



Minutes of the 6th (INFORMAL) ANNUAL MEETING - EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014

16th March 2017, 09.00 – 10:30 hours

Fort St. Angelo, Vittoriosa Waterfront, Vittoriosa

Participants

EEA Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC) & Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA)

Ms Henriette Gulbrandsen, Senior Adviser, Section for Central Europe, NMFA

Financial Mechanism Office

Mr Thorsteinn Björnsson, Country Officer

Malta National Focal Point (NFP)/ Programme Operator (PO) - Funds and Programmes Division, Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto

Mr Raphael Scerri, Director General (Funds and Programmes) / Head of the NFP/ PO

Ms Carmen Dalli, Director (Programmes and Projects)

Mr Nicholas Bugeja, Senior Manager

Ms Alison Grech, EU Fund Manager

Welcome and opening address

Mr Raphael Scerri welcomed representatives from the Donor States delegation, and the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO), and thanked them for meeting the National Focal Point in Malta for the informal annual meeting.

Mr Scerri said that the National Focal Point (NFP) presented the combined Strategic and Annual Programme Reports at this year's Monitoring Committee that was held on 20th January 2017. The Committee approved the Reports and these were sent to the FMO for the consideration and approval of the Donors.

Ms Henriette Gulbrandsen thanked the NFP for hosting the annual meeting. She said that at present the Donors are focusing both on the future financial mechanisms and on current issues, so as to close the current financial mechanisms in a proper manner. She also was looking forward to the site visits of the following day in order to see progress done on works on sites.

Presentation of the combined Strategic and Annual Programme Reports by the National Focal Point

Mr Nicholas Bugeja delivered a presentation on the contents of the combined Strategic and Annual Programme Reports, providing an overview of key events and progress registered at programme and project levels in Malta in 2016.

The year 2016 marks the award of various works tenders namely tender on works of Hal Saflieni Hypogeum under MT02/3 '**A New Environmental Management System for the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum World Heritage Site**'; tender on works of the water awareness centre under MT02/7 '**Malta Water Conservation Awareness Centre**'; tender on works of the young offenders prison under MT04/2 '**Renewing the Young Offenders' Unit of Rehabilitation Services (CORRS)**' and tender for the provision of training courses under Project MT02/2 '**Oil/HNS Spill Response Capacity Building for the Protection of Malta's Seas**'. These tenders carry the highest project costs.

Project MT04/1 '**A Partnership for Creative Governance**' was also concluded at the end of 2016. Three sets of Interim Financial Reports for Technical Assistance and the EEA and Norway Grants programmes were submitted throughout the year. Other activities included the preparation of forecasts of likely payment applications and the award of various applications under the Fund for Bilateral Relations at Programme Level (BFP). Bilateral meetings were frequently held with the Project Promoters and respective line Ministries whilst a number of administrative and on-the-spot checks were carried on incurred expenditure.

Mr Bugeja mentioned savings reported under MT02/2, which Transport Malta utilised in order to procure more equipment related to Oil/HNS Spills. Ms Gulbrandsen questioned on the new equipment procured which, as explained by Mr Bugeja, relate more to inland equipment for Oil spills occurring at shore.

Mr Björnsson asked when Heritage Malta shall open the site for public. Mr Bugeja explained that by end of March the contractor needs to be out of the site. In fact almost all work related to M&Es is complete.

The NFP asked on the savings reported under MT02, which as suggested by Mr Björnsson could be discussed at a later stage and possibly considered for reallocation to the bilateral fund, if requested by the PO/NFP.

Mr Scerri thanked Mr Bugeja for the detailed presentation and opened the floor for discussions on the Combined Strategic and Annual report.

Ms Gulbrandsen thanked the NFP for the combined Strategic and Annual Programme Reports, which were found by the Donors to strategically place the projects well within the context of national and EU priorities. Ms Gulbrandsen informed the NFP that the combined Strategic and Annual Report for year 2016 is approved.

Management and implementation - Information and Communication

Mr Bugeja gave an update on the Evaluation of the EEA and Norway Programmes. He informed the floor that he is currently working on the Terms of Reference whilst consulting the evaluation guidelines outlined on FMO's website.

Mr Scerri continued by proposing a tentative date for the last week of June in order to hold the final event to close the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 in Malta. He also suggested that, depending on the budget available, the NFP will make all efforts to prepare a promotional video, a brochure and perhaps air the video on national television stations. Ms Gulbrandsen suggested that NFP shall follow same brochure design used for the final event of Programme 2004-2009. Mr Björnsson also suggested that NFP shall submit a draft programme of the final event to the FMO. NFP shall also invite all project leaders for a short presentation on their respective projects. Mr Björnsson commented that Slovenia had a very good final event organisation and NFP can review photos of the event on the website <http://eeagrants.org/Results-data/Results-overview>.

Bilateral Relations and Issues

Mr Scerri informed that the PO is receiving substantial feedback from various promoters that are willing to exchange knowledge with Norwegian experts in various fields. There is currently a high demand for reallocations to funds for bilateral relations among the BS. Mr Björnsson therefore emphasized on the importance of showing both bilateral dimensions and feasibility in possible activities, if requests are to be made for reallocations to the Funds for bilateral relations.

Closing Remarks

Mr Scerri thanked Ms Gulbrandsen and Mr Björnsson for their collaboration and continual support to the NFP/ PO, and brought the meeting to an end.

Site Visits

The next day, 17th March, marked a full morning of site visits organised by the NFP/PO for the delegation from FMO and Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The order of the visits was as follows:

- 1) Academy for Disciplined Forces (ex-Police Academy), where the delegation met with the authorities, including Mr Kim Ekhaugen, during a training session being held for the new recruited staff to man the CORRS site in Mtahleb;
- 2) The CORRS site in Mtahleb, where the delegation could witness the advanced stage of structural works being carried out in the new wing;
- 3) The Malta Water Conservation Centre, where the delegation was welcomed by the contracted designer and project Manager of the site, who showed us around. Works are also in a very advanced stage;
- 4) The Hal Saflieni Hypogeum, where extensive works are also in progress and at an advanced stage.

The visits ended at around 2pm when the delegation was taken to the airport for their flight back home.