

Draft Blue Book

May 2016

Draft for consultation

**Priority sectors and
programme areas**
2014-2021



Support by country 2014-21

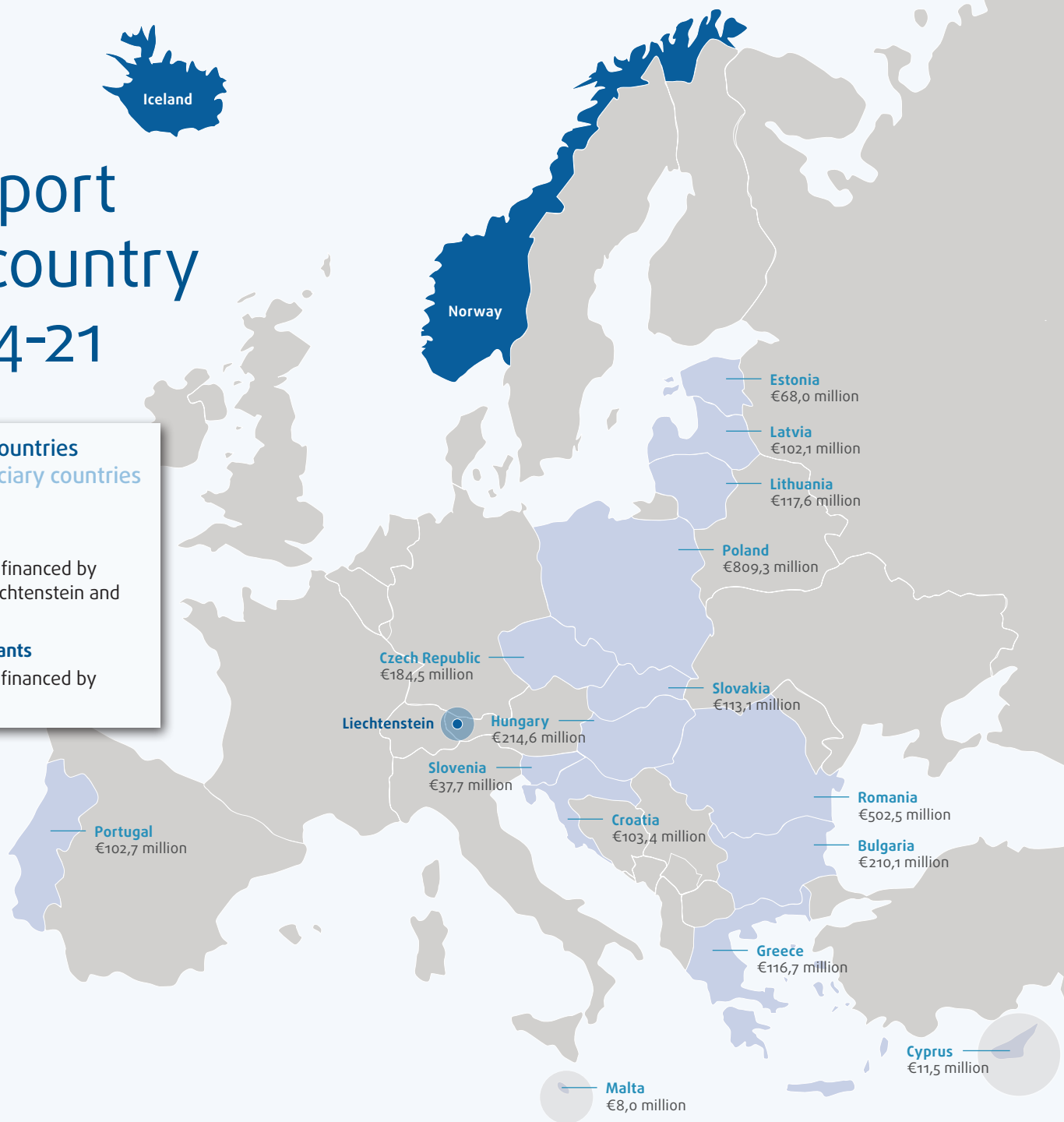
3 donor countries
15 beneficiary countries

EEA Grants

€1,5 billion financed by
Iceland, Liechtenstein and
Norway

Norway Grants

€1,3 billion financed by
Norway



The **EEA and Norway Grants** are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway's contribution to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations with **15 beneficiary countries** in Northern, Central and Southern Europe.

This draft 'Blue Book' presents the **five priority sectors and 23 programme areas** of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The **specific priorities in each beneficiary country** will be set in the memoranda of understanding.

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Introduction

Through the EEA and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway work closely with partners in 15 EU Member States identified as cohesion areas to help reduce social and economic disparities and further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

The five priority sectors and 23 programme areas funded in the period 2014-2021 reflect the priorities set out in the EU 'Europe 2020' strategy – the European Union's ten-year growth strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – and the EU 11 cohesion policy objectives. They aim at contributing to growth and jobs, tackling climate change and energy dependence, and reducing poverty and social exclusion. They also promote bilateral and international cooperation.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS 2014 – 2021

Since the signing of the EEA Agreement in 1994, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have made over €3 billion available in project funding. For the new funding period 2014-2021 the agreed budget is in total €2,8 billion.

For the period 2014-2021 the following five priority sectors have been agreed between the donor countries and the European Union:

- a) Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness
- b) Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction
- c) Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy
- d) Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms
- e) Justice and Home Affairs

The list of related programme areas has been agreed between the donor countries and the European Union. This agreed list is annexed to Protocol 38C on the EEA Financial Mechanism (2014-2021) and the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism (2014-2021).

Taking account of the need to focus on current challenges, the priority sectors and programme areas for the period 2014-2021 have been streamlined and the EEA Grants and Norway Grants now both focus on identical priority sectors and programme areas.¹ These priority sectors and their related programme areas address social and economic imbalances in the sectors and contribute to raising awareness about the challenges in these areas.

The new funding period builds on the successes of the 2009–2014 period and reinforces the results-based approach introduced in that period. The programme development process has been modified to ensure a clear focus on the particular challenges experienced in each beneficiary country. Strategic planning and involvement of all relevant stakeholders in programme design contributes to effective and efficient use of resources, increases a programme's impact and makes it easier to keep track of results.

¹ Except for PA05 Social Dialogue – Decent Work, which is solely eligible under Norway Grants



**Reducing
disparities**

Despite much progress in Europe, gaps in economic development and living standards persist. The funding is targeted towards areas where there are clear needs in the beneficiary countries in line with broader European policies. Priority areas include climate change, research and innovation, civil society and investing in people through human and social development.



**Strengthening
cooperation**

Promoting cooperation is a central aim of the Grants, with partnerships between organisations in the donor and beneficiary countries widely encouraged. Strengthening ties between organisations and institutions brings benefits for the beneficiary and donor countries alike.

In the new funding period there remains a clear commitment to further strengthen bilateral and international cooperation. The Grants make it possible for donor and beneficiary country stakeholders to work constructively together to address shared challenges and find joint solutions. International partnerships with organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) can bring expertise and added value to cooperation.

HOW IT WORKS

- > This draft Blue Book outlines the priority sectors and the related programme areas. Each priority sector is introduced by a text outlining the reasoning behind the support offered, the priority sector's link to relevant EU cohesion policy and added value of the Grants' support. Each programme area includes an objective, areas of support and programme area specifics. The programme area description in this Blue Book consists of the following sections:
 - the objective – to which a programme and any projects funded through it have to contribute
 - areas of support – the areas that are eligible for support

- suggested measures – a non-exhaustive list giving examples of activities eligible for support
 - relevance of support – the reasoning of why financial support in this programme area is relevant and justified, the link to the EU cohesion objectives and the added value of the Grants' support
 - programme area specifics – these are important for the overall contribution of programmes to the objective of the programme area. They are mainly mandatory conditions which shall be adhered to within this programme area
 - bilateral interest – any particular priorities or expertise of the donor and beneficiary countries which contribute to strengthening bilateral relations
- > Each beneficiary country agrees on a set of priority sectors and programme areas with the donor countries, based on national needs and priorities identified. The resulting Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the donor and beneficiary countries includes details on the country allocation, on the programmes to be set up and on management arrangements, including information on cooperation with the donor countries and international organisations. For some programmes pre-defined projects will be included in the MoU.
- > Programmes can focus on a single programme area or alternatively they can combine a number of areas of support from various programme areas in an individual programme, as long as all measures under the programme contribute to the same objective.
 - > All programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants shall be based on the principles of good governance, sustainable development and gender equality. In the programme planning phase these cross-cutting themes are integrated into the programme design.
 - > All programmes shall adhere to core European values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of people belonging to minorities. These values are enshrined in Articles 2 and 6 of the Treaty on European Union.
 - > Cross-border cooperation is eligible in all programmes. Such collaboration involves cooperation to tackle common challenges identified jointly between two neighbouring countries.
 - > A National Focal Point in the beneficiary country is responsible for the overall management of programmes in each beneficiary country.

- > Programme Operators in the beneficiary country develop and manage the individual programmes agreed in that country.
- > Programme development follows a two stage approach:
 - 1) A short ‘concept note’ defining the scope and planned results of the programme is drafted by the Programme Operator in cooperation with the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including – where relevant – Donor Programme Partners (DPP) and International Public Organisations (IPO). The note includes the justification and main features of the programme. The note describes the expected contribution towards the EEA and Norway Grants overall objectives and the programme’s objective, including planned outcome(s) and outputs, indicators, risks and target group(s). It shall further outline how special concerns from the MoU and where relevant common values are integrated in the planning and implementation of the programme. This note also includes the tentative overall budget as well as any small grant schemes, any pre-defined projects and any financial instruments.
 - 2) The Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC) assesses the concept note and makes comments. Any comment made by the FMC shall be taken into account in the programme’s further preparation. The FMC may decide to reject the concept note. In such cases the Programme Operator may once resubmit a revised version of the concept note – through the National Focal Point – taking into account the terms set in the Regulation 2014-2021. On the basis of the concept note and the comments of the FMC on this note, a draft programme agreement is prepared by the FMO setting out the terms and conditions of the operation of the programme as well as the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Blue Book has been drafted by specialists of the donor country governments. Its content is based on the EU’s cohesion policy, experience from earlier funding periods of the EEA and Norway Grants, and input from a number of international organisations and other stakeholders.

