

EEA GRANTS 2009-2014



FINAL STRATEGIC REPORT

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GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENTS & THE NSRF

NATIONAL FOCAL POINT, SPECIAL SERVICE EEA GRANTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EEA	European Economic Area
FMC	Financial Mechanism Committee
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
NFP	National Focal Point, Special Service of Ministry of Economy & Development
PO	Programme Operator
FO	Fund Operator
PP	Project Promoter
PA	Programme Agreement
MCS	Management and Control System
SGS	Small Grant Scheme
BFNL	Bilateral Fund at National Level
MOU S.A.	Management Organisation Unit SA, Ministry of Economy & Development
DoRIS	Documentation, Reporting and Information System (FMO)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TCN	Third country national
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework (Greek: ESPA)
GR01	Technical Assistance and Bilateral Fund at National Level
GR02	Integrated Marine and Inland Water Management Programme
GR03	Renewable Energy Programme
GR04	Funds for NGO Programme
GR05	Address urgent needs for the reception and screening of new arrivals and for the accommodation of vulnerable groups. Assistance to voluntary returns Programme
GR06	Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems Programme
GR07	Research Programme
GR08	Solidarity and Social Inclusion Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to Protocol 38b inserted by the Agreement between the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway on the **European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism 2009-2014**, the total allocation to Greece was 63.4 million Euros. According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Greece as Beneficiary and **Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway** as Donor countries, in 2011, EEA Programmes focused in the areas of environment, renewable energy sources, social inclusion, civil society cooperation, asylum and migration support; important and current, even critical, sectors where Greece required assistance and investment, especially in this period of implementation (economic crisis, migration increase, etc.).

The impact to the main objectives of the EEA Grants, namely Cohesion and Bilateral Relations, became more visible in Greece as the 2009-2014 programming period entered its final phase of implementation. The limited timeframe for actual programme-project implementation and the fact that this period coincided with a major economic crisis in the country, affected the overall pace and progress of this EEA Grants 2009-2014 Financial Mechanism.

EEA Programmes of 2009-2014 in Greece were ultimately completed with a satisfactory use of funds, improving on previous periods outcomes. The average absorption rate, i.e. actual progress of the GR 2009-2014 Programmes against total funds allocated to Greece is finally estimated at 86% (see section 2.2 for financial results).

Under-spending is noted mainly in GR06 programme in the sector of asylum and migration, for the reasons analysed in the relevant sections of this Report, the Final Programme Report and Cooperation Committees of the Programme. However the mitigation of the migration crisis that impacted this programming period rendered the EEA Grants support extremely relevant. The GR06 Programme contributed towards a strengthened institutional framework to ensure legal protection and care for the most vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, enabling asylum-seekers to bring forward their claim for international protection, have their claim processed in due time and be offered accommodation during processing of their case, or to return voluntary to their country of origin.

Other notable examples include the GR02 programme with the desalination plants for water supply in the Greek islands, or the GR03 renewable energy and efficiency programme; in that case projects were co-financed in hospitals, schools, municipalities achieving an increase of renewables share in energy production by 7,697.84 MWh/year and reducing CO₂ emissions by 6,934.53 tn/year, a tangible

contribution to the 2020 EU and national policy targets, while it is estimated that 38,668 persons benefited directly from these interventions.

The National Focal Point (NFP) closely monitored the EEA programme objectives and project results in close and successful collaboration with all Programme Operators, as well as FMO. Moreover, it followed the achievement of the bilateral actions at national level, while the bilateral actions of the programmes also delivered concrete results, cooperation events and exchanges of know-how within this period.

In order to inform about calls, successful projects results or events, events and internet info were used, by the coordinating Ministry of Economy & Development, as well as the Programme Operators and the sectoral Ministries; with several publicity and information events, conferences, launch and closing events at the central and programme level. In combination with the efforts of FMO and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Greece, there was an increased awareness for EEA Grants in this period, not least through the exposure for the first time via a dedicated [central website](#)¹ and social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook).

This was a period of several ‘firsts’ for EEA Grants: it was the first period where the EEA regulatory framework changed from a portfolio of projects, to that of a Multi-Annual Programming logic. This signified major changes in the design and strategies, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation requirements. In Greece, a Management and Control System specific to the EEA Grants was created, providing the same level of assurances as those applied for EU funds (scrutinised on several occasions by the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors - statement of assurance). Last but not least, the first application of a Management Information System dedicated to EEA Grants (in Greek ΟΠΣ-EOX) is particularly notable, designed to provide the reporting facilities of the MIS system used to monitor EU funds for more than 15 years in Greece. These systems shall continue in the next programming period -actually upgraded where possible- in the next programming period.

Lastly, cooperation of the NFP with the coordinating Services and Authorities of EU funds under the same hierarchy (General Secretariat for Public Investments & NSRF), was particularly useful. These synergies demonstrated that there is further potential in exploring cooperation and complementarity, using common channels for country level reporting or sharing know-how. After all there are several shared goals and strategies for Financial Mechanisms supporting cohesion in an EU Member State, as well as common principles, such as simplification, proportionality, additionality, efficiency - effectiveness and transparency of funds.

¹ <http://eeagrants.gr/en/>

1 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF THE GRANTS

1.1 Cohesion and socioeconomic context

The 2009-2014 period was the first period of EEA Grants with a new programming framework for all Beneficiary countries, including Greece. Therefore this was the first period where results and effect of the EEA grants could be noted and monitored as **programmes, related to policies or national strategies**, rather than individual projects.

Important changing circumstances have occurred within the timeline 2009-2014 **at EU level**, affecting all investment programmes and structural interventions due to the pan-European economic crisis post 2008, as highlighted in a similar context in the [Strategic report \(2017\)](#) on the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds: 'A gradual recovery from the crisis – progress towards cohesion objectives regaining momentum: Since 2014, the socioeconomic context in which ESI Funds operate has been gradually improving. In the first year of the programming period economic prospects were low in the EU with stagnating GDP growth rates and high and persistent unemployment. In the last two years, the economic recovery in the EU has been stronger and growth prospects are positive again for all EU Member States. Nevertheless, challenges also remain since GDP growth is uneven across Member States while the slow productivity growth and the legacy of the crisis continue to weigh on the economy'.

Similarly and more markedly at the **national level**, as Greece was one of the countries particularly affected by the crisis and an entirely new framework of budgetary and financial monitoring was introduced².

In order to present the aggregated effect to the programmes supported by the Grants as concerns reducing economic and social disparities, the following information is further noted.

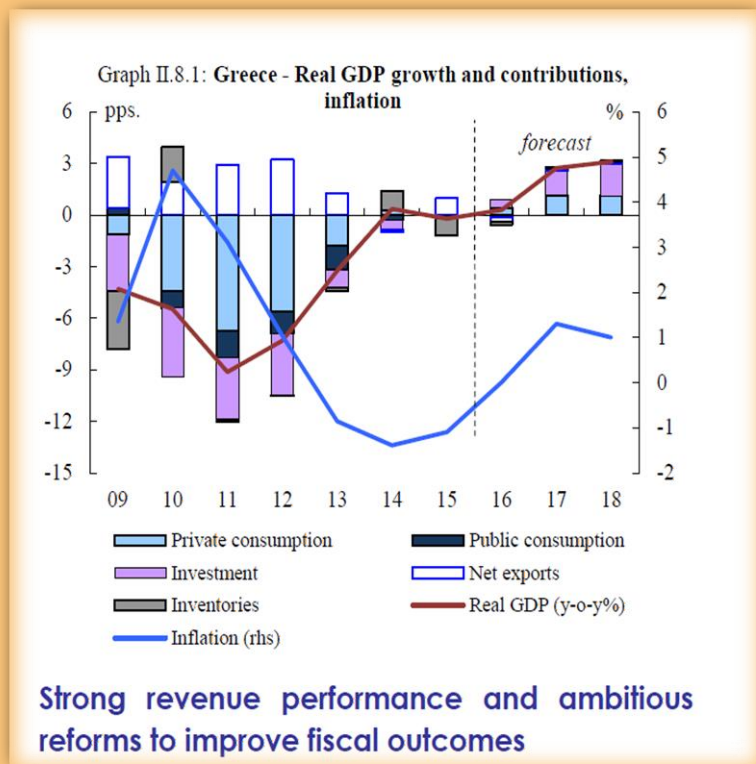
1.1.1 Public finances

The European Commission published in mid-2018 its latest macroeconomic forecasts, the interim summer 2018 report³: there it is noted that Greece's economy got off to a strong start in the first quarter in 2018. Following the conclusion of the ESM programme, the economic recovery is expected to continue in the coming years, as long as commitments to reforms are upheld. According to provisional data, real GDP growth reached 0.8% (q-o-q) in the first quarter of 2018 (in seasonally and working-day adjusted terms), which corresponds to a growth rate of 2.3% (y-o-y). This confirms that the slowdown to 0.2% (q-o-q) in the fourth quarter of 2017 was temporary and that Greece is indeed recovering.

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-financial-assistance/which-eu-countries-have-received-assistance/financial-assistance-greece_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/ecfin_forecast_summer_12_07_18_el_en_0_0.pdf

As this programming period closes, in the first quarter of 2018, growth was led by net exports which contributed 1.4 pps. (q-o-q) to GDP growth. This was a result of both rising exports and decreasing imports. Private consumption registered an increase for the first time since 2016, but its growth contribution was cancelled out by a decrease in public consumption, hence total consumption remained almost flat (0.1%). There was a large decline in investment, which shaved off 2.4 pps. from GDP growth.



However, the decline was expected following the strong one-off growth in the preceding quarter.

Real GDP is forecast to reach 1.9% in 2018 and to accelerate further to 2.3% in 2019. The main driver of growth is expected to be investment, which is rising on the back of the improving business environment and increased foreign direct investment. Private consumption is expected to remain subdued, while the contribution of net exports is set to be more moderate over the remainder of the year, as increased investment activity should generate additional demand for goods imports.

The labour market continues to improve. Unemployment fell to 20.1% in March 2018, down 0.7 pps. since the end of 2017, while employment grew by almost 2% in the first three months of 2018. This trend is expected to continue throughout the year. Consumer price inflation reached 0.8% in May, with an average of 0.4% for the first five months of the year, driven mainly by higher processed food and energy prices. Due to higher oil price assumptions, the forecast for headline inflation is revised slightly upwards.

1.1.2 Asylum and migration context

In the asylum and migration context, major international developments were noted within this programming period, not least due to the continuing war situation in Syria. There was an influx of immigrants escaping the war and asylum seekers, changes in the flows and routes (closure of land borders to the north of Greece etc.) and the EU-Turkey Statement in March 2016, that resulted in the decrease of migration flows through the Eastern Mediterranean during the second quarter of 2016, yet due to the escalated political situation in Turkey (July 2016, attempted coup) more TCNs arrived to the Greek islands bringing the total number of stranded migrants and refugees in Greece to over ~60,000.

These events had an overall dramatic impact on refugee movements, affecting the overall planning and impacting projects, as revealed in the context of the GR 06 programme. GR 05 programme (FMO-managed, minors, IOM turns) was also affected, but GR 06 had to be revised several times, as it was

providing critical financing to front-line migrant centres and actual hot spot support services. Similar impact was noted to EU funded asylum and migration support programmes.

The EU-Turkey statement consists of three key elements:

1. The return of all irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands (-no movement of migrants landed on the islands)
2. Resettlement of Syrians from Turkey to the EU (the 'one-for-one' deal)
3. The prevention of departure from Turkey

The EU-Turkey statement aimed to substitute irregular and dangerous migrant crossings from Turkey to the Greek islands with a legal channel of resettlement from Turkey to the EU. Furthermore it changed in effect the purpose of the hotspots in Greece by transforming them to closed facilities. Under this agreement, persons arriving in Greece from Turkey irregularly after 20 March 2016 are to be returned to Turkey. For every Syrian returned in this manner, another Syrian should be resettled from Turkey to the EU. Thus, the initial scope of the hotspots to provide for swift registration and screening before transfer to the mainland was replaced by the objective of implementing the EU-Turkey statement, despite the fact that the maximum official reception capacity on the five main islands receiving asylum seekers and migrants did not exceed 8,375 places in late 2106.

