



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
**MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL  
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## MINUTES

### **2nd Annual Meeting of the EEA Financial Mechanism & the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014**

**Ljubljana, 14 March 2013**

Location: Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Kotnikova 5 (conference room), Ljubljana, 9.30 PM – 14 PM

Date of meeting: 7 March 2013

***Co-Chairs of the meeting:***

Ms Mette Jøranli, Acting Deputy Director, Section for Central Europe and EEA/Norway Grants, Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ms Maja Humar, Head of International Affairs and National Authorities Division, Slovene Ministry of Economic Development and Technology

***PARTICIPANTS:***

***Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway in Hungary/ Veleposlaništvo Kraljevine Norveške na Madžarskem***

Mr Arild Moberg Sande, Counsellor

Mr Tamas Polgar (Adviser, EEA/Norwegian Financial Mechanism)

Mr Andreas Myrseth (trainee)

***FMO representatives:***

Ms Stine Andresen, Director

Ms Marie Osnes, Country Officer

***Ministry of Economic Development and Technology:***

Ms Mojca Pokorn, NFP, contact person

Ms Nina Omerza, PR

Ms Nataša Kogej, communication

Mr Bojan Suvorov, responsible person PO for SI05

Mr Tadej Baškovič, Head of Division for Control – ETC, IPA and IFM Programmes

Ms Andreja Malik, controller

Ms Nada Eniko, controller

***Ministry of Finance – Certifying Authority***

Ms Mateja Mahkovec, Head of Department for management of EU Funds/PO

Mr Robert Šircelj, Senior Advisor

***Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs***

Mr Andrej Kralj, Senior Advisor

***Budget Supervision Office – Audit Authority***

Ms Mojca Krisch, Auditor

Mr Božidar Hlebec, Auditor

***Programme Operator for SI04 - CMEPIUS***

Ms Alenka Flander, Director

Ms Marja Medved, Head of Unit for VET, Head of Unit for Tertiary Sector, National Team of Bologna Experts, responsible person)

Ms Irena Kos, Head of Finances, contact person

***Members of the Monitoring Committee:***

Ms Maruša Gortnar, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs – MDDSZ

Ms Sabina Mirković, Vodja Sektorja za izvajanje kohezijske politike, Ministry of Health – MZ  
Ms Tanja Vertelj, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport – MIZKŠ  
Mr Andrej Vihtelič, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport – MIZKŠ  
Mr Tomaž Petek, The Surveying and Mapping Authority-GURS  
Mr Uroš Brežan, Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (SOS) and Association of Municipalities in Slovenia – Skupnost občin Slovenije in Združenje občin Slovenije  
Mr Aleš Cantarutti, Chamber of Commerce – Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije  
Ms Alenka Palian – representative of NGOs – CNVOS

**Proposed Agenda:**

1. Opening remarks
2. Status/Presentation of the Strategic Report
3. Press conference/Coffee break
4. Management set-up
5. Risk assessment
6. Coffee break
7. Bilateral relations
8. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09
9. Closing Remarks

**1. Opening remarks by the National Focal Point and the Donor States**

Ms Maja Humar welcomed the participants. After a short introduction of both delegations the proposed agenda was adopted.

Ms Pokorn opened the meeting with a brief overview of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic report. Special attention was given to the status of each programme and the budget allocations and disbursements. All programmes have been approved by donors, except for SI03 – NGO programme, due to a later nomination of the Programme operator for the Fund.

After presenting the programmes Ms Pokorn presented the Work programme for 2013. For the first quarter of this year the following tasks remain to be implemented: signature of the Programme Implementation Agreement (PIA) for SI04 and the documents replacing PIA for SI02 and SI05, adoption of guidelines for reporting for SI01 and nomination of the new Monitoring Committee via governmental procedure. The latter depends on the government crisis development. After the new Government is formed, the membership will be revised in accordance with the changes. The nomination of the workgroups/Co-operation Committee for the implementation of the programmes (SI02 and SI05) by the Minister's decree is in internal signature procedure.

The Launch of Public calls for the selection of projects for SI02, SI03, SI04 and SI05 and the organization of workshops for potential applicants were envisaged in the second quarter of 2013. It is highly probable that public calls for SI02 and SI05 will be postponed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2013. All POs will adopt guidelines for reporting. If new composition of the Monitoring Committee will be adopted by the new Government timely, the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee members will be organized by the end of June 2013. By the end of 2013, NFP and POs will adopt Procedural manuals of NFP/POs and POs for SI02, SI04 and SI05 will submit descriptions of management and control system at programme level with AA opinion.

Ms Mette Jøranli, NMFA, thanked for the submission of the report. In the donor's opinion, the report is well written and provides detailed information on the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-14. Ms Jøranli stressed that for the future Strategic reports, NFP should also provide an analysis of implemented tasks and activities, especially regarding strengthening of the bilateral relations between Slovenia and the donor countries. Special attention should be given to the risk assessments and mitigation plan to manage those risks. For the donors it is important to understand the situation in the beneficiary countries. Therefore the mitigation plan should be based on the analysis of the situation and possible measures to avoid anticipated risks. Ms Andresen suggested that good examples of reports from other beneficiary countries be submitted to Slovene NFP (once good examples become available) in order to see good practices and get some fresh ideas on how to improve the strategic report.

The FMO provided technical comments to the report via e-mail prior to the annual meeting. Comments will be fully taken into account and the final version of the Strategic report will be submitted with draft minutes of the Annual meeting.

The meeting proceeded with the press conference, where approved programmes and plans for public calls for proposals were presented to the media.

## **2. Management set-up**

Ms Pokorn shortly presented the process of establishing the management and control system for EEA and Norway grants 2009–2014 in Slovenia and highlighted and explained the open issues to be solved regarding MCS. These issues, which were identified also by the FMO (Mr Elin Hristov, Financial Officer) in a letter to NFP of 5 February 2013, are:

1. Development of separate IT system – because of the limited capacities the NFP does not intend to develop a separate IT system, however, the shortages of the current system in place, combining two different IT solutions, which were identified by the AA within the 2004–2009 period will be taken into consideration and improved. The AA will review this issue in September 2013.
2. Delivery of the MCS within the deadline set in the Regulation: the main reason for substantial delay in providing MCS has been in unstable political situation which resulted in 2 changes of the Government during the process of establishing the system. This has also been reflected in 3 changes of MoUs since their signatures.
3. Guidelines and instructions of the NFP: will be adopted the latest by the end of September 2013. They are under preparation and are still in consultation procedure between CA and NFP.
4. In FMO view the controllers from the Division of Control within the given Directorate of MEDT should not be involved in activities other than the verification of payment claims in order to secure adequate control and to avoid conflict of interest: the issue has been clarified. The control unit for verification of expenditures is organizationally separated and controllers are not part of the programming activities, meaning that the controllers could assist in such activities as the preparation of the manuals, description of the system or closing down activities of the past programmes.
5. Sample of the legislative or administrative act that will replace the PIA in programmes where the PO and the NFP are the same organisation (SI02 and SI05): Declaration has been prepared by the legal officer and is in translational time of the annual meeting.

Ms Andresen said that the FMO received the reply of the NFP on 5 March 2013 that still needs to be checked more in detail by the FMO, however the reply clarify issues from the MCS document.

Ms Pokorn asked FMO if the absence of Head of NFP represents a problem for the donors. Ms Humar in this context informed the participants, that all legal documents will be signed by the minister who is responsible for Ministry's operations. Ms Andresen replied that this is more an internal issue if the work is not hindered due to the temporary absence of Head of NFP.

The issue of new employments, a pre-condition in Programme Agreements for SI02 and SI05 has been explained by Mr Suvorov. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia approved new employments and the procedures for employment will be implemented in the near future. He stressed that realistically we cannot expect that new staff will be in place and operational before public tender, but will be fully incorporated in the implementation of the programmes. Ms Mette Jøranli proposed, that NFP requests FMO to provide some training for new employments in order to speed up the effective start of new employees. The Slovenian side welcomed the proposal.

### **3. Risk assessment**

Ms Mette Jøranli in the introduction of this point of the agenda stressed the importance of risk mitigation plan and encouraged the Slovene side to develop such a plan. Ms Pokorn shortly presented risks, identified in the Strategic report, which were already discussed under point 2 of the agenda.

### **4. Bilateral relations**

Ms Pokorn and Mr Suvorov presented the planned activities for strengthening bilateral relations at national and programme levels. Ms Medved explained that activities for strengthening bilateral relations at SI04 programme level have not yet been discussed with all 3 programme partners, but will be defined at the working meeting between all four partners in the near future.

Slovenian side also welcomed the established co-operation between Norwegian Embassy in Budapest and NFP, as well as with the Ministry of Foreign affairs, which will bring a valuable contribution to strengthening bilateral relations between Slovenia and the donor states.

The representatives of Embassy participated at the consultation with NGO sector for the preparation of Programme proposal for SI03, which was held in Ljubljana on 6 March 2013. In their opinion the consultation was very fruitful, since the conference provided comments from the civil society sector in Slovenia, which will enable the Fund operator to finalise the programme proposal by the end of March 2013. The Fund operator will, if programming is successfully completed, organize a launching event for potential applicants at the end of May 2013.

Ms Mette Jøranli made a comment to the Strategic report that activities for strengthening bilateral relations are well presented in the report, however an analysis of the impact is still missing. She stressed that the Strategic Report should not focus on the changes to the bilateral work plan at national level but to the impact made to the bilateral relations by its activities. The NFP will take the comment into account and will put more emphasis on impact assessment in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Strategic report, when more activities will be implemented. Ms Jøranli also reiterated briefly the conditions in the work plan. The Slovenian counterparts informed participants at the meeting that all conditions have already been considered and will be taken into account while implementing activities, described in the work plan.

Mr Sande mentioned that the dialog with the Slovene Ministry of Foreign started regarding implementation of the "EU integration" activity, which will take place in 2013. He also confirmed that the Norwegian Embassy will closely co-operate with the NFP on the planning of

this activity. The governments of Lichtenstein and Iceland are also interested in the co-operation within this activity. Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently working on an outline of the activity, which will be sent to the Embassy after Easter break.

Ms Pokorn also mentioned a reserve project to be financed from the bilateral fund at national level, proposed by the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would contribute to strengthening of bilateral relations in the field of economic diplomacy. Ms Mette Jøranli welcomed the fact that there is a reserve project. The matter of reallocations of funding was mentioned in conjunction with that if there are activities that are in the work plan now, which might not materialize (for various reasons), reallocations might be necessary. The work plan is considered a rolling plan that will be reviewed at each annual meeting. In the event that some of the activities of the bilateral work plan at national level do not materialise, or have to be changed, the budget of the work plan can be looked at and reallocations to a new activity be proposed by the NFP. Any changes shall be discussed and agreed with the Donors at every annual meeting.

#### **5. EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09**

Ms Pokorn presented 3 outstanding projects from 2004–2009 period. Ms Osnes asked NFP to provide written information for SI036 to FMO as soon as possible. Ms Andresen explained that FMO plans to complete all tasks related to 200 –2009 before summer 2013.

#### **6. Closing Remarks**

In the conclusion of the meeting, Ms Andresen said that there has been good co-operation between Slovenia and the donors for the period 2004–2009 and the implementation of the programmes was very successful. In FMO's and NFP opinion the most urgent task in next days is completing the draft Programme Implementation Agreements in order to speed up the start of implementation of the programmes.

The representative of The Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, responsible for pre-defined project within SI02 programme, explained to donors that there is a concern that due to the late start of the programme(s), the time for completion of project(s) could not be sufficient and asked the donors if there is a possibility to prolong implementation period beyond 2016. Ms Jøranli pointed out that donors are aware of this since other beneficiary states are facing the same problem. She stressed that this issue is currently considered by the donors and as soon as the decision is taken the beneficiary countries will be notified.

The minutes and the final Strategic report will be provided to FMO within 2 weeks after the meeting and published on the web site of EEA and Norway grants in Slovenia.

Prepared by:  
Mojca Pokorn