

# Third Annual Meeting Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 EEA GRANTS PORTUGAL On-line, October 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

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Adopted by 12th November 2020

According to Article 2.7 of the Regulation on the implementation of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism (EEA FM) 2014-2021, the third Annual Meeting between the **Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC)** and the **National Focal Point (NFP)** was held on-line on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2020.

On behalf of the Portuguese delegation the meeting was chaired by Ms **Susana Ramos**, Coordinator of the National Management Unit, appointed as National Focal Point (**NFP**).

Ms **Torill Johansen**, Deputy Director at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-chaired the meeting on behalf of the **Donors**.

The meeting was also attended by Ms **Tove Bruvik Westberg**, Ambassador of Norway to Portugal and Ms. **Uunnur Orradóttir Ramette**, Ambassador of Iceland to Portugal, Mr **Árni Páll Árnason**, Deputy Director and Head of Country and Bilateral Cooperation of the FMO, as well as, other representatives from the Norwegian, Icelandic and Portuguese Ministries for Foreign Affairs, the Certifying Authority, the Programme Operators (PO) and the Active Citizens Fund (ACF) manager.

A full list of participants is attached to the present minutes. These minutes summarize the main issues discussed.

## Opening statements by NFP and FMC

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**Susana Ramos**, opened the meeting informing that the State Secretary was prevented to be present due to urgent important commitments at the Parliament for the discussion of the Recovery and Resilience Plan to be presented in Brussels soon, and requested that his compliments were conveyed to all participants for a fruitful meeting.

A welcome address to all participants was addressed acknowledging the importance of the availability of all participants to join in the digital format in these challenging times and to allow for these important milestone of the EEA Grants implementation to take place.

**Torill Johansen**, on behalf of the Donors, thanked the NFP for hosting the Annual Meeting virtually and the opportunity to appreciate the past year and to reflect on the future period. Also thanked the organization of the series of events around the Annual Meeting stating that the presentations on projects yesterday was very informative and useful in visualizing the progress achieved in implementation and also highlighting what is ahead of us. All projects presented had Bilateral Partners and it was noted that they underline mutual benefits and learning from each

other. The Donors value the strong bilateral relations with Portugal and the close collaboration with the Norwegian Embassy in Lisbon and Icelandic Embassy in Paris and this will certainly continue and be further enhanced by the new Ambassadors [that took office recently].

The Covid-19 pandemic has cast new challenges on our work since March 2020, but the Donors are glad to see that despite working remotely, the NFP and PO have adapted very well to the changing working conditions and communication and work have continued as needed. It was also noted that it is encouraging to see that even though the pandemic has resulted in delays, the work has not significantly slowed down, therefore the Donors retain the final date for eligibility for projects as 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The mitigation measures and flexibility that were set out in the letter from the FMC Chairman in April are still valid and we will need to monitor and assess the situation in the months to come. Appreciation was expressed for the dedication and professionalism that the NFP continued to show in the past year and particularly in these strange times during the pandemic. Colleagues at FMO have noted the continued efficiency and communication of the NFP and the PO that will be even more important in the uncertainty that we face today.

**Tove Bruvik Westberg**, thanked the possibility to attend the meeting and the valuable information shared before, introduced herself and stated that the information that the State Secretary could not be present is another illustration of the important discussions in Portugal on the national budget and the Recovery and Resilience Plan due to the pandemic context all illustrates the importance of the EEA Grants fitting well in addressing the challenges that we are facing together. Looking forward to listening on the important works going on and to contribute.

**Unnur Orradóttir Ramette** thanked the Ministry for Planning for hosting this meeting and the opportunity to take part again in the Annual Meetings now as Ambassador of Iceland to Portugal based in Paris. It is appropriate to recall in the Annual Meeting that achieving results and making the grants available to the public is a fundamental part of the EEA Grants, as well as reaching the common goal of reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and strengthening cooperation between our countries. Results, transparency and accountability are vital aspects of the EEA Grants together with the Result Based Management and the effective identification and handling of risks are the corner stones to increase the impacts of the grants. This is what will be discussed today and acknowledge that the NFP and the PO are very professional and result orientated. From the Icelandic perspective it is safe to say that the collaboration from the Icelandic side with the NFP and the PO has been excellent throughout the implementation period already and finally thank the FMO in the important role in the Gender Equality Conference in Reykjavik that allowed the participation of all beneficiary states. Looking forward to hearing the presentations here today and to strengthening our cooperation in the coming months.

## Strategic Report 2019 – Presentation and Discussions

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**Susana Ramos** started the works of the Annual Meeting by highlighting the main milestones over the reporting period such as:

- The approval of the Programme Agreements between January and May 2019, which represent about one year and a half of implementation for most of the Financial Mechanism;
- The celebration events of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the entry into force of the EEA Agreement (to be detailed later in the meeting);
- The opening of most of the foreseen open calls;
- By 2020 all Pre-defined projects are approved and ongoing and
- Only 3 of the 24 foreseen open calls are yet to be launched.

**Susana Ramos** underlined also the significant progress that was achieved in 2020 regarding the selection of projects. At the current stage, the provisional numbers from the 15 selection committees held so far, tell us that a total of 108 projects were recommended for funding from which 61 with DPP (about 57%) and with a total amount awarded estimated at about 30M€.

At this stage **Susana Ramos** gave the floor to the representatives of each PO and the ACF Manager to present a brief status on the progress of the Programmes. All Programmes reported the main figures on the implementation of the programmes and a brief report on the special challenges that programmes face due to the pandemic context.

On the **Blue Growth Programme** presentation delivered by Ms. **Conceição Santos**, Deputy Director of DGPM, **Torill Johansen** thanked the presentation on the status of the Programme and on the proposal on how to improve the performance. In general, the Donors are happy to see that the Programme implementation is progressing. It is known to be the flagship Programme for being large and also for focusing on Blue Growth that is a shared interest between Norway, Iceland and Portugal. The Donors noted that most calls have been launched and applaud the PO for catching up on the delays. The high interest perceived in the Research and Education call is very reassuring and shows that there is a great interest in these sectors. When it comes to the Business and Innovation part of the Programme the Donors understand that there may be some points of divergence between the PO and DPP, including on the new financial model proposal by the PO for the surplus amount available from the Open Calls 1 and 3, encouraging close and regular cooperation and communication with the DPP, in order for the Programme to progress as fast as possible and that together with the FMO facilitation hope that all parties will come to a common understanding and agree on a solution aligned with the objectives of the Programme. The Donors are a bit concerned that the disbursement rate is low due to the delay in the implementation. In the calls where the selection committee have selected projects we would like to see that the grants contracts will be signed very soon. The Donors hope that once the main issues are resolved the disbursement rate will pick up. The Donors hope that the measures taken by the PO so far, such as prolonging the deadline for the open calls, have mitigated some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic but encouraged to keep the FMO updated on issues related with the Covid-19 in order to see if there are any available tools that can facilitate the situation.

On this **Torill Johansen** asked **Conceição Santos** if there are any specific risks that were identified, for instance co-financing issues at projects level for SME. **Conceição Santos** stated that the PO do not foresee any difficulty on the support to SME in this time of COVID-19, maybe some delays in the implementation of the projects, but for now nothing specific can confirm that and it depends a lot on the type of sectors we are dealing with. The main cluster on the Blue economy did this assessment work asking the different sectors what are the impacts of the pandemic and they are very different from sector to sector. The PO is confident that the projects will be able to deliver results despite the pandemic context.

On the **Environment Programme** presentation delivered by Ms. **Susana Escária**, Director at the Secretary General of the Ministry for Environment and manager of the Programme, **Torill Johansen** stated that the Donors are happy to see that the Programme is progressing well and according to plan and that the PO is looking for ways to improve the implementation. Would like to underline the good cooperation between the PO and NFP and also that the efforts of all involved have really paid off over the last year: all the calls were launched, selection of projects were completed, for which some calls experienced high interest from potential project promoters. It is also clear that actors and partners involved in this programme have adapted well to the COVID-19 restrictions and have kept the Cooperation Committee and the FMO well informed along the way. These are all positive signs of a well-functioning programme that the Donors would like to strive to maintain and look forward to see the results of the Programme in the months to come. The Donors have a keen interest on the plastic in the oceans projects and

**Susana Escária** could detail that 6 projects were approved on the Small Grant Scheme #3 on this subject that had a high demand (26 applicants were considered eligible). From the 6 projects approved they are of good quality and are on track with very interesting results and very involved with the local community (activities with kids in schools, with universities). Also the projects are spread throughout the Portuguese territory including Madeira Island, in coastal areas. Projects promoters are mainly NGO in partnership with local authorities and 2 have DPP. The PO is very pleased with the outcome of this call where projects present already some results. The details on the projects can be seen in the presentations given by these projects that have already signed the contracts (a link will be shared).

**Torill Johansen** underlined that Norway share a common interest on these subjects.

On the **Culture Programme** presentation delivered by Mr. **Bernardo Alabaça**, General Director at the General Directorate of Culture Heritage, **Torill Johansen** noted the great bilateral interest in this Programme from all three Donor countries. The Donors appreciate the current level of progress and encourage the NFP and the PO to maintain this pace to ensure the achievement of results. The Donors acknowledge the uncertainty situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and also the impact that it may have on the culture sector in general, that is also that is seen in Norway. And on the bilateral cooperation in particular, the Programme has a very strong bilateral potential and the Donors would like to see the PO to really capitalize this potential to the extent possible. The Donors are ready to discuss in various ways to minimizing the risks and compensating for the negative impact of the pandemic to this end, whether this be through on more regular on-line communication or training. The Donors encourage the PO to keep close contact both with the NFP and the DPP and also the Embassy.

On the **Work-Life Balance Programme** the new President of the PO, Ms. **Sandra Ribeiro** that took office very recently introduced herself and gave the floor Mr. **João Paiva**, manager of the Programme to present the status on the implementation of the Programme. **Torill Johansen** noted that the Programme generated also a big interest. Gender Equality remains one of the key values underpinning the EEA Grants and the Donors are glad that this Programme in Portugal is progressing well. The Gender Equality Conference in October last year in Iceland was a successful symbol of our cooperation in this area and we have drawn a lot of experiences from this conference and hope that the contacts and exchanges made there among the various stakeholders have prepared the ground for good cooperation. **Torill Johansen** also stated that it is sure that the new two Ambassadors both from Norway and Iceland will keep focused on this Programme and is glad to hear that the dialogue between the PO and the DPP is good and this will be even more important as we continue to face more negative effects from the pandemic.

Ms. **Mafalda Leónidas** on behalf of the Consortium that manages **the ACF** in Portugal gave a brief presentation on the status of the implementation of the fund, on which **Torill Johansen** asked FMO to provide the comments to this Programme.

**Árni Páll Árnason** stated that the FMO has a very good experience with the Fund Operator in Portugal and believe that the Programme is progressing well in a very important year and are glad to see that the programme quickly adapted well to the COVID-19 pandemic, as presented. The Fund Operator is focused on providing continuous support to projects promoters to continue their work and helping them navigating through this crisis. As this Programme is the main funding source for civil society support in Portugal the FMO believes that the ACF has a lot to offer and look forward to seeing the programme progressing and delivering results. **Mafalda Leónidas** highlighted the effort of the project promoters in this pandemic context.

Then **Árni Páll Árnason** provided a brief status on the regional funds directly managed by the FMO, since it is important to highlight this support beyond the programmes operated in the Beneficiary countries:

- **Fund for Youth Employment** (60,61M€) – first open call in 2018 - 25 projects selected (10 Portuguese Beneficiaries Partners involved) - a new call launched on 1 September 2020 with deadline on 5 January 2021;
- **Fund for Regional Cooperation** (31,89M€) – only one open call in 2018, over 700 applications – 20 projects selected in spring 2020 under contracting phase (2 projects with Portuguese entities – one lead partner and one as beneficiary partner).

**Susana Ramos** thanked the useful information provided by the FMO, not available directly to the NFP and stated that the NFP remains also available to disseminate the new open call for the Fund for Youth Employment and to have a more active role on this, for instance, in co-promoting information sessions with the FMO.

## b) Status of the Fund for Bilateral Relations

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On the Fund for Bilateral Relations it was mainly highlighted the following:

- On the **status of the approved pre-defined initiatives**: from a total of 6 predefined bilateral initiatives approved, as reported in Strategic Report 2019, 2 are now completed, 2 are ongoing and 2 are under revision, with a total of about €250.000 committed.
- On the **use of the FBR at Programme level**, several initiatives eligible for the FBR allocations on programmes took place, the great majority of them before the pandemic context, on study trips, matchmaking events and travel grants. Additional allocations to Programmes can be decided by the JCBF, however, only when the level of reported expenditure is higher than at least 70% of the disbursed amount.
- Relevance was given to the high interest that was generated by the **FBR Open Call #1**. Until the 5th cut-off date that happened by 18th September, a total of 83 applications were received requesting a total of about €940.000, which is very relevant. In the event scheduled for the afternoon eight of these Bilateral Initiatives will be presented. The JCBF, as reported, decided to reinforce the initial total allocation for this open call in 2019 from €200.000 to €600.000 and to extend the open call until the end of 2021. The NFP continues to receive several requests for information, so it can be again expected a high number of applications by the 6<sup>th</sup> cut-off date foreseen to take place by December 2020. Also it was highlighted the workshops that are promoted by the NFP to the current 31 selected beneficiaries under the open call in order to assist them on contracting, reporting and implementation issues, that is intended to repeat within every selection period prior to the beginning of the implementation.
- On the **works of the JCBF** it was noted that the JCBF held the first meeting by February 2018 and yesterday held its 9th meeting. In some cases, there was the opportunity to hold the meetings in venues related with financed projects, such as the case of the Monserrate Palace and Chalet Condessa D'Edla, in Sintra (restored under the 2004-2009 FM) or the case of the Mar Portugal Vessel stationed at Almada or the Museum Damião de Gois at Alenquer (both financed under the previous 2009-2014 FM). The main issues under discussion on the JCBF are the additional amount to allocate to the open call and the update of the work plan for the next period 2021-2023.

**Torill Johansen** commented that she was looking forward to learning more on the Bilateral Initiatives over the event prepared for the afternoon and referred that the Donors appreciated the active participation and cooperation of all members of the JCBF and the regular and efficient meeting of the JCBF. Portugal stands out for a JCBF that works well and the NFP has managed to keep the focus on strategic projects and at the same time an Open Call which not many beneficiary countries do but Portugal works well with this option and try to select the best projects that will benefit all countries.

### c) Communication

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On Communication **Susana Ramos** stated that the NFP have continued to actively promote the communication aiming to broaden the knowledge of the EEA Grants in Portugal and informed that the NFP is carrying out a review to the Communication Strategy approved in 2019. This project will have a strong focus on Social Media.

In the reporting period the NFP has continued to carry out various **communication activities** some of which were highlighted:

- The daily presence in the social media with consistent increased number of followers;
- The joint website supporting a clear and effective communication of the EEA Grants in Portugal where stakeholders can find in one place access to all relevant information on the EEA Grants in Portugal;
- The EEA Grants APP - available for Android and Ios, with push notifications for Open Calls and for any other relevant information and with a partner match functionality.
- The dissemination of the EEA Grants promoted by the NFP despite the covid-19 pandemic with more than 100 meetings (some using digital support) with potential beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Under the **communication with the PO**, several initiatives were referred that have been implemented with the purpose of training the communication teams, such as the "Social Media Strategy" training course (July 15th and 17th), on job training and regular meetings. **Susana Ramos** underlined the importance of training for the NFP and PO when we are dealing with very small teams.

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 the EEA Grants Tuesday and a Journalistic prize "EEA 25 years" to reward the best piece of journalism that describes the importance of the EEA and the contribution of the EEA Grants to Portugal.

On the **relation with media** it was highlighted the press releases to the media by the NFP (ex. deadline for selecting the 5th phase of applications of FBR Open Call #1). Since August 2019 until the 1st of October 2020 were published:

- 103 news about EEA Grants Portugal and its Programmes on the site and
- 125 news on the media.

A special reference was done to activities promoted by the NFP for the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EEA Agreement, beyond the already mentioned Journalistic prize:

- The Evocative Event that took place on the occasion of the second Annual Meeting (8<sup>th</sup> October 2019) in the same room that the EEA Agreement was signed in 1992 in the city of Oporto;

- The “25 year/25 projects” Photo Exhibition in Lisbon in the metro Station Alameda that received in the past one of the first supports to Portugal under the EEA Grants (25 M€ in 1994-1998)

On the **main activities for the next months** it was referred the communicational database with all the projects approved in Portugal in all Financial Mechanism since the entry into force of the EEA Agreement, an important tool to disseminate the EEA Grants in Portugal. In total, and over the years, Portugal has benefited from the EEA Grants with over 300M€ in non-repayable grants and € 315M in financial instruments, which has allowed to fund a total of 280 projects. Also a mention was made on the intention to review the Communication Strategy with a strong focus on Social Media aiming to:

- Review the Brand Strategy and Social Media;
- Tailor made specialized training for Strategic Redefinition in Social Media;
- Consultancy and strategic redefinition in Social Media (2021);
- Build a Vision for 2025.

**Torill Johansen** thanked the very comprehensive overview of the communications activities that reflects the importance that the NFP puts on communication which is also very important to the Donors.

**Árni Páll Árnason** on behalf of the Donors congratulated the active work of the NFP on communication so far and commended the NFP for the good collaboration with the Embassy that the Donors encourage to continue in the future. The Portuguese NFP was one of the most active in all beneficiaries’ countries to promote the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EEA Agreement and the Donors commend Portugal for this and are grateful for the creative approach of the activities carried out such as the photo exhibition and the journalistic prize. The Donors took good note of the considerable increase in the number of followers on the social media channels that is a clear example of the active use of the social media that the Donors commend the NFP on that work. The Donors are also glad that the NFP gives special importance to training for the PO to improve relevant communication skills such as storytelling or social media and encourage the NFP to use the digital opportunities and tools that are now available and to continue training the PO when necessary. The Donors take note on the intention of the NFP to revise the Communication Strategy. Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on how we communicate and the planned activities and would like to see how the NFP will adapt some of the communications activities to this new reality. Finally, the Donors would like to highlight the importance of communication carry out on the programmes to keep the visibility of the EEA Grants.

### c) Implementation Issues

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On general **implementation issues** it was highlighted the:

- Approval of all Management and Control Systems at Programme level (January/February 2020) by the NFP and;
- The launching of the public tender for the Information and reporting IT System EEA Grants in Portugal (July 2020) in a joint procedure with the PO.

On **monitoring activities**, it was referred that in the reporting period the NFP received the first biannual reports by April 2020, after releasing the PO to submit the report due in September 2019, considering the early stage of implementation after the Programme Agreements signed between January and May 2019. In the reporting period the NFP has performed 2 rounds of meetings with each of the PO teams (November 2019 and June/July 2020) which provided

important inputs to conclude the Risk Assessment at Programme level. The next control meetings are planned for November 2020. The NFP also participated in several dedicated working meetings with each PO concerning the specific challenges identified along the implementation progress that proved to be very helpful and effective.

It was added that 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, with representatives from the different areas supported by the EEA Grants, either government or private agencies. In the reporting period the NFP conveyed 2 Monitoring Committee meetings (December 2019 and in July 2020). The next meeting is planned for December 2020.

The **evaluation plan** presented in the strategic report (Annex B) is planned to be performed in a two-step approach:

- First - launch of procurement procedure for the design of the terms of reference – 2020/2021 - up to 3 months - The NFP would like to discuss these terms of reference with the FMO.
- Second - procurement procedure for the Evaluation of Programmes (ex-post – Formative/Impact evaluation) based on the Terms of Reference approved - 2022/2024 - Final report 2025.

**Susana Ramos** underlined that **training** is a key issue for the NFP that actively promotes joint training sessions involving the POs and the ACF Manager and highlighted the joint training sessions promoted in the reporting period on Prevention Plans for corruption and related risks and on Social Media Strategy (July 2020) and the training planed until the end of year on:

- Legal and Finance issues promoted by the FMO – which is very relevant;
- Project Management (IPPS\_ISCTE –November);
- State Aid Seminar (PT MFA – November)
- Integrity and Public Procurement (OECD – December)

**Árni Páll Árnason** on behalf of the Donors congratulated that everything is in place regarding the Management and Control Systems both at National and Programme level. The Donors are glad to note the efficient functioning of the Certifying and Audit Authorities' and good cooperation established between these authorities and the FMO. The Donors also appreciate the timely submission of Forecasts [of Likely Payments] despite the challenges of the pandemic and note that the Forecast for 2020 was significantly reduced due to delays on the Blue Growth Programme with minus 11 M€, but hope that as implementation takes off to see that this rate will increase. The Donors are happy to see no irregularities so far in the Financial Mechanism and underlined the zero tolerance policy of the Donors towards corruption and fraud. As in all Annual Meetings the Donors highlight the importance of accurate and realistic Forecasts and stressed that there is no need to add a safety layer and that this information is of paramount importance to the Donors.

The NFP was commended for organizing internal training on different areas for the PO and encouraged to benefit from the various training offers by the FMO like the training in preparation for the coming weeks on legal, finance, results and evaluation aspects. Finally, would like to highlight the importance of monitoring and evaluation as we progress on the implementation. The NFP's monitoring not only of compliance but also of progress and quality will be useful to foster learning among programmes so that good management practices and lessons learnt can be shared with other programmes. On evaluation the FMO has several suggestions that they will share later with the NFP.



**Susana Ramos** continue the works stating that on the **issues for the Annual Meeting** some will be subject for the restricted part of the Annual Meeting, such as the Risk Assessment, Mid-term Review and the Reserve but the challenges of the Covid-19 could be addressed.

The pandemic is a challenging context for the implementation of the Financial Mechanism that has a fixed timeframe for implementation. So far the reported effects were:

- Extended deadlines for open calls;
- Postponement of Bilateral initiatives;
- Marginal withdraw of applications;
- Extended timeline on projects, specially on contracted Predefined Projects;
- Delays in the partnership agreements contracting.

The NFP remains available to assess this issue jointly with the Donors in order to mitigate further the negative impacts.

## Risk Assessment

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In a restricted session between the NFP and the representatives from the Donor States the risk assessment provided in the Strategic Report was discussed.

In particular, the NFP highlighted the major concerns on each programme from the Strategic Report, updated the information relevant for the mitigation for such risks and replied to all the questions from the Donors.

**Torill Johansen** stated in general that the Donors appreciate the openness of the risk assessment provided and encouraged to reach out to the Embassy in the situations where the communication with the DPP are affected and involved them for their experience.

## Mid-term Review and Reserve

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**Susana Ramos** presented the preliminary assessment at the current stage by the NFP and stated that this assessment was completed with the contributions from the PO and DPP and is consistent with the risk assessment presented before. The programmes with higher risks identified are not considered for additional funding and the programmes with lower risk and better performance are considered good candidates for the allocation of additional funds from the reserve.

The possibility of reinforcement of the FBR was underlined due to the high interest received and the ACF assessment that the Donors may have will be considered.

**Torrill Johasen** thanked the preliminary assessment and from the Donors side would like to encourage the NFP to make the full use of the Mid-term Review template sent out by the FMO early January this year, as well as the different guidance provided. It is important to look at the capacity to absorb additional funds in the NFP assessment because the Donors are not in a position to send very clear signals. The FBR and the ACF are possible candidates in a general basis to receive additional funds. When it comes to the ACF the Donors can share with the NFP through the FMO the information available that at this point is merely the status of the numbers. This will be a process between the NFP and the Donors: after the submission of the NFP formal proposal, the FMO will provide their assessment and the Donors together with the NFP will

decide on the distribution of the reserve. It is an important task to complete on this fall because there are a lot of funds available, so it is important that we manage to distribute them to Programmes that are performing and can absorb so that Portugal can maintain a high absorption rate in the current Financial Mechanism alike the very good numbers from the previous Financial Mechanism.

## Any Other Business

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Nothing outside the agenda was identified for discussion.

## Sum-up and conclusions

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**Susana Ramos** for conclusions and summing up underlined:

- It is relevant to highlight the important tasks that will have to take place in the Blue Growth and Work-Life Balance Programmes, because there are some issues to be solved before the end of the current month after which the NFP will have a solid perspective to allocate the remaining funds, which is very important since we are already in 2020 and the projects need some time for implementation and a clear definition is needed until the end of year;
- NFP will continue working closely with POs to reinforce their capability to present solid results;
- On Monitoring, the control meetings with the PO next month are important to highlight and on training, the NFP thanked the FMO the support on the planned training;
- On communication, the NFP will ask for comments and inputs from the FMO and the Embassies on the revision of the Communication Strategy;
- Finally, on the Mid-term Review and allocation of the Reserve, the NFP will close its assessment using the template provided and submit it to the Donors.

**Torill Johansen** thanked the NFP for hosting this Annual Meeting in this format, hoping to meet next year in Lisbon and confirmed the formal approval of the Strategic Report 2019 that is very well written and gives a very good overview of the status of implementation. For the next report the Donors suggest to keep close contact with the FMO in case there are some small amendments that could improve the report in the future. As regards communications, encouraged to keep up the good work and the good cooperation with the Embassy and also underlined the FMO Communication Workshop in November that is very timely given the situation that we all face. The Donors are looking forward to receiving the NFP Mid-term Review assessment and formal proposal for the allocation of the Reserve, that will be an important decision to take in the months to come. When it comes to the Bilateral Fund and the JCBF the Donors urge the NFP to keep up the good work and involvement of the Embassies and the FMO so that we can continue to use the funds at a strategic level.

The meeting was closed by 12.45.

## List of Participants

From	Representative	Position at the Entity
Portugal NFP	Susana Ramos	Head Coordinator of the National Focal Point (NFP)
	Maria João Lois	Deputy at the NFP
	Rita Soares	Communication Officer
	Filipa Rodrigues	Financial Officer
	Joana Marteleira	Programme and Bilateral Officer
	Ricardo Perdigão	Adviser
Norway	Torill Johansen	Deputy Director, Section for Central Europe, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Birgit Anette Kleven	Adviser for Portugal, NMFA
	Tove Bruvik Westberg	Norwegian Ambassador to Portugal
	Ms Ellen Aabø	Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Norway to Lisbon
	Susana Graca	Adviser, Embassy of Norway to Lisbon
Iceland	Unnur Orradóttir Ramette	Icelandic Ambassador
	Pétur Skúlason Waldorff	Counsellor, Iceland Embassy
FMO	Árni Páll Árnason	Deputy Director and Head of Country and Bilateral Cooperation
	Mualla Cirakli	Country Officer for Portugal
	Daniel Freyr Birkisson	Country and Bilateral Cooperation Trainee
	Niels Bekkhus	Bilateral Officer
PT MFA	Luísa Fragoso de Almeida	Officer at Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Certifying Authority	Luís Castilho	Member of the Board at the Certifying Authority (AD&C)
	Rogério Martins	Director at AD&C
Blue Growth	Conceição Santos	Deputy director at General Directorate for Maritime Policy
	Sandra Silva	Head of Programming Department
	Mafalda Matos	Director at Programming Department
Environment	Susana Escária	Director at Secretary General for Environment and Energy Transition (SGMATE)
	Graça Cordovil	Secretary General for Environment and Energy Transition (SGMATE)
Culture	Bernardo Alabaça	General Director at Directorate General for Cultural Heritage
	Mafalda Ramos	Director at Directorate General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC)
	Filipa Neto	Officer at Directorate General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC)
Work-life Balance	Sandra Ribeiro	President, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)
	Manuel Albano	Vice-President, Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)
	João Paiva	Director at Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)
	Sara Duarte	Officer Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)
Active Citizens Fund	Mafalda Leónidas	Deputy Director of the ACF at Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian
	Sofia Nunes	Fundação Bissaya Barreto