Since the EU-TR statement, a 97% drop in arrivals was noted and a 93% drop in deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean. 15,531 Asylum process applications were submitted and 12,254 first instance decisions issued. Approximately 1,500 migrants were returned to Turkey and over 10,000 asylum seekers have been relocated from Greece to other European Union (EU) and Associated States (including Norway) since the start of the programme⁴. The Commission further notes 7,436 assisted voluntary returns from Greece to country of origin since Jan 2016, with an increasing trend of applying for IOM's programme before being returned to Turkey. In the aftermath of the EU-TR statement, Greece adopted legislation that transposed into national law the provisions of the Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32/EU), thus introducing the concepts of first country of asylum and safe third country, as well as procedures for fast-track examination of applications for international protection at the border. Furthermore, according this Law 4375/2016, the name of First Reception Service changed to Reception and Identification Service (RIS) while its mandate was also enhanced.

In particular in relation of the effect of the relevant GR06 Programme, the main objective there was to support the national asylum system in guaranteeing the rights and protection of asylum seekers and more specifically of vulnerable population groups, such as unaccompanied minors. The Programme was originally approved in 2013; but this was soon amended due to the developments in the European eastern borders in 2015 and the migration crisis, with a huge influx of asylum seekers mainly towards the Greek islands of the Aegean Sea. The Programme GR06 was implemented under the pressure of this migration crisis, the quantitative figures of which could not be known at the design phase of the Programme, but also during the implementation phase, since migratory flows could have great variations even on a daily basis. Therefore, the Programme's implementation, particularly in certain subprojects, should be characterised by a considerable speed and flexibility for adaptations, so as a call for tender to cover any possible increased needs in the period that would follow. But finding the golden mean between flexibility on the one hand and transparency for public funds on the other, is always a challenge for such endeavours, that are right in the public focus and have a direct on the life of people (asylum seekers and local communities).

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/migration_management_greece_1.pdf

Thus GR06 did not achieve the full exploitation of the EEA contribution, as this was an unprecedented at European level development, affecting and requiring planning and implementation changes for the national systems, originally designed to manage more regular flows and deviating from the initial concept⁵. The funding gaps in some cases were later compensated by national or EU funds. However, the effect of the Grants in this sector was particularly notable, because at the start of the crisis it was the first Financial Mechanism to intervene (as the EU emergency funding was setup later) and provided much needed financial support in the setting up of the emergency centres.

Perhaps even more importantly, the know-how of an experienced Donor Programme Partner (UDI) was instrumental in providing know-how and a much needed strategic perspective to the establishment of a well-functioning asylum and migration system in Greece, to the mitigation of the migration crisis, as well as to the provision of guidance on the national relevant legal and administrative framework.

1.1.3 Energy & RES regulatory updates

In 2016 the European Commission released important new energy legislation updates, gathered in the previously-called Winter Package, and renamed 'Clean Energy for All Europeans'⁶. The package will shape the European Union's climate and energy legislation beyond 2020. The Commission intends that the EU leads the clean energy transition, not only adapts to it. The new proposals have three main goals: putting energy efficiency first, achieving global leadership in renewable energies and providing a fair deal for consumers. The most important features of the proposed new legislation are as follows:

Proposal for a revised Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, including COM (2016) 765 final:

- The requirement for Member States to establish long-term national renovation strategies with clear milestones for 2030 (previously under the *Energy Efficiency Directive*)
- The introduction of a smartness indicator rating the readiness of a building to adapt to the needs of the occupant and the grid and to improve its performance
- Requirements for electro-mobility infrastructure
- Requirements for building automation and energy monitoring systems as an alternative to inspections.

Proposal for a revised Energy Efficiency Directive, including (COM (2016) 761 final):

- A binding 30% energy efficiency target for 2030
- The extension of annual energy savings obligations for Member States beyond 2020
- Access for consumers to consumption information
- A communication on accelerating clean energy in buildings, including (COM(2016) 860 final)
- Smart financing for smart buildings which sets out the European Commission's intentions
- Addressing skills in the construction sector.

The Eco-design working plan 2016-2019 (COM (2016) 773 final):

⁵Source: Final Evaluation Report by LKN Analysis Ltd, Ex-post evaluation of the outcomes of the GR06 Programme, for the Ministry of Economy & Development (submitted to FMO in April 2018).

⁶<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/commission-proposes-new-rules-consumer-centred-clean-energy-transition>

- Setting out the European Commission's priorities, including reviews of existing measures and studies for new measures for other products (including Building Automation and Control Systems)
- Proposals for a Governance of the Energy Union Regulation, including (COM(2016) 759 final)
- Requirements for Member States' Integrated National Energy and Climate plans for 2021 to 2030, including planning and reporting on measures under the EED and EPBD (including national renovation strategies).

Proposal for a revised Renewable Energy Directive, including COM (2016) 767 final:

- The renewable energy target for 2030
- Obligations for renewable energy use in heating and cooling
- Communication on accelerating clean energy innovation, which highlights the need for (COM(2016) 763 final)
- More energy storage solutions
- Faster adoption of existing energy efficiency technologies in building
- Smart buildings and the empowerment of consumers.

The Programme GR03 that targeted this sector achieved⁷ an **increase of RES in energy production** by 7,697.84 MWh/year and **reduced CO₂ emissions** by 6,934.53 tn/year, according to the ex-post evaluation performed. The level of effectiveness of the projects was about 110% with respect to the programming target of total renewable energy consumption (7,697.84 / 7,000 MWh/year) and about 141.5% for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ 6,934.53 / 4,900 tn/ year).

Furthermore the projects contributed to **reduced operating expenses** for energy costs for the relevant institutions, hospitals, schools, municipalities and the reductions were estimated to be between 11% to 60%, with an average of 36%. The total number of **people who directly benefited** from implementation of these interventions is estimated **at 38,668 persons**, while the Social Benefit Index (Total Public Expenditure / Number of Citizens Getting Direct Benefits from the Programme) is € 276 per person. In terms of eligible costs this indicator is reduced to € 255 per person, of which € 216.75 per person is the EEA Financial Mechanism contribution, while the rest is national.

Therefore the Programme contributed a small but notable amount to the country's 20-20-20 relevant EU climate policy targets⁸ and obligations and the effect of the grants here is positively assessed both in terms of measurable contribution to the environment (greenhouse gas emissions relief) and of positive focus and visibility, as this type of investments in hospital or school infrastructures is benefiting people immediately and directly.

1.1.4 Research and innovation context

Regulation (EU) 1301/2013 is the legal base that defines EU's '**smart specialisation strategy**' (RIS3)⁹. 'Smart specialisation strategy' means the national or regional innovation strategies which set priorities in order to build competitive advantage by developing and matching research and innovation own

⁷ Source: Final Evaluation Report by REMACO S.A., Ex-post evaluation of the outcomes of the GR03 Programme, for the Ministry of Economy & Development (submitted to FMO in April 2018).

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf

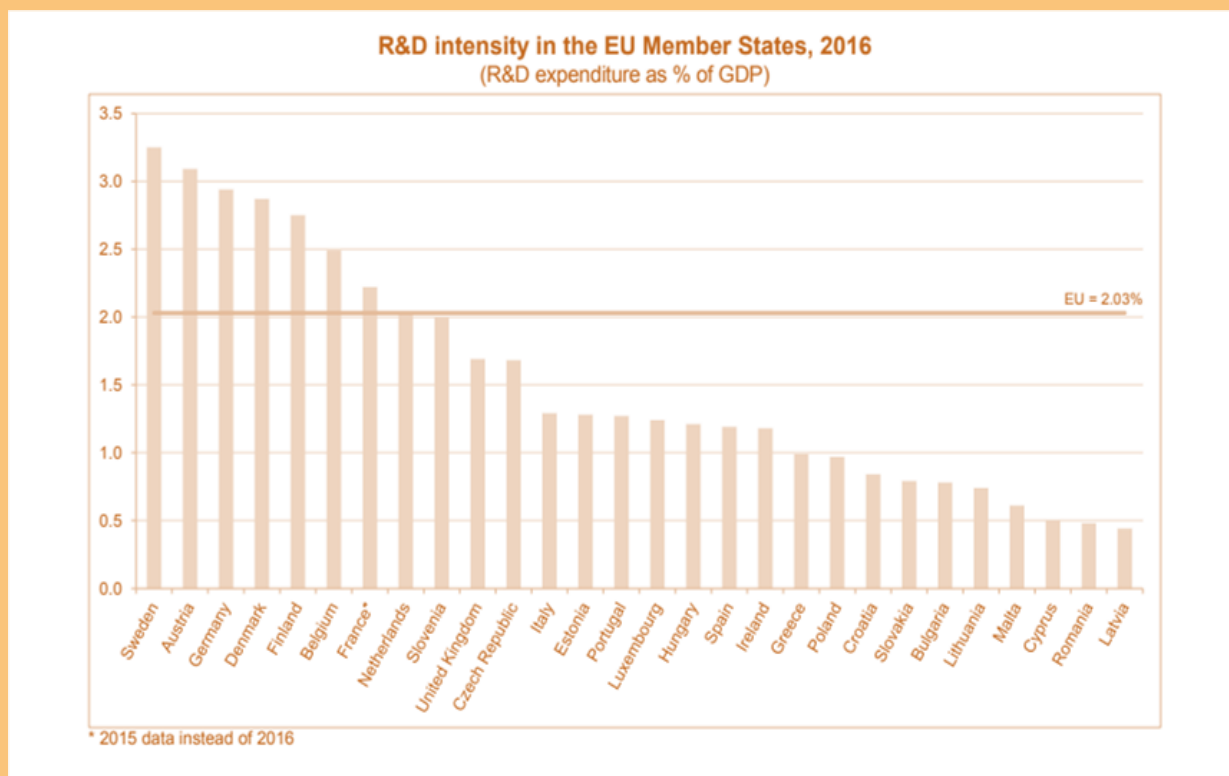
strengths to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts.

A smart specialisation strategy may take the form of, or be included in a national or regional research and innovation (R&I) strategic policy framework. Smart specialisation strategies shall be developed through involving national or regional managing authorities and stakeholders such as universities and other higher education institutions, industry and social partners in an entrepreneurial discovery process.

The existence of national / regional smart specialisation strategies to leverage private research and multiply innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well-performing national or regional R&I systems is a prerequisite for the effective and efficient achievement of a specific objective for all investment priorities: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation. In respect to research policy, the EEA Grants were focused on completing RIS³ (research, innovation, smart specialization strategy) and addressing the insufficient level of funding for R&D activities in particular in social sciences research.

Based on the latest available data, gross expenditures on all R&D represented only 0,96% of GDP in 2015 (the latest year for which relevant data is available) which is significantly lower than the average EU R&D intensity for the same year (2,03% of GDP) but significantly higher than the period of programme proposal (0,58%).

In 2016, the Member States of the European Union (EU) spent all together over €300 billion on Research & Development (R&D). The R&D intensity, i.e. R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP, remained stable at 2.03% in 2016. Ten years ago (2006), R&D intensity was 1.76%.



In Greece the said percentage of GDP was 0.99% in 2016 (0.56% in 2006), as portrayed in the figure above¹⁰.

¹⁰ Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8493770/9-01122017-AP-EN.pdf/94cc03d5-693b-4c1d-b5ca-8d32703591e7>

Within the total R&D activity, the share of higher education research in Greece, was 33% in 2016 (48% in 2006) according to this latest available data by Eurostat- 2017. The share of social sciences research is even smaller, so this targeted intervention for funding social science research from EEA Grants was particularly beneficial.

1.2 Bilateral relations

1.2.1 Bilateral Fund at National Level

The budget of the Bilateral Fund at National Level according to the MoU 2009-2014, was 317,000 Euros. During implementation there were eight projects approved for financing by the BFNL Committee, six of which were completed. These covered a broad field of areas of cooperation and bilateral relations.

Each Project Promoter was encouraged to include comprehensive exchanges (including on site) to the schedule of bilateral activities and to involve staff and the general public where possible with the aim to establish long term connections or partnerships with the **Donor Project Partners (DPPs)**.

A topic which proved of mutual great interest was the respective educational and social systems and their impact in particular in relation to the youth population, as very fruitful contributions were offered by two Norwegian Organisations: Junior Achievement – **Young Enterprise Akershus** and the **Norwegian Ministry of Labour**, in the framework of the relevant two successfully implemented projects. Both projects have disseminated Donor Partner know-how by organising seminars and presentation of educational and scientific material to a broader public of experts.