We nevertheless believe that those likely to benefit from the Grants, those that are likely to manage the funding and other stakeholders could have valuable input to the texts of the priority sectors and programme areas in the draft Blue Book. The draft Blue Book will therefore be broadly consulted. The consultation will offer an opportunity for stakeholders to take account of the current draft and provide input on elements prior to its final publication.

All the information on the public consultation is available on www.eeagrants.org/bluebook.

PRIORITY SECTOR

Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness

The programme areas in the priority sector *Innovation, Research, Education and Competitiveness* contribute to growth by supporting the further development of the knowledge economy. Sustainable growth is promoted through funding to strengthen the link between education and training systems, and employment and to support a socially inclusive labour market through combating youth unemployment, facilitating the participation of women and promoting social dialogue. The added value of the funding under this priority sector lies in the opportunities it offers for strategic piloting and testing of innovative approaches and for international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and experiences leading to accelerated learning.

This priority sector is relevant for the thematic objectives of EU cohesion policy highlighted below

1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT
3	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants shall contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the beneficiary countries. The priority sectors and programme areas shall contribute to these two overall objectives.





PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°1

Business Development, Innovation and SMEs

OBJECTIVE

Increased value creation and sustainable growth

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Innovative technologies, processes and services
- > Sustainable business development
- > Greening of existing businesses and processes
- > Development and implementation of innovative products and services

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Business development from early stage innovation up to testing of new technologies and supporting their first presentation to the market (piloting and demonstration facilities)
- > New technologies, processes and services that directly or indirectly improve the environment, including limiting pollution through purification processes, more environmental products and production processes, and more efficient handling of resources and technological systems
- > Development and implementation of greener production processes
- > Supporting 'blue growth' projects – maritime projects, including maritime safety, inland water and marine projects, including port development, energy efficiency in ships and new control systems
- > Supporting processes aimed at Liquid Natural Gas (LNG)
- > Welfare technology and ambient assisted living
- > Promoting entrepreneurship, especially for young and/or female entrepreneurs

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

The EEA EFTA countries and the EU subscribe to the principle of sustainable development and share a common objective of creating competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economies.

Innovation in the selected business areas, green industry development, entrepreneurship and smart growth strategies supports the efforts of the Europe 2020 and the Horizon 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as young entrepreneurship and job creation. The programme area further supports several thematic objectives in the EU's cohesion policy 2014-2020, where the objectives on innovation, ICT quality, competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and sustainable transport are the most obvious ones.

The Business Development, Innovation and SMEs programme area serves as a bridge between research programmes and business development close to market technologies. The programme area stimulates the productivity and competitiveness of European businesses through technology and includes innovative, processes and services. Investments in innovation strengthen economic growth and employment in all business areas and inspire environmental and eco-sensitive management and production. These aims are in line with Europe 2020, which emphasises the need for green and more innovative economies as well as resource efficiency through eco-design and the circular economy.

Increased demand for transport will require new environmentally friendly and sustainable solutions. This includes energy efficiency improvements as well as the reduction of emissions from ships and ports. Climate change motivates the need to green economies by minimising emissions and energy used.

The programme area is particularly suitable to provide support through grants and financial instruments, such as venture capital (equity), soft loans and guarantees.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programme area is targeted at private businesses. The aim is that 75% of the funding shall be allocated to SMEs
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
- > Programmes can consist of a maximum of three focus areas chosen among the following: green industry innovation, blue growth, energy, welfare technology, ambient assisted living (health), and ICT
- > All programmes shall allocate at least 50% of funding to green industry innovation, unless otherwise specified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note
- > Programmes can be operated by a relevant donor country entity in close cooperation with a beneficiary country entity or by a qualified beneficiary country entity together with a donor programme partner

BILATERAL INTEREST

Business development and innovation are key areas for bilateral cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries. Complementarity with donor country schemes and programmes may be relevant within specific areas of support.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°2 Research

OBJECTIVE

Enhanced research-based knowledge development

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Research cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries
- > Research within the priority sectors and/or programme areas of the EEA and Norway Grants or in other agreed areas
- > Application of research results
- > Capacity building in research, including supporting the careers of female researchers and early stage researchers
- > Participation and cooperation of beneficiary countries in the European Research Area (ERA)

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Collaborative projects in basic and applied research
- > Support for the establishment of long-term strategic partnerships between research institutions in donor and beneficiary countries
- > Research within smart specialisation priorities
- > Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)
- > Research targeting societal challenges and social innovation
- > Measures reinforcing the links between innovation, research and education ('the knowledge triangle')
- > Short-term mobility schemes for researchers and students
- > Support for the recruitment of researchers from abroad into beneficiary country research institutions
- > Measures addressing gender imbalance in science and research
- > Support for the active participation of beneficiary countries in ERA multilateral research cooperation, such as ERA-net, Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI), the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), and macro-regional strategies
- > Strengthening beneficiary countries' participation in Horizon 2020 through capacity building activities, such as support in developing project applications, training, and building networks that include donor countries

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Social and economic development in Europe depends on research and innovation. Increasing and strengthening research investments are priorities in all European countries. Europe 2020 has a goal of increasing research and development (R&D) investments to 3% of GDP. Individual EU Member States and EEA EFTA countries have set specific national targets.

European and international cooperation in research and innovation is a priority shared by all European countries. Transnational European research cooperation is promoted through the EU Framework Programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020. However, limited economic resources and the instability of research funding pose special challenges to beneficiary countries, both in meeting their R&D policy goals and in fully participating in international cooperation.

The European Research Area (ERA) promotes transnational European research cooperation and is part of the Europe 2020 Innovation Union Flagship Initiative, a key instrument in achieving the goals set out in the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth. The ERA is an effort to create a genuine European 'internal market' in research, including increased coordination of national research activities. ERA activities and priorities have given rise to new European activities such as: Horizon 2020, Joint Programming Initiatives, network activities and cooperation on research infrastructure. In all these activities and mechanisms, beneficiary countries have at present a low rate of participation.

The donor countries share the ERA priorities and Iceland and Norway take part in Horizon 2020 and other ERA activities. There is great potential to increase research capacity in beneficiary countries through cooperation with donor countries, both through direct bilateral relations and within joint ERA activities.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > All research projects shall include cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
- > Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) shall be eligible participants in all programmes
- > Dissemination of research results shall be included in all programmes

BILATERAL INTEREST

Research within the EEA and Norway Grants has a strong bilateral character. The 2014-2021 funding shall build on bilateral relations developed in 2004-2014 and further expand bilateral cooperation in this area for the future.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°3 Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship

OBJECTIVE

Enhanced human capital and knowledge base

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Institutional cooperation at all levels of education between donor and beneficiary countries
- > Enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training in the beneficiary countries at all levels of education
- > Cooperation and partnerships between education, research and the world of work
- > Traineeships, apprenticeships and work placements
- > Youth entrepreneurship
- > Improving adult participation in lifelong learning
- > Professional development of teachers
- > Higher education student learning mobility and staff mobility between donor and beneficiary countries

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Joint projects with national and regional partners, donor countries and other EEA countries
- > Exchange of knowledge and best practice between stakeholders and professional networks
- > Public awareness-raising
- > Curriculum development and development of joint programmes and degrees
- > Integration of new technologies in education and training, and new modes of teaching and training
- > Skills for job potential
- > Sharing innovative solutions for inspiring and recruiting young people to studies, work or entrepreneurships
- > Fostering youth entrepreneurship in and through education and training
- > Inclusive education: addressing the needs of disabled people and socio-economic disparities in access, retention and completion of education
- > Projects supporting synergies between research, education and the world of work
- > Support for public-private partnerships
- > Developing and supporting quality dual learning, trainee, apprenticeship and work placement systems
- > Recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal education and training
- > Training of teachers and trainers, staff exchanges and job shadowing
- > Higher education student and staff mobility

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Cooperation within the fields of education and research is an objective shared by all European countries. The significance of transnational cooperation has been highlighted as part of the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Strategic Framework for Cooperation in Education and Training 2020 (ET2020), as well as the Copenhagen process aimed at improving vocational education and training (VET).

Investment in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning is one of the key objectives of the EU cohesion policy. Increasing both the quality and relevance of education/training at all levels has been identified as crucial in regard to this objective. Reinforcing the link between education, research and innovation, and the world of work, is a key driver for growth and job creation. Having a workforce that possesses the required skills is essential both for growth and employment, especially of young people. The transition from education and training to employment for young people can be stimulated through targeted schemes such as quality dual learning, traineeships, apprenticeships, and work placements. Valuable skills can also be promoted through measures that support youth entrepreneurship.

Education plays a key role in ensuring social inclusion, fostering personal development, critical thinking, citizenship skills and democratic attitudes and values, which are also priorities of ET2020. European Education Ministers have highlighted that education and training's mission of developing intercultural competencies, fostering dialogue and acceptance of differences of opinion, convictions and beliefs is key to combating intolerance and discrimination, and to providing a sustainable response to the growing threat of radicalisation leading to violent extremism.

International mobility as part of education and training can improve students' career options and provide skills needed for the EU/EEA job market. Despite increased EU funding through Erasmus+, there is still a need for additional funding to provide this opportunity to a larger number of students from all socio-economic backgrounds. As part of ET2020, a set of indicators and reference levels have been agreed on early school leaving, higher education completion, basic skills, early childhood education, lifelong learning, transition to the labour market and mobility between countries.

