

Strategic Report 2019

National Focal Point

Portugal

July 2019

According to Article 2.6 of the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the National Focal Point shall submit to the FMC an annual Strategic Report on its implementation. The present report follows the template provided by the FMO on August 2nd 2018.

Abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority
ACF	Active Citizens Fund
ADC	Cohesion and Development Agency P.I.
CA	Certifying Authority
CN	Concept Note
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EEA	European Economic Area
EEA FM	European Economic Area Financial Mechanism
FBR	Fund for Bilateral Relations
FMC	Financial Mechanism Committee
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
IFR	Interim Financial Report
IGF	General Inspectorate of Finance
JCBF	Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds
NFP	National Focal Point
MCS	Management and Control Systems
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PO	Programme Operators
PA	Programme Agreement
PIA	Programme Implementation Agreement
RCM	Council of Ministers Resolution
SG PCM	General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
SGS	Small Grant Scheme
TA	Technical Assistance
UNG	National Management Unit

1. Executive summary

No significant political, economic and social change or trend in Portugal had an impact on the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021 and at the current stage of the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021 where most of the open calls and contracting of pre-defined projects are ongoing it is early to report any results and effects of Grants.

Progress in the reporting period (since March 2018) was very relevant with the approval of all concept notes by the Donors States and the conclusion of all Programme Agreements in the first half of 2019 and implementation of Programmes is expected to take full speed when the Programmes have launched the first Open Calls or are ready to go ahead.

Impressive interest was generated by the Fund for Bilateral Relations Open Call #1 launched by December 2018 that by the first cut-off date has received a total 26 applications from which 11 bilateral initiatives for funding were selected.

Programmes have been actively involved in or promoting bilateral initiatives particularly matchmaking events when many open calls are starting and the timing is relevant to foster potential bilateral partnerships at project level.

A joint procedure to procure the setting up of an Information and reporting IT System was promoted by the NFP with the Programme Operators and is expected to start gradually operating by 2020.

Communications activities by the NFP have been actively promoted aiming to broaden the knowledge of the EEA Grants in Portugal. The launching of the joint website for all Programmes and the EEA GRANTS

Portugal APP can be highlighted as best practices. Direct communication activities to potential promoters and/or partners has been intense over the reporting period and a growing interest in the EEA Grants has been registered by the NFP considering the requests for information or for meetings received. A highlight should be given to information sessions all over Portugal including Azores and Madeira Islands and Iceland with the participation of the NFP and all of the Programme Operators, where hundreds attended.

After the conclusion of the Programme Agreements only a few minor amendments to the MoU must be agreed upon.

2. Political, economic and social context

No significant political, economic and social change or trend in Portugal had an impact on the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021.

3. Effects of the Grants

At the current stage of the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021 where most of the open calls and contracting of pre-defined projects are ongoing it is early to report any results and effects of Grants.

4. Status of programmes

The MoU on the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021 was signed between Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein, Kingdom of Norway and Portuguese Republic on the 22nd May 2017 with the following implementation framework:

The Portuguese Republic		EEA FM contribution	National contribution
Programmes			
A	Blue Growth Innovation and SMEs	€38,000,000	€6,705,882
B	Work-life Balance and Gender Equality	€6,000,000	€1,058,824
C	Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy	€24,000,000	€4,235,294
D	Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	€9,000,000	€1,588,235
E	Civil Society	€11,000,000	N/A
Other allocations			
	Technical Assistance to the Beneficiary State (Art. 1.10)	€1,540,500	N/A
	Reserve (Art. 1.11)	€3,403,000	N/A
	Reserve for completion of projects FM 2009-2014 (Art. 1.12)	N/A	N/A
	Fund for bilateral relations (Art. 4.6.1)	€2,054,000	N/A
Net allocation to Portugal		€94,997,500	€13,588,235

The NFP delivered the first Annual Strategic Report covering the status of implementation since the signature of the MoU in May 2017 until March 2018.

Since the last reporting period, the implementation of the EEA FM 2014-2021 has recorded significant progress with all Programme Agreements concluded and with the launching of the first open calls as detailed in the tables below.

Programmes	1 st draft Concept Note	CN approved by the Donors	PA draft approved by the Donors	Programme Agreement	Programme Implement. Agreement	Launching of 1 st Open Calls
Blue Growth	Sept 2017	Oct 2018	Apr 2019	15.05.2019	11.06.2019	May 2019
Work-Life Balance	Aug 2017	May 2018	Dec 2018	26.01.2019	05.02.2019	Feb/March 2019
Environment	Sept 2017	Oct 2018	May 2019	27.05.2019	29.05.2019	July 2019
Culture	Sept 2017	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	26.02.2019	23.04.2019	Estimated for September 2019

The approval of the concept notes by the Donors States (Donors) took in average a total of 12 months since the first draft delivered by the POs to the FMO and the approval of the draft PA by the Donors took in average a total of about 6 months.

The preparation of the Programmes since the signature of the MoU took about two years reflecting the need for detailed and thorough discussions between all stakeholders (PO, DPP, FMO, NFP, Donors) to reach the jointly aimed quality at entry approach.