Other key projects involved the organisation of know-how exchanges between Norwegian Partners (one University and one Research Institute) and the Greek Project Promoters (CRES and Technical University of Crete) on topics such as geothermal development, academic and research cooperation and innovation. Both projects had productive results, not only by allowing the dissemination of the Norwegian Partners activities in the Greek scientific and academic audiences, but also by establishing long term collaboration perspectives.

The activities under the BFNL of the 2009-20014 period delivered cooperation and knowledge exchange activities with an aspiration to continuous cooperation, since five out of the six implemented projects are expected to result in further exchanges in the future.

The 2009-2014 BFNL implementation started in 2014 and was completed in April 2018, with several intermediate amendments to the relevant Work Plan. As this was the first time implementation, managerial and administrative issues had an impact on delivery and financial completion. The BFNL was in effect a small portfolio in terms of budget, but with a variety of participating bodies and Ministries, from Greece and third countries; this required coordination and guidance, as well as the streamlining of processes connected to financial management of joint projects or international payments authorised/verified. Furthermore legal issues and amendments concerning the person(s) authorised to execute state budget banking transactions on behalf of the NFP (co-responsibility with Ministry of Economy's General Directorate for Financial Services), also had an impact in this period.

The NFP regularly cooperated with all project promoters/beneficiaries of the BFNL, to inform about the processes, as these developed in practice and the step-by-step introduction of Management Information Systems (OPS-EOX), or electronic payment systems via Bank of Greece, all for the first time implemented in this programming period. Also frequently followed up and encouraged the acceleration of implementation, e.g. formal correspondence of Secretary General PI & NSRF (Sep 2017) to all BFNL national recipients, in order to expedite progress and payments before the BFNL deadline of Apr 2018.

The implementation picked up in the last years of implementation, as more than 50% of the BFNL budget was executed in years 2017-2018 (see graph, source: DoRIS). In order to ensure timely implementation of bilateral activities at National level, the last amendment to the BFNL Work plan was

agreed in Feb 2018, between the Ministry of Economy & Development, FMO and the Donors (published in Ministerial Decree as per the MCS and usual practice).

Lastly, the assistance of FMO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was indeed critical throughout this period as well as towards its end, in regard to the matching and bringing together possible partners for the successful completion of the BFNL, or support to implementation and dissemination of the BFNL project results to the general public.

1.2.2 Description of completed bilateral actions at National Level

1. **Entrepreneurship in Education** project was implemented by the [Junior Achievement Greece \(SEN/JA\)](#) with the cooperation of **Ungt Entreprenørskap, Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise (JA-YE) Norway**. The implementation period was from June 2014 to December 2018. The activities in the framework of the project included:

- Visit of Norwegian Students –Teachers and JA-YE Akershus representative to Greece / Company of the Year Competition 2014 Greece, and visit of Greek students and Teachers to the European Best Company of the Year Competition 2014 Tallinn – Estonia, Participation of Greek Students in the Norwegian Student Trade Fair (Teacher and SEN/JA Greece representative).
- Development of educational material on entrepreneurship - Localization of the Norwegian educational website in Greek Teachers Training - Norwegian Trainers in Athens. The event was held in Athens on 15.12.2017 where 80 elementary and secondary schoolteachers as well as volunteers trained by two Akershus staff.

2. **Identification of best practices within the Norwegian Social Inclusion Model** was implemented by the Hellenic **Ministry of Labour** (Dept. of Social Security & Social Solidarity) in cooperation with **the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and social affairs, FAFO**.

During the implementation of the project, the following activities were promoted:

- Visit of officials of the Greek public administration from the Ministry of Labour, to Norway and exchange of know-how.
- Organisation of a seminar in Greece where Norwegian experts publicly presented their Report on the topic.
- Report and dissemination of the results (available online here): **“The Norwegian social model – an inspiration for Greece?”**¹¹



¹¹ FAFO Report 2016: Norway and Greece were unequally affected by the financial crisis. While Norway was one of the countries that came out of the crisis in a relatively sound condition, Greece was one of the countries hardest hit. In the aftermath of the crisis Greece has introduced several welfare reforms, but the country still aims at improving the effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of its welfare state further. The Greek Ministry of Labour, Social Security & Social Solidarity and the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs asked [FAFO](#) (a non-profit social science research foundation in Norway) to conduct a study where relevant features of the Norwegian social model are highlighted and where features of the Norwegian model that could be an inspiration for Greece are identified. The results of the study is presented in this report.

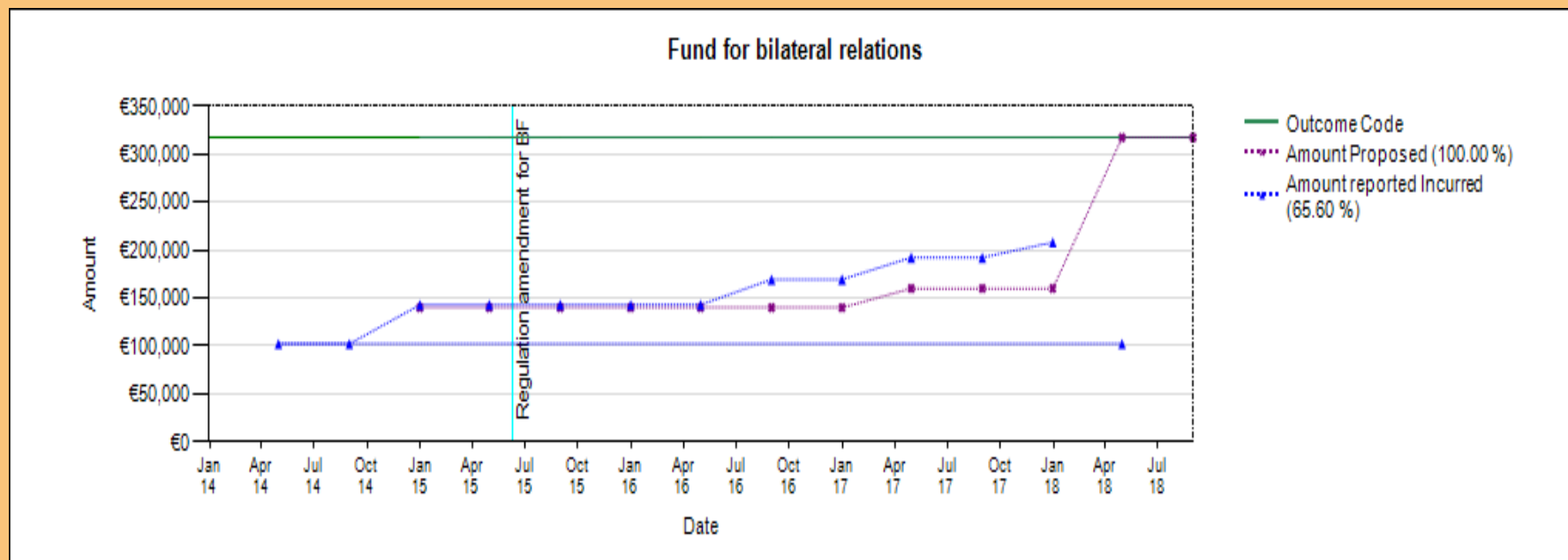
3. **Geothermal Development** was implemented by **CRES** (Centre for Renewable Energy Sources & Energy efficiency) in cooperation with the **Norwegian Centre for Geothermal Energy Research (CGER)**, based in Bergen, Norway. The activities included two expert visits: from Greece to Bergen with participation in a Scandinavian Colloquium on Geothermal Energy Production and visit from experts from Norway to Greece, Athens and Milos island geothermal facilities. The events took place during May and June 2017 and March 2018. Staff from the relevant department of CRES, as well as the NFP participated in the events.
4. **EU-Presidency Activity** bilateral action was implemented by [the Centre of International and European Economic Law](#) (CIEEL), based in Thessaloniki, in cooperation with in cooperation with the [EU Fundamental Rights Agency](#) (FRA), during the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2014, organised a two-day Seminar on the best practices for limitation and reporting of hate crimes entitled “How can EU Member States combat hate crime effectively? Encouraging reporting & improving recording”. The Seminar, which was sponsored also by Norway Grants, took place on 28-29 April 2014. The EEA Grants bilateral fund covered the travel expenses of European and international experts invited to participate.
5. **Academic cooperation** bilateral activity was implemented by the [Technological University of Crete](#) in cooperation with the **University of Adger, Norway**. All activities were implemented on March and April 2018 and included a visit of staff from TUC to Norway, on experience and knowledge exchange and participation of Norwegian University staff to a two- day event (days of innovation) organized by TUC in Chania, Crete. This bilateral action led to a continuous cooperation, as the TUC and the University of Adger signed a Memorandum for cooperation for the years 2015-2020 in the fields of scientific research-exchange of students and other staff-organization of seminars and various colloquia, as well as joint participation in research projects and studies.
6. **Cooperation for Safe Shelter for Unaccompanied Children** was implemented from September to December 2017 by the awarded NGO [MetaAction](#) in cooperation with [UDI](#), the **Norwegian Directorate of immigration**. The action supported the operation of Transit Accommodation Facilities in an effort to offer safe shelter and protection to unaccompanied children. The action will continue in the coming years using Greek and European Union funding sources. UDI is an active partner of Greek authorities and NGOs dealing with the refugee and immigration issues.

The events of the 6 bilateral projects were attended by the NFP, reported and promoted by the Partners and the NFMA and made public also via the EEA Grants Greece social media: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts.

Some of the areas of cooperation could be further explored in the new programming period, e.g. the renewable energy sources objective that remains a priority, or the FAFO contribution to employment strategies, further to the concise but very important original analysis produced in the framework of the bilateral project mentioned above.

The updated **Work Plan** with **final financial results** is presented in the following table:

No.	Project Title	Project Promoter	Donor Project Partner	Approved Work Plan Budget	Executed budget	Eligible budget (EEA Grants)
1	Safety in the Off-Shore & Oil Gas Sector	Greek Ministry of Environment & Energy	Norwegian Petroleum Safety Agency	30.000 €	0 €	0 €
2	Entrepreneurship in Education	Junior Achievement Greece (SEN/JA)	Ungt Entreprenørskap, Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise (JA-YE) Norway	42.000 €	32.287,67 €	20.414,87 €
3	Identification of best practices within the Norwegian Social Inclusion Model	Ministry of Labour, Social Security & Social Solidarity	Norwegian Ministry of Labour and social affairs	29.000 €	27.836,73 €	27.836,73 €
4	Geothermal Development	CRES	Norwegian Centre for Geothermal Energy Research (CGER)	25.000 €	19.815,74 €	0 €
5	EU-Presidency Activity	Centre of International and European Economic Law (CIEEL)	Cooperation with Fundamental Rights Agency	41.000 €	40.665 €	36.700,16 €
6	Academic cooperation	The Technological University of Crete	The University of Adger (Norway)	30.000 €	19.431,80 €	0 €
7	Support for shelters for minors	MetaAction NGO	UDI	120.000 €	120.000 €	120.000 €
TOTALS				317.000 €	260.036,94 € →82% implementation of the BFNL Fund.	204.951,76 € →65% eligibility (absorption).



BFNL In graphical representation: source, FMO Documentation, Reporting and Information System (DoRIS).

2 REPORTING ON PROGRAMMES

2.1 Overview of Programme achievements

The programmes and their results' information are publicly available as per the EEA Grants Regulation, via webpages of the NFP, POs or PPs, and other press announcements as appropriate.

For this period, the MoU allocation for Greece was as previously mentioned 63.4 million Euros and implemented via 7+1 Programmes (including Technical Assistance). Out of the eight programming areas, five areas were managed by Greek authorities (incl. T.A. and the BFNL) and three directly by FMO.

The funding was focused in the sectors of: environment, renewable energy sources, civil society, asylum & migration and academic research.

The funding via the EEA Grants mechanism managed by the Greek authorities are focused on the achievement of relevant programming national targets and strategies and form part of the national reporting to the EU and sectoral results where appropriate (communication with EU funds Managing /Executive Authorities).