In the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU has set the following targets to be reached on average by 2020: at least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of VET should have undertaken a study or training period abroad; 40% of people aged 30 – 34 should have a higher education attainment; at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning; the share of employed graduates should be at least 82% three years after graduation; and the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%. The EEA and Norway Grants support the beneficiary countries in contributing to these average targets.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > All programmes shall address gender disparities in education and training
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
- > All programmes shall address inclusive education

BILATERAL INTEREST

The donor and beneficiary countries share common challenges in the education sector. Programme and project cooperation and mobility of students and staff are encouraged in order to support learning, knowledge development and sharing of best practice.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°4 Work-life Balance

OBJECTIVE

Work-life balance improved

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Gender equality in the labour market
- > Women's economic empowerment
- > Gender equality institutions and organisations
- > Child-care policy, aiming at affordable, good quality and accessible child-care
- > Policy/systems for family leave entitlements
- > Social dialogue

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Development of national strategies, systems and policies to promote work-life balance and gender equality
- > Research and data collection
- > Establishment of affordable, good quality and accessible child-care facilities
- > Introducing flexible working arrangements
- > Measures to increase flexible working arrangements and the take-up of care leave among men
- > Awareness-raising, capacity building and education to promote a better balance between work and family life
- > Capacity building for institutions and organisations working in the field of work-life balance and gender equality
- > Development of cooperation between the social partners
- > Exchanges and dissemination of successful national policies and best practices on work-life balance
- > Pilot projects

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Work-life reconciliation policies are increasingly recognised as key responses to the economic and demographic challenges facing Europe. Parenthood remains one of the main factors for the current gender employment gap. Persistently low fertility rates combined with the increasing life expectancy of Europe's citizens represent major challenges for productivity across the region. Promoting sustainable and quality employment for all is therefore vital to increasing cohesion throughout Europe.

Organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) provide ample evidence that female participation in the labour market leads to increased productivity and thus higher GDP. Increasing women's labour force participation also in innovation and research is a priority for the EEA and Norway Grants' support in this field and will be paramount to improving economic productivity across Europe and to counter the challenge of Europe's shrinking working-age population. Specific attention needs to be given to the relatively low labour market participation of older women, single parents, women with a disability, migrant women and women from ethnic minorities.

Strengthening women's economic independence through increasing their labour market participation has been a key factor in the donor countries' efforts to achieve gender equality. Cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries to share successful policies and practices is central to support in this field.

Equality between women and men is an EU fundamental value, enshrined in its treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 also underlines how improving work-life balance is central to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, not least to meet the Europe 2020 target rate of 75% employment.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

> A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

Ensuring a good and desirable work-life balance has been an area of focus in the donor countries for several decades. Bilateral cooperation offers the opportunity for exchange and transfer of knowledge between donor and beneficiary countries. This includes the experience that donor countries have in structured dialogue and cooperation between the social partners.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°5 (Norway Grants) Social Dialogue – Decent Work

OBJECTIVE

Strengthened tripartite cooperation between employer organisations, trade unions and public authorities and the promotion of decent work

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Social dialogue and tripartite dialogue structures and practices
- > Focus on the benefits of decent work
- > Access to employment and participation in the labour market
- > Gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace
- > Work-life balance
- > Employee adaptability and life-long learning
- > Youth employment
- > Public sector social dialogue
- > Tripartite dialogue on employment contracts, working hours, pensions and benefits
- > Work-related crime

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Policy review, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation on areas where tripartite cooperation is promoted
- > Institutional capacity building and training
- > Cooperation between social dialogue organisations
- > Cooperation between labour inspectorates and other relevant regulatory bodies
- > Information and awareness-raising activities
- > Pilot projects

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Norway and the EU support the principles of social dialogue – the dialogue between workers and employers – and social dialogue is a key element of the Nordic social model. This programme area supports strengthened dialogue and ensures that beneficiary countries are better placed to deal with the challenges of high unemployment and to establish decent work objectives, such as non-discrimination and receiving a living wage.

The turmoil caused by the financial crisis and subsequent sovereign debt crisis has placed enormous pressure on public funds. Unemployment remains high and recovery is slow. These factors underline the importance of decent work and social dialogue in creating an equitable and fair future as Europe moves towards recovery.

The programme area supports the objectives of increased employment and the EU's Social Europe Initiative under the framework of Europe 2020. The programme area also builds on the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Decent Work Agenda. Decent work covers social dialogue, strengthened rights of employees, employment and social protection.

The ILO encourages tripartite cooperation to promote harmonious labour relations. Tripartite cooperation brings employers, employees and government together to collaborate, consult, discuss and resolve common concerns related to employment. A tripartite approach has the advantage of informing people and thereby enable them to help design and implement national policies that will achieve fair terms and working conditions that are favourable for all.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

> Fund coordinated by a single Programme Operator across all beneficiary countries

BILATERAL INTEREST

Norway has a strong tradition of tripartite consultation, bringing together workers, employers and governments in formulating and negotiating labour standards and policies. Bilateral cooperation plays a very strong role in this programme area, with the opportunity for close involvement of Norwegian social partners, sharing expertise and experience.

PRIORITY SECTOR

Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction

The European Economic Area is not just about economic cooperation, it is also about empowering people to play their role in society. Sustainable inclusive growth and future prosperity rely on finding a balance between economic progress and social advancement. In line with the EU's cohesion policy, the programme areas in the priority sector *Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction* promote well-functioning societies by supporting social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups, equal access to education, employment and health care, and capable and responsible institutions. The added value of this priority sector is its contribution to breaking the cycle of disadvantage by supporting early interventions, by investing in prevention and boosting systemic change, and by encouraging pilot projects in the area of social innovation.

This priority sector is relevant for the thematic objectives of EU cohesion policy highlighted below

1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT
3	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants shall contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the beneficiary countries. The priority sectors and programme areas shall contribute to these two overall objectives.





PRIORITY SECTOR
Social Inclusion, Youth
Employment and
Poverty Reduction

Programme area n°6 European Public Health Challenges

OBJECTIVE

Improved prevention and reduced inequalities in health

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Prevention of non-communicable diseases
- > Prevention and control of communicable diseases in accordance with the international health regulations, including Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS
- > Health systems development, including information and surveillance systems
- > Universal access to health care
- > Reduction of social inequalities in health and the burden of diseases
- > Mental health, including mental disorders associated with alcohol and drug abuse
- > Strengthening systems for primary health care services
- > Healthy and active ageing

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Preparedness, alert and response to communicable diseases, including antimicrobial resistance
- > Population-based prevention programmes and/or programmes targeted at specific risk groups, including tobacco, alcohol and drugs users and the suicidal
- > Civil society empowerment in the health sector, including user involvement in health care services
- > Mental health awareness-raising activities and education programmes
- > Develop outreach services (local and home-based services including services for mental health and substance abuse)
- > Policy approaches for strengthening primary health care in terms of quantity and quality
- > Transition from inpatient to outpatient care, including mental health
- > Develop e-health tools and strategies
- > Secure human rights and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness
- > Promote health through a life-course approach, including nutrition education programmes
- > Foster inter-sectorial cooperation

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Although people in general live longer and healthier lives than before, inequalities in life expectancy and the burden of diseases remain, for both communicable and non-communicable diseases. The economic crisis has led to cuts in health spending, which has further increased the existing health gap. Poverty continues to contribute to poor health and measures are urgently sought to break this cycle of disadvantage for the most vulnerable. Additionally, the demographic challenge brought by an ageing population and low birth rates requires innovative solutions and multi-sectorial approaches.

The EEA and Norway Grants help to reduce the health gap by improving health governance, boosting systemic change and strengthening primary care and health services in line with the EU's cohesion objective of promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and any discrimination. Investing in prevention, health promotion and information is underpinned by World Health Organisation (WHO) and EU strategies and accepted as the best way to improve population health in a sustainable manner. The Europe 2020 strategy recognises the importance of fostering health as an indispensable condition for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This perspective includes mental health, which is often stigmatised, leading to social exclusion and work absenteeism. The WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 sets important new directions for mental health including a central role for provision of community-based care and a greater emphasis on human rights.

Building on experience and exchange of best practice to meet common European health challenges, both donor and beneficiary countries can benefit from extensive bilateral cooperation and partnerships. Coordination and cooperation with international organisations such as WHO adds further value to the Grants and the activities supported.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note
- > At least 10% of the total programme allocation shall address child health
- > At least 10% of the total programme allocation shall address improved access to health for vulnerable groups and deprived or rural areas

BILATERAL INTEREST

The donor and beneficiary countries share common challenges in the health sector. Programme and project cooperation is encouraged in order to exchange knowledge and share best practices and values. The EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 builds on the good bilateral relations developed in the past to further improve bilateral cooperation in the future.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Social Inclusion, Youth
Employment and
Poverty Reduction

Programme area n°7 Roma Inclusion and Empowerment

OBJECTIVE

Enhanced inclusion and empowerment of Roma

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Implementation of European, national, regional and local strategies relevant for Roma inclusion, and investments for systemic changes
- > Integrated measures at local level in the areas of education, employment, health and housing
- > Innovative approaches to enhancing the inclusiveness of public institutions and policies
- > Empowerment of Roma
- > Combating all forms of discrimination, including stereotyping of Roma
- > Systems for data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluation
- > Collecting knowledge and synthesising expertise on different Roma groups, languages, cultures, histories and identities in Europe

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Supporting direct involvement of, and dialogue with, Roma in programme development and implementation
- > Identifying best practice at local or at community level
- > Targeting marginalised settlements through an integrated approach, including small grant scheme(s) to support grassroots initiatives
- > Developing partnerships between the public and private sphere with a focus on job creation
- > Empowering Roma women by supporting the freedom of choice for Roma women and girls and mainstreaming Roma women's issues in relevant national programmes
- > Supporting specific interventions at community level, such as on legal aid or on social entrepreneurship, including microfinance
- > Training of young Roma leaders, also aimed at increasing their number in different areas and levels of public administration
- > Campaigns targeting the majority on how to foster the human rights of Roma, combat Roma discrimination and promote Roma in a positive way
- > Synthesising expertise on Roma language, culture, history and identity in Europe
- > Developing educational materials on different Roma groups, languages, cultures, histories and identities in Europe
- > Consolidating efforts on research and training in Romani studies

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Roma are Europe's largest minority, with an estimated population of 10-12 million people. Socially and economically Roma are also one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Improving their socio-economic situation and ensuring the protection of their rights is a priority for the EEA and Norway Grants.

Poverty reduction is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy aimed at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The EU increasingly focuses on the inclusion of Roma as a means to deliver on such targets, notably in its cohesion policy. Beneficiary countries have also made their own such commitments in their national Roma integration strategies, but many are facing important challenges in implementation. It is in this context that the Grants are working closely with the European Commission to assess progress in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 and on follow-up at a national level to relevant EU Decisions.

