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*Annual Programme Report on the Implementation of the Programme EE09:
Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*

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1. Executive Summary

The current report provides an overview of the first year (2013) of implementation for *EE09 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*, (hereinafter referred to as *the Programme*) financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014. The Programme aims to increase awareness on gender equality, promote research in the programme areas¹, improve the balance between work and private life responsibilities for members of society, and strengthen the capacity of organizations and networks active in the programme areas.

Shortly after the Programme Operator (hereinafter referred to as *the PO*)² began working on executing the Programme, the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner began realizing the pre-defined project³ *Promoting Gender Equality through Empowerment and Mainstreaming*. Though affected by the general delay in the Programme implementation, the first trainings, seminars, and legal counselling sessions in counties all over Estonia began taking place. The project is on target to meet its objectives of enhancing the application of the *Gender Equality Act* (subsequently advocating for a change in the general legal culture) via raising awareness on issues of gender equality, the prohibition of discrimination, and structural gender inequalities.

Equally to the Commissioner's Office, Statistics Estonia began implementing their project *Increased Availability of Gender Pay Gap Statistics* in early 2013. In spite of a prolonged start in the first half of the reporting period, the pre-defined project promoter has proven to be highly capable and comprehensive work on developing a new strategy for collecting and publicizing data on the gender pay gap in Estonia has begun.

Following a successful joint opening conference with the programme EE11 on domestic and gender-based violence 4 April, the PO launched two open calls 29 May which resulted in the selection of four projects. The call for proposals *High Quality, Comprehensive and Sustainable Systems for Promoting Gender Equality Developed and Implemented* resulted in the selection of two projects and the call for proposals *Research-Based Concepts for Promoting Balance between Work, Private, and Family Life Developed and Employee and Family Friendly Social and Working Environment Promoted*, resulted in the selection of two projects as well. Altogether 11 organizations from a comparatively wide variety of fields are involved with the selected projects as either project promoters or project partners.

Furthermore, the open calls gave rise to 3 project partnerships between Estonian and Norwegian entities. One of the three is between organizations in the public sector and thus contributes directly to the achievement of the Programme's bilateral outcome of signing two partnership agreements in the Estonian public sector fairly early in the implementation process. Contracts between the PO and project promoters are expected to be signed by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

With only one year of active implementation behind, the Programme is on target to achieving the other outcomes set forth in the Programme Proposal as well. That is, the employment rate of women with children under the age of three has climbed over the anticipated 30% mark and the general number of people who agree that a society in which men and women are equal is a good society, is on the rise as well. However, seeing as the implementation of the Programme is in its early stages, the positive shifts in outcome indicators have to be attributed to forces external to the Programme.

For example, the increases in the employment rate of women with children under the age of three can be linked to the fact that men were hit hardest by the financial recession because male-dominated fields suffered most when the economy weakened. Accompanying the high

¹ The Programme is divided into two programme areas: (1) promoting gender equality and (2) promoting a balanced relationship between work and private life

² The PO for EE09 is the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs (Department of Gender Equality in cooperation with the Foreign Financing Unit of the Finance and Property Management Department)

³ Two pre-defined projects are being implemented under the Programme: (1) *Promoting Gender Equality Through Empowerment and Mainstreaming* and (2) *Increased Availability of Gender Pay Gap Statistics*

unemployment rate of men was the women's more rapid return to the labour market.⁴ Among the reasons behind an increase in the number of people who agree that a society in which men and women are equal is a good society, is most probably an increase in awareness among the general population and specific target groups about gender equality and its benefits. Awareness raising has been a constant effort for the PO, e.g. a media campaign was carried out in spring 2013 to tackle gender stereotypes and to demonstrate their negative influence on work and career choices.

In retrospect, the most crucial and all-encompassing challenges for the Programme thus far have been the development of clear management structures that would enable the pre-defined projects to start implementation, the facilitation of bilateral relations on the programme level with the Donor Programme Partner (hereinafter referred to as *the DPP*)⁵, and ensuring that both the quality and quantity of projects from the open calls have an impact on, and contribute to, achieving the Programme's outcomes.

Lastly, the Programme Agreement has been amended twice with the first modification resulting in the decision to implement the small grant scheme (hereinafter referred to as *the SGS*) within the PO, rather than delegating the task to an external operator. The second amendment led to an increase in the total grant that would be distributed in the framework of the SGS as well as a shorter implementation period, from 0-24 to 1-18 months.

2. Programme Area Specific Developments

In the second half of the reporting period, the Gender Equality Council, as set forth in § 24 of the *Estonian Gender Equality Act* (hereinafter referred to as *the GEA*) was established and met for the first time. The Council functions as an advisory body to the Government of the Republic of Estonia and its main responsibilities are:

- Advising the Government in matters related to strategies for the promotion of gender equality
- Approving general objectives of gender equality policy and performing the duties prescribed in the GEA and its statutes
- Presenting opinions to the Government concerning the compliance of national programmes with § 9⁶ of the GEA

The establishment of such a high-level Council will undoubtedly make gender issues and disparities more visible in Estonia by providing the Government with invaluable advice on methods to reduce gendered inequalities such as the gender pay gap, gender segregation in education and in the labour market, hardships in the reconciliation of work and family obligations, as well as the risk behaviour of men and the latter's low life expectancy. Higher visibility of gender equality issues with more high-level representatives from various target groups as well as stakeholders of gender equality policies being involved in the discussions, both at the policy-making level as well as among the general public, will hopefully also contribute to raising the general awareness of these issues in the Estonian society at large.

To name other notable developments, then several national acts and development documents have been drafted in the reporting period (e.g. the *Strategy of Lifelong Learning* and the *Child Protection Act*) in which gender is being mainstreamed. Taking into consideration the gender mainstreaming obligation foreseen in the GEA, as well as the obligation to conduct impact analysis on various draft legislation enacted by the Government and the accompanying guidelines for the methodology of impact assessment⁷ which is also applied when preparing strategic documents and foresees a gender impact assessment, the PO is optimistic that the final drafts will also take the different situations/needs of men and women into account and,

⁴ Laes, T.-L., Krusell, S. "Laste heaolu. Child Well-Being? Tallinn: Statistics Estonia, 2013. Web. 3 Feb. 2014. <http://www.stat.ee/publication-download-pdf?publication_id=34248>

⁵ The Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

⁶ All national and municipal organizations are obliged to promote gender equality via mainstreaming

⁷ Republic of Estonia. Government Office, Ministry of Justice. Mõjude hindamise meetoodika. Tallinn, 2012. Web.

<http://www.valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/riigikantselsei/strateegia/strateegiate-mojude-hindamine/MHM_03-12-12.pdf>.

alongside the Programme, contribute to establishing an improved gender balance in the field of education.

3. Reporting on Programme Outcomes

The Programme is designed to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Raise awareness on matters related to gender equality and promote research in the field
2. Improve the balance between work and private-life obligations
3. Strengthen the capacity of gender equality organisations and networks

Three central outcome indicators have been chosen to measure the achievement of the Programme's anticipated outcomes. The first indicator measures the progress in changing attitudes towards gender roles that have taken place during the Programme period. The second indicator, the employment rate of women with children under three years of age, validates the positive impact of new measures taken to improve the reconciliation of work and private life responsibilities. Last but not least, the third outcome indicator measures the number of gender equality organisations and networks that have been strengthened as a direct cause of the Programme. Nonetheless, when looking at the shifts in the various outcome indicators, it is important to keep in mind that the Programme itself has not been in implementation for a long period and justifications for any positive developments have to be examined through other efforts that have been undertaken in the field and that are external to the Programme.

#	Outcome	Indicator	Description	Baseline	Progress	Target
1	Awareness raised and research on gender issues promoted	Change in attitudes towards gender roles (survey)	Percentage of people who completely agree that a society where women and men are equal is a good society	59% (2009)	64% (2013) ⁸	70%
2	Balance between work, private and family life improved	Employment rate of women with children under three years of age	General indicator for assessing the improvement of the area	28% (2010)	30.6% (2012) ⁹	30%
3	Capacity of gender equality organisations and networks strengthened	Number of gender equality organisations, networks and employers who receive small grant	Gender equality organizations and networks capacity is strengthened, employers supported to implement work-life balance measures to fulfil Programme objective	0	0	15

Table 1

As Table 1 exemplifies, the baseline for the indicator of outcome no 1 was measured at 59% in 2009 and the target for 2016 has been set at 70%. The *Gender Equality Monitoring*¹⁰ is used as the source of verification. An interim *Monitoring* was conducted in 2013 with funding from the European Social Fund which showed a 5% increase (between 2009 and 2013) in the percentage of people who completely agree with the idea that "a society where men and women are equal is a good society." While the indicator shows movement toward the desired outcome, a significant positive development is needed to achieve the goal of 70% within the next two years.

⁸ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. *Gender Equality Monitoring 2013*. Tallinn, 2014. Print.

⁹ Statistics Estonia TKL29

¹⁰ The Gender Equality Monitoring is an extensive quantitative study that provides data and information on various aspects related to gender equality and inequality, including public opinion, prevailing stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours in the Estonian society. Similar studies were conducted in 2003, 2005, 2009, and 2013. The next Gender Equality Monitoring will be conducted in 2016 with funding from the current Programme.

The second outcome indicator looks at mothers with children less than three years of age and their participation in the labour market. The baseline for the indicator was measured at 28%¹¹ in 2010 and the target for 2016 was set at 30%. Nevertheless, data by Statistics Estonia from 2012 indicate that the desired growth has been achieved – 30.6% of mothers with small children were engaged in paid work in 2012. Seeing as there is no reason to presume that by 2016, Estonian women will not surpass the set goal by several percentage points, the PO will consider increasing the target indicator over the course of the following reporting period.

Implementation of the SGS had not begun in the reporting period¹² and therefore it is impossible to report on any progress on the achievement of the third outcome and indicator thus far.

With one full year of implementation behind and two whole years still ahead, the risk that the Programme will not meet its expected outcomes is generally low. Nonetheless, risks vary across the various outcomes and should be assessed on the basis of each individual outcome rather than their composite.

For instance, risks associated with the achievement of the first outcome are moderate due to the fact that the indicator measures a change in the general public's attitudes which require more time to change and are dependent on the wider social and political context, i.e. strategies and other programmes that advocate for positive changes in the Programme area. Although measurements in the changing attitudes toward gender roles showed a 5% increase in the indicator value between 2009 and 2013, there is a tangible risk that the 6% increase that is necessary to achieve the target, will not be attained. In order to mitigate the risk, the PO will continue promoting the Programme on a national level, bringing attention to the importance of it as a whole, as well as parts of it (i.e. projects). Furthermore, the PO is hopeful that with the majority of projects beginning in 2014, positive developments will be seen by 2016.

3.1. Progress on Horizontal Concerns

To a certain extent, the Programme addresses the majority of horizontal concerns related to fundamental values such as promoting tolerance, multicultural understanding, and respect for the rights of minorities.

The most immediate effect of the Programme is the awareness that will be generated among both policy-makers and the public on not just gender equality, but on a variety of contemporary forms of intolerance. On a policy-level, the Programme complements the effective implementation of the two fundamental tools to eliminating intolerance and creating a basis for equality in the Estonian society on the whole: the *Gender Equality Act* and the *Equal Treatment Act*.

Close to a third of the Programme's budget is directed towards enhancing the capacity of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. The Commissioner is the main body in Estonia responsible for investigating discrimination cases on the grounds of gender, nationality, race, religious beliefs, disability, age, and sexual orientation. It is the Commissioner who is supposed to make proposals to – as well as advise and inform the central and local governments on issues relating to – the implementation of the *Gender Equality Act* as well as the *Equal Treatment Act*.

Enhancing the Commissioner's role as the promoter of equality prevents gender and multiple discrimination, assists policy-makers in the creation of anti-discriminatory policies, increases the general public's awareness, and aids members of the populace in case of actual discrimination. By increasing the effectiveness of legal protection against discrimination via raising the general public's awareness on their own rights and helping victims of discrimination through complex legal cases, increasing the capacity of the officials assisting discrimination victims, intensifying the promotion of gender equality and enhancing mainstreaming gender into policies and practises by various actors (especially in the public sector), the awareness of different actors on

¹¹ Krusell, Siim. "Reconciling Work and Family Life as a Task for Women?" *Man's Home is the World, Woman's World is her Home?* Tallinn: Statistics Estonia, 2011. 74. Web. 3 Feb. 2014. <http://www.stat.ee/publication-download-pdf?publication_id=25640>.

¹² For more details see Section 4.3 (small grant scheme) of the Annual Programme Report on the implementation of EE09 *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*.

issues of gender equality and the prohibition of discrimination and prevailing structural gender inequalities in the society will substantially improve.

4. Reporting on Outputs

4.1. Projects' Contribution to Programme Outputs

The central strategy that was chosen for the Programme concentrates on creating a strong basis for the further development of systemic structures that promote gender equality. This is achieved via launching two calls for proposals, developing a new strategy for calculating and analysing the gender pay gap (pre-defined project), implementing a SGS to improve the capacity of organizations and networks active in the programme areas, and creating a comprehensive set of activities to improve the efficiency of legal protection against gender discrimination (pre-defined project). For a detailed overview of the projects' contribution to the Programme outputs, refer to *Table 2*.

Outcome	Output	Output indicator	Indicator Value			Source of Verification
			Baseline	Progress in 2013	Target 2016	
Awareness raised and research on gender issues promoted	High-quality, comprehensive and sustainable systems for promoting gender equality developed and implemented	Number of initiatives that contribute to a high-quality, comprehensive and sustainable system(s) for improving the capacity of relevant stakeholder on gender equality	0	2 projects that contribute to the outcome were selected via an open call, contracts with project promoters are yet to be signed. Nonetheless, the target of 3 initiatives will most likely not be achieved	3	Project reporting
	New concept for gender pay gap statistics in place	Set of indicators on the gender pay gap added to the public on-line data base of Statistics Estonia	0	Project is in implementation. The target is on track to be met	1	Project reporting
		A new concept developed for more efficient collection and faster publication of statistics on the gender pay gap	0	Project is in implementation. The target is on track to be met	1	Methodological guideline of collection and publication of gender pay gap statistics compiled on-line database of Statistics Estonia
	Enhanced capacity of Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner to protect against discrimination and help obliged actors to mainstream gender in their core work	Number of trainings and consultations on implementation of equal treatment principle and gender mainstreaming are provided (days per year)	8	3 trainings took place. Though delayed, the target will likely be met	25	Project reporting
		Number of publications about equal treatment of women and men and gender mainstreaming	4	No publications were publicized. First publications will be completed in 2014. Though delayed, the target will likely be met	12	Publications by Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner
		Number of studies on the prevalence of inequality and experiences of gender and multiple discrimination	0	Planning for the study has commenced. Though delayed, the target will likely be met	1	Studies available to the public on the prevalence of inequality and experiences of gender and multiple discrimination

Balance between work, private and family life improved	Research-based concepts for promoting balance between work, private and family life developed	A new concept developed	0	1 project was selected via an open call that is highly research-based but concentrates narrowly on one aspect of the area of work-life balance, rather than contributing to the creation of a new concept for its promotion. A contract with the project promoter is yet to be signed, but nonetheless, the target is on track to be met	1	Project reporting
		Research-based measures on balancing work, private and family life pointed out in the concept, available	0	The above mentioned project was selected. The target of developing 7 concepts will most likely not be met	7	Concept with different work, private and family life balancing measures compiled and available
	Employee and family friendly social and working environment promoted	Number of measures implemented that promote work, private and family life balance	0	1 project was selected via an open call. A contract with the project promoter is yet to be signed, the target is on track to be met	3	Project reporting
Capacity of gender equality organizations and networks strengthened	Gender equality organizations and networks have improved awareness and better cooperation on gender equality and gender mainstreaming measures	Number of measures to improve awareness of gender equality and gender mainstreaming among gender equality organizations and networks	0	The SGS will be implemented in 2014	8	SGS projects' final reports
	Work-life balance measures supported	Number of employers that promote work-life balance	0	The SGS will be implemented in 2014	4	Project reporting
Bilateral Indicators						
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector			0	3 project partnership agreements are likely to be signed in 2014 with one of them between entities in the public sector. With the SGS yet to be implemented, the target is on track to be met	2	Project reporting

Table 2

4.2. Pre-Defined Projects

Two pre-defined projects are being implemented within the framework of this Programme:

1. **Promoting Gender Equality Through Empowerment and Mainstreaming**

Pre-defined project promoter: Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner
Grant Amount: €700,000

2. Increased Availability of Gender Pay Gap Statistics

Pre-defined project promoter: Statistics Estonia

Grant Amount: €227,762

Implementation of both projects began 25 March 2013.

4.2.1 The Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner

The project *Promoting Gender Equality through Empowerment and Mainstreaming* works to raise awareness of several actors on the various issues related to gender equality, the prohibition of discrimination, as well as the prevailing structural gender inequalities in the Estonian society. The project's activities have been designed to enhance the protection from discrimination on the basis of sex/gender and multiple discrimination, and have a positive impact on raising legal awareness on the equal treatment of women and men, resulting in a general change in the legal culture. Overall, the project is intended to enhance the implementation of the *Gender Equality Act* – the foremost legislation in Estonia on the equal treatment of women and men and mainstreaming gender equality.

Generally speaking, the project has been divided into two sets of activities:

1. Increasing the effectiveness of legal protection against discrimination by raising rights awareness and helping victims of discrimination directly through strategic litigation as well as increasing the capacity of officials assisting discrimination victims
2. Intensifying the promotion of gender equality and enhancing mainstreaming gender into policies and practises by various actors, especially in the public sector

The pre-defined project contract was signed 12 April. Since then, the Commissioner has hired a staff consisting of an assistant, a project manager, a communications specialist, an expert in the field of mainstreaming gender equality, and a senior lawyer. Together with the growing personnel, the Commissioner's office began looking for a new office space as well, which took more time than expected and caused disruptions in the entire team's work. A temporary office space was found in the end of the third quarter and a number of people working on implementing the project moved there in the middle of the fourth quarter.

The Commissioner has continually pointed to the delay in the start of the project implementation as one of the major risks to achieving the project's expected outcomes and a short delay in the implementation is evidenced, but does not cause for too much concern with two full years of implementation still ahead.

The main achievements for the current reporting period include:

- Conducting a seminar for specialist in the field of gender equality
- Conducting a training for the Labour Inspectorate of Estonia
- Developing a webpage for the project¹³ (in Estonian and in English)
- Legal counselling in 5 counties (altogether 45 have been planned for the duration of the project, one in every county per year)
- Planning a study on the prevalence of inequality
- Planning and starting the implementation of a pilot project on gender mainstreaming within the Ministry of Social Affairs
- Planning trainings for employers
- Developing information brochures for different target groups
- Preparing guidelines regarding gender mainstreaming for the public sector
- Preparing lawyers for future strategic litigation, one training was conducted
 - One case was taken to court
- Publishing three newsletters on gender equality developments in Estonia and abroad
- Participating in and leading seminars for the Inter-Ministerial Workgroup on Gender Mainstreaming

¹³ Republic of Estonia. Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner. Soolõime ja õiguskaitsesga sugude võrdsuseni. Tallinn, Web. <<http://www.svv.ee/index.php?id=611>>.

Notable activities from the reporting period that were postponed into 2014:

- An interdisciplinary gender studies conference
- Legal counselling in counties that were not reached in 2013 will take place in the first half of 2014
- Publishing information brochures

While the fact that some activities were postponed into 2014 is somewhat troublesome, it is understandable due to the delay in the overall implementation of the financial mechanism in Estonia and therefore the Programme as well. The timeline for the project is continuously being adjusted and the PO is closely monitoring all the developments.

By the end of the first/current reporting period, the main risks that the Commissioner's Office has identified relate to the delay in the implementation of the Programme, a change in the staff related to the leaving of a senior lawyer, and the fact that the Office has little control over the development of multiple policy documents that play a role in the implementation of their project. The PO is doing its best to assist the project promoter in getting the timeline for the project on track.

4.2.2 Statistics Estonia

The project *Increased Availability of Gender Pay Gap Statistics* is aimed at developing a new strategy for collecting and publicizing (including developing suggestions for a new methodology and data sources used) pay statistics that have been disaggregated by sex, in order to ease the administrative burden of data respondents, data base managers, and analysts. Reducing the gender pay gap is a priority for the Estonian Government and the current pre-defined project is a part of the *Government Action Plan for Reducing the Pay Gap*¹⁴.

Consequently, the project aims to upgrade gender pay gap statistics and ensure the possibility of its monitoring via:

- Comparing available data sets (Estonian Labour Force Survey and Structure of Earnings Survey) for gender pay gap indicators
- Developing a new strategy for collecting and publishing gender pay gap statistics (developing new indicators)
- Monitoring the dynamics of the pay gap

Chief accomplishments over the course of the reporting period include:

- A working group of Statistics Estonia's main customers was established
- An opening seminar for approximately 60 participants was conducted on 16 October
- Developing a webpage for the project¹⁵ (in Estonian and in English)
- Methodological work was started, including:
 - Validation of the wage indicator and working hours data of the Labour Force Survey to obtain an overview of the quality of the data and the possibility of using these indicators in the source database and raising the quality of the indicators through additional databases
 - Validation of output indicators on the basis of the Labour Force Survey – identification of output indicators that could be calculated on the basis of the Labour Force Survey but have not been regularly produced before; determination of input parameters for the source database and possibilities for raising the quality of the parameters through additional databases
 - Re-personification of the Labour Force Survey databases (2000-2012) to produce identifiers, which would enable linking with other databases (the identifiers will be compiled on the basis of personal identification codes)

¹⁴ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. *Tegevuskava meeste ja naiste palgalõhe vähendamiseks*. Tallinn, 2012. Web. <http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sooline_vordoiguslikkus/Kabineti_memorandum_04_07_12doc.pdf>.

¹⁵ Republic of Estonia. Statistics Estonia. *Increased availability of gender pay gap statistics*. Web. <<http://www.stat.ee/increased-availability-of-gender-pay-gap-statistics>>.

- Identification of the necessary parameters for compilation of work income data on the basis of social tax data of the Tax and Customs Board
- Linking the Labour Force Survey data with the data of the Tax and Customs Board and a personified analysis of the wage parameter on the basis of two data sources (determining the degree of overlap, difference, etc.)
- The project has been presented to the Research Council on Population and Social Statistics. The Council coordinates different statistical research with the aim of improving how the statistics that fall under the umbrella of *population and social sciences* are measured and formulates national subscriptions to different statistics (e.g. what data is collected via funding from the government). Presenting the project to the Council is relevant not only in that it helps keep the work aligned with nationally relevant definitions, classifiers, and methodologies, but it also sheds light on the project's activities at a broader level. For the successful implementation of the project, it is important to take into account the experts (including scientists) opinions and suggestions as much as possible. Thus, the results of project will have a wider use in society.

4.3. Small Grant Scheme

Due to the general delay in the implementation of the Programme as a whole, as well as the shorter implementation period of the SGS there has been a delay in the overall implementation of the SGS. Consequently, a full-time project manager¹⁶ for the SGS was not hired until December which is also when comprehensive planning for the detailed implementation of the SGS began.

Most importantly, owing to the setup of the monitoring environment for the Norway Grants within the PO, it was decided in the very beginning of the second half of the reporting period that the implementation of the SGS would stay within the PO and would not be outsourced as was planned when writing the Programme Proposal. Furthermore, owing to leftover funds from the open calls, the total size of the SGS was increased from €250,000 to €370,000, the maximum size of one grant was increased from €40,000 to €50,000, and the duration of the implementation period was shortened from 0-24 months to 1-18.¹⁷

The PO is planning on launching the call under the SGS by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

5. Project Selection

Preparation for the announcement of the calls began with the joint opening conference of the programmes *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance* and *Domestic and Gender-Based Violence* on 4 April where the Programme in its entirety was introduced to relevant stakeholders and representatives of various target groups. Attendees included members of the NGO sector as well as the public and private sector (including organizations from various regions of Estonia).

Furthermore, 5 Norwegian experts from 3 organizations active in the programme areas were invited to speak at the event, share and exchange good practices, and serve as first points of contact for any interest in potential future project partnerships¹⁸. Overall, the opening conference was attended by 156 people.¹⁹

¹⁶ The project manager is responsible for the implementation of the SGS under *EE11 Domestic and Gender-Based Violence* as well

¹⁷ For more details see Section 8 (Need for Adjustment) of the Annual Programme Report on the implementation of EE09 *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*.

¹⁸ For more details see section 6 (Progress of Bilateral Relations) of the Annual Programme Report on the implementation of EE09 *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*

¹⁹ For more information on the opening conference see: Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Opening Conference. Tallinn: Print. <<http://www.sm.ee/eng/norway-main-page/mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-work-life-balance/past-events/opening-conference-april-4-2013.html>>.

Two open calls were announced 29 May to implement the following measures stemming from the Programme outputs:

- A call for proposals *High quality, comprehensive and sustainable systems for promoting gender equality developed and implemented*, which made available € 550 245
 - 2 to 3 grants were projected to be allocated, depending on the size of the grant requested per application. The minimum amount of grant assistance to be applied for was € 170 000 and the maximum amount was € 225 000
- A call for proposals *Research-based concepts for promoting balance between work, private and family life developed and employee and family friendly social and working environment promoted*, which made available € 340 000
 - 2 grants were projected to be allocated in the amount of € 170 000

Within the framework of the first open call, activities that promoted gender equality were supported. Projects that contributed to the creation and/or implementation of systemic and sustainable structures contributing to raising awareness on the importance of gender equality among various target groups and other stakeholders were a high priority. Separately, under the second call, specific activities that promoted the balance between work, private, and family life by enabling better reconciliation of work and private lives were supported.

The expectations for both calls were kept fairly broad so as to avoid that they turn into variations of pre-defined projects as well as to provide a certain extent of flexibility to the applicants in designing the projects.

Two information events were conducted in the framework of the calls: one 12 June²⁰ and another one 15 August²¹ (in cooperation with the programme on gender-based violence), attracting respectively 31 and 68 attendees.

The seminar in June served as the first introduction to the open calls and served as a first point of communicating the precise guidelines for applying for grants. Furthermore, Ms Maris Jõgeva, who is an expert on civil society from the *Open Estonia Foundation*²² conducted a workshop on how to write projects that are in accordance with the donors' requirements, the project promoter's ambitions, and the end-beneficiaries needs.

The seminar in August gave potential project promoters the chance to pose any questions that might have arisen during the preparation of the project and meet with partners from Norway with the aim of adding finishing touches to the projects that were to be submitted in early Fall. Additionally, Ms Helen Sulg, an expert from the Estonian Ministry of Finance gave a presentation on how to approach risk assessment and mitigation and Ms Liisa Past, an expert in the field of communication talked about the importance of building a comprehensive communications strategy and *staying on brand*.

By the deadline for submitting applications (26 August), 6 applications were submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs: 4 in the programme area of promoting gender equality and 2 in the area of work-life balance. While the number of proposals received was smaller than initially expected, the total number of organizations involved with these applications was 16, with 3 of them being Norwegian entities, which, in retrospect, are numbers to be content with.

The main interest in the calls was concentrated in the area of promoting gender equality with 2/3 of the projects submitted for promoting gender equality and the remaining 1/3 concentrating

²⁰ For more information on the event see: Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Information Seminar for Programmes "Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Work-Life Balance" and "Domestic and gender-Based Violence". Tallinn, Print. <<http://www.sm.ee/eng/norway-main-page/mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-work-life-balance/past-events/information-seminar-june-12-2013.html>>.

²¹ For more information on the event see: Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Second Preparatory Seminar for the Open Calls. Tallinn, Print. <<http://www.sm.ee/index.php?id=1394&L=1>>.

²² The Open Estonia Foundation (OEF) is a non-governmental not-for-profit public benefit foundation established in 1990 and is based in Tallinn, Estonia. It is affiliated with the global Open Society Foundations (OSF) network. OEF's goal is to help build open society in Estonia and other countries. Over the past 20 years the foundation's initiatives have ranged from school reforms to contemporary art and legal reforms. Today their focus is on strengthening open governance and civil society and reinforcing the principles of participatory democracy. The organization's activities are driven by a vision of democracy, civil society, social responsibility and equal opportunities in democratic decision-making processes. For more information see: <http://oef.org.ee/en/>

on reconciling work and family obligations. Please refer to section 4.1 of the current report for a detailed account of how the projects that were selected for financing contribute to the Programme's outcomes.

The projects were evaluated by experts external to the PO (as well as the applicants) and were found via an open call. The final decision (in the form of a decree issued by the Minister of Social Affairs) on which applications will be financed was cast by the PO 21 November. **Project contracts are expected to be signed in early 2014.**

6. Progress of Bilateral Relations

Over the course of the reporting period, much emphasis was placed on furthering cooperation between institutions at different levels in the private sector, academia, and civil society. Emphasis was placed on the general exchange of knowledge, understanding, and increasing the local target groups' awareness about principles of gender equality in Norway and lessons to be learned from there. Integral tools in that quest have been the funds set aside for strengthening bilateral relations, the communication and relationship with the DPP (The Norwegian Ministry for Children, Equality, and Social Inclusion) as well as the regular meetings of the Cooperation Committee.

6.1. Developing bilateral relations through cooperation, sharing knowledge, and mutual understanding

A Cooperation Committee, consisting of representatives from the PO and the DPP has been established to further the extent of cooperation and has met twice over the course of the reporting period (representatives from the National Focal Point and the Norwegian Embassy in Tallinn are included as observers in the Committee's work). At both meetings, progress on the implementation of the Programme has been analysed, plans to develop mechanisms for furthering bilateral relations have been set forth, and future actions have been determined in mutual cooperation and understanding.

In addition to determining the general principles for the implementation of the Programme, mutual cooperation between the PO and DPP has been integral to making the principle of bilateral cooperation a fundamental part of the activities carried out under the Programme. To encourage partnerships at project level as well, projects that had Norwegian project partners received extra points in the selection process.

The first effort to **develop the extent of cooperation** took place in the context of the opening conference for the Programme that took place 4 April, when, in cooperation with the DPP, 5 experts from 3 Norwegian organizations that are active in the Programme areas participated at the event.²³

To **exchange knowledge and improve mutual understanding**, an overview of Norwegian national policies and developments was given by Ms Arni Hole, a representative of the DPP, thus setting a bigger picture of the topics in Norway and the potential lessons to be learned. Furthermore, the main objective for introducing Norwegian experts and their work at the event was to share good practices from a country that is among the most progressive and successful in the fields of gender equality and work-life balance, as well as to give Estonians who are active in the fields a chance to network with their Norwegian counterparts and begin laying the groundwork for any potential future partnerships.

Upon issuing a call for proposals on 29 May, additional opportunities to find potential project partners in Norway were given to Estonian entities. In addition to posting relevant contacts and information on the Programme's website and answering to any inquiries with assistance from the DPP, an application was created where all potential applicants were given the opportunity to describe their area of interest regarding the call and describe their expectations for potential

²³ For more information on Norwegian participants, presentations, etc. see: Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Materials. Tallinn, Web. <<http://www.sm.ee/eng/norway-main-page/mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-work-life-balance/past-events/opening-conference-april-4-2013/materials.html>>.

future project partners. The applications were first processed by the PO, after which the DPP took the initiative to contact Norwegian entities that might be interested in cooperating with Estonian organizations. Once contact between the Estonian and Norwegian organizations was established, they had the opportunity to meet in the context of an information seminar in August to further work on projects/cooperation ideas. For the purpose of building partnerships, an information brochure²⁴ with interested Norwegian experts/organizations was created in cooperation with EE11 for the seminar in August.

#	Norwegian organizations at the opening conference in April 2013	Norwegian organizations at the seminar in August 2013	Norwegian organizations involved with projects submitted in the open calls	Norwegian organizations involved with projects selected from the open calls
1	The KUN Center for Knowledge and Gender Equality	The KUN Center for Knowledge and Gender Equality	The KUN Center for Knowledge and Gender Equality	The KUN Center for Knowledge and Gender Equality
2	Likestillingscenteret (Center for Equality)	Gender Consult	Telemark University College	Telemark University College
3	Reform (Resource Center for Men)		Albion Holding OÜ	

Table 3

As Table 3 illustrates, a variety of Norwegian organizations have been involved with the Programme (mostly in the context of the open calls) at various stages, with the *KUN Centre for Knowledge and Gender Equality* involved with the open calls from start to finish. The KUN Centre found a common voice with multiple Estonian organizations and different experts from the organizations were involved with two projects that were submitted to the PO in the open calls.

As a result of the selection process²⁵, three projects were selected that had project partners from Norway. Although partnership agreements have not been signed thus far, we can assume that the Programme is moving in the pace of fulfilling the target of the bilateral indicator that was set.

Indicator	Baseline	Progress	Target
Number of project partnership agreements in the beneficiary public sector	0	3 partnership agreements are expected to be signed with one of them in the public sector. With the SGS still to be implemented, the target may well be achieved	2

Table 4

6.2. Bilateral Ambitions of the Programme

Although the target of the bilateral indicator is promising to be met on the basis of the open calls, emphasis will remain on strengthening bilateral relations and making the strengthening of bilateral relations a fundamental part of all the selected projects. With the majority of the bilateral funds being given out for project promoters from the SGS for the exchange of knowledge and mutual understanding, the extent of cooperation, as well as sharing knowledge and mutual understanding, is likely to increase over the next reporting period.

By the end of the reporting period, the PO also learned that due to rearrangements in the working structure of the current DPP, a new entity – the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs – will take over the role of DPP beginning 1 January 2014. This suggests that the current work plan for bilateral relations will be revisited and new goals, corresponding to the new DPPs abilities to contribute to the Programme will be set.

²⁴ For the brochure, please see: Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Brochure. Tallinn, 2013. Web. <http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/piiratudkaust/SVO_infoseminar/Infomaterjal_Veebi.pdf>.

²⁵ For a detailed review of the selection process please see section 5 (Selection process) of the Annual Programme Report on the implementation of EE09 *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance*.

6.3. Brief Overview of the use of the Bilateral Funds

By the end of the reporting period, about 18.5% of the funds for bilateral relations had been depleted with the majority of the resources being spent on covering the costs related to the Norwegian experts' travel and accommodation expenses (incl. per diems).

6.3.1. Complementary Action

A small portion of the funds for Complementary Action were used for the PO's travel costs to attend a training in Lithuania in December, organized by the Lithuanian National Focal Point, and led by representatives of the Financial Mechanism Office. Funds for Complementary Action were not added to the Programme until November and therefore, the PO has not had the opportunity to utilize them extensively.

7. Monitoring

In the current reporting period, only the pre-defined projects have signed contracts and have actively been implemented. The PO has not conducted any on-the-spot checks yet, but both projects have been submitting regular quarterly reports which have been processed. Monitoring is conducted by the Gender Equality Department in cooperation with the Foreign Financing Unit of the Finance and Property Management Department (the PO).

The Gender Equality Department has been keeping track of the projects staying within the proposed timeframe and conducting content-based consultations and thus making sure that their (and inadvertently the Programme's) objectives and outcomes are met. The Foreign Financing Unit of the Finance and Property Management Department has been keeping track of the financial progress and eligibility of costs. Furthermore, the PO has made an effort to be present at the majority of events for unofficial monitoring purposes.

No questions of irregularities have come up thus far.

Please refer to Annex I for a monitoring plan for the next reporting period.

8. Need for Adjustments

The PO has made use of the possibility to modify the Programme Agreement between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Estonian Ministry of Finance for the financing of the Programme EE09 *Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance* in line with Article 5.9 of the Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 (hereinafter referred to as *the Regulation*) and the Programme Agreement during the reporting period.

8.1. Administration of the Small Grant Scheme

The first request for a modification was submitted to the National Focal Point 7 June, when the PO proposed a change in regard to the administration of the SGS. It had been previously decided that the administration of the SGS would be subcontracted to an entity external to the PO.²⁶ The latter was a reasonable idea when writing the Programme Proposal in 2011-2012, seeing as it was hoped then, that it would alleviate the administrative burden of the PO.

Upon drafting the concrete responsibilities that would be outsourced, it became evident that tasks such as signing contracts, making payments, and cost monitoring had to be carried out by the PO. The latter became relevant due to the domestic monitoring environment that was set for all programmes in Estonia and that set up the obligation to process contracts, payments, and costs through the national structural funds operational system (SFOS). Access to the operational system is granted only to public entities whereas the initial intention was to find/procure an administrative body outside the public sector.

Since the use of the structural funds operational system SFOS placed most of the responsibilities that were intended to be outsourced back in the hands of the PO, leaving only minute technicalities for the potential subcontractor, the actual administrative burden of the PO

²⁶ Programme Agreement, Annex II – Operational Rules, chapter *Small Grant Schemes*

would not have been reduced. Therefore, in the light of the above mentioned, the PO requested the opportunity to administer the SGS internally. The budget was foreseen to remain the same as was planned for the subcontractor and would be used to hire a full-time SGS manager as well as for expert fees, information days, publications costs, and other administrative expenses.

The issue was also brought up at the Cooperation Committee meeting on 4 June where it was agreed by both the Estonian and Norwegian counterparts that the Programme amendment was justified and that the relevant proposal should be submitted to the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO). Consequently, the FMO approved the modification 11 July.

8.2. Unresolved Funds in the Open Calls

On 6 November, the PO proposed another round of changes to the Programme Agreement when a proposal to change the Programme Agreement was submitted to the National Focal Point. The proposal was related to the reallocation of unresolved funds from the call for proposals *High-Quality, Comprehensive and Sustainable Systems for Promoting Gender Equality Developed and Implemented* which made available €550,245²⁷.

The initial call for proposals was launched on 29 May and the deadline for submitting applications was 26 August. The Selection Committee met on 22 October and decided to finance two of the four applications submitted in the Programme Area.

While the target output indicator for the call required financing three projects²⁸, it was not feasible to finance three of the top ranked projects due to budgetary limits. Therefore, as an alternative to requesting the applicants to reassess their budgets, which could potentially have significantly altered the content of the evaluated projects, the Selection Committee made the recommendation to allocate grants to only the top two projects in the ranking.

The PO agreed with the Selection Committee in that requesting from the applicants that they make cutbacks to their budgets would have notably altered the content and quality of the applications. What's more, this would consequently have called for the applications to be submitted through the selection procedures for a second time to ensure the transparency and legitimacy of the entire selection process and to guarantee the equal treatment of applicants. Nonetheless, extreme time constraints made this impossible – the applicants would not have enough time to carry out their projects if the selection process was postponed any longer. Consequently, the PO made the decision, in accordance with the decision of the Selection Committee, to support the projects that had been recommended for financing by the Selection Committee.

Ergo, the PO was left with €142,070.34 that was not distributed in the call for proposals. Seeing as the amount did not reach the minimum grant size requirements as stated in Article 5.4, paragraph 7, of the Regulation, to launch a supplementary call for proposals, the PO requested changing the Programme Agreement as follows:

- **Increase the *Fund for Bilateral Relations* by €5,000** – from €45,000 to €50,000 – for the facilitation of bilateral relations between Estonia and Norway. The additional resources (together with the already prevailing funds) would be distributed to project promoters for the purpose of networking with their Norwegian counterparts and for the exchange and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practices.
- **Earmark €15,000 for *Complementary Action***²⁹. The budget for the Programme did not foresee funds for complementary actions on the separate budget line meant for it. Instead, the Programme Agreement obligated the PO to set aside funds within the Fund for Bilateral Relations „*for activities that are organised by the Programme Operator and contribute to the objective(s) of the programme with the primary aim of strengthening co-operation between the Programme Operators and similar entities within Estonia and Norway, and exchanging experiences and best practices related to the implementation of*

²⁷ Programme Agreement, Annex II – Operational Rules, Article 3.2

²⁸ Programme Agreement, Annex I – Programme Decision, Article 1

²⁹ Programme Agreement, Annex I – Programme Decision, Article 3.3

the programme“ (Programme Agreement Annex II – Operational Rules, Article 5) i.e. for complimentary action. Adding € 15,000 to *Complimentary Action* line would enable the PO to strengthen co-operation with other Programme Operators and similar entities within other the Beneficiary States and Norway as set forth in Article 7.11 of the Regulation without taking away resources from the project promoters.

- **Add the remaining €120,000 to the SGS**, which would increase the total amount for the SGS to €370,000. The PO also proposed increasing the maximum amount of grant assistance from €40,000 to €50,000.

The proposed changes were discussed at the Programme’s Cooperation Committee meeting on 23 October, where both the Estonian and Norwegian counterparts agreed that the resources should be re-allocated and that an amendment for the Programme Agreement should be submitted.

Lastly, the PO proposed **changing the duration of the projects in the SGS from 0-24 months to 1-18 months**. Owing to the general delay in the implementation of EE09³⁰ and the fairly late development and decision³¹ of implementing the SGS internally without subcontracting an external operator, the PO has been under great time pressure to implement all of the various elements of the Programme. What has added to the delay is the fact that in order to adequately specify the exact expected objectives and outcomes for the SGS, the PO chose to wait for the results of the calls for proposals. The latter was done to avoid any duplicating actions from the two and to allow the SGS to compliment the activities of the calls for greater impact for the Programme as a whole. Therefore, delays were inevitable to ensuring the general high quality and results.

Subsequently, launching the SGS in the third quarter of the reporting period as noted in the Programme Agreement (Programme Agreement, Annex II – Operational Rules, Article 5.3) became impossible. In order to relieve some of the time pressure from the PO and help adjust to the generally shorter timeframe (while ensuring that all of the outputs and objectives of the Programme are met); the proposal to limit the SGS to 18 months was made.

The PO received a confirmation from the Financial Mechanism Office that all of the above mentioned changes were approved on 13 November.

9. Risk Management

The major risks identified in the Programme Proposal were related to the lack of interest on the part of various stakeholders (especially higher education institutions), the pre-defined projects staying on schedule and NGOs finding the necessary co-financing. Two of the three risks have largely been mitigated. For instance, the open calls demonstrated that the interest in the calls was fairly high: all of the three largest universities in the country are involved as either project promoters or project partners with two of the four projects that received funding. Furthermore, while the pre-defined projects started behind the intended schedule, they are vigorously moving forward with their activities and have not exhibited deviations that could not be accounted for at this stage.

Project promoters finding the necessary co-financing will likely remain a risk in 2014 as well, in the framework of the SGS, however, the amounts under discussion are much smaller than they were in the context of the main open calls.

Please see Annex II for a comprehensive risk assessment (including an identification of new risks) for the next reporting period.

10. Information and Publicity

As noted in the Memorandum of Understanding on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014, the Programme should be implemented jointly with EE11

³⁰ EE09 was approved 30 October 2012, the Programme Agreement was signed 25 February 2013

³¹ The corresponding Addendum to the Programme Agreement was signed in July 2013

Domestic and Gender-Based Violence, as the programmes and their outcomes support each other and share the same PO. Consequently, the Communication Plans and strategies for these Programmes have been combined.

Separate publicity plans have been created for the pre-defined projects and the projects that have been selected in the open calls will also create their own publicity plans.

Communication of the Programmes activities to the audience³² of the strategy that was laid out in the Programme Proposal has been among the top priorities in the current reporting period. During the current reporting period:

- A website³³ for the Programme has been designed (accessible both in Estonian and in English) and serves as one of the most important means of communication where all the calls, results, and other deliverables are published
- An opening conference was conducted to introduce the Programme to the audience
- Open calls were announced in national newspapers (both in Estonian³⁴ and in Russian³⁵) and a number of articles were written by the media about the Programme
- Press releases have always been published when important milestones have been reached
- Two information seminars were organized for the target groups
 - One 12 June with the purpose of announcing the calls and conducting a training to potential project promoters on the importance of impact analysis
 - One 15 August with the purpose of furthering bilateral relations and conducting training on risk management and the importance of having a communication plan

As exhibited by the *Public Opinion Survey on the Structural Funds for 2013*, only 3%³⁶ of respondents were aware of the fact that gender equality was among the fields financed by the Norway Grants. This can partly be attributed to a generally low level of awareness on the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014: only 27%³⁷ of respondents were aware of the fact that Estonia receives funding from Norway Grants. Nonetheless, the PO is aware of the challenges in the area of Information and Publicity and is consistently working on reaching better a bigger and broader audience.

The Programme has followed the publicity requirements of the Norway Grants 2009-2014 and all the project promoters and promoters of pre-defined projects are expected to do the same.

11. Cross-Cutting Issues

The integration of the cross-cutting issues in the Programme design has ensured thus far that the challenges and obstacles that would undermine the overall objectives of the financial mechanism have been kept to a minimum, if exhibited at all.

11.1. Good Governance

The planning and implementation of the Programme thus far has been conducted in accordance with Estonian legislation and the State Procurement Act, the Public Information Act, etc., have all been pivotal as regulations to the PO's actions.

³² According to the proposed Communication Plan, the audience for the communication strategy is as follows: the general public, policy makers (including people working in public sector), journalists, programme and project partners (NGOs and other public and private entities working in the field or interested contributing to the field), victims and potential victims of gender based violence and trafficking in human beings, perpetrators of violence

³³ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Norway Grants 2009-2014. Tallinn. Web. <<http://www.sm.ee/eng/norway-main-page/mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-work-life-balance.html>>.

³⁴ Announcements of the calls in Estonian were published in two of the most read daily newspapers in Estonia, *Postimees* (6 June 2013) and *Päevaleht* (11 June 2013).

³⁵ Announcements of the calls in Russian were published in the Russian edition of *Postimees* (6 June 2013).

³⁶ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Finance. Avalik Arvamus Euroopa Liidu Struktuuritoetustest. Tallinn: Faktum&Ariko, 2013. Web. <http://eeagrants.fin.ee/sites/default/files/Avaliku_arvamuse_uuring_2013.pdf>.

³⁷ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Finance. Avalik Arvamus Euroopa Liidu Struktuuritoetustest. Tallinn: Faktum&Ariko, 2013. Web. <http://eeagrants.fin.ee/sites/default/files/Avaliku_arvamuse_uuring_2013.pdf>.

The Programme's webpage³⁸ has been an integral platform for sharing information on the implementation of the Programme and ensuring that the implementation process is transparent and well defined. Information on the pre-defined projects, open calls, results of the open calls, the projects to be implemented, events, the DPP, and various documents relevant to the Programme can be readily accessed in both Estonian and English.

As the development of the Programme was an open process, conducted in close cooperation and dialogue with various stakeholders in the Programme areas (i.e. NGOs and networks, universities and research centres, other ministries, etc.), the PO has made an effort to keep the dialogue going by organizing two information events over the course of the current reporting period, giving various stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback (both via open dialogue as well as in anonymous and written form).

11.2. Environmental Considerations

Activities that have been carried out under the Programme have been in compliance with EU legislation and have not harmed the environment.

The PO has made a conscious effort to provide as much information as possible in electronic form and in cases where printed deliverables have been made, concrete dissemination plans have been outlined.

11.3. Economic Sustainability

The Programme has been designed to promote gender equality in Estonia and to contribute both directly and indirectly to the development of a sustainable system to reducing the gender pay gap which in itself will have a long-term impact on the prevailing socio-economic power relations between the two predominant genders, i.e. men and women.

Statistics Estonia as one of the pre-defined project promoters is already looking into possibilities to find funding to continue collecting comprehensive data on the gender pay gap after the current grant has been depleted. The open calls that were conducted in the second half of the reporting period made (economic) sustainability a priority in the selection criteria and will continue to emphasize its importance once the project contracts will be signed and project promoters will begin implementation.

Furthermore, it is assumed that the Programme as a whole will have a positive effect on raising the general public's awareness on gender equality and will consequently continue to improve the well-being of both men and women by enabling a conscious targeted approach to the use of human resources.

Lastly, the PO has made all the materials that have been developed to date available on its website and will continue to do so in the future as well.

11.4. Social Sustainability

The PO has made a conscious effort to endorse cooperation between various fields and sectors (education and research, the public sector, the private sector, various NGOs, etc.) to comprehensively tackle the challenges at hand. This also includes cooperation with different organizations from Norway. Broad-based cooperation was also among the selection criteria for projects in the open calls.

The continuity of the links between different sectors is ensured by the conceptual framework of the Programme and its formal procedures, but the contacts created and experiences shared hold a valuable source for social sustainability as well.

11.5. Gender Equality

The objective of the Programme is to promote gender equality and work-life balance and it is assumed that all activities will directly contribute to the promotion of gender equality. Comprehensive audits on the impact of the Programme have not been conducted, but the fairly positive developments in the Programme areas that were highlighted in Section 3 enable the

³⁸ Republic of Estonia. Ministry of Social Affairs. Norway Grants 2009-2014. Tallinn. Web. <<http://www.sm.ee/eng/norway-main-page/mainstreaming-gender-equality-and-work-life-balance.html>>.

PO to conclude that the overall developments in the field (including the implementation of the Programme) contribute to the promotion of gender equality.

Attachments to the Annual Programme Report

Annex I: Monitoring Plan for 2014

Project monitoring will be carried out by the PO in accordance with a Monitoring Plan (*Table A1*) that contains reviews of projects, on-the-spot checks and regular monitoring of developments in the Programme indicators.

The exact number of projects that will be reviewed, as well as the number of on-the-spot checks will be determined on the account of the amount of financial support received/already absorbed, as well as the transparency/clarity of information received from the project promoters through regular project reporting.

Suspensions of irregularities will result in additional inquiries to the project promoters. In the case that that irregularities are found, they will be reported to the Financial Control Department of the Ministry of Finance acting as the Audit Authority in accordance with national procedures (Government Regulation No 278 adopted on 22 December 2006 on the Reporting of Irregularities and Reclamation of Grant Assistance³⁹).

Name or Description	Monitoring action	Timing ⁴⁰	Criteria for monitoring (especially for site visits)	Risk issue with the project (if applicable)	Comments
Pre-Defined Projects	Analysis of project reports	Q2; Q3; Q4	Basis for disbursements	N/A	N/A
Open calls (projects selected in 2013)	Analysis of project reports	Q2; Q3; Q4	Transparency in project implementation, contracting in accordance with the Regulation, risk management, timeframes, achievement of outcomes	Poor quality of implementation; inability to follow the rules and regulations set out in the Regulation on the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism; inability to meet the co-financing requirement	Contracts have not been signed with the date of compiling the current report but expenses are eligible as of 21 November
Small grant scheme	Maintaining transparency in the selection procedures of projects – internal monitoring within the PO	Q1	Transparency, objective and equal treatment of applicants	N/A	The PO will place higher emphasis on monitoring its own actions throughout the selection of projects via the SGS

Table A1

³⁹ Republic of Estonia. Government of the Republic of Estonia. Toetuse tagasinõudmise ja tagasimaksmise ning toetuse andmisel ja kasutamisel toimunud rikkumisest teabe edastamise tingimused ja kord. Tallinn, 2006. Web. <<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/105072011020>>.

⁴⁰ Q1 – first quarter; Q2 – second quarter; Q3 – third quarter; Q4 – fourth quarter

Annex II: Risk Assessment of the Programme EE09

Risk identified in the Programme proposal				
Outcome no.	Description of risk	Likelihood⁴¹	Impact⁴²	Analysis of the situation
1	Developed training programmes are not attractive and suitable for people working in public sector	Low	High	The risk is not as relevant as it was when writing the Programme as no projects concentrating on developing such training programmes were funded in the open call. The risk is still somewhat relevant in that applicants in the SGS may propose similar activities. Mitigation steps that the PO will take include issuing a clear call for proposals, encouraging the execution of pre-analysis, and looking at experiences from other countries in the creation of similar programmes
1	Higher education institutions are not interested in cooperating gender equality as a topic in their curriculums	Low	High	The risk has largely been mitigated in that three of the largest universities are either project promoters or partners for projects selected in the open calls
1	Mentoring programme is not attractive for females	Medium	High	The risk is not as relevant as it was when writing the Programme as no projects concentrating on developing such mentoring programmes were funded in the open call. The risk is still somewhat relevant in that applicants in the SGS may propose similar activities. Mitigation steps that the PO will take include issuing a clear call for proposals, encouraging the execution of pre-analysis, and looking at experiences from other countries in the creation of similar programmes
1	Statistics Estonia is not able to follow the time schedule of the project and therefore the outputs are not delivered in time	Medium	High	The PO has organized meetings with Statistics Estonia and provided continuous support to aid the project in staying within the timeframe
1	The office of Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner is not able to follow the time schedule of the project and therefore the outputs are not delivered in time	Medium	High	The PO has met regularly with the Commissioner's office and provided continuous support to aid the project in staying within the timeframe
2	Set of measures developed and implemented does not	Medium	High	The risk is still very relevant. The project promoter is expected to develop

⁴¹ Assessment is based on what was noted in the Programme proposal⁴² Assessment is based on what was noted in the Programme proposal

	have the desired effect on the target group			comprehensive research-based measures. Good practices from other countries will have to be followed during the development and implementation process of the measures
3	NGOs are not able to find the co-financing to make the project proposals	Medium	High	The risks has thus far been mitigated in the open calls but is still relevant in the context of the SGS. Also, the risk of project promoters not being able to contribute the necessary co-financing will remain throughout the implementation of projects and will be monitored by the PO. As for the SGS and potential risk mitigation steps, then voluntary work may constitute up to 50% of the co-financing required
Risk assessment for 2014-2016				
Type of objective	Description of risk	Likelihood ⁴³	Consequence ⁴⁴	Mitigation
Cohesion outcome	Implementation does not achieve the expected outcomes	1	4	Putting in place carefully selected and thoroughly evaluated selection procedures for projects. Thoroughly analysing interim project reports and making relevant suggestions for adjustments
Cohesion outcome	Calls result in an insufficient number of projects	2	3	Publicize information on the calls in the media and other relevant information channels for stakeholders
Cohesion outcome	Calls in the SGS result in an insufficient quality of projects	2	3	Organize information seminars. Create clear guidelines for potential project promoters. Encourage communication with the PO
Cohesion outcome	Insufficient time for implementation	3	3	Adjust to a generally shorter timeframe. Implement activities in parallel
Cohesion outcome	The investments made are not sustainable	2	2	Communicate the importance of sustainability to project promoters. Make sustainability an important selection criterion in the project selection process
Bilateral outcome	The partner's role is unclear and/or understood differently in Norway and Estonia	2	2	Clear communication between the PO and the DPP. Face-to-face meetings with representatives of the DPP. Create and adhere to a clear bilateral work plan
Bilateral outcome	Demand for partner input by beneficiary states far exceeds supply	2	2	Create and adhere to a clear bilateral work plan and ensure the DPP's input in the creation of the document
Operational	Insufficient control systems	2	2	Adhering to the Regulation on

⁴³ 4 = Almost certain (75 – 99% likelihood); 3 = Likely (50 – 74%); 2 = Possible (25 – 49%); 1 = Unlikely (1 – 24%)

⁴⁴ 4 = severe; 3 = major; 2 = moderate; 1 = minor; n/a = not relevant or insignificant

issue	in place			the Implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 within the framework of the national legal system and internal procedures of the PO
Operational issue	Finding impartial experts to evaluate projects in the open calls	4	3	Conduct open calls to find experts. Make impartiality an important factor in the selection process of the experts. Look for experts from the neighbouring countries, i.e. Estonian researchers that have migrated abroad
Operational issue	Disproportionate procedures deter project promoters from project objective	2	3	Create clear guidelines for the project promoters. Meet with the project promoters and conduct information events for them
Operational issue	Project promoters are in noncompliance of Programme objectives	1	3	Drafting comprehensive contract between the PO and project promoters. Look for shortcomings in intermediate financial reports and participate in events
Operational issue	Changes in the key staff	2	2	Keep the implementation as horizontal as possible, delegate tasks so that the majority of staff are capable of picking up duties when are where needed
Operational issue	Project promoters are unable to come up with the necessary co-financing	2	3	Communicate the possibility to finance 50% of the co-financing via volunteer work. Encourage project partnerships intra- and internationally

Table A2