From the initial design of the mechanism to the MCS processes, the NFP in particular places emphasis on the relevance of EEA programme priorities to EU or national strategies in the corresponding sector. Furthermore care is taken to ensure complementarity of the interventions irrespective of funding source (EU or EEA), as the EEA Grants allocation to Greece grows in the last periods and therefore its impact is increasing. This is also enhanced by the mandate of the Executive or Special Authorities of sectoral Ministries, which have been created to assist exactly in laying out sectoral priorities and ensuring complementarity and possibly coordination of financing and reporting, so as to fulfill each participating Ministry's action plan or relevant EU or other national legal obligations or strategic goals.

Lastly, Special/Executive Authorities of the EU funds have actually been assisting in one case as programme operator in the EEA Grants mechanism (Environment, EYSPED), and beneficiary of a BFNL project (Energy, EYSED).

All Programme achievements are presented analytically

Summarised information on individual programmes of EEA Grants 2009-2014 is provided in section 2.2 below.

2.2 Overview of financial figures

For **GR 01**: the Bilateral Fund eligibility ended on **30 April 2018** and Technical Assistance on **31 August 2018**.

For **GR programmes monitored by the NFP** eligibility ended on **30 April 2017** (further to 1 year extension request in 2015).

The **programmes managed by the Greek authorities** are as per the following table:

Programme no.	Total budget	Max EEA Grants contribution (€) 85% contribution	Funds disbursed by FMO (€)	Eligible expenditures incurred (€) @Final Balance	Absorption Rate (%)
GR01	771,220	771,220*	630,650	571,190	74%
GR02	7,641,176	6,495,000	6,242,350	8,817,372	115%
GR03	11,188,235	9,510,000	9,404,222	9,829,252	88%
GR06	13,947,108	11,855,042	8,322,710	7,076,607	51%
GR07	3,525,072	2,996,311	2,872,476	3,244,309	92%
Sub-totals	37,072,811	31,627,573	27,472,408	29,538,730	80%

Source: DoRIS and FPRs and FBs, as submitted to FMO in 2018. NB> these are not all approved at this stage.

*: 100% EEA contribution for T.A. and BFNL.

The **FMO-managed programmes** are as per the following table:

Programme no.	Total budget (€) 100% EEA Grants contribution	Funds disbursed by FMO (€)	Eligible expenditures incurred (€) @Final Balance	Absorption Rate (%)
GR04	7,340,000	7,096,019	7,096,019	97%
GR05	9,941,738	9,828,976	9,828,976	99%
GR08	4,265,217	4,235,360	4,123,213	97%
GR50**	2,391,637	2,357,543	2,169,866	91%
Sub-totals	23,938,592	23,517,898	23,218,074	97%

Source: FMO. Note FPRs and FBs are not all approved yet at this stage. **: GR50 forms part of GR05.

Therefore, the EEA Financial Mechanism in Greece for the period 2009-2014 had an overall result of **~86 % absorption of the available funds**.

Actual total EEA contribution to Greece is estimated at 49.2 mil Euros¹². Actual national contribution estimated at 2.3 mil Euros. All numbers are pending approvals of Final Programme Reports and Final Balances by FMO.

¹² The max net allocation to be made available to Greece was € 58,645,000 (MoU 2009-2014, last amendment 2015).

2.3 Individual Programme summaries (Greek Authorities)

2.3.1 GR 02 - Integrated Marine & Inland Water Management Programme

Programme Operator: The Programme Operator of GR02 is the Executive Authority Partnership Agreement, of the Ministry of Environment & Energy, Environmental Sector ([EYSPED](#), ex S.A.CEP).

All projects of the GR 02 Programme were completed by 30 April 2017. The programme slightly over-performed in budget due to a budget decrease and these funds are planned to be reimbursed to the projects from the EEA 2014-2021 mechanism (for expenditures up until April 2017).

Under this scope, 13 projects were successfully implemented and 22 research scholarships were awarded to PhD and post-Doc researchers to study in the Donor countries, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein.

This programme addressed a key issue of water supply, especially to the island regions, where this is not sufficient to cover demand, especially during the summer season when demand doubles or more, for the Cyclades and Dodecanese islands, due to intense tourist activity. The high water demand combined with losses in water networks, often leads to water scarcity. Also, excessive-pumping of groundwater to cover water supply and irrigation needs has led to groundwater's quantitative and qualitative degradation. At the same time there is need for environmental protection, because of the water overexploitation that leads to low water quality (brackish water), as well as there is need for sustainable management of water resources.

Water supply for the islands is therefore a top priority, as it addresses the country's geographical and regional cohesion, the needs of the local population, as well as environmental factors in sensitive and the local economy, as e.g. tourism is usually the most important source of income for islands and key sector of business activity. According to the Greek Tourist Federation, in 2016 tourist activity contributed 18.6% to national GDP and expected to contribute 20% to GDP in 2017. The projects implemented here contributed to sustainability and created temporary jobs during the implementation phase at national and regional level. The projects that provided drinking water on the islands of Leros, Ios, Santorini (Oia), Telendos and Pserimos also have positive results to entrepreneurship in tourism and agriculture on these islands. By resolving the water supply problem, a key benefit was provided to the island communities; in the tourism sector a key example is the upgraded desalination plant in the town of Oia in Santorini island, which is actually a world-class tourist destination. The projects also contributed to the decrease in operating energy costs, as they are not only water supply projects, but functioning on renewable energy (photovoltaics); with 35% of Telendos and Pserimos PVs installation energy demand covered by saline energy recovery systems, and 40% in the case of Oia's¹³.

Under the conditions of the recent economic and financial crisis in the country, addressing the water supply on islands, in addition to environmental benefits, was particularly important in reducing public spending on water transport to the anhydrous islands and ensure the provision of a more long-term and viable solution.

In fifteen islands (data 2014) of the Aegean Archipelagos, water supply was exclusively provided or supplemented, by ships; a rather costly and sometimes unreliable solution (adverse weather conditions at sea, delays etc.) but thus far the only alternative. The state therefore employed water-carrying vessels to transport water quantities to these islands of the Cyclades and the Dodecanese (either completely anhydrous or with insufficient local resources, especially for the summer). According to public procurement

¹³ Source: GR02 Final Programme Report.

data, the unit cost for transport to the anhydrous islands of water needed ($330,000 \text{ m}^3$ /year) for years 2016 and 2017, was approximately 12.8 €/m^3 -incl. VAT- therefore rising to 4,214,760 Euros per year. As a result of this programme's interventions, and other EU funded projects and efficiency measures, in 2018 alone the cost is expected to be reduced to 2,554,400 Euros for the transport of fewer quantities needed ($\sim 220,000 \text{ m}^3$). And the financial benefits will add up in the next years as well, as this is a more permanent solution. The country level savings and statistics will be elaborated once supply of water by sea to the islands has been totally eliminated, a goal soon to be attained as stipulated in the country's water management strategy (and EU regional policy objectives).

More specifically, e.g. for the island of Pserimos, before the installation of the desalination unit, there were $1,600 \text{ m}^3$ of water transported by vessels every 8 months, while during the 4 summer months the water transport demand increased to $2,400 \text{ m}^3$ (=ttl $4,000 \text{ m}^3/\text{yr}$). Taking into account the cost of water transportation as mentioned previously according to public procurement data of water transport contracts to the islands, the financial burden for water supply to Pserimos was therefore estimated to $\sim 51,200$ Euros every year. Since the installation of the desalination unit, no further water transportation was necessary, thus economising on public expenditure and administrative and logistics burden and the island is supplied with water at all times.

The projects that provided improved water supply and water quality to the town of Oia in the island of Santorini, the islands of Leros, Ios and the smaller remote islands of Pserimos and Telendos provided significant results. The expected long term effects include the protection of the water resources and improvement of quality of life and health for residents and tourists. Additionally, the reduction or elimination of plastic bottle use will greatly benefit the environment.



Desalination plant with PV for water supply in Oia, Santorini island.

All the above projects are considered innovative best practice projects. The desalination units in Oia village and in Telendos and Pserimos islands were combined with energy recovery systems and photovoltaic systems for covering part of their energy supply, i.e. 35% of Telendos and Pserimos PVs installation energy demand is covered by saline energy recovery systems and 40% of the Oia village desalination system is covered by saline energy recovery systems. All these desalination units have a 5KW Photovoltaic systems installation which covers the lighting needs, the operation of the air conditioning systems and the operation of the remote control of the automatic systems, even during electricity black out. The tele-

monitoring systems applied in the water supply networks in Ios and Leros, which reduced water loss and detects water quality, are also innovative technologies. Water leakage has so far been reduced in Leros by 15% and in Ios by 18%.

Furthermore, Universities and Research Centres in Greece collaborated with the Managing Authorities of Nature Protected Areas, Municipalities and Regions of the Country as well as Research Centres and Institutes from Norway and implemented projects with a total co-financed budget of €2,900,000. These projects contributed to the increased knowledge and awareness on the protection and management of water bodies suffering from environmental problems or biodiversity loss and increased knowledge concerning the integrated marine and inland policy or the protection/management of coastal areas.

An example is the project 'Innovative solutions to climate change adaptation and governance in the water management of the Region of Crete - [AQUAMAN](#), which was developed by the Technical University of Crete. The project developed innovative methodologies for integrated water resources management in Crete that take into account: Adaptation measures to climate change, the rational evaluation and

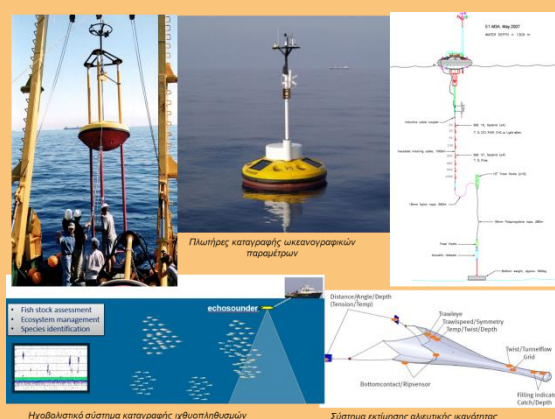
prioritization of the Program of Measures, innovative governance approaches to water management. Another example is the project Sperchios: "Integrated environmental study and mapping for the improvement of the river basin management plans and the coastal zone of river Sperchios", which researched and designed effective strategies to assess and address the sustainable and integrated management of the inland water and Delta coastal area of Sperchios River. The study area was important from environmental and hydrological point of view with significant ecosystems and biodiversity and the coastal area belongs to the [NATURA 2000 network](#).



These projects were developed in partnerships, with overall twenty-six (26) partners. Six of the projects had partners the following Norwegian institutions: IMR (Institute of Marine Research), NIVA (Norwegian Institute for Water Research), NIBIO (Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research) και CICERO (Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research), which contributed, with their specialized know-how and resources.

Most of the projects produced from the Greek Programme on water management contribute to the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans' proposed measures or contribute to their revision and the implementation in Greece of the [EU Water Framework Directive](#), 2000/60/EC.

Furthermore, a best practice project is the predefined Project "Implementation of an integrated marine monitoring programme", which contributes to the [EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#), 2008/56/EC. This project upgraded the already existing infrastructure of the POSEIDON marine monitoring network and increased the area coverage of marine waters' monitoring programme. The monitoring programme covers the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea and the sea area around Crete (Aegean, Ionian and Levantine Seas), by the [Hellenic Centre for Marine Research](#) (ΕΛΚΕΘΕ).



The Programme also offered opportunities to scholars in terms of mobility, academic cooperation, exchange of ideas and best practices. 12 researchers and PhD students had the opportunity to study in the Donor countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The programme was successfully implemented by the [State Scholarships Foundation](#) (IKY). The scholars gained experience in the scientific and technical areas of water resources management - which are of capital importance for Greece- as well as academic and personal development, which may even set a threshold for wider career options. Scholarships are always an added value for scientific research and the academic sector.