Large-scale surveys show that when compared to non-Roma living in the nearby vicinity, Roma are particularly affected by the risk of poverty and discrimination. This leads to huge gaps in education and job opportunities. To break the cycle of disadvantage, there is a need for measures that involve Roma directly in assessing their needs in designing and implementing appropriate actions. To address the root causes of their exclusion, discrimination of Roma shall be combatted, in line with the provisions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as with other European standards and norms.

By targeting Roma in an explicit but not exclusive way, the EEA and Norway Grants can help address needs prioritised by the beneficiary countries. Roma inclusion is mainstreamed within and across the relevant priority areas of the Grants. The support is also given in cooperation with such key partners as the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, the Council of Europe or the Open Society Foundations. Advancing on Roma inclusion entails three main interlinked aspects: empowering Roma, rendering institutions and policies more inclusive, and targeting the majority to positively influence attitudes towards Roma. Partnerships among all stakeholders are essential for implementing integrated measures at local level and for inducing the necessary systemic reforms. Donor coordination and strategic partnerships with international organisations shall also serve this purpose.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > All programmes shall address the three aspects of Roma participation: empowerment of Roma; rendering institutions and policies more inclusive; and, targeting the majority, unless otherwise specified in the memorandum of understanding
- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note



Programme area n°8 Children and Youth at Risk

OBJECTIVE

Promote the rights and well-being of children and young people

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Child welfare and child protection systems
- > Child-friendly justice
- > Protection of child victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and domestic violence
- > Early childhood education and care systems
- > Prevention of early school-leaving
- > Empowerment of children and young people, including participation in decision-making processes
- > Alternatives to institutional care

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Promoting the rights of children and young people and contributing to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- > Establishment of an Ombudsman for children to assist national authorities in protecting, promoting and realising children's rights
- > Developing and improving the quality of child welfare systems and child protection measures at national and local levels
- > Integrated approaches to tackle child poverty and social exclusion including prevention of early school-leaving
- > Innovative approaches targeting children and young people with behavioural problems
- > Empowerment of children and youth with a minority background
- > Developing health service and social care provisions for vulnerable children and youth
- > Improving the overall administration of juvenile justice at national and local levels
- > Developing national strategies concerning the application of restorative justice in the administration of juvenile justice
- > Improving the protection and securing the rights of children in detention and on probation
- > Multi-sectoral approaches to prevent radicalisation of young people and create resilience to violent extremism
- > Pilot projects

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Today, one out of four children in the EU is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The economic crisis has increased the number of children at risk. Children growing up in poverty or social exclusion are less likely than their better-off peers to do well in school, enjoy good health and realise their full potential later in life. Vulnerable groups of children and youth are often exposed to discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. There is also growing concern about the radicalisation of young people, which demands a more comprehensive multi-sectorial effort to counter violent extremism.

The EEA and Norway Grants support children's rights by providing funds to improve child protection, empower children and youth and improve their social inclusion by using a variety of tools and encouraging innovative approaches.

Preventing the transmission of disadvantage across generations is a crucial investment in Europe's future, as well as a direct contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the EU's cohesion objective of promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination. The EU's 2013 Recommendation 'Investing in Children - breaking the cycle of disadvantage' takes a rights-based approach that puts the best interests of the child, equal opportunities and support for the most disadvantaged at the centre of efforts to combat child poverty and promote child well-being across Europe. This agenda is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which continues to be the guiding international instrument on children's rights. The support provided shall be in line with the UNCRC.

The report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' (April 2014) by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe also recommends measures to address the main challenges related to children's rights.

Building on experience and exchange of best practice to meet common challenges, both donor and beneficiary countries benefit from extensive cooperation and partnerships. Cooperation with international children's rights actors such as the Council of Europe adds further value to the Grants and the activities supported. Improved rights and inclusion of children and young people is also supported in the following programme areas: youth inclusion in the labour market; education and scholarships; as well as under the NGO programmes.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

Bilateral programme and project cooperation is encouraged in order to exchange knowledge and share best practices and values. The EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 builds on the good bilateral relations developed in the past to further improve bilateral cooperation in the future.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Social Inclusion, Youth
Employment and
Poverty Reduction

Programme area n°9 Youth Participation in the Labour Market

OBJECTIVE

Increased number of young people aged 15-30 in employment

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Vocational education and training systems and work-based learning
- > Assisting the transition from education and unemployment to the world of work
- > Reshaping labour market policy and institutions to facilitate access to employment and tackle social exclusion
- > Social protection mechanisms providing adequate income support

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Stimulating analysis, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of labour market policies and institutions
- > Promoting knowledge exchange and peer learning within and across donor and beneficiary countries
- > Supporting institutional capacity-building
- > Tackling and reducing early school-leaving and providing second-chance opportunities
- > Strengthening the role and effectiveness of vocational education and training in close cooperation with social partners
- > Strengthening and expanding quality apprenticeship programmes, dual learning and other work experience programmes
- > Providing appropriate work experience opportunities for young people before they leave education
- > Providing good quality career guidance services backed up with high quality information about careers and labour market prospects
- > Mapping and sharing new solutions for inclusion and job creation/social enterprises/public private partnerships/piloting
- > Addressing demand-side barriers, such as high labour costs
- > Strengthening employment and education systems and regulations in private and public sectors for youth participation in the labour market and transition from school to work
- > Awareness-raising activities
- > Strengthening networks and cooperation to facilitate knowledge-exchange and accelerated learning

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

The economic crisis has hit young people harder than any other group. In many countries, youth unemployment rates soared and have remained persistently high in the face of modest job growth so far during the economic recovery. In 2013, the youth unemployment rate in EU countries was 23% on average. In two-thirds of the beneficiary countries (ten countries in 2013), the youth unemployment rate was higher than the EU average and four of these countries have rates above 30%. Many young people become discouraged and withdraw from the labour market altogether. In 2013, seven million young people were neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET) across the European Union, representing 13% of young Europeans aged between 15 and 24. In many countries, the school-to-work transition is particularly difficult and lengthy, justifying this programme area's focus on young people.

For many young people labour market difficulties are related to a number of factors, including: lack of professional experience; inadequate education or training; limited social protection coverage; and - when in a job - precarious working conditions. Some groups are at more of a disadvantage than others, in particular young women, migrants, young people from minority and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, and people with disabilities. The difficulties faced by many young people are multidimensional and require a comprehensive set of policies and actions to allow them to participate in the labour market.

While the economic and financial crisis has intensified problems in the area of youth unemployment, many young people struggled to make a successful transition from school to work even prior to the crisis – reflecting long-standing structural obstacles to their integration in the labour market. Obstacles include weak systems of initial education and training and high school-leaving rates; poor careers advice and guidance; demand-side barriers to the employment of the low-skilled; poorly functioning public employment services for helping disadvantaged youths find work or improve their employability; lack of social services/protection to assist young people most at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

The Europe 2020 strategy puts a specific focus on youth inclusion in the labour market. The Council of the European Union adopted the Youth Guarantee in 2013. The guarantee aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education adapted to their needs within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. All EU Member States have developed national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programme area is particularly suitable for partnerships with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)



PRIORITY SECTOR
Social Inclusion, Youth
Employment and
Poverty Reduction

Programme area n°10

Local Development and Poverty Reduction

OBJECTIVE

Strengthened social and economic cohesion

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Social and economic development in specific geographic areas
- > Anti-discriminatory activities focusing on groups vulnerable to social and economic exclusion
- > Interventions to increase job prospects
- > Interventions to increase job capacity, especially among the most vulnerable
- > Quality of and access to social/welfare services
- > Networking and policy exchanges between municipalities

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Developing active inclusion policies and bottom-up approaches to local and regional development
- > Sharing of knowledge and best practices at a local/regional/national level and developing joint strategies aimed at reducing poverty
- > Activities aimed at modernising the public sector
- > Promoting social investment in community development in poorer areas
- > Spurring on innovative economic and social entrepreneurship in local business
- > Cooperation between local authorities and private and civil society actors
- > Providing information on systems for micro-credit
- > Developing knowledge exchange on systems for apprenticeships, business start-ups and incubators
- > Supporting cross-sectoral, socially innovative approaches, for example through re-training and/or participative capacity-development methods to address unemployment in particular groups, especially young people and cultural and ethnic minorities
- > Promoting better access to welfare services
- > Developing activities aimed at promoting equal opportunities for vulnerable groups

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

According to the EU, people are at risk of living in poverty if their income falls below 60% of median income in the country where they live. In 2011, more than 119 million people – 24% of the EU population – were at risk of poverty. The Europe 2020 strategy aims to reduce this number by 20 million by 2020. Special attention is paid to measures aimed at those running the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion: the unemployed and low-skilled, non-EU migrants and single parent families. There is an urgent need to address youth unemployment (23% in EU countries in 2013) and the unemployment of cultural and ethnic minorities and non-EU migrants.

The EEA and Norway Grants target the challenges that the most vulnerable regions in the beneficiary countries are currently facing. The Grants do this by providing support to help address poverty at the root causes: lack of job prospects, lack of job capacity and problems leading to social exclusion. The support aims to empower communities to develop innovative, inclusive and bottom-up approaches to involve people in the development of their community and create better prospects for the disadvantaged. It also aims to stimulate knowledge exchange between municipalities through networking and policy exchanges.

The Europe 2020 strategy and the EU's cohesion policy take account of the crucial role Europe's cities and regions play for future smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Addressing poverty is a key priority in this strategy.

BILATERAL INTEREST

The donor and beneficiary countries share challenges in the area in local development and empowerment of local communities. Programme and project cooperation is encouraged to share knowledge and best practices.

PRIORITY SECTOR

Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy

Resource-efficient and sustainable use of our natural capital, reduced vulnerability to climate change and a push towards a less carbon intensive and more energy secure economy are key factors for economic and social cohesion in Europe. In line with the EU's cohesion policy, the programme areas in the priority sector *Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy* aim to ensure good environmental status of our ecosystems, adequate and timely climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, and increased use of renewable energy. Given the great degree of interconnectivity between the three programme areas under the priority sector, measures and activities will seek to exploit co-beneficial outcomes.

This priority sector is relevant for the thematic objectives of EU cohesion policy highlighted below

1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT
3	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants shall contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the beneficiary countries. The priority sectors and programme areas shall contribute to these two overall objectives.





PRIORITY SECTOR
Environment, Energy,
Climate Change and Low
Carbon Economy

Programme area n°11 Environment and Ecosystems

OBJECTIVE

Improved environmental status in ecosystems and reduced adverse effects of pollution

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Environmental strategies, management plans, action plans and/or protection plans
- > Environmental monitoring and modelling
- > Systems for the sharing and the dissemination of environmental information
- > Management and control of hazardous substances
- > Compliance with environmental legislation

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Implementation of marine, inland water and terrestrial management plans and targets
- > Development and implementation of action plans on threatened species and habitats and/or invasive alien species
- > Mapping and monitoring of the ecological status in marine and inland waterways, and in terrestrial areas
- > Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services
- > Promoting natural heritage as a basis for sustainable tourism
- > Promoting resource efficiency in use of natural resources
- > Management and control of import, export and use of hazardous substances
- > Promoting capacity development of environmental authorities in relation to integrated planning and control
- > Restoration of degraded habitats and ecosystems, including the development of green corridors
- > Development and implementation of plans and measures to avoid fragmentation of ecosystems
- > Encouraging investments in green infrastructure
- > Environmental education and awareness-raising

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Quality of life, economic competitiveness, employment and security all rely on the natural capital of our ecosystems. Europe's ecosystems are under increasing pressure, and the natural resources on which social and economic development is based are under threat. Intensive agriculture practices, infrastructure development causing land-use change, pollution, use of chemicals, over-exploitation of forests, inland and marine waters, and climate change are some of the main threats.

Reports from the European Environment Agency indicate that almost half of Europe's water bodies have poor ecological status. Water use often exceeds water availability, resulting in water stress across Europe. Biodiversity, crucial for the ecosystem services we rely on, is at risk. Ecosystem services are essential for maintaining the long-term viability of forestry, agriculture and fisheries, and are the basis of many industrial processes and the production of new medicines. In addition, pollution and hazardous substances are adversely affecting human health and the environment.

The programmes shall contribute to the coherent implementation of EU environmental strategies and legislation. The 7th Environmental Action Programme is the guiding environmental policy of the EU until 2020. It lists nine priority objectives and identifies three priority areas where more action is needed: protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience; boost resource-efficient, low-carbon growth; and reduce threats to human health and well-being. Addressing environmental issues requires the integration of policies on protection and the sustainable use of biodiversity in fresh water, oceans, terrestrial ecosystems, and on hazardous substances with sectoral policies such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy and transport to ensure the resilience of ecosystems and provisions of ecosystem services.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are committed to international efforts to address environmental challenges, a commitment shared with the EU. The EEA and Norway Grants will fund programmes focusing on environment and ecosystems in line with the Europe 2020 strategy targets. Safeguarding the environment requires cooperation across sectors and national borders.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programmes shall contain small grant scheme(s) targeting civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value

BILATERAL INTEREST

The donor and beneficiary countries share considerable knowledge and experience within this programme area. The donor countries have competence on integrated marine management, ecosystems management and integrated planning and control. The sharing of this expertise is important to accelerate knowledge development in the area of environment and ecosystems.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Environment, Energy,
Climate Change and Low
Carbon Economy

Programme area n°12

Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security

OBJECTIVE

Less carbon intensive energy and increased security of supply

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Energy efficiency in production, distribution and/or end use
- > Renewable energy production and/or distribution
- > Recovery of energy from waste or hazardous waste
- > Energy security
- > Renewable energy policies in all relevant sectors
- > Energy markets

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Energy efficiency measures in the industrial sector
- > Production of renewable geothermal energy for multipurpose use, mainly for district heating, but also for increased efficiency of distribution
- > Production of electricity from renewable energy resources
- > Energy saving measures in households
- > Utilisation of waste or pre-treated hazardous waste as an energy source (co-processing) in industrial processes
- > Improved energy security through increased use of renewable energy sources
- > Development of energy markets and improvement of the infrastructure for gas and electricity
- > Awareness-raising

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

The European energy sector is currently facing the challenge of moving from the use of fossil fuels and high energy consumption to an increased use of renewable energy and high energy efficiency. This move is fundamental for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Otherwise, Europe will not be able to meet its commitments to reduce emissions.

This calls for a climate change-focused energy model. Such a model will not only address the need to mitigate climate change: a push towards less carbon intensive economies will also promote research and innovation in climate-friendly technology. It will create job opportunities in sectors where a highly skilled workforce is needed. Promoting the use of domestic renewable energy and less carbon intensive technologies is therefore a key element for a more competitive Europe.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are committed to international efforts to tackle climate change, a commitment shared with the European Union. The EEA and Norway Grants will fund programmes focusing on renewable energy and energy efficiency in line with the Europe 2020 strategy targets of 20% reduction of greenhouse gas emission, 20% of energy from renewables and 20% increase in energy efficiency.

The move towards less carbon intensive economies calls for involvement from a wide range of stakeholders. This includes all sectors and levels of government, the private sector and in particular SMEs, the research community and the general public. Bilateral cooperation is an essential part of the EEA and Norway Grants allowing donor and beneficiary countries to share knowledge and experience when it comes to mitigating climate change. This is particularly the case when it comes to energy efficiency in industries and renewable energy solutions such as geothermal, solar, wind and hydro energy.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Programmes targeting greenhouse gas reductions and/or avoidance shall deliver considerable reductions at a reasonable cost – a minimum of 100 000 tonnes CO₂ equivalent
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value

BILATERAL INTEREST

To achieve a less carbon intensive and more secure energy supply, the sharing of knowledge and experience is crucial. The donor and beneficiary countries shall cooperate bilaterally, especially in the areas of energy efficiency, and renewable energy such as geothermal and hydro energy.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Environment, Energy,
Climate Change and Low
Carbon Economy

Programme area n°13 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

OBJECTIVE

Climate change mitigation and vulnerability to climate change reduced

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Strategies, action plans and/or contingency plans
- > Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- > Climate change adaptation
- > Extreme weather preparedness and risk management
- > Carbon capture and storage

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Development and implementation of national, regional and local action plans on adaptation measures
- > Greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures in industry
- > Integration of ecosystem-based solutions in action plans for adaptation and mitigation
- > Implementation of greenhouse gas capture and storage through restoration and conservation of ecosystems
- > Implementation of pilot projects for carbon capture and storage
- > Climate-proofing of infrastructure
- > Flood and drought prevention
- > Development of extreme event contingency plans
- > Awareness-raising activities

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Climate change is one of the challenges affecting economic and social development in Europe. It influences the sustainability of our societies, the potential for economic growth, the state of ecosystems, as well as our quality of life. The impact of climate change is global. It will however affect European citizens and ecosystems differently, depending on the magnitude and rate of climate change and the ability of the ecosystems and our communities to adapt to these changes.

To mitigate climate change the emission of greenhouse gases needs to be reduced or prevented. This calls for new technologies, energy production with less emissions, more efficient energy use, protection of ecosystems as they store large quantities of carbon, changed management practices and consumer behaviour. In addition to mitigating climate change, our societies need to prepare for and adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Adaptation means anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the damage it can cause.

Climate change affects sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and energy. European economies have to adapt to this and significant investment is required to address drought, heat waves, coastal erosion, floods and other effects resulting from extreme weather. Urban life needs to adapt to the increase in extreme weather conditions, which are likely to strain existing infrastructure in areas such as water supply, health, energy and transport.

The EU is making good progress towards meeting the climate and energy targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy. However, integrated policies for the longer term are needed. In April 2013 the European Commission adopted an EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. The so-called '2030 Framework', driving a continued progress towards a low carbon economy, was presented in January 2014. At the core of the framework is the proposal to reduce EU domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below the 1990 level by 2030.

The EU 'Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050' outlines how to achieve much deeper emission cuts by the middle of the century, with reductions milestones of the order of 40% by 2030 and 60% by 2040.

The agreement reached at the 21st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in November 2015 is a milestone in international climate change policy. The targets (on temperature rise and greenhouse gas emissions) and instruments agreed at the COP21, require committed implementation and follow-up, and this has triggered discussions in both the EU and donor countries on the revision of policies and next steps.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are committed to international efforts to tackle climate change, a commitment shared with the EU. The EEA and Norway Grants will fund mitigation and adaptation programmes in line with targets set out in the Europe 2020 strategy and the 7th Environment Action Programme 2020. The nature of climate change demands cross-border cooperation. Bilateral cooperation is essential for the addressing of some of the challenges stemming from climate change.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Climate change adaptation programmes shall contain small grant scheme(s) targeting civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

BILATERAL INTEREST

To mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, the sharing of knowledge and experience is crucial. The donor and beneficiary countries shall cooperate to develop mitigation measures and adaptation plans, while ensuring robust ecosystems and smart communities.

PRIORITY SECTOR

Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

The promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms lies at the core of the European Union's aim to advance its population and safeguard individual dignity. In line with the EU's cohesion objectives, the programme areas in the priority sector *Culture, Civil Society, Good Governance and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms* contribute to upholding fundamental rights and democratic freedoms and facilitating individuals' cooperation to achieve common aims. This is achieved through strengthening active citizenship, empowering vulnerable groups and enhancing the role of civil society. The aim is reinforced by support for activities aimed at cultural dialogue and awareness of diversity.

This priority sector is relevant for the thematic objectives of EU cohesion policy highlighted below

1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT
3	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants shall contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the beneficiary countries. The priority sectors and programme areas shall contribute to these two overall objectives.





PRIORITY SECTOR
Culture, Civil Society, Good
Governance and Fundamental
Rights and Freedoms

Programme area n°14

Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation

OBJECTIVE

Social and economic development strengthened through cultural cooperation, cultural entrepreneurship and cultural heritage management

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Cultural heritage management and conservation related to local and regional development
- > Documentation and accessibility of culture and cultural heritage
- > Capacity development of cultural players
- > Cultural entrepreneurship
- > Cultural and creative activities contributing to sustainable development and social cohesion
- > Audience development, including people in the diversity of culture, outreach and educational activities
- > Networking and international cultural cooperation

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Reinforcing cultural heritage management to strategically revitalise heritage and/or contribute to sustainable local and regional development
- > Adapting to digital developments
- > Documenting cultural history and/or safeguarding cultural heritage and making it accessible
- > Increasing public inclusion and awareness about cultural diversity
- > Outreach and educational activities
- > Developing cultural heritage routes
- > Stimulating job potential in the cultural and creative sectors
- > Developing skills, competencies and know-how
- > Exchange programme for young professionals
- > Developing new working methods/business models
- > Bridging the gap between creativity, culture and business, for example, through public-private partnerships
- > Supporting minority culture
- > Promoting dialogue on history narratives
- > Bilateral cultural cooperation between cultural players
- > Good governance/shared European values through culture and local community development
- > Small grant scheme(s)

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Culture's intrinsic value is widely recognised. Beyond this value, the cultural and creative sectors are important drivers of economic growth, job development and social inclusion. In its impact assessment for the EU Creative Europe programme, the European Commission underlines the transformative economic and social power of culture: the cultural and creative sectors account for approximately 4.5% of the Union's GDP (2008) and employ some 3.8% of its workforce. These sectors trigger spill-overs in other economic areas such as tourism. They fuel the development of innovative content for ICT and greatly contribute to education, social inclusion and social innovation.

Within the EU's 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, funding for the EU Creative Europe programme was increased in view of the sector's role in promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In May 2014 the EU Council adopted conclusions on cultural heritage, stressing that a holistic approach by the EU is required for cultural heritage, whilst underlining the sector's role for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The EEA and Norway Grants stimulate the safeguarding of cultural heritage, cultural entrepreneurship and cultural cooperation because of the sector's role in local and regional development, capacity development and social inclusion. The Grants recognise the sector's potential as a driver of economic and social innovation inside and outside of the cultural and creative sectors. They acknowledge that the cultural and creative sectors also play a role in stimulating social inclusion and combatting discrimination; they help forge solidarity between people and strengthen democracy. Across Europe there is a growing concern related to radicalism and violent extremism. Culture plays a role in counterbalancing this due to its role in stimulating greater mutual understanding.

The EEA and Norway Grants aim at broadening people's access to culture, at promoting cultural diversity and at strengthening intercultural dialogue. The importance of media literacy, intercultural skills and other democratic competences is underlined in the Secretary General of the Council of Europe's report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' (April 2014).

There is strong bilateral cooperation in this area, which stimulates knowledge sharing, accelerated learning and the emergence of stronger networks for international cooperation.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Cultural heritage management and conservation shall take account of impact on regional and local development
- > All programmes shall include cultural cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries
- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding, or exceptionally in the programme's concept note
- > A minimum level of funding available for small grant scheme(s) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding, or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

This area contributes to further development of the European area for culture by forging bonds between cultural players in the donor and beneficiary countries, contributing to accelerated learning within these sectors and to the strengthening of networks.



PRIORITY SECTOR
Culture, Civil Society, Good
Governance and Fundamental
Rights and Freedoms

Programme area n°15 Civil Society

OBJECTIVE

Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Democracy, active citizenship, good governance and transparency
- > Human rights, minority rights and anti-discrimination, including combating racism and xenophobia
- > Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups
- > Gender equality and gender-based violence
- > Environment and climate change

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Advocacy, awareness-raising and outreach to citizens
- > Watchdog and monitoring, including following up on recommendations of international monitoring bodies
- > Citizen activism, volunteering and civic participation
- > Participation in policy and decision-making processes, including promoting an enabling environment for civil society
- > Support for freedom of expression and media
- > Countering hate speech, including support to networks working with hate crime victims
- > Capacity building of the civil society sector, including sustainability, networking and accountability of NGOs
- > Partnerships between NGOs, public and private sector entities
- > Civic education and training
- > Research and analysis to inform policy-making
- > Social innovation and social enterprise development
- > Multicultural dialogue, including platforms for minority/majority interactions
- > Awareness-raising and capacity building on environmental issues including climate change and adaptation
- > Access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the Aarhus Convention

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Support from the EEA and Norway Grants to civil society reflects a firm recognition of the sector's role as a fundamental building block of democratic governance, human rights and social cohesion across Europe. The civil society programmes reflect the current challenges facing Europe against the backdrop of the economic crisis. In line with the objectives of the EU's cohesion policy, particular emphasis is given to combating discrimination, to promoting inclusion and to harnessing the potential of social entrepreneurship in the fight against social exclusion. Support for young people at risk of social exclusion, and young people from marginalised communities, is mainstreamed across the programme area.

Civil society organisations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), mobilise participation in civic life, and play a key role in promoting active citizen engagement in decision-making at local, national and European levels. In the context of reduced national and international support to the sector, the EEA and Norway Grants play a critical role in building the capacity of the sector.

NGOs tackle social problems arising from inequality and discrimination. They contribute to the activation and empowerment of disadvantaged people and minority groups, such as Roma, by helping them overcome barriers to participation and ensure that their voices are heard.

Radicalisation, violent extremism and the rise of populist forces demand a comprehensive and multi-sectoral response. Civil society support for inclusion, democracy and participation plays a role in addressing the easy dissemination of hateful views online and can reinforce broad efforts to counter extremist narratives and prevent escalation leading to violence.

NGOs provide innovative solutions and services that help vulnerable people overcome barriers to participation in socio-economic life. The Europe 2020 strategy emphasises civil society organisations as agents of innovation, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Civil society organisations supported by the EEA and Norway Grants often work closely with public authorities and stakeholders. Partnerships between NGOs and public administrations, particularly at local level, can contribute to better access to services, accountability and good governance.

The programme area takes account of challenges identified in the Secretary General of the Council of Europe report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' (April 2014). Knowledge-sharing, exchange of experience and project partnerships are promoted through bilateral cooperation.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > At least a third of the re-granting amount shall be allocated to democracy and human rights relevant projects
- > All programmes shall address youth inclusion
- > Protection of the environment and climate change shall only be supported as part of measures to promote civic participation, advocacy, social innovation and active citizenship
- > Provision of welfare and basic services shall only be supported as part of wider actions addressing awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment and reform initiatives
- > At least 15% of the re-granting amount shall contribute to capacity development and sustainability of the civil society sector

Programme area n°16

Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency

OBJECTIVE

Integrity and accountability of public administration improved

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Institutional capacity-building
- > Public administration reform
- > Delivery, accessibility and quality of public services
- > Accountable, inclusive and transparent government
- > Economic and financial governance
- > Cooperation between government and civil society

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Public governance reviews and follow-up with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- > Support to public administration reform programmes, with a focus on strengthening good governance, democratic institutions, transparency and prevention of corruption
- > Systems for budgeting, audit, control and supervision and for public consultations with citizens
- > Revision of national legislation on local self-government, including finance, in line with the principles of the Council of Europe Charter of Local Self Government and other European standards
- > Follow up of recommendations of the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) addressing good governance with the involvement of the Council of Europe
- > Competence and skills development within public administration
- > Social innovation policy approaches including guidelines and mechanisms for interaction between civil and private sectors, public authorities and parliament
- > Campaigns aimed at raising awareness and empowering women's participation in government
- > Development of institutional and judicial frameworks for the protection of whistleblowers in line with European standards
- > Knowledge exchange between democratic institutions, such as national parliaments

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Good public governance and a more efficient and effective public administration are key drivers for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth, which are the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The economic crisis has negatively affected already strained government resources and posed challenges in the area of democratic governance. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) most countries have experienced increased income inequality since the onset of the crisis. Unemployment is high, especially among young people. Vulnerable groups of all ages and both sexes are being hit by the crisis. Inter-regional differences in public services and regional disparities, combined with significant differences in fiscal capacities, have deepened.

National and sub-national governments are major drivers of the developments needed to find a way out of the crisis. In order to respond to the crisis, plan for the future and make the best use of scarce resources, governments need to strengthen their capacity.

Within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy and the EU's cohesion policy, national public administration reform programmes are seen as instruments to improve democratic and economic governance and foster fiscal consolidation. They are essential for the structural reforms required, for investment in growth and employment, and for improved service delivery. They also help to achieve a better balance between economic interests, environmental concerns and social inclusion. This is underlined in the report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (April 2014), which recommends measures to reinforce governance structures. Adherence to recommendations of European and international monitoring reports shall be ensured if applicable.

Governments are faced with a loss of trust in their ability to deal with the crisis and meet citizens' needs and expectations. This loss of trust can reduce the effectiveness of policies and ultimately undermine the capacity of governments to uphold fundamental rights. Good public governance, including the rule of law, contributes to building trust and confidence in national institutions as stewards of national well-being, quality of life and economic prosperity for citizens.

The EEA and Norway Grants support concrete actions and reforms to develop and implement public policies of governments at local, regional and national levels. Bilateral partnerships between donor and beneficiary country entities are promoted as a way to stimulate exchanges of best practice and knowledge.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programme area is mandatory in each beneficiary country. It shall be implemented either as an individual programme or within other programmes
- > The programme area is particularly suitable for cooperation with international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)



PRIORITY SECTOR
Culture, Civil Society, Good
Governance and Fundamental
Rights and Freedoms

Programme area n°17

Human Rights – National Implementation

OBJECTIVE

Human rights situation improved and discrimination and extremism combatted at national level

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
- > Developing and empowering ombudsman institutions, national human rights platforms and equality bodies
- > Peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation
- > Combating all forms of discrimination, including hate crime and hate speech

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > National implementation of relevant judgements and case law by the European Court of Human Rights
- > Follow-up of thematic and country-specific recommendations on human rights put forward by international organisations
- > Training of judges, lawyers and prosecutors on the European Convention on Human Rights and relevant case law of the European Court of Human Rights by the Council of Europe
- > Development of national strategies and/or action plans on human rights implementation
- > Capacity building measures linked to developing and empowering ombudsman institutions, national human rights institutions and equality bodies
- > Awareness-raising campaigns on combating all forms of discrimination
- > Development of systematic dialogue with people working on anti-discrimination issues linked to history teaching and remembrance
- > Innovative approaches to promoting human rights, e.g. towards young people or through the media, and in developing educational materials
- > Strengthening of human rights protection and promotion in school and out of school
- > Capacity building measures for history educators on the use of efficient methods to promote peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation
- > Protection of individuals and groups in national human rights work
- > Institutional networking and sharing of best practice

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Fostering human rights and preventing discrimination and extremism are priorities for the donor countries. These aims are therefore streamlined across programmes within the EEA and Norway Grants in addition to this dedicated programme area.

The economic crisis has put human rights under additional pressure, and political extremism is on the rise across Europe. Combating all forms of discrimination is a fundamental principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as expressed in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Treaty of the European Union. It is also an objective for EU cohesion policy. Whilst ensuring implementation is the responsibility of the state, broad cooperation with citizens is necessary to succeed.

The ability of national governments to implement the conditions of international treaties will be strengthened under this programme area. Support is given to measures designed to give effect to judgements of the European Court of Human Rights and decisions of the Committee of Social Rights of the Council of Europe, as well as follow-up on country-specific recommendations put forward by monitoring bodies and expert groups of international organisations, such as the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and UN human rights monitoring mechanisms. The report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' (April 2014) by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe recommends measures to address main challenges in this area. These recommendations are taken into account in the areas of support.

Within this programme area cooperation with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights is recommended.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Priority shall be given to empowering minorities and vulnerable groups to uphold their rights
- > Priority shall be given to initiatives targeting young people
- > Programmes shall include small grant scheme(s) for partnerships between the public sector and civil society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with minimum allocations for such scheme(s) to be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

This is an area where the donor and beneficiary countries can benefit from institutional networking and the sharing of best practice.

PRIORITY SECTOR

Justice and Home Affairs

The priority sector *Justice and Home Affairs* aims at strengthening European citizens' confidence in their governments' ability to ensure civil rights, equal treatment and protection, all which are crucial to the Europe 2020 strategy for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Lack of public trust in the judiciary is widespread mainly due to corruption, excessive length of proceedings and chronic non-enforcement of judicial decisions. Furthermore, crime stretches across European borders with increased complexity, the influx of irregular migrants remains a challenge for Europe, and weak immigration systems risk breaching human rights and international law. Domestic and gender-based violence remain endemic throughout Europe to huge economic and social cost. Man-made and natural disasters are increasing both in frequency and intensity, and investments in disaster risk reduction can reduce or prevent loss of life and property, and reap vast economic benefits.

This priority sector is relevant for the thematic objectives of EU cohesion policy highlighted below

1	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
2	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT
3	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
4	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors
5	Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
6	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
7	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures
8	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
9	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
10	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning
11	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants shall contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthening bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the beneficiary countries. The priority sectors and programme areas shall contribute to these two overall objectives.





Programme area n°18 Asylum and Migration

OBJECTIVE

Functioning national asylum and migration management systems ensured and the right to seek asylum safeguarded

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > National systems for asylum and migration management, including voluntary return
- > Services to help asylum seekers to exercise basic rights

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Supporting initiatives that contribute to a well-functioning asylum system, enabling asylum seekers to bring forward their claim for international protection, have the claim processed in due time, be offered accommodation during the processing of their case and be given the opportunity to return voluntarily, all in accordance with the legal instruments of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)
- > Strengthening case processing systems for asylum seekers
- > Developing reception facilities with a focus on unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups
- > Supporting voluntary return
- > Strengthening the cooperation between public authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and/or international organisations such as the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- > Exchange of knowledge and best practice, either bilaterally or multilaterally, on ways to improve national asylum and migration management systems
- > Small grant scheme(s) for NGOs
- > Capacity building of NGOs

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

More than 1,2 million asylum seekers requested international protection in Europe in 2015, more than double the number of people compared to 2014. As a result border and asylum systems in Europe are currently under enormous pressure. In 2015 the EEA and Norway Grants put increased focus on activities aiming to alleviate some of the pressure asylum and migrant reception services are experiencing.

The increasing volume of asylum seekers requires well-functioning migration management systems that safeguard the right to seek asylum. Since 1999, the EU has worked to create a Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The CEAS establishes common standards for the asylum procedure.

The UN Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees is the key legal document defining refugees, their rights and the legal obligations of states. Asylum is granted to people who flee persecution in their own country and are in need of international protection.

All EU Member States and EEA EFTA countries are signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits return to the country of origin where there is a risk of torture or other cruel or inhuman treatment ('non refoulement'). They are also part of the Dublin system that defines the state responsible for processing an application for asylum. All asylum seekers shall have their application considered in only one of the countries participating in the collaboration.

All programmes under this programme area contribute to a well-functioning asylum system, enabling asylum seekers access to secure asylum procedures in line with the legal instruments of the Common European Asylum System.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

> Priority shall be given to the needs of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups

BILATERAL INTEREST

Knowledge exchange and exchange of best practice between donor and beneficiary countries is of interest in this area, especially on the organisation of reception facilities, on case management systems and on vulnerable groups.



Programme area n°19

Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention

OBJECTIVE

Improved correctional system

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Correctional service systems and mechanisms
- > Support to prisoners, including their rehabilitation and preparation for release
- > Measures stimulating the beneficiary countries to meet international standards on correctional services and detention, including the Council of Europe's European Prison Rules, recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and case law of the European Court of Human Rights
- > Alternative sanctions to alleviate overcrowded prisons
- > Education and training for prison and probation staff
- > Support to vulnerable groups (in pre-trial detention, prison and probation)
- > Strengthening the implementation of agreements on the transfer of sentenced persons and EU framework decisions
- > Justice chain cooperation and networking between justice institutions (courts, prosecution services, police and correctional services)

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Developing policies and national strategies, including measures to increase transparency and insight, and reviewing sentencing policies
- > Improving organisational and managerial structures in and outside prisons, such as an efficient and functioning National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs), in line with CPT recommendations
- > Improving preparations for release and reintegration, including cooperation with public services and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- > Improving conditions for prisoners and detainees, including facilities to maintain family and community ties in preparation for release from prison
- > Establishing detainees' legal avenues to challenge the legality and conditions of their detention before a competent national authority
- > Reducing overcrowding in places of detention (including pre-trial) by seeking alternatives to prison, such as community-based sanctions and measures
- > Increasing competence and professionalism among staff through education and training focused on ethics, values and security culture
- > Small grant scheme(s) for NGOs
- > Improving conditions, methods and staff competence on the treatment of vulnerable groups, including women, juvenile offenders, LGBT-people, drug addicts, non-nationals, physically and mentally-ill prisoners
- > Strengthening cooperation between criminal justice authorities to enable transfer of prisoners to their country of origin
- > Establishing and strengthening networks of cooperation within the penal and judicial systems

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Many beneficiary countries face serious problems with their prison systems, including growth in the prison population and overcrowding, inadequate health care, mental disorders, subcultures and sexual abuse. In addition, the rising number of prisoners with drug addiction problems is of growing concern. Poor infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel, insufficient sanitation and accommodation and shortages of meaningful activities for prisoners are also common challenges.

The report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (April 2014) recommends measures to address chronic prison overcrowding and to improve prison conditions.

As in the past, the EEA and Norway Grants help to address these problems. A number of successful prison projects and professional partnerships have already been established under previous periods of the Norway Grants.

Over the years, the United Nations and the Council of Europe have developed specific standards in the prison field. These can be found in recommendations, conventions and protocols, as well as in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. The observations of the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) and the reports of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) document a wide range of problems and concerns in places of detention in Contracting States. They also provide concrete and detailed recommendations to each member state on how to improve the situation and adapt their laws and policies.

After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has increasingly taken account of matters in the prison field by issuing framework decisions such as on transfer of prisoners and probation and alternative sanctions. Adherence to relevant recommendations in European and international monitoring reports and jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights shall be ensured.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Improvement of material conditions in prison shall only be supported alongside rehabilitation and reintegration measures
- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note
- > Priority shall be given to juveniles in prison

BILATERAL INTEREST

Exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience should be encouraged through bilateral cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries.



Programme area n°20

International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime

OBJECTIVE

Improved crime prevention and investigation

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Cooperation between national and international law enforcement authorities, such as Europol, Interpol and Frontex
- > Efficiency of cooperation between law enforcement authorities in fighting organised crime
- > Cooperation between authorities, including national law enforcement authorities, and relevant stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the general public, especially vulnerable groups
- > The justice chain – cooperation and networking between justice institutions, including courts, prosecution services, police, and correctional services
- > Combating transnational crime, including cyber-crime, trafficking in and smuggling of human beings and itinerant criminal groups
- > Combating hate crime and violent extremism
- > Combating gender-based violence
- > Combating crimes against employees, work-related crime, money laundering and corruption
- > Effectiveness of the police system and its performance
- > Systems to protect and support victims of crime
- > Child-friendly justice

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Improving the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute in cases of organised crime, including trafficking
- > Improving the capacity of national authorities to work with Eurojust, Europol and Interpol
- > Capacity building and financial support for core activities, such as improved forensic services
- > Strengthening of cooperation between border control and police authorities
- > Support cooperation within the Schengen area
- > Developing and supporting international networks on an operational level to ensure the rapid exchange of information for investigative purposes, as well as for the sharing of best practice
- > Preventing recruitment into trafficking and providing assistance and support for victims
- > Combating corruption within the police
- > Improving work-flows within the police
- > Improving cooperation between different stakeholders where several public and civic institutions play a role
- > Training in human rights, cultural awareness and dialogue, including follow-up of country specific recommendations in European and International monitoring reports, such as those of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), and MONEYVAL
- > Preventing and combating corruption, money laundering, including proceeds from tax crimes, as well as the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- > Recovering proceeds from crime and implementing cost-efficient mechanisms to reuse former criminal assets

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Crime draws resources from the economy and poses a threat to public safety.

Combating international organised crime is a high priority for all European countries. Since the Vienna Action Plan in 1999, combating organised crime has been a priority for the European Union. This has subsequently been reflected in programmes and action plans adopted every fourth year, the latest being the Stockholm Programme for 2010-2014.

Security in Europe is enhanced when law enforcement authorities pool information as effectively as possible. Well-educated and well-functioning police forces, which are adequately equipped to cooperate, are the key to combatting crime. Law-enforcement authorities in Europe cooperate on a bilateral basis and through European agencies such as Europol, Frontex and Eurojust, as well as internationally through Interpol.

The 2010 evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2004-09 identified that future funding needs to focus on combating organised crime, human trafficking and corruption in particular. Victims of crime are an important group that needs to be recognised, especially children. The implementation of the EU's victims' directive is especially relevant in this context.

All EU and EEA EFTA countries have signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and all but two have ratified it. The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the convention. Many of the same countries have also ratified the criminal law and civil law conventions against corruption, which are monitored by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). The EEA and Norway Grants will assist the beneficiary countries in meeting their obligations under these conventions.

Adherence to recommendations in European and international monitoring reports, as well as to judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice of the EU, shall be supported if relevant. The support also takes account of the recommendations made in the Secretary General of the Council of Europe report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' (April 2014).

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

> A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note

BILATERAL INTEREST

Cross-border crime is a collective challenge which can be addressed through increased international cooperation. Exchange of knowledge and expertise between police forces will be supported through this programme area.



Programme area n°21

Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening Rule of Law

OBJECTIVE

Strengthened rule of law

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Efficiency of the judiciary and quality of judicial decision-making
- > Stimulating integrity and addressing corruption in the judiciary
- > Access to justice, including for vulnerable groups
- > International cooperation between actors within the judicial system, including Eurojust
- > Efficient justice chain: cooperation and networking between justice institutions, including courts, prosecution, police and correctional services
- > Promoting openness and cooperation between the judiciary and civil society as well as relevant public authorities
- > Justice capable of addressing hate crime and extremism
- > Child-friendly justice
- > Restorative justice

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Improving administrative capacity, skills and effectiveness of the judiciary, including upgrading of technical equipment, reviewing management practices and improving gender balance in access to justice and in the senior judiciary
- > Training of judges, lawyers and prosecutors on the European Convention on Human Rights and relevant case law, training for legal professionals and support for professional associations
- > Establishing objective and transparent appointment, promotion and transfer procedures for judges and prosecutors
- > Improving systems for legal aid, including access to free legal aid
- > Establishing judicial procedures responding to the rights of persons with special needs
- > Supporting European judicial culture through study trips, secondments and exchanges increasing the knowledge of fundamental and human rights, EU law and other international legal instruments
- > Enhancing justice chain data collection facilitating knowledge development
- > Establishing networks of public institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- > Addressing child abduction and establishing child-friendly facilities, including in and out of court interviewing
- > Increasing the use of restorative justice, including projects aimed at national strategy and overall administration of juvenile justice
- > Preventing and combating corruption, money laundering, including proceeds from tax crimes, financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- > Small grant scheme(s) for NGOs

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

The lack of public trust in the judicial system is widespread across Europe. Corruption within the judiciary, excessive length of proceedings and chronic non-enforcement of judicial decisions in some countries are among the factors that contribute to this lack of trust. Fair and efficient judicial systems and rule of law are essential to regain public trust in the courts.

The European Convention on Human Rights remains the cornerstone for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the findings of the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) show that many countries face challenges in their judicial system. The CEPEJ aims to improve the efficiency and functioning of justice in the member states and to further foster the implementation of the instruments adopted by the Council of Europe to this end. For this reason programmes under this programme area are suitable for implementation in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

The report 'State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe' by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (April 2014) found that the key measures to improve the judiciary were to shorten the length of judicial proceedings and enforce court decisions, strengthen transparency within the judicial system, improve the quality of training of judges and improve the gender balance in the senior judiciary. To ensure greater fairness in the court system it is important that access is equal for all and that the courts are designed to meet the needs of different groups within society, in particular children. With hate crime on the rise it is also important that judges receive additional training in this area.

A fair judiciary that ensures predictable, timely and enforceable judicial decisions contributes to trust and stability. This is not only important for people's faith in the system, it is also crucial in ensuring a sound business and investment environment. National justice systems are important for meeting the goals of the EU's Europe 2020 strategy to restore confidence and attract the investment needed for Europe's return to growth. Equally important are European networks of legal practitioners that contribute to building and nurturing a European judicial culture and facilitating mutual trust and judicial cooperation.

Adherence to recommendations made by European and international monitoring mechanisms and the judgments of European and international courts shall be ensured if applicable.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note



Programme area n°22

Domestic and Gender-based Violence

OBJECTIVE

Domestic and gender-based violence prevented and victims protected and assisted

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Prevention of domestic and gender-based violence
- > Protection and support for victims of domestic and gender-based violence
- > Effective and integrated response systems including police, justice and service agencies

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Development of legislation, policies and national strategies to prevent and tackle gender-based violence
- > Measures to strengthen victim protection and to bring national legal frameworks in line with Council of Europe standards
- > Development of effective protective measures
- > Development of educational material for primary and secondary schools, as well as for health care providers, to enable them to better protect victims and prevent future abuse
- > Training of professionals in close contact with victims and/or perpetrators
- > Advocacy, awareness-raising, and capacity-building activities, including on online harassment
- > Treatment programmes for offenders
- > Establishment of specialised support services and the continuation of support services for victims of gender-based violence and affected children
- > Primary prevention activities identifying children and families at risk
- > Research, analysis, and data collection, including survey research that can be used to inform policy and action on the ground
- > Development of partnerships between central and local government and civil society
- > Networking, e.g. fostering collaboration between local stakeholders working in the field of gender-based violence
- > Regional cooperation, e.g. regional comparative analyses of the implementation of laws and policies on gender-based violence, including the implementation of the Istanbul Convention
- > Small grant scheme(s) for non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), as many as one in three women in Europe have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15. Gender-based violence covers a variety of transgressions, including violence in close relationships, sexual violence, rape, assault and harassment.

Gender-based violence is a violation of fundamental rights with respect to dignity, equality and justice. It goes beyond the remit of criminal law and touches upon many policy fields from public health to education. Despite efforts to counter such violence, it remains an extensive and widely under-reported human rights abuse, with young women and girls being particularly vulnerable.

The scale and gravity of this issue call for renewed and increased attention. The EEA and Norway Grants aim to tackle both the causes and consequences of violence. The comprehensive and comparable data made available by FRA on the scale and nature of violence against women in Europe will serve as an important baseline for our support in this field.

The Council of Europe is an important partner to the Grants in the area of gender-based violence. The Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which entered into force on 1 August 2014, serves as a reference and guideline for the EEA and Norway Grants' efforts in this area. Support will enable beneficiary countries to prepare and follow up the ratification of the Convention. Moreover, the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and recommendations from the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking provide guidelines for projects aimed specifically at trafficking in human beings. Programmes shall be in line with these conventions.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe report "State of democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe" (April 2014) recommends measures to address challenges related to gender-based violence. The provided support will help address some of the identified challenges.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > Priority shall be given to vulnerable groups including child witnesses of violence, migrant women and Roma women
- > Priority shall be given to comprehensive and coordinated measures involving public entities as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- > A maximum of 50% of funding shall be made available for infrastructure (hard measures)



Programme area n°23 Disaster Prevention and Preparedness

OBJECTIVE

Improved disaster resilience

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Risk and vulnerability competence and capacity
- > Prevention and reduction of existing and new risks and vulnerability
- > Disaster and crisis risk resilience at all levels and in all sectors of society

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Mainstreaming of disaster risk management to support resilient investments
- > Development and update of national acts and regulations based on relevant international commitments and recommendations
- > Development of national, regional and local risk assessment systems, including procedures and methods
- > Cross-border learning and cooperation on development and implementation of risk management policies and practices
- > Cross-border learning cooperation on disaster impacts
- > Guidance for disaster and crisis prevention based on best practices on cross-cutting themes
- > Capacity-building through technical support for critical infrastructure
- > Strengthening of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) safety and security
- > Strengthening of oil spill prevention management
- > Ensuring data availability, accessibility, sharing and comparability, aimed at establishing European standards and protocols for recording disaster losses

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Disasters and climate risks have a major impact on the economy as well as on the security and well-being of citizens. In recent years, exposure to disasters has increased significantly due to climate change, rapid and unplanned urbanisation, demographic pressure, construction and more intensive land-use in hazard prone areas, biodiversity loss and eco-system degradation.

In the past decade, disasters and risk have increased direct overall losses with annual averages of 100 000 deaths and economic losses of more than €100 billion worldwide. In the European Union, natural disasters have caused 80 000 deaths and €95 billion in economic losses.¹

Impacts vary across regions depending on the geographic exposure to risk as well as the level of socioeconomic development. While fatalities tend to be higher in developing countries and economic losses higher in developed economies, all countries are vulnerable to disasters.

Human development activities may carry significant inherent risks, caused or inflicted either by technical factors, human errors or malevolent actions – or a combination of these. Recent examples of this are the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011 and the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster in 2010.

To address this alarming trend, risk prevention and management policies as well as concrete and sustainable safety and security measures are essential to ensure sustainable development and economic growth. Prevention and risk management make strong economic sense in terms of avoiding losses. Investments in disaster risk management also brings extended economic benefits and can act as a means of promoting jobs and help to ensure structural sustainability of public and private finances.

The programme area will further the implementation of relevant international obligations, recommendations and standards given by intergovernmental organisations such as the EU, the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and other UN organisations.

The revised EU Civil Protection legislation aims at a better (joint) response to natural and man-made disasters. A swift, pre-planned and effective response will increase the security of EU citizens and disaster victims. The activities shall contribute to realising the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU civil protection legislation and the UN post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction with a focus on prevention.

BILATERAL INTEREST

To reduce disaster risk and strengthen disaster risk resilience, sharing of knowledge and experience is crucial. The donor and beneficiary countries shall co-operate to develop prevention competence and capacity, ensuring that robust systems are in place when incidents occur.

¹ Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)

Reduce
economic and social
disparities

Strengthen
bilateral
relations



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF ICELAND



GOVERNMENT
PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN