic administrative processes – this has been noted particularly with the BF and within the Research programme (CZ09).

Ms Matyášová pointed out that the NFP is aware about this concern but the Czech authorities do not prepare the rules to complicate the implementation but to ensure that some minimum requirements and procedures need to be established and obeyed in line with the Czech legislation. She added that there are still too many different programmes so the implementation is fragmented.

SUMMARY EVALUATION RESULTS

Ms Dominika Caputová, Centre for Foreign Assistance – Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, briefly presented the results of summary evaluation report as well as objective assessment of the set-up and achieved results based on the evaluation findings as well as findings from the audit of the Supreme Audit Office (attachment No. 2). One of the Supreme Audit Office findings was related to the insufficient definition of the programme goals and their indicators – the SAO concluded their audit with the finding of failure to prove achievement of the programme objectives in 11 out of 14 programmes.

Ms Holm pointed out that the NFP performed an extensive final evaluation with very interesting findings that needs to be reflected in implementation of programmes for the new period. Also the FMO learned from the past and e.g. indicators and their settings are now much better defined. She also confirmed that non-attainment of the targets defined in the results framework in the Programme Agreement is not the breach of the Programme Agreement.

This was supported also by **Mr Árnason**, the Deputy Director of the FMO, who confirmed that the FMO does not share the view of the Supreme Audit Office of the Czech Republic in this matter and invited the NFP and Programme Operators to only report the achieved results in Annual Programme Reports and in Final Programme Report with proper explanation.

Ms Matyášová thanked for this approach and explained that the communication about this finding of Supreme Audit Office was quite complicated and this was the reason the NFP needed a written statement from the FMO related to it.

CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

As there was no other point raised under “Miscellaneous”, **Ms Matyášová** summed up the conclusions of the 7th (last) Annual meeting of EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014:

- Final Strategic Report was approved, the NFP noted the remarks of the Donors for the future;
- as this is the end of the implementation period the NFP has some reflections and lessons learned that will be used in the implementation of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021.

Ms Holm thanked all for a productive meeting, she also thanked again to all entities in the Czech Republic for their good work and expressed a wish for good future cooperation.

Ms Matyášová thanked for the constructive discussions during both Annual meetings that were a good opportunity to clear up many important issues.

As the last information, Ms Matyášová briefly informed about the programme of site visits to Lety Memorial and Příbram Prison that will be organized the next day.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Presentation “Results achieved on programme level and on bilateral cooperation”
2. Presentation “Summary evaluation results”

EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009 – 2014

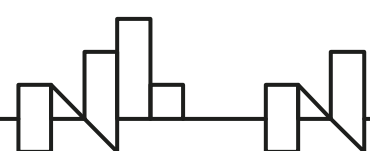
**Results achieved on programme level
and on bilateral cooperation**

Hana Hrazdiová

Annual Meeting 2018

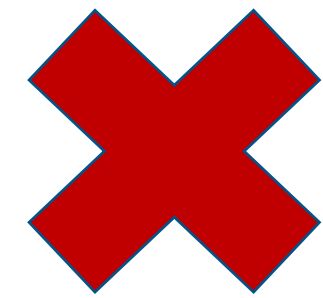
Overview of programmes and their results

- **19 programme areas, 15 programmes**
- **In total 894 projects** (23 predefined; 682 open calls; 189 small grant scheme)
- **113 mil. EUR (ca 90,98 % of the total allocation)** was disbursed by POs
 - **the highest rates – more than 90 % (9 PRG):** Environment, NGO Programme, Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Art, Pilot studies and surveys on CCS technology, Research, Public Health Initiatives, Mainstreaming Gender Equality, Schengen Cooperation and Organised Crime, Judicial Capacity and Correctional Services
 - **the lowest rates – up to 50 % (2 PRG):** Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation (*PDP component 2*), Domestic and Gender-based Violence (*delayed start of implementation, savings*)
- **Results at programme level:**
 - **42 outcomes, 80 outcome indicators**
 - **107 outputs, 148 output indicators**



Overview of programmes and their results

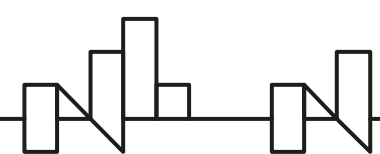
- **variety** of programme areas & partial thematic **overlaps**



- **accurate selection** of the relevant programme areas
 - **proper needs identification**
 - **in line with key strategic documents and policies**
 - **reflection of current developments and trends**
-
- **contributed to achievement of the objectives of the individual programme areas**
 - **contributed to improvement as regards overall FM objectives**



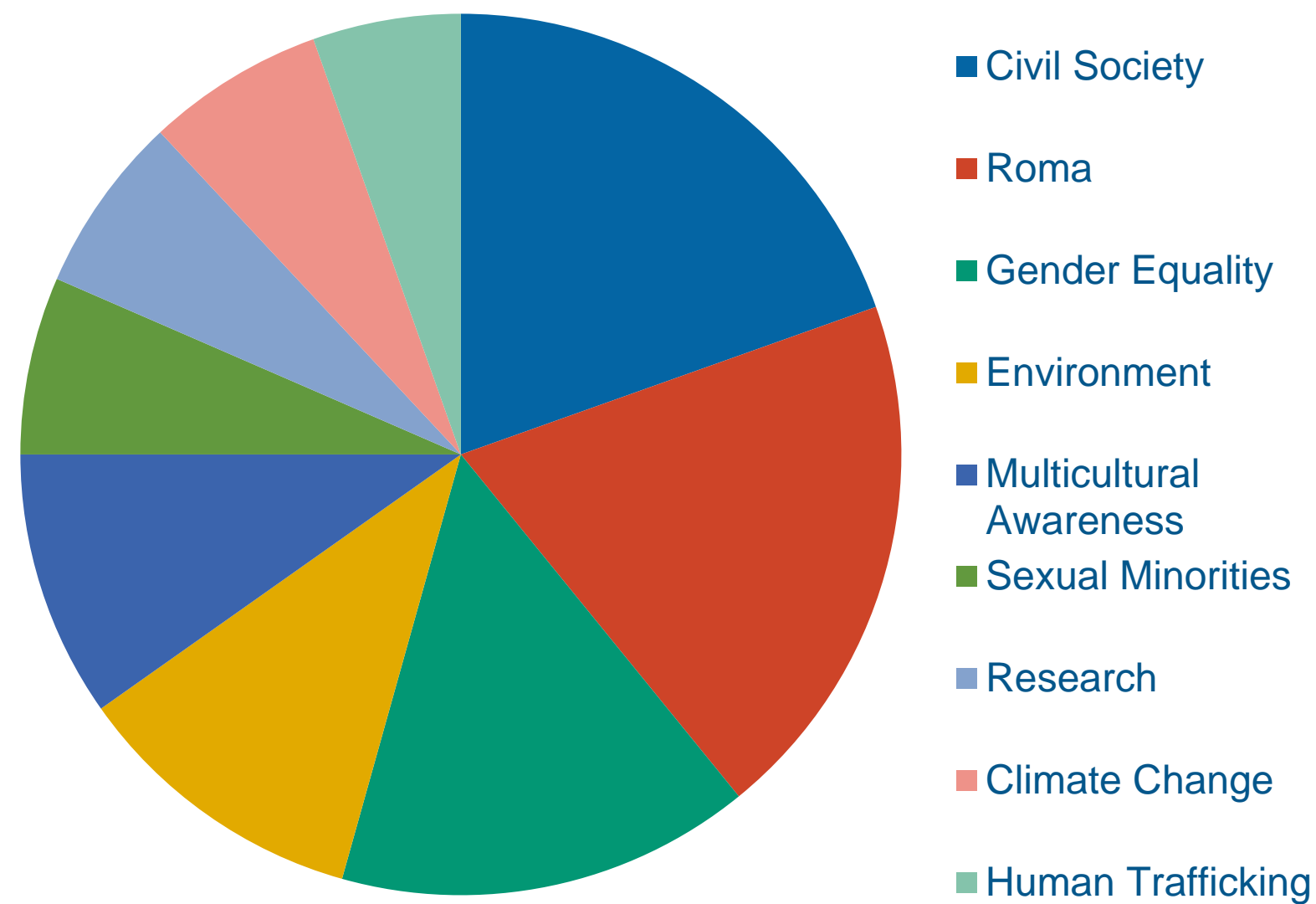
highly relevant to the needs and challenges



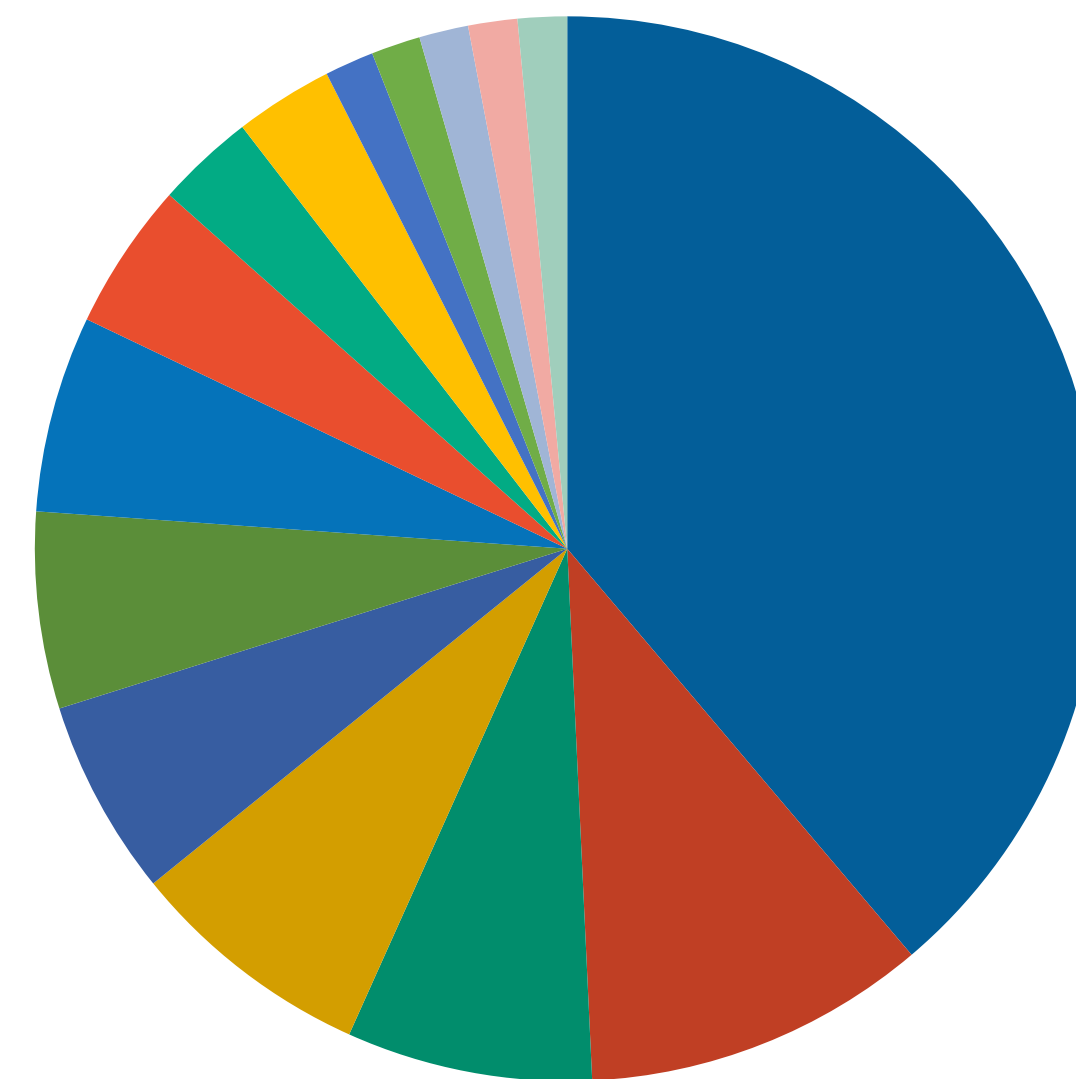
Horizontal concerns / policy markers

➤ **horizontal concerns promoted especially:** NGO Programme, **Children and Youth at Risk**, Local and Regional Initiatives - Social Inclusion, **Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Art**, Mainstreaming Gender Equality, **Domestic and Gender-based Violence** and Schengen Cooperation and Organised Crime

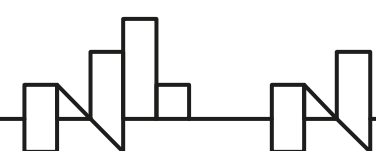
According to type of policy marker



According to Programme Area



- PA10: Funds for non-governmental organisations
- PA28: Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance (Norway grant)
- PA29: Domestic and gender-based violence
- PA32: Correctional services, including non-custodial sanctions
- PA02: Biodiversity and ecosystem services
- PA12: Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion (EEA grants)
- PA27: Public health initiatives (Norway grant)
- PA11: Children and youth at risk
- PA07: Adaptation to climate change
- PA20: Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
- PA03: Environmental monitoring and integrated planning and control
- PA16: Conservation and revitalisation of cultural and natural heritage
- PA17: Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European cultural heritage
- PA23: Bilateral research cooperation
- PA30: Schengen cooperation and combating cross-border and organised crime, including trafficking and itinerant criminal groups



Horizontal concerns / policy markers

➤ **CZ03 NGO Programme: integration of Roma children and youth in the education mainstream**

2 770 Roma children benefited and 134 after-school activities organized; education still represents a key tool for solving the Roma issue, parental support necessary

➤ **CZ04 Children and Youth at Risk: equal access and non-discrimination and Roma social inclusion**

Transformation plans for new services in the area of care for vulnerable children and young people created; respect of children's rights and their opinion during decision-making processes promoted; new methods of finding out children's views and helping them to express them tested and implemented; awareness of children's rights by local and national campaigns raised.

➤ **CZ05 Local and Regional Initiatives - Social Inclusion**

Hate Free Culture – the strongest label in the Czech Republic in terms of promotion of multicultural values and respect to the minorities. Hate Free campaign promoted positive examples of good practice and positive personal stories of members of various minorities (ethnic, gender, age, health-handicapped, homeless) facing danger of social exclusion.

➤ **CZ06 Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Arts: diversity at the level of cultures, nations and minorities, including Roma inclusion**

Targeted in 12 projects within the programme; 4 projects focused on the Jewish culture and heritage.

➤ **CZ12 Mainstreaming Gender Equality: gender equality, domestic and gender-based violence, tolerance, multicultural understanding and respect for the rights of minorities including the Roma**

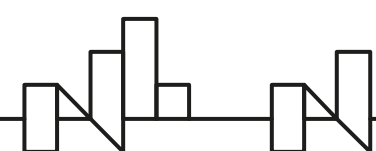
Combating violence against women was present in every single project of the PA Domestic and Gender-based Violence. Some projects introduced new topics such as gender in the Roma community and Roma women's empowerment, tackling domestic violence in the Roma community or engagement of Roma men in child-care services.

➤ **CZ13 Domestic and Gender-based Violence: respect of human rights especially on gender equality and topics related to domestic violence and balance between work and private life**

Project helped to balance the opportunities of women and men and contributed to reduction of domestic violence.

➤ **CZ14 Schengen Cooperation and Organised Crime: Roma**

Building of trust through recruiting minority members into Police as well as by the improvement of the communication between the Police and Roma minority by the policemen's education in line with the Strategy of Roma Integration until 2020 and also by the Strategy for a work with minorities 2015-2017.



Bilateral relations

- established mainly in the field of **research, culture, education or environment**
- 7 programmes had partner from the donor states
- **hundreds of individual partnerships at project level** (in some programmes mandatory condition) = **53 % of all projects** implemented in partnership
- **Fund for Bilateral Relations at national level** – 3 open calls, **53 initiatives** , 437 408 EUR disbursed (91 % of allocation)

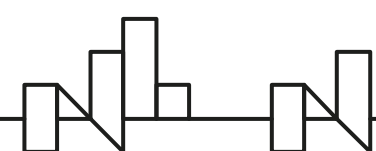
Support of cooperation in areas that overlap programmes or outside the framework of the EEA and Norway Grants in the CR

20 workshops or seminars on wide spectrum of topics and issues, 13 study visits in Norway, Czech Republic or Iceland, 9 meetings with focus on sharing and exchange of know-how, 7 business meetings

Number of analyses, case studies and manuals developed and shared with main involved stakeholders – for instance on 4 conferences

NFP held or co-organized several expert events of international importance (i.e. focused on public health, anti-corruption, education or environment)

- **Bilateral Fund at programme level - 295 initiatives**, 2 872 119 EUR disbursed (82 % of allocation)
- Measure A: 49 initiatives ; match-making seminars, study trips
- Measure B: 246 initiatives; study visits, workshops/conferences/seminars, bilateral meetings, international conferences, etc. several initiatives organized by POs, such as evaluation seminars and study visits



Bilateral relations - examples

Programme: Public Health Initiatives

Initiative: The Open Dialogue in practice

Promoter: Zahrada 2000 (NGO providing services in the field of mental health)

Partner: Norwegian University of Science and Technology

+ Concordia foundation (Poland)

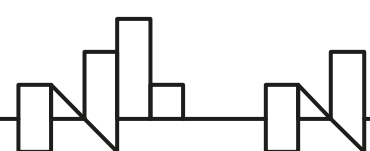


6-day workshop - introduction of the Open dialogue (OD) method - a method of work with the family and the whole client network in crisis, provision of timely intervention.

CZ and NO continue cooperation —→ since April 2018, the two-year intensive introduction of the OD method in Zahrada 2000 - an accredited OD method course with foreign lecturers and practical exercises supervised by Norwegian experts.

The staff of the organization also participates in foreign internships and conferences devoted to OD.

Main expert: Mark Steven Hopfenbeck (Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Director of the Post-Graduate Open Dialogue Program outside of Finland)



Bilateral relations - examples

Programme: Children and Youth at Risk

Initiative: International cooperation in the area of Children and Youth at Risk

Promoter: Zlín Region

Partner: Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection



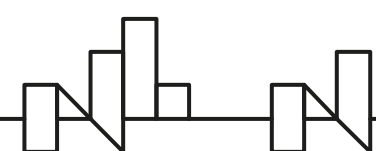
4-day study trip of 13 Czech participants (representatives of the Zlín region, children's homes and other organizations) to Iceland in April 2017.

7 Icelandic organizations visited, workshops, presentations and debates conducted on the topic of children and youth at risk.

Thanks to a diverse programme and various experts (theoreticians and practitioners) from both sides, the study trip was very inspirational especially for the Czech participants who became familiar with the Icelandic system of working with children and youth at risk.

The knowledge gained has been gradually implemented into practice in Zlín region, in particular in children's homes transformed within the Children and Youth at Risk programme.

Cooperation with colleagues from Iceland continues within a follow-up project on transformation of system of care within Operational Programme Employment.



Bilateral relations - examples

Programme: Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Arts / Bilateral Fund at National Level

(Swiss-Czech Cooperation Programme)

Project / Initiative: Preparation for the joint Czech-Norwegian project *The Norwegian tourist routes*

- *architecture and management - inspiration for the country, Artscape Norway, Artscape Iceland*

(Built in Swiss Mountains)

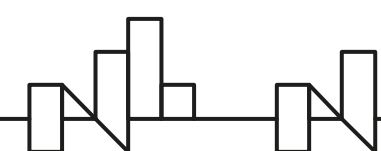
Promoter: Jaroslav Fragner Gallery

Partner: National Tourist Routes, ROM, Reykjavik Art Museum, Studio Granda Architects

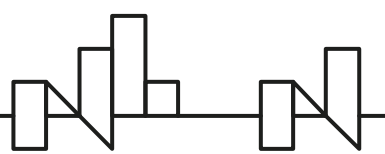
- use of contemporary art in the context of the development of society, transfer of experience to the Czech cultural context
- presentation of visual aspects of art and fine architecture, which became part of the landscape and public space through the medium of photography, documentary and video art

<http://www.artscape-norway.eu/>

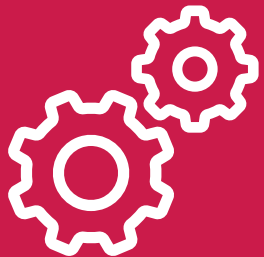
<https://www.gjf.cz/>



Thank you for your attention.



SUMMARY EVALUATION RESULTS



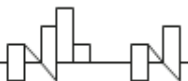


Key evaluation conclusions

Country Summary Evaluation Report

HaskoningDHV Czech Republic

External evaluation contract (January 2017 – March 2018)



Excellent relevance

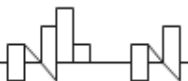
- **Accurate selection** of the relevant programme areas
- **Clear linkage** programme areas vs. national strategic documents
- **Suitable complement** to ESIF interventions
- **Relevance still prominent** for the future



Recommendation

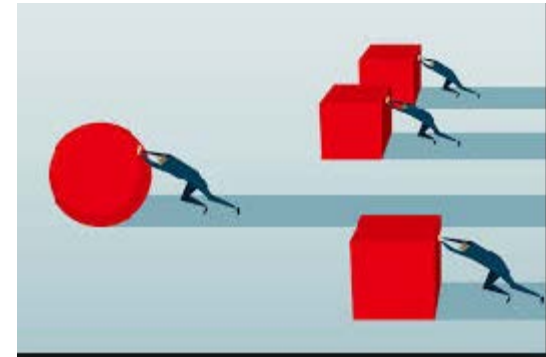
Consider concentration on specific sub-themes

(children's psychiatric care, anti-terrorism and anti-extremism measures, combatting cyber-crime, more intensive support of applied research, cooperation among different educational layers to ensure transitions and synergies)



Effectiveness - very good, but...

- Though still under implementation **most indicators fulfilled or exceeded**
 - **Reservations to indicator setting** – main limitation of the evaluation
- **Two negative factors**
 - Delayed start-up of the programmes
 - Risk of discontinuation of political support
- **Major positive factor - partnerships**



Recommendations

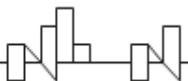
Need to precisely define realistic & relevant indicators

Encourage PO to use outcome indicators capturing the qualitative change

Long term effects to be identified via Qualitative analyses and Ex-post evaluations

Secure solid embedding of the projects in affected institutions from the initial phase (design)

Strengthened communication efforts towards decision-makers and strategic partners



Direct effects

- **Larger part of the Czech monument fund** made accessible to public
- **Investments** (mainly police and justice sector) complemented by soft measures
- **Paradigm change** (mainly bilateral programmes)
 - **concept of open prison** prepared and transposed to a pilot facility in Jiřice
 - first steps towards the transfer to **community-based psychiatric care in the CR**
- **Reforms accelerated** via creation of institutional framework
 - **Action Plan for Prevention of Domestic Violence** drafted and medialized
 - new legislation on anti-money laundering adopted
- **Effects at the regional level - a pilot concept to be deployed nation-wide**
 - adaptation strategies to climate change (Plzeň, Brno, Prague)
 - model of care for children at risks in 2 regions (Zlín, Pardubice)



Sustainability potential – very good

- **Formalism and accent to the sustainability of outputs**
- **Mechanisms at more systemic level lacking or conditional**
- **Varies across thematic areas and depends on supported activities**
- **Programmes demonstrated clear strategy on sustainability of outputs**
(Culture, CCS, Schengen & organised crime)

Recommendations

Sustainability of outcomes should be more emphasized

Focus on sustainability at project/programme design



Objective assessment of the set-up and achieved results

Independent entities:

- 1 Supreme Audit Office of the Czech Republic (SAO)
- 2 HaskoningDHV Czech Republic (external evaluator)

Similar aspects of the FMs reviewed:

Set-up of the implementation structure, achievement of the programme objectives

Purpose:

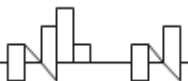
Check of compliance and legality

Provision of formative conclusions and recommendations

Methods and procedure:

SAO control requirements governed by the Act on the Supreme Audit Office

Evaluation questions & criteria, qualitative scale of assessments (1-5) defined within the contract



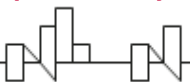
Administrative set-up and processes

Relatively high number of programmes (programme area fragmented into more programmes, 1-2 larger projects forming one programme)

- Complexity and low effectiveness of the implementation structure
(19 institutions involved in the operation, 15 programmes, 894 projects)
- MoF as PO for 10 programmes – unification of the management and control processes for majority of the PRGs, exchange of experience and good practice
- One of the most significant challenges of the programming period 2009-2014

Delays in programme preparation

- Majority of programmes launched not earlier than in 2014, implementation period had to be extended by 1 year (04/2017)
 - MoU signed only in 2011 – delays in all subsequent steps
 - Extension granted only to the projects under implementation – no positive effect on quality and ambition of projects/programmes
- Especially research and environment projects affected



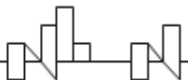
Administrative set-up and processes (2)

Concentration of functions of the NFP and the PO at the Ministry of Finance (Dept. 58)

- Separation of functions between the NFP and the PO not sufficiently ensured
- Responsibility for management setup lies on both MoF and donors
- Efficiency of financial support on programme and project level not influenced
- Brought significant learning effects for the NFP and the PO staff
- Lack of clear distinction of responsibilities of the NFP and the PO (esp. for the third parties on horizont. level)
- Project Promoters not negatively affected, 84% considered majority of all processes smooth and efficient
- Financial efficiency of the grants not affected

Financial reporting and certification

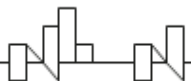
- 100 % of the PO management expenditures checked and certified, no regranting expenditures controlled by the CA (proportionality principle not applied)
- Donor project partners required to comply with the Czech legislation – compromised eligibility of expenditures, confusions, administrative issues



Programme and project objectives

Project/programme indicators

- Programme strategic objectives defined by quantitative indicators – programmes unable to „sell“ positive (qualitative) effects
- Focus on the (quantitative) target value achievement rather than the wider effects
- Indicators lacking generally accepted definition, method of aggregation, units of measurement – inconsistency, divergence in reporting, incomparability between projects, limits to evaluations and monitoring
- Insufficient definition of the programme goals and their indicators – failure to prove achievement of the programme objectives in 11 out of 14 programmes
- No solid baselines, not realistically set target values – major differences between planned and achieved values (mostly underestimation of the target values, low ambition)



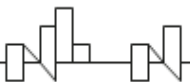
Programme and project objectives (2)

Underachievement of the programme indicators – violation of the PA according to the SAO

- Provisions of the article 1.4 (3) of the PA

„Commitments, statements and guarantees, explicit as well as implicit, made in the programme proposal are binding for the National Focal Point and the Programme Operator unless otherwise explicitly stipulated in the annexes to this programme agreement.“

- Each modification of the programme indicator value agreed with the FMO needs to be reflected in the PA amendment otherwise considered as a violation of the PA according to the control rules of the SAO



Thank you for your attention!