Networking amongst the participants came from science and regional agencies contributed to strengthening human and bilateral relations and led to 6 joint projects to deal with the integrated management of the water. It contributed to develop methods and tools and new information was produced at local level in various regions of Greece, islands and mainland. Bilateral relations in the programme created a network of co-operation and knowledge dissemination between donor and Greek partners, that will continue and after the end of implementation period of the Programme GR02. This network will be useful for further development of joined activities and exchange of information and academic material. The six projects implemented with the partnership of a Donor state institution, successfully addressed the four outcome areas and established a new dynamic for further co-operation between institutions from Donor states and Greece. Furthermore, the Agriculture University of Athens, which was the Project Promoter of the project “SPERCHIOS” has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the University of Iceland for further joint initiatives. More than ten study tours took place in Greece, Norway and Iceland, four joint scientific works were published and another five are expected to be published in the next months; these results highlight the benefits of cooperation for the development of new knowledge data and its dissemination, in common by institutions from Donor States and Greece.

Lastly the responsible P.O. participated in the following **Complementary actions**, in other EU Member States also participating in the EEA Grants framework:

Programme / Country	Date
Portugal Atlantic Conference -EEA Grants Programme PT02 , Matosinhos, Portugal	16-17 November 2015
Complementary Actions, Programme BG02 and BG03 , Sofia, Bulgaria	14 October 2016,
Closing Event of the Programme EE02 , Tallinn, Estonia	08 March 2017,
Closing Conference of the Programme CZ02 , Prague, Czech Republic	28 March 2017
Closure Conference and Experience Exchange Visit of the Programme LV02 , Riga, Latvia	12 May 2017
International Conference Together for the Green Environment EEA and Norway Grants in Poland, Wrocław, Poland	23-24 May 2017
Closing Conference of the Programme LT02 , Druskininkai,	30-31 May 2017

2.3.2 GR 03 - Renewable Energy Programme

The Programme Area “**Renewable Energy Sources (RES) – GR03**” of EEA Grants 2009-14, implemented by the **Programme Operator: [Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving \(CRES\)](#)**, aims at the implementation of nine (9) innovative demonstration projects for the integration of RES and electro-mobility in public facilities (hospitals, schools, universities, sports centers, public administration buildings, pumping stations) of great visibility and significant social added value. The nature of the infrastructures in which they have been integrated has ensured the highest possible multiplicity of results, demonstrating to large population groups that technical solutions that incorporate RES in small-scale applications, thus improving energy efficiency and reducing the operating costs of the infrastructure in which they are installed, are mature and sustainable.

The nine (9) Projects of the GR03 Programme are illustrated as follows:

Table: GR 03 Projects

No.	Project Promoter	Project title
1.	Region of Western Macedonia	RES Integrated interventions for developing the Local Community of Grevena
2.	Democritus University of Thrace	The contribution of Renewable Energy Sources in the sustainable development and operation of the Democritus University of Thrace – Creation of a sustainable Community
3.	Municipality of Andros	Demonstrative interventions for Renewable Energy Sources (RES) in the Island of Andros”
4.	Centre for Social Protection and Solidarity, Education and Environment – Polykoinoniko (Alexandroupolis)	Implementation of RES projects to support socially vulnerable groups and experiential environmental education in the Municipality of Alexandroupolis
5.	Agricultural University of Athens	Integration of RES Technologies in the Community of Agricultural University of Athens”
6.	Municipality of Nea Ionia	Geothermal System of district air conditioning and other RES applications
7.	General Hospital Mamatsio-Bodossakio	Installation of solar vacuum collectors for the full coverage of hot water needs, solar cooling with an absorption chiller and support of heating with the remaining thermal energy
8.	Municipality of Karpenissi	Application of RES technologies in municipal buildings of the Municipality of Karpenissi
9.	Organisation for the Development	Installation of photovoltaic systems in water tanks of

No.	Project Promoter	Project title
	of Crete S.A.	O.A.K. SA & autonomous operation of water pumps

The implemented projects were classified in the following categories:

- **RES in Buildings:** The replacement of RES systems such as solar systems for hot water, biomass or/and geothermal systems for cooling / heating and PVs (for energy production in buildings) were installed, replacing conventional systems of high energy consumption.
- **RES applications in microgrids:** Microgrids applications of power production were installed like an off grid PV station in the area of a sewage plant, off grid PV public lights and solar PV charging stations along with ten electric vehicles of different types (1 mini bus, 6 small trucks, 4 cars).

Replacement of conventional energy sources with RES (no buildings): In a pumping station, the project involved installing a PV system in the water tank to drive and operate new electric pumps, aiming at pumping water through solar energy (OAK).

As demonstrated by the achieved output indicators, the targets of the Programme were achieved. The total production from RES exceeded the target of 7,000 MWh/year by 698 MWh/year, while the target for CO₂ emissions reduced, amounting to 4,900 tonnes per year, was exceeded by 2,018 tones. The sub-targets of RES electrical energy (2,915 MWh/year) and RES for district heating applications (3,000 MWh/year) were not reached, but the sub-target of produced heat from RES (1,085 MWh/year) was exceeded by 5,434 MWh/year.



Solar thermal systems for Hospitals, Mamatsio (in Kozani) - Bodossakio (in Ptolemaida).



To the left: PV panels for energy supply to the sewage treatment plant of Korthi, island of Andros.

GR 03 Programme consisted of in two types of activities for strengthening the bilateral cooperation among Greece and the Donor States. The first type was project implementation (infrastructure and other activities within the context of each project). A distinct subproject for strengthening bilateral relations was implemented by each Project Promoter in cooperation with entities from Donor States.

Actions included indicatively:

- Study trips to entities from Donor countries for the transfer of good practices in the field of RES;
- Visits by experts from entities from Donor countries for the transfer of technical expertise;
- Feasibility studies on installing RES technologies to meet energy demand requirements;
- Participation/organization of conferences/workshops on RES.

Important entities from the Donor countries, such as **SINTEF** Energy Research, Reykjavik University, the University of Stavanger, **OREEC** (Oslo Renewable Energy and Environment Cluster), **ISOR** (Consulting and research institute – Geothermal energy), **Reykjavik Geothermal** and Aventa AS (Solar thermal energy company), participated in the subprojects.

Furthermore, the second type of activities was targeted to enhance bilateral relations on a national level, among Greece and Norway in the field of geothermal energy. This was achieved by the cooperation of CRES with the **Christian Michelsen Research** institution - CMR. More specifically, three activities were carried out between CMR and CRES so to enhance our bilateral relationship and knowledge sharing, as follows:

- 22-34 May 2017: The CRES team attended the GeoEnergi 2017 Conference held in Bergen. At the conference particular attention was given on the emerging opportunities related to various technologies for the exploitation of geothermal energy. During the second day, the CRES team participate in a bilateral meeting held again in CMR. The Polish Geological Institute participated also in the meeting in the frame of its bilateral project. Some new bilateral project areas were examined (e.g. advanced measurements for onshore and offshore wind parks, heat and cooling thermal systems, etc.).
- 12-13 September 2017: A 1-day conference was taken place in the first day in Athens and subjects for the exploitation of geothermal energy were discussed based on the programs projects. Specifically, the project of smart energy networks-geothermal district cooling, implemented in New Ionia was presented. In the next session, geothermal applications from bilateral and multilateral cooperation's programs were presented. In the second day, a trip to Milos took place visiting and discussing areas where low and high enthalpy geothermal fields have been installed. CRES and CGER decided research cooperation opportunities in the frame of HORIZON2020 programme and submitted a proposal in January 2018.
- 21 March 2018: This bilateral meeting between CMR and CRES had as a subject CCS; energy systems; geothermal drilling; PV; geothermal heat pumps & underground thermal energy storage; geothermal energy; etc. Different corporations and institutions were participated (such as TEKNOVA, IRIS, CMR, UNI CIPR, Prototech). After the presentation of these subjects a discussion about possible collaboration and joint activities took place.

In conclusion, the design of the Programme was in accordance with the overall objectives of the EEA FM 2009-2014, which were the reduction of the social and economic disparities within the EEA and the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the area of RES. It was also in line with the EU 20-20-20 targets and its implementation was in accordance with the EU and national legislation on RES promotion and CO₂ mitigation that is currently in effect. The most recent applied legislation regarding power generation from RES is a new supporting scheme was imposed. More specifically, Law 4414/2016 replaced the feed-in tariff-based (FiT) scheme that was applied previously in the country, with a technology-specific sliding scale feed-in premium (FiP). The same legal framework permits the installation of PV stations and station with small

wind turbines for coverage the self-demand, by applying virtual net energy balancing, in installations of agricultural holding and use. Moreover, the new virtual net metering provisions allow the production of electricity in different location, than the one where the consumption is. In addition to that, a new Law on “Energy Communities and Other Provisions” is to be introduced further to vote by the Hellenic Parliament.

Regarding Energy Efficiency in the building sector, this is regulated by Law 4122/2013 on Energy performance of Buildings (Adoption of EU Directive 2010/31/EC, Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - EPBD recast) and Law 4342/2015 on Energy Efficiency – Adoption of Directive 2012/27/EC (Energy Efficiency Directive) in the national legal order.

2.3.3 GR 06 – Asylum and migration Programme

Programme Operator: [European And Development Programmes Division](#) (EDPD), of the Ministry of Citizen protection.

Since 2010 Greece has faced increased migratory flows, both at its land and maritime external borders, also the external South-East borders of the European Union, not least since the start of a civil war in Syria. The strains on the capacity of the Greek asylum and migration system to screen at unprecedented rates irregularly entering migrants/asylum seekers, conduct an efficient asylum procedure and offer proper accommodation conditions, resulted in migrants and refugees becoming crowded or at times vulnerable and prone to situations of exploitation and violence, as their legal situation remained indeterminate for an extended period of time. Introducing a comprehensive and coherent asylum and migration management policy, became a major political priority in Greece, as well as in the EU. (See also section 1.1.2).

In this context, Greece committed to enhance its asylum system on the basis of a national Action Plan on Asylum and Migration Management presented in August 2010 and revised in January 2013 in line with the requirements of the *EU acquis communautaire* in the framework of access to and adequateness of the asylum procedure as well as reception conditions, including in respect of vulnerable applicants for international protection, such as unaccompanied minors.

By Law 3907/2011 the **First Reception Service** (FRS) was established as an autonomous body. Its mandate is the first reception of third-country nationals intercepted following illegal entry in Greece. First reception, as well as ensuring the immediate vital needs of the third-country nationals, includes certain procedures, such as identification, registration, medical screening and socio-psychological support, provision of information on rights and obligations and the referral of vulnerable persons such as unaccompanied minors and victims of torture to competent authorities. The FRS supervises the establishment and operation of First Reception Centres (FRCs) and of First Reception Mobile Units operating at the borders, which are both responsible for carrying out the aforementioned tasks.

The establishment of the **Asylum Service** (AS) was also provided for in the Greek Action Plan on Migration Management. Established by Law 3907/2011 and upon start of its full operation in 2013, it took over from the Hellenic Police the responsibilities of registration and examination at first instance of international protection applications lodged after 7 June 2013 (as per the relevant EU legislative framework).

Resources available under the country’s AMIF and ISF national programmes were mobilised for the reinforcement of first line services in terms of screening and debriefing procedures, as well as the acceleration of the international protection process; however, further funding in the area of asylum and migration was required, to ensure the management of unprecedented numbers of migrants and refugees entering its territory in the mainland or the islands (rescued from sea). For its part, EEA Grants greatly

contributed in helping to establish a well-functioning migration and asylum system in Greece and alleviate the migrant crisis. Through Programme GR06 'Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems', First Reception Service and Asylum Service, the twin pillars of the Greek migration and asylum system, have strengthened their operational capacity in order to provide first-reception and asylum services according to international requirements.

Programme GR06, operated by European and Development Programs Division (EDPD) was in full conformity with the Greek Action Plan on Asylum and Migration Management, namely the objectives of creating screening Centers (point 2.1), accommodation for vulnerable groups (point 2.3) and provision of services (point 2.4). The Programme fitted into the overall objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism, namely, the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA, and more particularly in the area of human and social development.

Initially consisting of three (3) predefined projects, which later became five (5), the Programme set out to improve the quality of the administrative procedures for the management of the immigrants entering the Hellenic territory by overcoming structural shortcomings, with particular emphasis to the most vulnerable group, namely unaccompanied children.