The Active Citizens Fund (ACF) operated directly by the FMO and managed by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in consortium with the Bissaya Barreto Foundation selected as Fund Operator in Portugal, took less time to contract the Programme (about 6 months). By July 2018 the first Open Calls were launched and by January 2019 the first projects were selected.

Active Citizens Fund	1 st draft CN	Programme Implementation Agreement	1 st Open Calls launched	1 st Selection Committee
	Jan 2018	09.07.2018	July 2018	Jan 2019

The NFP has promoted support to all PO in the different stages of implementation of the Programmes by setting up annual workshops on specific issues relevant for the work planning of the PO (namely on preparation of programmes, planning of different stages of implementation, on the description of management and control systems, communication issues, open calls, reporting, Fund for Bilateral relations, etc.). The NFP plans to continue hosting at least once a year a workshop with all PO to address the challenges that each stages of the implementation of the Programmes demand.

The NFP also participated in dedicated working meetings with each PO concerning the specific challenges identified along the different staged of implementation that prove to be very useful and effective.

The first round of monitoring meetings after the signature of the PA with all PO took place by July 2019 which provided the necessary input to conclude the Risk Assessment at Programme level.

A more detailed status on the programmes and how the MoU special concerns were addressed in the contracted programmes and the ACF are presented below:

A - Blue Growth Innovation and SMEs (Blue Growth)

With the objective to increased value creation and sustainable growth, the Blue Growth, Innovation and SMEs Programme covers 3 Programme Areas (i) Business Development, Innovation and SMEs, (ii) Research and (iii) Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship.

With a such a broad and ambitious approach, the PO (Directorate General for Maritime Policy – DGPM) benefits from four DPP to support its design and implementation and that can foster expertise in all the 3 Programme Areas covered: Innovation Norway (IN), Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS), Research Council of Norway (NFR) and Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku).

The indicative appropriation between the different Programmes Areas (PA) were stated in MoU (approximately 70% for Business Development, Innovation and SMEs and 30% for the remaining PA). The total allocation for the Business Development component contracted under the Programme Agreement (PA) falls slightly below the MoU threshold (65,5%) when considering the proportion on the Outcome budget. This will benefit the reinforcement of the Research and Education components of the Programme. The Programme entails a total of 5 Open Calls and 3 Small Grant Schemes (SGS).

The Blue Growth Programme was launched by June 2019 and the first Open Call on the Business component was launched by 12 June 2019 which is now open until the end of September 2019, with a total allocation of 14.2M€.

To encourage cooperation between research institutions and SMEs, in order to facilitate commercialization of innovative ideas, products and processes, as stated in MoU, applications will be given additional score if they are dedicated to develop user driven research base innovation and the development or implementation of green solutions, involving strong partnerships and bilateral cooperation between Beneficiary State and Donor States institutions.

SGS #1 under the Business outcome aiming at mainly startups is expected to be launched in the summer of 2019 (Business development). The planning of SGS #2 (“managing skills”), aimed particularly to selected Startups under the Programme is under assessment by the PO in order to achieve the aimed outcome.

To ensure synergies with the Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy Programme, as stated in the MoU, resource efficiency in maritime sector is addressed in an extensive joint approach aiming to contribute to the current global threat that marine litter poses to the Oceans. An open call under the outcome of Business Development, Innovation and SMEs dedicated to the promotion of blue business greening and development and with a total allocation of €1.176.000 is planned to be launched in the summer of 2019 and discussions between the 2 PO have taken place to ensure a coordinated synergy.

The open calls on Research and on Education are expected to be launched in the fall of 2019.

The Programme has 3 Pre-defined Projects (PDP) that are still under assessment by the PO. The initial eligibility has not been opened yet. One PDP still lacks the appraisal of a detailed plan and budget by the FMO (PDP2 – Atlantic Observatory) as a pre-eligibility condition set in the PA signed by 15 May 2019.

B - Work-life Balance and Gender Equality (Work-Life Balance)

The Programme Work-life Balance and Gender Equality covers 3 PA (i) Work-life balance, (ii) Domestic and Gender-based Violence and (iii) Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency. According with the MoU the Programme shall focus on gender equality and work-life balance, with special concern on research, local development and social cohesion.

The Programme aims to address the main gender inequality issues faced by Portugal with a focus on work-life balance, gender pay and pension gaps, governance tools like sex disaggregated data systems, gender segregation in education and occupations, local and municipal gender policies, domestic and gender-based violence (DGBV) and women’s participation in decision making.

Work-life balance issues have the major allocation on the Programme with approximately 50% of the funding available which is consistent with funding gaps identified in the area.

As considered in the MoU the Programme agreed 4 pre-defined projects in the areas of gender equality and work-life balance with the focus on 1) gender pay gap; 2) national data systems to promote work-life balance and gender equality 3) gender mainstreaming in education and vocational training. The additional

PDP agreed on the Programme Agreement aims to promote Gender Equality opportunities in Senior management.

From a total of 5 Open Calls and 2 SGS the Programme as launched all but Open Call #2 and #3 under the outcome “Enhanced gender equal opportunities in labour market” which are expected to be launched after the summer 2019.

From the 4 PDP the PO has assessed 3 and the NFP has confirmed it to the FMO in accordance with Article 6.5.3 of the Regulation and for the effects of Article 4.1.4 of the Programme Agreement (initial eligibility of expenditures) and the projects contracts have been signed. The PO is still assessing PDP 1 on the Equal Pay standard.

C – Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy (Environment)

The Programme aims at improving the environmental status in ecosystems and reduce adverse effects of pollution and other human activities. It will cover 2 Programme Areas (i) Environment and Ecosystems and (ii) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

The special concerns of the Programme in the MoU (Circular Economy in the building sector, living labs for low carbon cities and National Network of Biosphere Reserves) translate in a strong focus on innovative approaches, in particular from private business. Innovation Norway as DPP can play an important role in the implementation of the Programme. The Programme can also benefit from the exchange with Donor States' entities with a more sector/policy base that can be supported through allocations from the Fund for Bilateral Relations.

To ensure synergies with the Blue Growth, Innovation and SMEs Programme, resource efficiency in maritime sector is addressed in a joint approach aiming to contribute to the global threat that marine litter poses to the Oceans. An open call with a total allocation of €1M under a dedicated outcome was agreed in the Programme is Agreement.

The Environment Programme was launched in May 2019.

Open Call #2 and SGS #1 and #2 under the outcome Circular Economy were launched in July 2019 and progress has been done on the text for Open Call #1 on the plastic bottles return system under the same Outcome.

Open Call #3 on the Biospheres Reserves outcome and Open Call #4 on Low carbon measures in large cities are expected to be launched as planned, by 4th quarter of 2019 and 1st quarter 2020 respectively.

The Programme entails 3 PDP for which the PO is still conducting its assessment. The initial eligibility has not been opened yet. One PDP still lacks the appraisal of a detailed plan and budget by the FMO (PDP3 – Rio Ceira) as a pre-eligibility condition set in the PA signed by 27 May 2019.

D – Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation (Culture)

The Programme aims at social and economic development strengthened through cultural cooperation, entrepreneurship and heritage.

The special concerns of the Programme in the MoU directs the focus on the role that arts, culture and cultural heritage play in local and regional development with emphasis on employment, social inclusion and cohesion, on cultural entrepreneurship, on cultural heritage management, preservation and conservation and on audience development and cultural activities in education.

The main challenge on the programme design has been to address two different cultural scopes (heritage and arts) under the same umbrella. Due to the different nature of measures that can be funded under each outcome safeguarding of cultural heritage will proportionately demand a higher appropriation.

On the safeguarding of coastal cultural heritage is being taken into account under the support of safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The maximum level of funding available from the total eligible expenditure of the Programme for infrastructure (hard measures) was identified in the concept note with a maximum of 41,5% after the design of the open call that aim to support projects anchored in tangible measures in order to ensure impact of the funding.

The Directorate for Cultural Heritage (RA) is the designated DPP and has been fully involved in the programme design in either outcome. The Arts Council of Norway (ACN) has been, as foreseen in the MoU,

also involved in the preparation of the programme and expectations of further involvement in the implementation of the Programme have been regularly highlighted. The support from RA and ACN on the design of the open call texts has proven important.

The aim set in MoU more than 20% of the total eligible expenditure of the Programme is being set aside for cultural cooperation and exchange between the Donor States and Portugal through the Arts Outcome of the Programme where mandatory partnerships with the Donor States entities or artists is foreseen.

Following up on the management capacity concerns expressed in the MoU for the Culture Programme, the change of Programme Operator has been considered by the Ministry of Culture has a solution that received the full support from the NFP.

The Annex B was amended after agreement with Donors through the exchange of letters concluded by 14th May 2018.

In accordance with the MoU the NFP and the Programme Operator submitted to the FMO a plan to ensure adequate programme management capacity of the Programme Operator by November 28th 2018.

The progress registered in the preparation and implementation of the Programme by DGPC with DG Artes has proven that the modification was adequate to mitigate the identified risks and the capacity for adequate management of the Programme has been evident to the NFP.

Open Calls #1 on the heritage component and #2 on the Arts Component are planned to be launched in the summer of 2019.

The Programme entails 2 PDPs for which the PO is still conducting its assessment. The initial eligibility has not been opened yet. The PDP that will be operated by the PO is completing the external assessment and the respective appraisal by the FMO (PDP1 – Underwater Heritage) as a pre-eligibility condition set in the PA signed by 26 February 2019.

E – Civil Society (Active Citizens Fund)

According with the 1st Annual Programme Report (APR) on progress for 2018 (submitted by the Fund Operator by February 2019 and approved by the FMO by May 2019) a total of about 1100 people were engaged in the Programme opening event held on September 14th and the subsequent outreach events throughout the country, held in July and September 2018. Applications could be submitted up to October 31st 2018.

The four calls were opened between July and end of October 2018, with a total allocation of €3 620 000 and concerned all 4 Outcomes defined under the Programme:

1. Strengthened democratic culture and civic awareness;
2. Increased support for human rights;
3. Vulnerable groups are empowered;
4. Enhanced capacity and sustainability of civil society.

According with the above mentioned APR a total of « ... 165 out of 187 received applications were deemed admissible under the rules of the Programme, and their evaluation process was carried out until January 2019. Overall, requested support under the scope of these calls was four times the amount made available. »

By the Annual Review Meeting with FMO in June 2019 almost all of the 51 approved projects were contracted and implementation is already on going.

An open call on the Platform of Human Rights call was closed on the 24th June 2019, with two received applications. Selection is still ongoing.

The two calls opened in 2019 (Large projects under Outcome 4 and Small projects under Outcome 1) closed by July and selection is ongoing.

The ACF has one PDP that was contracted after selection of the promoter and is under way.

5. Status of bilateral funds

The first formal meeting of the Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds (JCBF) was held in Lisbon by February 6th 2018 and discussions on a first draft of the Work Plan presented by the NFP supported the conclusion to further explore the possible proposed pre-defined bilateral initiatives in different priority areas and to develop an open call to be launched until the end of 2018.

In the second meeting of the JCBF by June 26th 2018 an agreement on how to proceed with proposed pre-defined initiatives was reached and the final version of the FBR Work Plan was discussed and approved by written procedure by July 27th 2018.

Pre-defined Initiatives

A total of **three agreed pre-defined bilateral initiatives** were contracted between November 2018 and January 2019. For each a brief description and summary of progress is presented below:

1. **Business Development Event in Oporto 14th November 2018** contracted with the public national business agency (AICEP) and Innovation Norway with a total budget of €38.070. The Final Report and Balance submitted by AICEP on April 10th 2019 has been subject to addition request of information to the promoter and the approval by the NFP shall be possible soon. The main results reported are:

- ▮ 15 pitching sessions;
- ▮ 19 Donor State companies (17 NOR - 2 ISL);
- ▮ More than 100 B2B meetings;
- ▮ 17 cooperation agreements;
- ▮ 106 reported possible cooperation in the future;
- ▮ AICEP reported that the partnership with Innovation Norway allowed for «...*settling ground for the future development and participation in new joint projects and the exploration of synergies and knowledge in order to identify and work on mutual business opportunities*».

2. **Children and Youth at Risk** contracted with the national Agency for protection of rights of young children (CNPDPJC) in partnership with the Oslo Child and Family Agency with a total budget of €36.092. The official kick-off of the Bilateral initiative took place by July 3rd 2019 following the International Seminar “*Reflecting upon the participation of children in public decision-making*” organized by the Promoter at the Portuguese Parliament with Donor States key note speakers amongst which representatives from the *National Coordination of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Municipalities and County Governor Offices in Norway, from the Ministry for Children and Families in Norway and from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from Iceland*.

The Bilateral Initiative aims to jointly plan and produce two main outcomes:

- (i) A ***Thematic Glossary of Child Protection Systems and the Promotion of Children Rights*** focused on the hearing of the child in special vulnerability contexts, based on the long experience in Portugal and Norway of including the participation of children,
 - (ii) the ***Digital Referential of Good Practices*** to improve the hearing and participation of the child in the protection of their rights, as well as of the tools and resources/materials for implementation and monitoring available (or not available but considered useful) in these countries (Portugal and Norway) to face these challenges.
3. **Mental Health and Primary Health Care** contracted with the national authority for the health system (ACSS) with the national General Directorate for Public Health (DGS) in partnership with Norwegian National Advisory Unit on Ageing and Health and the Regional Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Eastern and Southern Norway – University of Oslo, with a total budget of €70.000. The promoter reported that preliminary work is underway preparing the first field trip to Norway in September 2019 and update on chronogram and budget expected to be received soon after the need to reschedule the activities with the Donor Partners.

A summary of the financial outline of the contracted pre-defined initiatives is presented below:

Nr.	Bilateral Initiatives	Status	Estimated initial Budget	Approved Budget
FBR/01	Business meeting AICEP & Innovation Norway	Contracted in November 2018 - Final Report under approval	€40.000	€28.070
FBR/02	Public Health #1 Mental Health	Contracted in December 2018 – ongoing	€70.000	€70.000
FBR/03	Children and Youth at risk	Contracted in January 2019 – ongoing	€50.000	€36.092
TOTAL			€160.000	€134.162

FBR Open call #1

By November 27th 2018 the third meeting of the JCBF concluded discussions on the Open Call text and approved by written procedure a final text on the 17th December 2018.

The Open Call was announced in a public event in Lisbon by December 14th 2018 promoted by the NFP with a total of about 100 participants to highlight the opportunities under the FBR and the Open Call that will remain open until December 2020 with cut off dates every four months.

By June 6th and 26th 2019 the fourth and fifth JCBF meetings took place in order to conclude the assessment of the received applications in first cut-off date set by May 17th 2019. Resulting from the high interest generated in the first cut-off date the JCBF decided to reinforce the original total amount available under the Open Call #1 from €200.000 to €600.000.

The main figures from the first cut-off date of the FBR Open call #1 are as follows:

- ▮ 26 applications received (22 applications received between 16th May and 17th May (18.00.00 GMT);
- ▮ 26 applications were submitted by Universities (7) | NGO (6) | Enterprises (4) | Business Associations (6) | Municipalities (1) | Public entities (3);
- ▮ 1 application considered not eligible and 1 application rejected after formal assessment;
- ▮ A total amount of €342.177,35 requested by 24 valid applications;
- ▮ A total of 11 applications recommended for funding by the JCBF with a total of €146.860
- ▮ A total of 13 applications recommended for rejection by the JCBF.

FBR on Programmes

To ensure the proper implementation of the FBR by the PO the NFP promoted a working session in July 2018 with representatives from the PO.

All PO requested and received the exceptional advance payment to Programme Operators directly by the FMO in accordance with Article 4.6.4 of the Regulation before the signature of the Programme Agreements, between December 2017 and August 2018.

All the MoU allocations of the FBR to Programmes in the total amount of €500.000 were transferred by order of the NFP to the Programme Operators in December 2018 after the signature of a formal contract setting the terms and conditions on the use of the FBR by Programmes including the reporting responsibilities.

Several initiatives eligible for the FBR allocations on programmes took place between early 2018 and the current year 2019, mainly on matchmaking events and study trips to detail the identified partnerships in pre-defined projects with the Donor Project Partners. Programme Operators have plans to promote bilateral activities in the current year mainly to continue matchmaking events for possible projects partners when many open calls are running.

Programme	MoU Allocation	Expenditure Executed until 31.12.2018 (verified and reported by NFP in IFR#1 15.03.2019)	Expenditure Expected to be incurred from 01.01.2019 to 30.10.2019	Activities reported by PO taking place from 01.01.2019 to 30.10.2019
Blue Growth	200.000 €	26 710,52 €	142 000,00 €	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Launch of the call FBR Blue Growth E3 initiatives meeting partners"; - Business matchmaking event (Lisbon, 14th May 2019); - Business matchmaking Alesund/Norway (Innovation Norway), 21/22 May 2019; - Nor-Shipping (Oslo/Norway) – Matchmaking Session on the 5th of June, in the Stand "Blue Economy Portugal" (Blue Economy Hall) 10.30h – 13.30h. - Education matchmaking event – TBD; - Research matchmaking event – TBD;
Environment	100.000 €	13 061,14 €	55 868,00 €	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matchmaking meeting in the field of circular economy (Fev 2019); - "Innovation Week in Oslo – Oslo", September 2019; - Studytrip to Biosphere Reserves;
Work-life Balance	100.000 €	9 573,95 €	38 050,00 €	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar in Iceland: Gender equality and gender related issues - best practices; - Initiative "Sexual Harassment in Workplace"; - Initiative "Networking to create Synergies to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence Against Women" with Norwegian Ministry of Justice;
Culture	100.000 €	3 480,34 €	75 350,00 €	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travels in the scope of predefined projects "study trips to National Library of Norway and to ANIM – Centro de Conservação da Cinemateca); - 2 International Seminars for programme presentation, conference presentations, matching and pitching sessions.
Total	500.000 €	52 825,95 €	311 268,00 €	

It is possible that requests for additional allocations from the FBR by the Programme Operators may have to be considered by the JCBF before the end of the current year but at the present date is not possible to estimate in what level.

Financial Execution and Disbursements

The level of advance payment to the FBR was over requested due to a misinterpretation on the first Interim Financial Report (IFR) where the request of Funds registered also the advance payment in the FBR agreement and the exceptional advance payment to Programme Operators directly by the FMO in accordance with Article 4.6.4 of the Regulation.

Total Grant	Execution			Disbursements (including advance payments)	Balance
	2018	1st sem. 2019	Total		
2 054 000,00 €	€75 282,00	€42 436,80*	€117 718,80	€850 000,00	+ €732 281,20
Rate	4%	2%	6%	41%	—

* To be confirmed in IFR to be certified in September 2019.

6. Management and implementation

a. Management and control systems (MCS)

MCS at national level

In accordance with Article 5.7.1 of the Regulation, the NFP submitted to the FMO a description of the Management and Control Systems (MCS) at national level, (November 2017). After the exchange of clarifications, the FMO notified the NFP of the compliance of the description of the MCS by letter of June 14 2018.

MCS at Programme level

The NFP provided active support to the PO for the setting up of their MCS descriptions in close articulation with the Certifying and Audit Authorities, to ensure that the PO timely submit a detailed description of MCS at programme level.

By January 2019 the NFP delivered a Guideline for support to the PO on the drafting of the descriptions of the MCS.

According with the description of the MCS at national level

When examining the 1st IFR submitted by the PO, the Certifying Authority should verify that, for the respective Programme, the National Focal Point has approved the description of the management and control system and whether it is accompanied by a report and an opinion of compliance, issued by the Audit Authority, pursuant to Article 5.7.3. of the Regulation.

The Certifying Authority will only pursue the certification request of the expenditure if the opinion of the Audit Authority contains sufficient guarantees on the compliance of the management and control system of the PO. If there are reservations that may have an impact on the expenditure to be certified and which may be clearly circumscribed to part of the expenditure, the Certifying Authority shall only certify the expenditure for that part of the Programme for which there is reasonable assurance as to the regularity and legality of the expenses declared.

Under this context, in the case that the report and opinion of the AA on the description of the MCS of the PO is not delivered before October 2019, the first Interim Financial Reports (IFR) certified under the Programmes may be only in March 2020.

The deadline for submission of the Description of the Managing and Control Systems at Programme level are:

Programmes	Deadline	Status
Blue Growth	15.11.2019	PO drafting underway
Work-Life Balance	26.07.2019	Submitted to the AA by 16.07.2019
Environment	27.11.2019	First drafts exchange with NFP
Culture	26.08.2019	PO is concluding draft

Information and reporting IT System

The Information and reporting IT System is the major issue identified in the managing and control systems at national level that demand improvement.

A joint procedure to procure the setting up of such a system was promoted by the NFP with the Programme Operators. By July 2019 the first phase is ongoing with a joint contract with an IT consultant that is in charge of preparing the technical requirements for the international public tender to develop the IT System for the EEA FM in Portugal. The public international tender is expected to be launched until the end of the year and contracting is expected to be concluded by early 2020 for development under 18 months.

b. Complaints

No complaints were received at the current early stage of implementation.

c. Irregularities

No irregularities are reported at the current early stage of implementation.

d. Audit

No audits were performed at the current early stage of implementation

7. Communication

Following the communication strategy, approved by the donor countries in 2018, the NFP has carried out various communication activities from May 2018 until July 2019.

In summary, several activities can be identified:

1 - Social Media:

EEA Grants Portugal ensures a daily presence in the social media networks.

In December 2018 was also created an Instagram account.

News, photos, shares, retweets and likes to other entities such as EEA Norways Grants are the main activities in the social media presence.

The number of followers has increased as can be seen in the next table:

Social Media Followers	November 2017	March 2018	July 2019
Facebook	1091	1535	2614
Twitter	26	87	263
Linkedin	14	78	347
Instagram	-	-	361

2 - Flyer:

NFP produced in 2018 a flyer with the summary of the results of the previous financial mechanism and with an introduction on the new one (2014-2021). It was produced in Portuguese and in English.

3 - Awareness of EEA Grants Portugal

A standard survey was carried out with the intention of collecting data from a national representative sample in order to know the degree of awareness of EEA Grants.

This survey, applied in the beginning of 2018, showed that only 4% of the individuals were aware of EEA Grants either in the form of the name, logo or as entity that directly or indirectly benefitted from this Financial Mechanism.

4- Website:

EEA Grants Portugal launch a new joint website (NFP+PO's) in December 2018 – www.eeagrants.gov.pt

Since December until July 2019 the website has had a total of 144 042 page views focusing on subjects related to calls and information of the programmes. In the next table can be seen the top 10 of preferences:

	Page	Page Views	Unique Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit
		15,544 % of Total: 100.00% (15,544)	11,670 % of Total: 100.00% (11,670)	00:01:21 Avg for View: 00:01:21 (0.00%)	5,038 % of Total: 100.00% (5,038)	53.73% Avg for View: 53.73% (0.00%)	32.41% Avg for View: 32.41% (0.00%)
1.	/pt/	2,384(15.34%)	1,703(14.59%)	00:01:02	1,524(30.25%)	26.44%	25.04%
2.	/pt/concursos/	1,119(7.20%)	758(6.50%)	00:00:52	220(4.37%)	50.45%	25.38%
3.	/pt/programas/	811(5.22%)	515(4.41%)	00:00:15	61(1.21%)	27.87%	7.03%
4.	/pt/programas/ambiente/concursos/	695(4.47%)	481(4.12%)	00:00:53	233(4.62%)	51.50%	28.49%
5.	/pt/eea-grants/	604(3.89%)	482(4.13%)	00:00:59	60(1.19%)	58.33%	24.34%
6.	/pt/programas/crescimento-azul/concursos/desenvolvimento-de-negocios-inovacao-e-pmes-aviso-1/	573(3.69%)	484(4.15%)	00:03:13	249(4.94%)	83.13%	61.08%
7.	/pt/programas/ambiente/	481(3.09%)	344(2.95%)	00:00:56	115(2.28%)	39.13%	17.05%
8.	/en/programmes/blue-growth/calls/business-development-innovation-and-smes-call1/	412(2.65%)	346(2.96%)	00:03:43	305(6.05%)	77.70%	73.54%
9.	/pt/programas/ambiente/concursos/aviso-2-projetos-para-a-promocao-da-economia-circular-no-setor-da-construcao/	409(2.63%)	286(2.45%)	00:02:36	114(2.26%)	58.77%	42.30%
10.	/pt/programas/ambiente/concursos/small-grants-scheme-1-projetos-para-a-prevencao-e-sensibilizacao-para-a-reducao-do-lixo-marinho/	376(2.42%)	290(2.49%)	00:04:30	111(2.20%)	64.86%	48.40%

5 - APP

It was announced in December of 2018 the new EEA Grants APP (EEA Grants PT).

This APP, available for Android and IOS, allows its users to receive, through a push notification system, immediate information about the open calls and news.

In June of 2019 it was launch, a new APP's functionality that allows matching between Portugal and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway entities in order to strengthen bilateral relations and promote future partnerships.

6 - Direct Communication:

2018:

On September 26, EEA Grants Portugal participated in the panel dedicated to national and European Funding Instruments at the **"Mediation of Knowledge and Scientific Culture"** event that took place in Lisbon.

This initiative, held on 25th and 26th of September, was intended to be a moment for reflection, debate, exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices of what constitutes the work of educational services in the promotion of knowledge, science and culture.

On World Food Day, October 16th, the EEA Grants participated in Oporto, in the seminar **"Investigate at FCNAUP"** where besides the EEA Grants presentation also four projects funded by MFEEE 2009-2014 were presented.

EEA Grants Portugal was present in the **Ocean Business 2018** that was held at the Gare Marítima de Alcântara, in Lisbon, from 18th to 20th of September. The Ocean Business 2018 included debates, one B2B area to business meetings, and an exhibition area dedicated to the all contributing to the Economy and Blue Growth: enterprises, start-ups, innovations centers, universities, NGO's and public entities.

The Ocean Business 2018 have taken place simultaneously with other three Blue Economy major events in Lisbon, in what have been a truly maritime week at the Portuguese Capital: Portugal Shipping Week 2018, from 17th to 19th September, also at the Gare Marítima de Alcântara; Sea Trade Med 2018, from 19th to 20th September, at the International Fair of Lisbon; Oceans Meeting 2018, from 20th to 21st September, at the Gare Marítima de Alcântara and the Gare Marítima da Rocha do Conde de Óbidos.

On the 13th of November an information meeting took place at **Confederation of Portuguese Industry** (CIP) headquarters, in Lisbon, with the purpose of introducing the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2014-2021, focusing on the opportunities to companies and business associations. This meeting was attended by almost 20 representatives of companies and business associations.

On November 20, EEA Grants Portugal held, in Almada, a **dissemination session** about the programmes areas. This meeting was addressed to the senior management staff of the municipality of Almada.

On November 16th took place in Figueira da Foz the Seminar **"Local adaptation to climate change"** where EEA Grants Portugal participated in the panel dedicated to Adaptation Financing. This initiative was organized by Adapt.local - Network of Municipalities for Local Adaptation to Climate Change, which includes 32 Municipalities of mainland Portugal, the Azores and Madeira, as well as 11 other public and private entities directly linked to this theme.

2019:

EEA Grants Portugal participated on 15 January in a session on the theme “**European Financing Mechanisms**”, promoted by the Europe Direct Information Center Coimbra Region.

Together with representatives of the Europe for Citizens and Creative Europe programmes, this initiative aimed to make known the functioning of the different financial mechanisms.

During the first three months of 2019, the EEA Grants also travelled around Portugal and all its regions with the objective of clarifying potential interested parties on the funding opportunities of this financial mechanism.

During this **roadshow**, the National Focal Point and the entities responsible for the Blue Growth, Environment, Culture and Conciliation and Gender Equality programmes held seven informative sessions in the following cities: Lisbon, Évora, Faro, Porto, Funchal, Coimbra and Ponta Delgada.

Besides the information regarding the funding opportunities, these sessions also addressed topics such as the methodology and format of the current open calls and the future open calls in the short term. About 750 people attended the roadshow.

In May of 2019, the NFP was present with the Blue Growth Programme in the exhibition area of the **European Maritime Day** that was held in Lisbon.

On June 3rd and 4th, a **Portuguese delegation**, consisting of members of the National Focal Point of the EEA Grants and members of the Programme Operators, visited **Iceland** in order to create synergies and articulate the best way to enhance the collaboration between Portuguese and Icelandic entities. On the first day, the Portuguese delegation, in addition to presenting the EEA Grants and the outlines of the current Financial Mechanism Programmes in Portugal, had the opportunity to learn in detail the line of action of "Promote Iceland", an entity that aims to promote the competitiveness of Icelandic companies and Rannís, an Icelandic center dedicated to research.

On the same day, a bilateral meeting was held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland represented by its Ambassador Kristín Árnadóttir, with responsibilities on the Gender Equality issues in that country.

The meetings and visits continued over the two days with the following entities:

Matís – expert research and development entity aligned with the food and biotechnology industries.

Navis – company responsible for the design of the first hybrid long-line fishing boat.

Reykjavik Maritime Museum – museum dedicated to the ocean cluster.

National Museum of Iceland – museum focused on the preservation and management of the country's cultural heritage.

Innovation Iceland – entity that, through active participation and support to entrepreneurs and businesses, has as its mission the innovation and promotion of new ideas in the Icelandic economy.

From April of 2018 until July of 2019 the NFP also promoted more than **30 meetings** (some using skype) with potential beneficiaries.

7. Communication with PO's:

Whenever it was considered relevant the NFP promoted communication meetings with the PO's. In this period there were about 10 meetings. Various topics were discussed such as the joint website, communication and graphic standards, events, good practices, etc.

In October of 2018 the NFP helped in the logistical preparation of the Annual Communication Workshop promoted by the FMO. In this initiative all the Portuguese PO's were invited. This participation turned out to be, in PO's opinion, very positive.

In this Communication Workshop the Communication Officer of the NFP was invited to share some Practice Examples from Portugal and to talk about (as a good practice) “How we talk together” with the Embassy of Norway in Lisbon.

In May of 2019, the NFP promoted a digital media writing workshop held specifically for the NFP, communication officers of PO's and Embassy of Norway in Lisbon.

8. Communication activities with the Embassy of Norway in Lisbon

The NFP maintains an active and open relation with the communication officer of Embassy of Norway in Lisbon.

Some of the implemented activities during this period were:

- Both entities worked together with a communication agency on a communication project. the most expressive results were:

- Creation of short names in Portuguese and English for the Programmes:

Name in EN	Name in PT	Short name EN	Short name PT
Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy	Ambiente, Alterações Climáticas e Economia de Baixo Carbono	Environment	Ambiente
Blue Growth Innovation and SMEs	Crescimento Azul, Inovação e Pequenas e Médias Empresas	Blue Growth	Crescimento Azul
Work-life Balance and Gender Equality	Conciliação e Igualdade de Género	Work-life Balance	Conciliação e Igualdade de Género
Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	Empreendedorismo, Património e Cooperação Cultural	Culture	Cultura
Fund for Bilateral Relations	Fundo de Relações Bilaterais	Bilateral Fund	Fundo de Relações Bilaterais
Active Citizens Fund	Programa Cidadãos Ativ@s	Active Citizens Fund	Programa Cidadãos Ativ@s

- Creation of 7 films (in Portuguese with subtitles in English and vice versa):

-  [EEA Grants](#)
-  [Blue Growth](#)
-  [Environment](#)
-  [Culture](#)
-  [Work- life balance](#)
-  [Bilateral Relations](#)
-  [Active Citizens Fund](#)

- EEA Grants Tuesday - Both entities worked together to give a better understanding of projects, news and activities supported by the EEA Grants in Portugal and strengthening the relationship between Portugal and Norway. Every week (on Tuesday) both entities publish on Facebook a post with the same subject. The news are presented in English in Embassy's Facebook, and in Portuguese at EEA Grants Portugal.

- In order to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the European Economic Area Agreement, the NFP and the Embassy of Norway are working together in this activities:

- Journalistic prize – By 9 July 2019 it was launch the "EEA 25 years" journalistic prize. This competition, open until 15th of October, aims to reward the best piece of journalism that describes the importance of the EEA and the contribution of the EEA Grants to Portugal.

- Instagram competition – in this competition the objective is to show all the ways that the EEA Grants are present in Portugal. So, people will be invited to post an image which in some way captures the EEA Grants. This competition is scheduled to take place during the next months.

9. Media relation:

The NFP, whenever it was considered relevant, released press releases to the media (ex. Launch of Bilateral Fund). Since May of 2018 until July of 2019 were published 92 news about EEA Grants Portugal and its Programmes.

10. Exhibition “25 years & 25 projects”:

The NFP is organizing an exhibition in order to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the EEA Agreement. The photographic exhibition will present projects of all financial mechanisms that took place in Portugal. It's the NFP intention to held the exhibition in Alameda Metro Station, an EEA Grants project in the period 1994-1998.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

a. Monitoring

Despite the early stages of the implementation of EEA FM 2014-2021, the NFP have performed monitoring activities over the Programmes either in:

Before the signature of the PA: case-by case monitoring through following different working meetings of the PO on the preparation stage of Programmes (v.g. conference calls with FMO and/or DPP on the drafting of the concept notes or the Programme Agreements, technical meetings on the preparation of the pre-defined projects drafts, Cooperation Committees meetings, etc.);

After the signature of the PA: monitoring meetings dedicated to each of the 4 Programmes (July 2019) for follow-up on the pending implementation issues on the different programmes (v.g launch of open calls, contracting of Pre-defined projects, setting-up of the description of the Management and Control Systems, use of the FBR, etc).

Despite the provision for a Monitoring Committee was not included in the Regulation on the implementation of EEA FM 2014-2021, the setting up of such committee was maintained under the current funding period in Portugal.

Following the last meeting on the EEA FM 2009-2014 in March 2018, a first meeting on the current period was scheduled in February 2019 in order to provide the members of the Monitoring Committee with a brief overview of the EEA FM 2014-2021 and the status of implementation. The next meeting is planned for November 2019.

b. Evaluation

No evaluations were performed at the current early stage of implementation.

9. Issues for the annual meeting

MoU Amendments

From the conclusion of the PA the MoU needs to be updated in some details, such as:

Annex B

- Programme Blue Growth, Innovation and SMEs:
 - name change for one of the DPP (SIU);
- Programme Environment, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy
 - Special concerns
 - b) Portugal living labs in ~~Lisbon and Oporto~~ cities over 200.000 inhabitants
 - Pre-defined project
 - Addition of National Project Partners (Municipality of Lousã and FEUP)
 - Increase of the maximum grant amount (from €1,900,000 to €2,600,000)

Following the new government that will be formed after the general elections in early October some minor adjustments, either in Annex A and Annex B, may be need due to organic readjustments of the new government to the designated entities.

Fund for Bilateral Relations

Any discussion on the FBR to be considered in the revision of the Work Plan under way to be agreed by the JCBF.