The Programme contributed towards a strengthened institutional framework to ensure legal protection and care for the most vulnerable group of migrants, namely unaccompanied minors, and a well-functioning asylum system in place, enabling asylum-seekers to bring forward their claim for international protection, have their claim processed in due time and be offered accommodation during processing of their case, or to return voluntary to their country of origin. Indeed, the effective operation of AS and FRS, which constitute the twin pillars of the Greek migration and asylum system, was of outmost importance and this was safeguarded to a great extent through funding from the EEA Grants. Under predefined projects (PDP) 1, 2 & 4 third country nationals (TCNs) were provided with accommodation in conformity with international obligations and the national legal framework while at the same time ensuring that all required personnel and infrastructure are in place for facilitating effective access to the asylum procedure, an adequate first instance procedure and full respect for applicants' rights, as well as respect for the right to an effective remedy. The provision of the above services to unaccompanied minors was of particular importance.



To the left: At the reception and Identification Centre (R.I.C.) in Fylakio, Evros prefecture, land borders of Greece with Turkey.

Programme GR06 was furthermore active in promoting bilateral relations as an integral part of EEA Grants, capitalizing on the valuable assistance of UDI, the Norwegian Directorate for immigration, as donor programme partner (DPP), and aiming at fostering collaboration amongst all stakeholders, exchanging technical expertise and best practices. In terms of strengthening the bilateral relations between Donor countries and Greece, Programme GR06 contributed to knowledge sharing and mutual understanding,

having a wider effect upon the cooperation between Greece and Norway in the field of asylum and migration, not least by contributing to the mutual understanding of migration as a common European challenge.

This fruitful cooperation resulted in the successful organization of a two-day high-level international conference entitled «MiGR2016 - Migration flows in Greece: the Way Ahead» which constituted the core bilateral action under Programme GR06 for 2016 and aimed to present all aspects of migration in Greece. Furthermore, a seminar for “Contract Management” for the reception facilities and for the services provided to Asylum seekers, a seminar on “Project Management” and a three-day Conference on migration management and Assisted Voluntary Return & Reintegration (AVRR) were some of the ten separate bilateral activities organized by the European & Development Programs Division in its capacity as Programme Operator in cooperation with the Donor Programme Partner UDI.

Bilateral actions that took place in Norway focused on the transfer of knowledge in terms of new technologies / new practices, including IT systems, as well as on valuable professional / technical skills. Actions included study visits for the examination of issues such as age determination, return procedure, reception facilities, management of unaccompanied minors, the I.T. system (database) used for the monitoring of third country nationals accommodated in open facilities, procedures of the Dublin Unit of the Greek and Norwegian Asylum Service. Bilateral cooperation on those matters is foreseen to continue.

It should be noted that throughout the Programme’s implementation, Greece was confronted with massive migratory pressure on its borders and changing flows. Europe as a whole witnessed the largest migration flows since World War II. But Greece was at the spotlight as one of the main unofficial entry points of almost 1,000,000 migrants and asylum seekers fleeing from their homes to escape war zones or devastation. In this respect, the nature of this programme differed from the rest of the programmes financed by the EEA Grants in Greece, as it had to be evolving, with projects subsequently adapted to emerging needs. In addition to this, implementation of the programme was affected by political uncertainty in particular during 2015, coupled with the on-going economic crisis (and capital controls). In order to ensure that appropriate first reception procedures are implemented as standard practice for the treatment of new arrivals in accordance with relevant legislative provisions, FRS/RIS required considerably more resources. RIS and AS both needed to expand and re-organise, while in continuous and strenuous operation, among others in order to implement the EU-Turkey Agreement as mentioned above or the new Relocation Programme, mandated by the European Council in September 2015 for a total of 66.400 asylum seekers over a period of two years. This required the establishment of new Regional Asylum Offices, mainly in the islands of the Eastern Aegean, while at the same time securing the corresponding interpretation services. However, given that AS had not yet reached the processing capacity stipulated by law, the need for further financial and operational support was a sine qua non for ensuring sustainability of the services provided.

Programme GR06 was successful in terms of transferring knowledge and expertise. Staff recruited through the programme and permanent personnel of both RIS and AS have gained valuable experience in front-line reception practices and the international protection process. Moreover, they have also taken part in bilateral actions addressing issues on the ground, improving skills and performance. This capacity-building constitutes the legacy of the Programme, as the acquired knowledge would help Greek public administration in the long-term management of the migration challenge.

2.3.4 GR 07 – Academic Research Programme

Programme Operator: [General Secretariat for Research & Technology](#), Ministry of Education.

In the context of Programme GR 07 funding research interventions in the sectors of ‘Diversity, Inequalities and Social Inclusion’, the focus was on the following areas:

- **Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion**
- **Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance and**
- **Promotion of diversity in culture and arts within European Cultural Heritage**

The objectives of the programme were achieved through the implementation of eighteen (18) Research and Development (R&D) projects: Seven projects on “National inequalities and social exclusion” have been implemented by seven project promoters and nineteen partners. Five projects on “Gender equality and work-life balance” have been implemented by five project promoters and twenty partners and lastly, six projects on “Cultural diversity” have been implemented by six project promoters and eleven partners.

Out of the 18 projects, 8 implemented bilateral activities; promoting, networking, sharing and transfer of know-how, experience and best practices between Project Promoters in Greece and entities in the Donor States. Project promoters established partnerships with four Norwegian and two Icelandic institutions. All bilateral initiatives were carried out successfully, mostly carried out in Norway and Iceland, while a smaller number of initiatives were carried in Greece.



*To the left: **Closing event of GR 07**, Athens 2017.*

The strengthening of bilateral relations has been fostered by partnerships between donor partners and project promoters. For example, a project promoter (University of the Peloponnese on project “Overcoming Barriers to a Multicultural Society”) reported its invitation from NOVA the Norwegian partner, to participate in at least 3 proposals for research funding in a consortium as well as the project promoter of project “Community Interpreting in Greece” reported that received an invitation to continue the cooperation with the Norwegian stakeholder within the frame of a COST initiative.

Lastly, during the programme implementation, emphasis was placed on addressing at a scientific and research level the corresponding acute challenges faced by the Greek society amid the recent economic crisis coinciding with the EEA Grants programming period in question (i.e. increased social, economic/income inequalities, rise in social exclusion phenomena, reduced level of work-life balance for working women etc.).

3 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Management and control systems

The **national level MCS** was elaborated by the NFP - Ministry of Economy & Development with the assistance of FMO, further to several exchanges and mainly transposes the EEA Regulation in the national legal order and enforces the respective rules for the NFP, PO and PP responsibilities. The current MCS is published via a Joint Ministerial Decree no. 781/B, of 2014 (Ministers of Finance and of Economy & Development).

Important additions where necessary in the procedures and legal framework were made at programme level, with the submission to the FMC of the detailed descriptions on Management and Control Systems for all Programme Operators and the relevant exchanges. Clarifications were provided by all POs or NFP at the request of the EEA Financial Mechanism Office (FMO).

The **programme-level MCS** of were submitted by the Greek authorities and acknowledged by the FMO, as follows:

Programme	Date of submission of MCS	MCS formally acknowledged by FMO
GR02	14/05/2015	06/06/2016
GR03	06/03/2015	26/01/2016
GR06	14/01/2015	08/06/2016
GR07	08/04/2015	12/12/2016

Furthermore in 2016, the EEA Grants **MIS system** was delivered to the NFP and all users (POs and PPs), in close cooperation with the Special Service for MIS of the Ministry of Economy. Data entry into this system was completed by 2018 (even retro-actively) for all expenditures of 2009-2014 programmes managed by the Greek authorities.

Lastly, Greece's national MCS was audited by an independent international audit company (Moore Stephens) on behalf by FMO, in the summer of 2018. The National Focal Point, as well as the Certifying and Audit Authorities were audited; final results are pending at this stage, preliminary comments were positive. Comments shall be taken into account in the on-going design of the new MCS for the 2014-2021 period.

3.2 Compliance with EU legislation, national legislation and the MoU

The NFP is closely monitoring all programmes and collaborates with other administrative services in order to verify that the national and EU legislation are followed in all circumstances. Compliance is ensured by various mechanisms applicable via the MCS.

Further streamlining of information and synergies with other Services of the Ministry of Economy are explored, to assist NFP and all POs on such issues (e.g. a help desk service for legal questions is available to EU funds programme operators), for the next period.

The public procurement legal framework was updated with the introduction of Law 4412/2016 (transposition of new EU procurement directives) in August 2016 and this caused some delays in projects in particular under GR03 and GR06 who were in the process of procuring and signing new contracts. The adaptation to the new framework is now complete.

Lastly, please refer to the section of **Recommendations** of this Report, where the issues of compliance are connected to goals for the next programming period.

Irregularities and complaints

Until the end of the programming period, periodic reporting on irregularities continued to be submitted to FMO. All irregularities reports are declared and uploaded in FMO's **DoRIS**.

The majority of irregularities for Greece are now closed and the remainders are pending final audit reports by the Audit Authority. No major corrections are so far expected according to preliminary results, any adjustments will be dealt with in the Closure declaration stage.

3.3 Monitoring, reviews, evaluations and audit (NFP)

While in the final phase of the period and with programmes completed in April 2017, the NFP commissioned in late 2017 the independent evaluation of two programmes of the 2009-2014 period (ex-post). The timing allowed evaluating completed programmes and their final results, while still using Technical Assistance funds to commission the independent evaluations. The programmes selected were the ones intended to continue in the next programming period and therefore most likely to put to immediate use the recommendations of these evaluations.

Here follows a summary of the evaluation findings, as submitted to FMO in April 2018.

3.3.1 Evaluation of Programme GR 03

The GR 03 Programme introduces and promotes demonstration projects on the use of renewable energy solutions in communities that currently use fossil energy sources. It aims at increasing the share of RES in the production and consumption of energy (about 7,000 MWh/year) and at the same time the reduction of CO₂ emissions. The Programme also seeks to alleviate social and economic inequalities and strengthen bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states in the field of RES.

The 9 projects of the equal number of beneficiaries included in the Programme amounted to a budget of 10,962,996.33 € (EEA FM co-financing: 9,318,546.88 €) aiming to increase RES contribution to energy production by 7,276.76 MWh/yr and to reduce CO₂ emissions by 6.149,15 tn/yr. After their completion, the total cost of the 9 Projects amounted to 9,325,569.05 €, while their total eligible costs amounted to 8,483,174.03 € (EEA FM co-financing: 7.210.697,93 €), achieving an increase of RES share in energy production by 7,697.84 MWh /yr and reducing CO₂ emissions by 6,934.53 tn/yr.

The level of effectiveness of the programme's projects is about 110% with respect to the programme target of total renewable energy consumption (7,697.84 / 7,000 MWh/yr) and about 141.5% for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (6,934.53 / 4,900 tn/yr). In relation to the project's target objectives, in aggregate, their level of effectiveness amounted to approximately 105.8% in terms of the total renewable

energy consumption target (7.697,84 / 7.276,76 MWh/yr) and about to 112.8% on the reduction of greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions (6.934,53 / 6.149,15 tn/yr).

Despite the Programme's limited contribution to 2020 strategy targets, mainly due to its similarly limited economic scope and the demonstrative (pilot) nature of its projects, the specific objectives set out above have been overachieved and are expected to contribute to a larger (relative to the initially estimated) extent to achieving the targets for increasing RES contribution to energy consumption and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

As regards the impact assessment of the Programme's interventions on Project Promoters, according to the data gathered from the project promoters' replies to the Program's results assessment questionnaire, all 9 of them stated that the interventions implemented had a positive impact on addressing the problems and needs identified during the initial planning of the interventions. These concern above all the upgrading of the RES capacity and potential, the reduction of the energy-intensive buildings and the improvement of the energy efficiency of the buildings. As for the financial impact of the projects, all 9 project promoters replied positively to the question of whether their respective implemented project contributed to reducing their operating expenses. According to their answers, these reductions span from 11% to 60%, and on average they reach up to 36,6%.

Further, regarding the intervention areas' energy needs level of coverage, according to the project promoters replies it appears that the program's interventions resulted in covering their needs up to the level of 73,8%, on average basis, with individual projects percentages spanning between 25% and 105%.

Finally, as for replacing conventional energy sources with new RES that comprises one of the impacts that complement the interventions' assessment, only four (D.U.TH., A.U.A., Municipality of Andros and Municipality of Karpenisi), out of the nine implemented projects reported that conventional sources of energy were completely replaced by RES. In other projects, this has not been possible, mainly because of the nature of the needs they cover, as the supply of electric / thermal energy, in hospitals and social care structures (e.g. in the "Mamatsio" Hospital and the social structures of Alexandroupolis) must be uninterrupted.

As regards the indirect impact of the Programme's projects, all 9 Project Promoters that replied to the relevant question sustained that the interventions implemented had positive indirect impacts on the broader intervention area and on the local community. These mainly concern the encouragement of the use of RES, the involvement and coverage of the needs of large sensitive population groups and the improvement of quality and living conditions. The total number of citizens who directly benefited from the implementation of the interventions amounts to 38,668 people, while the Social Benefit Index (Total Public Expenditure / Number of Citizens Getting Direct Benefits from the Program) is € 276/person. In terms of eligible costs this indicator is reduced to € 255 /person, of which € 216.75/person is part-financing from the EEA Financial Mechanism. With regard to the interventions' life expectancy and sustainability prospects, indicative is the fact that all Project Promoters have stated that they have taken measures to ensure the sustainability and continuity of their projects. In regard to the 9 Project Promoters' assessment of project results life expectancy, their responses span between 20 and 30 years, averaging approximately 23.5 years.

Finally, the Programme's Operator (PO) effectiveness regarding its provided supporting services to the Project Promoters was evaluated positively by the latter. In particular, all Project Promoters replied positively with regard to the Programme's Operator support during the interventions' implementations and their submitted projects' evaluation and approval procedures. All Project Promoters evaluated positively at least one aspect of the PO's operations that is its support services as well as its procedures on the projects'

evaluation and approval phases. Only one negative evaluation is observed (OAK S.A.) where the approval of the project was delayed due to insufficient resources of the Programme (ref. 'overbooking' facility).

In order to promote the effective and efficient use of the Programme's financial resources, the following were proposed:

- Consistent monitoring of the interventions' implementation (with emphasis given on monitoring the energy objectives' achievement).
- Ensure the availability of sufficient and reliable data with regard to the achievement of the projects' objectives and their sustainability after the projects' completion.
- Ensuring the complementarity and synergy of projects that were selected to be implemented through the new Programme with corresponding interventions funded by the EU Structural Funds in the 2014-2020 financial period.
- Define criteria to ensure business continuity and sustainability of interventions, with effective monitoring of their implementation.
- Confirmation of the direct impact of the interventions in the RES sector by conducting appropriate field investigations (by the Project Promoters or by the Programme Operator) before and after the implementation of the projects, after an adequate period of operation, and regarding the level of satisfaction among the directly benefiting users, in order to capture their realistic perception of the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions.
- Identify and rigorously apply safeguards to accelerate the implementation of projects and the timely release of resources from non-mature projects.

To improve the effectiveness of the Monitoring, Management, Control and Evaluation Mechanisms of the interventions, the following are proposed:

- To improve the attractiveness of the new Programme and to eliminate competitive invitations from other co-funded Programs, which confuse potential beneficiaries, effective coordination is needed both in the planning phase of programs and in their implementation.
- Also, in order to deal effectively with the problems and delays often encountered in the implementation of the tender procedures of the projects, there is a need for coordinated and continuous support of the beneficiaries for the acceleration of the evaluation procedures and the immediate solution of critical issues affecting the timely and effective implementation of the projects.

In particular, increased emphasis should be placed on reducing the administrative burden that Project Promoters usually face and the delays observed in public procurement procedures, by providing appropriate guidance and support at all stages of the tendering process, drawing up standard tender notices by type of technology, technical support for problem solving, etc.

The Programme management mechanisms should be maintained in the next period, without substantial alterations, taking advantage of the experience gained from the implementation of the 2009-2014 Programme in order to ensure its effective operation. At the same time, it is advisable (in order to increase the efficiency of the mechanisms) to ensure full alignment with the Management and Control System applied to programs funded by the EU Structural Funds (NSRF 2014-2020 Management and Control System).

Lastly, due to the nature of the projects, the verification of the achievement of the programme indicators' output values is possible only after their completion. This fact should be taken into account when planning the Programme and designing relevant calls for potential beneficiaries, provisioning for the development of an appropriate mechanism to monitor the results and impacts of the projects after their completion and for a period of time adequate enough for providing reliable quantitative data. To this end, it is proposed that a

relevant clause is included to the projects' approval decisions with regard to a long-term obligation of the beneficiaries for sustaining their project's operations and equipment for a certain period of time (e.g. 3 years).

3.3.2 Evaluation of Programme GR 06

The GR06 Programme resulted in a significant impact since it has contributed to the development of a comprehensive framework for managing the reception, identification and hosting of migratory flows and the organisation of asylum services, along with the European policy in these fields. The needs in the relevant sectors remain of outmost importance, since in relation to its capacity the migratory flows are still high, despite their relative stabilisation at least by the end of 2017.

The Programme has largely contributed to the provision of reception and care services to vulnerable groups, particularly to unaccompanied minors. The continuation of interventions targeted at this age group should remain a priority under the EEA Grants 2014-2021, while aiming at reducing their accommodation in reception centres and transferring them more quickly in appropriate accommodation structures in the mainland. Addressing these issues requires the availability of services (trained staff, interpretation, etc.) that can be programme priorities in the next period.

Improving sustainability of interventions is related to constantly building up the capacity of project promoters (in particular of the two main services involved in the migration management system, namely the RIS and AS) and the know-how they acquire. Setting up or further enhancing existing structures for the provision of services that are currently outsourced (e.g. interpretation and translation services) will contribute to further enhancing the sustainability of interventions. In addition, staff shortages have been one of the problems that funding in the migration sector has been called upon to overcome. Hiring personnel on short-term contracts has been extremely useful. However, this does not always allow for a legacy to be built. Greece needs to establish procedures that will contribute to the sustainability of interventions.

Bilateral actions, which have been particularly positive under the EEA Grants 2009-2014, is considered a factor that will contribute to improving the staff's knowledge and expertise on the migration and asylum related fields. Bilateral actions could be further enhanced, with the aim of stimulating and developing long term cooperation between the Norwegian services and the Greek authorities.

The development, utilisation and diffusion of certain IT tools that were developed during the 2009-2014 programming period (e.g. utilisation and diffusion of the usage of CiGreece results, usage of QlikSense) could further contribute to the sustainability of interventions. The Programme Operator could undertake further actions in order to communicate the existence of those tools to potential users.

Implementation issues: Despite the relative stabilisation of migratory flows, the services required to be provided by the **Reception and Identification Service** and the **Asylum Service** remain high in both quantitative and qualitative terms. It is therefore necessary to further strengthen those institutions, both in staff and the necessary infrastructures for reception and accommodation.

The need to reduce the number of pending asylum applications (backlog) implies the acceleration of the relevant procedures and therefore the need to identify the possibility of strengthening the respective Services with staff and interpreting services. Supporting the administrative capacity of the abovementioned Services through continuous training of their staff can be supported by national funding, by funding from

the 2014-2020 ESI Funds, as well as through the aforementioned continuation of bilateral actions under the EEA Grants.

The fact that more time is available for the preparation of the 2014-2021 Programme compared to the previous programming period is a challenge for both the Programme Operator and the implementing bodies. More time is provided to the project promoters for needs assessment and decision-making regarding which of them can be implemented under EEA funding or alternative (national or international) funding sources. This would avoid project transferring to different funds- a common practice in the previous period- facilitate programming and also avoid the risks of project double-funding.


Consider introducing financial flexibility within the total EEA Grants allocation to support urgent projects that respond to opportunities or threats. There is also a need for flexibility in terms of re-programming, when required.

Finally, as applies to every Programme that includes multiple stakeholders, a closer cooperation and coordination between the Programme Operator and project promoters is necessary, which will allow for timely mutual information and joint problem-solving. Risk factors which could raise difficulties in the project implementation should be of a special examination during the design process.

3.4 Information and publicity

The Communication Strategy for the Grants, was submitted at national level by the NFP and at programme level by the P.O.s.

The NFP retains a distinct website, exclusive to EEA Grants: www.eeagrants.gr, currently managed by MOU S.A.

Furthermore it retains and continuously updates social media accounts in  Facebook: 'EEA Grants Greece' and  Twitter: @eeagrants_gr.

The last **Annual Meeting** and **Closing event** of the 2009-2014 period at national level, are expected to take place in November 2018.

Further details on information and publicity at programme level can be found in the **Final Programme Reports** as submitted to FMO.

Publicity highlights per Programme are as follows:

3.4.1 GR 02

On 21.11.2017 the P.O. organised the **Closing event** publicizing the impact of the financial mechanism and its Programmes, including the bilateral cooperation with Donor State entities.

In the website of the SACEP, the special dedicated area for the publicity of the GR.02 Programme (<http://www.eysped.gr/en/Pages/eea.aspx>) hosts the PP's websites too. For every project a website has developed, according to requirements of the Regulation.

PO was in close cooperation with PP for the development and the update on regular basis of these sites.

The Programme Operator soon after the closure of the projects (June 2017) organised a two-day workshop in order to disseminate the projects' results to academic and state sector with the aim to further exploit the results of the projects. The deliverables of the projects are available on the Project promoter's websites. Already, after request, the deliverables of the projects about the marine spatial planning have been made available to the Planning Department - Ministry of Environment and Energy. Other deliverables have been provided to the [General Secretariat for Waters](#) to be used for the River Basin Management Plans review. Also, deliverables have been provided to the region of Attica regarding the management of the Attica wetlands.

The project webpages are the following:

No.	Project title	Project Promoter	Website
1	IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED MARINE MONITORING PROGRAM	HELLENIC CENTER FOR MARINE RESEARCH (HCMR)	http://immp-eea.hcmr.gr
2	SUPPLY OF DESALINATION UNITS OF PSERIMOS AND TELENDO	HELLENIC UNION OF MUNICIPAL ENTERPRISES FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE (EDEYA) OF KALYMNOS	http://deyak.kalymnos.gov.gr
3	SUPPLY OF A MOBILE SEA WATER DESALINATION UNIT FOR OIA	HELLENIC UNION OF MUNICIPAL ENTERPRISES FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE (EDEYA) OF THYRA	http://www.thira.gr/prokhryxeis-diagwnismoi.html
4	OPERATION OF A SYSTEM FOR DRINKING WATER IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY CONTROL AND DISTRIBUTION IN LEROS MUNICIPALITY	MUNICIPALITY OF LEROS	http://www.leros.gr/main/index.php?categoryid=138
5	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND SET IN OPERATION FOR "UPGRADING AND MODERNIZATION OF A DESALINATION, REFINERY AND DRINKING WATER PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION QUALITY SYSTEM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF IETE"	MUNICIPALITY OF IETE	http://tya.ios.gr/
6	IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THE	GOULANDRIS NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM - GREEK	http://eordaia-nestos.gr/

	DETERMINATION OF THE MINIMALLY REQUIRED LEVEL/PROVISION OF WATER BODIES	BIOTOPE/WETLAND CENTER	
7	INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND MAPPING STUDY TO IMPROVE SPERCHIOS RIVER CATCHMENT AREA AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PLANS	AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS	http://sperchios-project.gr
8	INNOVATIVE WATER RESOURCES METHODOLOGIES FOR ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF THE REGION OF CRETE-AQUAMAN	NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CRETE-SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR RESEARCH GRANTS	http://www.aquaman.tuc.gr
9	ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ON ATTICA WETLANDS RECOMPOSITION AND REHABILITATION	REGION OF ATTICA	http://www.patt.gov.gr
10	STUDIES AND RECORDING OF EROSION PHENOMENA REVERSION ON AEGEAN ISLANDS TOURIST BEACHES	UNIVERSITY OF AEGEAN-SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR RESEARCH GRANTS (ELKE)	https://eoxbeaches.wordpress.com
11	MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING ON THE AEGEAN FOR BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION	UNIVERSITY OF AEGEAN	http://www.marisca.eu
12	SMART SYSTEM DESIGN FOR WATER NETWORKS SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT: APPLICATION IN CRETE	TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CRETE	http://www.smartwater.tuc.gr
13	THE ANOXIC ZONE OF AMVRAKIKOS BAY: DEPICTION, IMPACT, MANAGEMENT	UNIVERSITY OF PATRAS	http://eeagrants.amvrakikos.upatras.gr/en/index.html

14	Small Grant Schemes II	STATE SCHOLARSHIPS FOUNDATION	https://www.iky.gr/upotrofies-gr/didaktoriko/eox and https://www.iky.gr/upotrofies-gr/metadidaktoriko
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3.4.2 GR 03

WHAT	TARGET GROUP	WHEN
<i>A. Websites</i>		
<p>Link to CRES website: http://www.cres.gr/kape/index.htm</p> <p>Complementary action website: http://res-eeagrants.com/el/</p> <p>Promoters websites: http://www.pdm.gov.gr/praxi-olokliromenes-paremvasis-ape-gia-tin-anaptyxi-tis-topikis-kinotitas-grevenon/ http://reuni.eu/ http://andros-eeagrants.gr/el/ http://www.alexpolis.gr/default.asp?static=101&id=5037 https://www2.aua.gr/el/info/ergo-hm-eoh-gpa-stis-ape http://www.neaionia.gr/Inner.aspx?LangID=1&FolderID=e4e779e0-bf6c-49cb-b494-43b5cea2e166 http://panels.mpodosakeio.gr/ http://www.karpenissi.gr/xm-eox/ http://oakae.gr/</p>	Scientific community and Wider public (bilingual websites – Greek, English)	During implementation period
<i>B. Workshops, conferences, seminars</i>		
<p>Program Operator Actions:</p> <p>Closing Event Conference, Complementary Actions Conference</p>	Project promoters, boarder public, project operators by other RES programmes decision makers, scientific community.	<p>7th of December 2017</p> <p>6th of December 2017</p>
Promoters actions:		During implementation period

<i>Region of Western Macedonia:</i> 3 scientific workshops on sustainable energy development		
<i>Democritus University of Thrace:</i> 8 educational seminars in first and second grade schools	Broader public	
<i>Municipality of Andros:</i> 2 dissemination and awareness workshops		
<i>Centre for Social Protection and Solidarity, Education and Environment – Polykoinoniko (Alexandroupolis):</i> 4 educational seminars in first and second grade schools		
<i>Municipality of Nea Ionia:</i> 2 workshops for Sustainable Energy Development		
<i>General Hospital Mamatsio-Bodossakio:</i> 2 workshops for Sustainable Energy Development		
<i>Organization for the Development of Crete S.A:</i> 1 workshop for know-how transfer from the Donor State during the study visit of its representatives		
<i>C. Printed Material</i>		
Program Operator: Issuing a booklet with abstract presentation of all the Actions of the Program and the results achieved	Scientific community and Wider public (bilingual websites – Greek, English)	End of program
Promoters: Leaflets presenting their individual project action	Broader public	During implementation period



Closing event of GR 03, Athens, 6 December 2017.

3.4.3 GR 06

WHAT	TARGET GROUP	WHEN
Programme GR06 website, http://www.mopocp.gov.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=5487&Itemid=533&lang=&lang=	Wider public	During implementation period. Website still remain on public availability
Press release for the cooperation committee meeting between Greece and Norway (regarding the implementation of Programme GR06).	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) – Wider public	November 2014
Signboards at the PPs offices	Migrants, Wider public	2017
Newspaper Interview of Asylum Service's Director mentioning the contribution of EEA Grants	Wider public	2017
Results concerning the Announcement of Asylum Service for fixed-term contracts of employment	Wider public	June 2015
Announcement for the annual Programme Reports	Wider public in Greece and abroad	2014- 2015
Workshop on Age Assessment in Oslo, Norway	PO, representatives of the PPs and Hellenic Police	March 2015
Press Release for Complementary Action	Greek and Norwegian	June 2015

-Organization of a three day exchange of expertise meeting	authorities – Wider public	
Press Release concerning the visit of the Norwegian Minister of EEA and EU Affairs to Reception and Identification Service in Lesvos	Wider public	February 2016
Participation in Best practices and Communication Workshop-Justice and Home Affairs sector in Bucharest	Foreign Programme Operators and Project Promoters	March 2016
1st International Conference on Migration Management – “MiGR2016 Migration flows in Greece: The way ahead”	Norwegian stakeholders, Wider public, Public institutions, International organizations, NGOs,	April 2016
Participation in Workshop on Fundamental Rights Forum in Vienna	Foreign Programme Operators	June 2016
Distribution of stationary material with the logos in the Bilateral Actions, the Complementary Action and other events	Participants of events	During implementation period
Workshop on management capacity building in Oslo, Norway	E.D.P.D. staff, representatives of Reception and Identification Service (R.I.S.)	October 2016
Training Seminar on Project Management	Representatives of the PPs, Donor Programme Partners, Greek public Authorities and Hellenic Police.	February 2017
Study visit for the examination of unaccompanied minors management from Norwegian authorities.	Representatives of the Reception and Identification Service (R.I.S.) and Ministry of Migration Policy	February 2017
Closing event for Programme GR06- Capacity building of national Asylum and Migration Management Systems	Wider Public	October 2017
Two videos shown in closure event highlighting the results of Programme GR06 as well as those of the other Programmes under EEA Grants 2009-2014.	Wider Public	October 2017
Video on GR06 results on social medias (facebook and youtube).	Wider Public	October 2017

Distribution of information material in a leaflet at the closure event presenting the results of Programme GR06	Wider Public	October 2017
Programme updated website, https://www.ydeap.gr/%CE%AC%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%82-%CF%87%CF%81%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%BF%CF%84%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82/eea-grands/ethniko-programma/	Wider Public	December 2017
Usage of Logos in communication with other public institutions	Public institutions staff	From 2014

3.4.4 GR 07

WHAT	TARGET GROUP	WHEN
Dedicated project websites	Scientific community and Wider public (bilingual websites – Greek, English)	During implementation period
Workshops	Scientific community and Wider public	During implementation period
Edited volume in Greek that will further disseminate gained knowledge to the wider public.	Wider public in Greece	April 2017
Publications to Scientific Magazines	International Academic Community	During implementation period
Conference and Festival Presentations	Wider public in Greece and abroad	During implementation period
Documentary Film	Wider public in Greece and abroad	March 2017
Programme dedicated website, http://www.gsrt.gr/EOX/central.aspx?sId=11914281108913231488743 , was frequently updated in order to inform all interested parties about the current developments on programme (results of	Scientific community and Wider public (bilingual websites – Greek, English)	During implementation period. Website will remain on public availability.

evaluation process, annual report, complaints reporting etc).		
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4 SUMMARY LIST OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Programmes of 2009-2014 in Greece were ultimately completed with a very satisfactory use of funds, improving on previous periods outcomes. For the future, efforts are concentrated in the following points, mainly on mechanism improvements and on expediting processes so as to allow for a longer timeframe of project implementation. The ex-ante three year extension of the 2014-2021 regulatory timeframe for all countries supports this goal (N+3, the 2014-2021 programmes end in effect in 2024 or 2025 for Technical Assistance).

- The 2009-2014 period marked the implementation of a **Management and Control System** for EEA Grants in Greece, providing the same level of assurances as those applied for EU funds. As implementation picked up towards the end of the period, this unified approach allowed for synergies with other Services under the mandate of the [General Secretariat for Public Investments & the NSRF](#) - which is the hierarchy of the NFP of EEA Grants in Greece- such as the Public Investment Budget General Directorate or the [Management and Organisation Unit S.A.](#) Also in relation to the rest of the stakeholders POs and PPs, usually bodies who are experienced beneficiaries of public financing in co-financed management and control processes. The EEA Grants Programme Operators of the 2009-2014 period were also [Executive - Managing Authorities](#)/ Special Services of [EU - ESIF funds](#) or beneficiaries of EU funds, while one was at the same time [Executive Authority for the European Internal Security Fund](#). Therefore the use of standardised rules for MCS was beneficial to all parties, allowing the use of previous experience gained and the speeding up of processes where possible.
- In order to facilitate and support the **MCS** and more generally due to other global reforms in public governance, new electronic systems were put in place during this period. Namely, the **Management Information System (MIS)** for monitoring all co-financed programmes and projects ([OPS EOX](#)), as well as the **MIS** for state budget lines of the Public Investment Programme ([e-pde](#)). Lastly, according to instructions from the Ministry of Finance - General Accounting Office, all transactions of co-financed programmes were now 'ring-fenced' into one central specifically designated account, to ensure consistency of financial flow and monitoring. These systems shall continue –actually upgraded where possible- in the next programming period, providing assurances for the principles of transparency, efficiency – effectiveness, proportionality and additionality of funds.
- The contribution of the **Management and Organisation Unit S.A.** should be particular acknowledged in this period, in terms of **staffing, website and other electronic systems support** for the NFP, as well as to Programme Operators or the Certifying Authority. MOU support has contributed significantly to the fulfillment of EEA regulatory obligations of the period and the closure of the Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. Staffing remains a critical issue for NFP in particular, as highlighted by the Donors. Therefore it is not only recommended but vital that this support remains and is enhanced throughout the next programming period 2014-2021. To this effect, steps are already made to assign from the start a section of Technical Assistance from EEA Grants 2014-2021 to the management of MOU S.A., further to agreement with FMO.
- As mentioned previously, the EU legislation for **public procurement** was updated in the middle of the programming period, thus requiring an update of relevant national legislation. New national electronic [Portal and Registry](#)¹⁴ were set up for public procurement, requiring mandatory input from all national

¹⁴ National Portal for public procurement rules for services, supplies and public works (ΕΣΗΔΗΣ) and National Registry of all public contracts (ΚΗΜΔΗΣ).

Awarding Authorities of public contracts (such as NFP, POs and PPs of EEA Grants), in addition to the EU mandatory rules of publicity for calls, competitions and contracts (Tenders Electronic Daily -TED- database, Official Journal etc.). Lastly a new [Single Independent Authority for Public Procurement](#) was setup for relevant primary and secondary legislation issuance, templates, public procurement queries etc. All these measures will continue to apply in the next programming period. The MIS Service uploads regularly any updates or legal templates on the MIS system (for EU and now EEA), so all stakeholders can be kept systematically informed. The obligations of Programme Operators and Project Promoters who act as Awarding Authorities of public contracts shall continue in the next programming period; these obligations are applicable independently of the co-financing factor, but clearly contribute to the implicit systemic safeguards.

- The use of synergies and **alignment of rules**, across sources of external financing (EU and EEA), are recommended to be explored and applied further in the next period for MCS or other issues that arose during implementation according to NFP experience, for example:
 - the application of the national anti-corruption plan to EEA Grants and the handling of complaints within the national administration in the context of co-financed programmes (securing the financial interests of the EU and Greece), in collaboration with the AFCOS - Anti-Fraud Coordination Office responsible Authority in Greece, i.e. the General Secretariat against Corruption of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights.
 - the use of a national 'overbooking' facility, similarly to EU programmes and up to a maximum 10% allowance on each sectoral programme budget.
- Lastly, in terms of the **bilateral actions** at national level: the beneficiaries retain the key responsibility for timely implementation and budget absorption. However administrative, financial and banking procedures were also a factor in delays (payments by the state budget with ad hoc clearances or to recipients outside the public administration etc.). It is noted that more than half (>50%) of the funds available in the 2009-2014 period for Technical Assistance, and the Bilateral Fund at national level, were implemented, paid and inserted to all systems (DoRIS and national, OPS-EOX), in the last two years of the programming period (2017-2018). For this, the NFP and POs require designated and authorised staff for payment processes and possibly legal framework improvements in order to minimise bureaucracy while not jeopardising transparency, notwithstanding the limitations from public contracts or public investment budget obligations. The Bilateral Fund scope is to finance usually individual, ad hoc, small budget projects or actions, implemented by a variety of beneficiaries in Greece and at least one participant from the Donor states, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein in each case, requiring flexibility and quick response to practical issues. Lastly, it is proposed that new bilateral fund projects are monitored by the NFP, abide by same rules known to all from the start (standardisation and templates for proposals, also dedicated Chapter in the new MCS system) and are decentralised to POs to the extent possible, especially for bilaterals within the programming areas of the 2014-2021 period.

5 ATTACHMENTS TO THE STRATEGIC REPORT

Attachments 1-5, as extracted from DoRIS - June 2018:

