

Second Annual Programme Report

EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009-2014

1. *Executive summary*

The Programme GR06 “Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems” has started its implementation during 2014. It consists of three pre-defined Projects that are planned to give vital aid to the Greek asylum and migration system. The first two Projects of the Programme started the implementation period in May 2014 when the respective Project Contracts were signed. During the remaining time of 2014 the First Reception Service as well as the Asylum Service, which are the Project Promoters, have achieved to have several of the services in operation- as designed in the project proposals. However, they have managed to reach only part of the goals set in the initial Proposals. A Third Project for the opening and operation of three Open Accommodation Facilities with a total capacity of 80 places has been pre-defined and the First Reception Service was assigned as the Project Promoter. Operations under the Third Project are expected to start in the first half of 2015. Moreover, the First Reception Service is in the process of compiling a fourth Project proposal that could be approved in the early 2015.

2. Programme area specific developments

The Programme GR06 “Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems” fits into the overall objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism, namely, the reduction of economic and social disparities in the EEA, and more particularly in the area of human and social development. The Greek asylum and migration system has limited capacity for procedures of screening irregularly entering migrants, for allowing third country national to apply through an efficient asylum procedure and offer appropriate housing conditions to those whose removal from the country is pending. Hence, the introducing of a comprehensive and coherent asylum and migration management policy including the overhaul of the entire system became a major government priority in the last two years and resulted in the adoption of the Law 3907/2011 which came into force as part of the Greek Action Plan on Asylum and Migration Management. This Law established First Reception Service and Asylum Service with the purpose to provide accommodation services in properly equipped facilities (FRS) and proper asylum procedure (Asylum Service). The two institutions started their operation when the Presidential Degrees for the staffing and structure of these Services were publicized (March-June 2013). The main concern of the Programme is to provide the necessary funds for the new services to continue working properly in the currently difficult financial situation of Greece.

More particularly, concerning the First Project, the First Reception Service (FRS) started operation in March 2013 and since then in the First Reception Centre in Fylakio ,Evros, Third country Nationals are transferred to the center after their apprehension and they are offered housing in the above-mentioned closed facility. The screening procedure provides the determination of the status of irregular migrants/asylum seekers, covers the needs of migrants belonging to vulnerable groups (such as unaccompanied minors, elderly, victims of trafficking/torture etc.). Inside the FRC in Fylakio, migrants are also given adequate information on the right to seek asylum and facilitating access to the competent Asylum Authorities.

Furthermore, concerning the Second Project, the Asylum Service started operation in June 2013 and since then it provides services for asylum seekers, such as examination of the asylum requests in first and second level, interpretation services when needed, referral of asylum seekers who have been subjected to torture to specialized medical doctors, provision of information through leaflets and counseling for asylum seekers, with particular attention to vulnerable persons such as unaccompanied minors.

Finally, concerning the Third Project which aims to provide assistance and fulfil the basic needs of vulnerable groups, with particular emphasis to Unaccompanied Minors, not having applied for asylum, immediately after the completion of screening procedures and pending their referral to the appropriate actor of protection, there has also been an administrative change in Greece. During 2013, the Law 4172/2013 was publicised and the main structural change concerning the migration policy is that the First Reception Service is responsible for taking care of the vulnerable groups namely unaccompanied minors, elderly, victims of trafficking/torture etc.

Based on this Law, the initial intention of the Programme Operator as set in the Programme Proposal for the implementation of this Project through an Open Call for Proposals, changed and the Project became predefined with FRS as the Project Promoter that will run a tender procedure for the management of the Open Accommodation Facilities. This change resulted in the modification of the Programme in 16-09-2014 when the Programme Implementation Agreement was changed formally.

It is also remarkable that the Programme remains in full conformity with the Greek Action Plan on Migration Management, namely the objectives of creating screening Centres (point 2.1), accommodation for vulnerable groups (point 2.3) and provision of services (point 2.4). Therefore, the policy and administrative changes that took place in the year 2014, do not pose any new risks to the achievement of the programme's objectives.

3. Reporting on outputs

As a matter of fact, the First Reception Service as well as the Asylum Service is already operational since March-June 2013, but they are not adequately funded in the framework of the Greek difficult financial situation. The target of the output indicators set in the Programme Proposal will be achieved with the grants of the Programme. However, there is also another thing that should be considered in order to evaluate properly the expectation of the indicators achievement and this is the fact that the implementation of the Programme started in May 2014 (02/05/2014) when the Project Contracts for the two first Projects were signed. This fact resulted in having less time to implement the pre-defined projects (First and Second Project) which had initial duration of 32 months for achieving the goals.

More specifically, the numbers of the indicators for the First Project achieved with the EEA Grants, as seen in the table below, are measured since 06 February 2014 when FMO was informed about the existence of the positive appraisal report of the Project and incurred project costs became eligible. They do not concern the whole 2014 year. In fact, the First Reception Center in Fylakio achieved the accommodation for almost 2.700 third country nationals who have entered the country throughout this region without legal formalities and these were hosted in Fylakio FRC and were provided a screening procedure in order to identify persons in need of immediate medical care and identify persons belonging to vulnerable groups in order to refer them to the appropriate structure / organization of protection / assistance.

Output :Operation at the First Reception Center (FRC), Evros enabled

Output indicator(s)	Baseline	Achievement	Source of Verification
Number of third country nationals accommodated at the FRC, Evros, in conformity with international obligations and the national legal framework	0	2.663	Reports from the First Reception Centre
Number of unaccompanied children accommodated at the FRC	0	225	Reports from the First Reception Centre

Output :Residents of FRC, Evros provided with Information on rights and obligations

Output indicator(s)	Baseline	Achievement	Source of Verification
Number of third country nationals informed about rights and AVR	0	2.663	Reports from the First Reception Centre
Number of asylum applications submitted	-	320	Reports from the First Reception Centre
Number of requests for Assisted Voluntary Return AVR	-	137	Reports from the First Reception Centre

However, the fact that the Regulation of the Programme is setting maximum implementation time for the projects the end of April 2016, it is concluded that the maximum duration of this pre-defined project will be 26 months. It is therefore evident that the shorter duration of the project is a high risk that the numbers set as targets in the output indicators will not be achieved as the existing numbers take into consideration the original implementation timeline. This risk will be mitigated by the fact that the modification of the indicators will set the most realistic for the time being goals. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there were some delays in the completion of activities associated with the legislative framework establishing tender procedures for procurement of goods or/and the provision of related services. Administrative limitations in the related services, the inability of NGOs to bid in big tenders and the complicated legal framework have been the main reasons that caused delays in procurement procedures. In addition to that, the location of the Center (away from the urban) makes difficult to find providers of specialized services, which are necessary for the operation of the Centre, consequently repeating competitive processes have put more delays in signing contracts with the providers of the services requested.

As far as the Second Project is concerned, the outputs achieved with the EEA Grants are seen in the table below. They are measured since 02 May 2014 when Project Contract was signed.

Output :Asylum Service in operation

Output indicator(s)	Baseline	Achievement	Source of Verification
Number of decisions on international protection claims taken	0	4086	Reports from the Asylum Service

Output :Regional Asylum Office in OrestiadaEvros Operational

Output indicator(s)	Baseline	Achievement	Source of Verification
Number of asylum applications submitted and processed in the FRC of Fylakio	0	260	Reports from the Asylum Service

More specifically, the number of decisions on international protection claims taken at 1st instance during May-December 2014 was 6.150. The number of asylum requests received and processed within the FRC Fylakio (see – Regional Asylum Office in North Evros) was 260. Since 2013, tightened border control measures in the land border of Greece to Turkey have resulted in a shift from land crossings to sea borders in the Eastern Aegean Sea, therefore the international protection requests in North Evros have been reduced. In details, claims on international protection received per month per region of registration are:

2014										
Region of registration	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	%
Attica	589	516	573	251	475	599	478	562	4043	67,40%
Amygdaleza	58	50	61	50	46	62	48	63	438	6,40%
North Evros	37	29	45	24	20	30	29	46	260	4,20%
South Evros	68	68	108	89	64	84	32	111	624	10,00%
Lesvos	24	11	14	19	24	29	18	30	169	2,10%
Rhodes	35	22	33	30	25	42	26	51	264	4,80%
Thessaloniki	34	25	32	29	14	37	37	83	291	4,40%
Patra	0	7	10	17	6	4	1	9	54	0,60%
Chios	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	2	7	0,10%
TOTAL	845	728	880	509	674	888	669	957	6150	100,00%

The above numbers of asylum applications are below the threshold of 950 applications for international protection received per month by the Asylum Service, as set for the determination of the programme's indicators. As by the end of 2014, the Asylum Service was approximately 25% understaffed, compared to its organogram, the capacity of the Regional Asylum Offices in operation in registering claims for international protection was equally reduced (approximately 769 claims for international protection registered per month). To the above reason, the limited operation of the Regional Asylum Office in Thessaloniki should be added. In Thessaloniki, there were delays in finding a location for the office which would be adequate to host the needs of the Regional Asylum Office, and as result Asylum Unit is deployed registering claims of asylum seekers in detention. In particular for November 2014, the significant decrease noted in the number of registered asylum seekers is due to the lack of provision of interpretation services for almost ten days within the month. This occurred because of prolonged tendering procedures that did not allow for a timely

conclusion of the necessary contract. During the month of December, the number of registered international claims was the highest throughout the operation of the new Asylum Service, due to two reasons: a) the uninterrupted provision of interpretation services, and b) the workload processed by the 16 case workers hired by means of the project. One more element to be highlighted is the increased number of claims received in Evros, mainly due to the support received by case-workers based in Athens, who proceeded with the examination of claims of international protection received in Evros via teleconference.

It is fact that rather limited activities were implemented during 2014, mainly due to the delayed signature of the project contract between the Programme Operator and the Programme Promoter (May 2014), the delayed launching of the programme (mid-June 2014) and the long tendering/selection procedures. More specifically, the contract for interpretation and translation services was only concluded in mid-September 2014, after a fruitless tendering procedure. Regarding deployment of case-workers with a short term contract, the selection procedure lasted longer than five months and the newly hired team could only be deployed in mid-October 2014. Despite the delays in the project implementation, both the contracts concluded for the provision of interpretation and translation services and the contracts concluded with the case workers, are of great importance for the asylum system in place. This is proved by the abovementioned statistics and is expected to be further supported by the respective numbers in 2015.

Finally, as far as the Third Project is concerned, it should be stated that the Project Contract was not yet signed in 2014 and therefore the indicators achievement is currently not available as the implementation of the Programme has not started yet.

Output :Temporary accommodation and care provided to unaccompanied minors

Output indicator(s)	Baseline	Achievement	Source of Verification
Number of unaccompanied minors accommodated and cared for in temporary shelter	0	-	Reports from the First Reception Service

4. Reporting on Programme outcome

The Programme has set two outcomes which are both relevant with the greater value of respecting the rights of the migrants as human beings.

Concerning the first outcome of the Programme “Strengthened institutional framework to ensure legal protection and care for the most vulnerable group of migrants, namely unaccompanied children” there is direct connection with the output “Operation of the FRC in Fylakio” as the enforcement of the FRS is the first movement that the legal framework has produced in the field of taking care of mixed migration flows. The main purpose of First Reception Center in Fylakio, is to ensure access to the asylum procedure to all people entering Greece by providing them with specific information about their rights and respect those rights. At the same time the Center provides a screening procedure in order to identify persons in need of immediate medical care and identifies persons belonging to vulnerable groups in order to refer them to the appropriate facility/ organization for protection / assistance. Consequently, the second output of this outcome, that is “Residents of FRC in Evros provided with information on rights and obligations”, is

justifiably set to measure the strengthening of the institutional framework for the migrants as the information provided in the FRC is finally legally established. In these two outputs, the FRS is the responsible authority which measures the output indicators.

Concerning the second outcome “Well-functioning asylum system in place, enabling asylum-seekers to bring forward their claim for international protection, have their claim processed in due time and be offered accommodation during the processing of their case, or to return voluntarily to their country of origin” there is absolute connection with the output of “Asylum Service in operation” as the Asylum Service is the one responsible to receive the requests for asylum. The establishment of the Asylum Service was the main legal improvement in the framework concerning the asylum seeking in Greece. Therefore, the outputs measuring the work of Asylum Service in general (as set in the “Number of decisions on international protection claims taken at first instance”) and more particularly inside the FRC (as set in the “Number of asylum requests received and processed within the FRC”) are indicative of measuring the whole Asylum System in Greece. With reference to this Project, which started in May 2014, significant support has been offered to the Asylum Service, by ensuring availability of interpretation and translation services (for the period of 17/09/2014-02/11/2014 and 24/11/2014 – 23/03/2015) and support to the asylum procedures by 16 staff members hired as case-workers in the Regional Asylum Office of Attica, with fixed term contracts for the period of October 2014 to April 2015. As it was further explained, the abovementioned support enhanced efficiency in the asylum procedure. As for the remaining activities in the program, launching of their implementation is planned for the first quarter of 2015.

Finally, concerning the care of the most vulnerable group of migrants, namely unaccompanied children, the Programme has set the output for the “Temporary accommodation and care provided to unaccompanied minors”. This is programmed to be implemented by the third Project as explained in chapter 2 of this Annual Report, according to the Law **4172/2013**, by the First Reception Service which holds the main responsibility for the care of the most vulnerable group of migrants, namely unaccompanied children.

As far as the risks of achieving the outcomes are concerned, we can state the fact that the new government, formed after the elections of 25/01/2015, has announced substantial changes in the structure of the Ministry of Citizen Protection that has been supervising the Project Promoters. There is a high risk that these changes may be causing some delays to the implementation of the new project and may even disrupt the cash flows and /or the planned procurements for the first two projects. However, since the First Reception Service and the Asylum Service are already operational since March – June 2013, the new structures may be absorbed more quickly than normally expected. Meanwhile, in the context of the risk mitigation plan, PO has already informed the new political hierarchy that there will be difficulty in introducing changes in the competences of the PP and expects that there will be the least affecting the Programme changes. Beyond that, the risks of not achieving the output indicators are mentioned below.

5. Project selection

With reference to the Programme Proposal, it is worth mentioning that all outcomes set were planned to be implemented by three projects. The first and the second project were decided to be pre-defined actions which concerned the Migration and Asylum System. This selection procedure was made in the Ministry of

Public Order and Citizen Protection- now MoCP -which is the responsible authority to safeguard the well-functioning of the Migration and Asylum System. The Programme Operator of this Ministry, with the consultation of Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), took into consideration the Greek Action Plan as well as the fact that limited governmental budget and concluded to the Programme Proposal with the title “**Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems**”. In the meantime, the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection has decided to strengthen the procedure of accommodating the vulnerable groups and established in 2013 the Law 4172/2013 as mentioned in chapter 2. The main structural change concerning the migration policy is that the First Reception Service is responsible for taking care of the vulnerable groups namely unaccompanied minors, elderly, victims of trafficking/torture etc.

Furthermore, during 2014, as the monitoring of the projects was ongoing, the amount of money which was foreseen not to be absorbed, created the idea of forming a new Project to be proposed in the context of the EEA Grants. This proposal concerns the coverage of operational costs of another FirstReceptionCenter which is located in Lesvos. Therefore, the proposal which was formed in September 2014 was for the amount of 1.769.135,00€. Particularly for this proposal, the formal submission of additional information by the P.O to FMO is pending.

6. Progress of bilateral relations

The Programme “**Capacity building of national asylum and migration management systems**” has been assigned a Donor Programme Partner and EDPD has therefore cooperated with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). So far, during the year of 2013 the two institutions established a Cooperation Committee that has been meeting 4 times in 2014. UDI has also executed 5 missions to Greece and has contributed with advises and ideas on how the outcomes set in Programme could be achieved according to the practice of the Norwegian Migration System. In the Cooperation Committee meetings significant decisions were taken (such as the creation of new project for the unspent funds (as calculated by mid 2014), the collaboration of services in the implementation of the projects) as well as the creation of a concrete list of ideas for the actions which could be funded by the Bilateral Fund.

This contribution has also helped the PO to implement the first Bilateral Fund action which consisted of a seminar in Greece in June 2014. The seminar concerned the “Contract management for the reception facilities and for the services provided to asylum seekers” and there were speakers from both countries (Greece and Norway). This contribution has been helpful for the Programme Operator which was offered the knowledge and the experience of a directorate responsible for the Migration in Donor States; this is proven also by the results of the questionnaire which showed that all participants were satisfied or very satisfied. There will be more actions of bilateral relations in 2015 as agreed and planned in the Cooperation Committee Meeting which took place in early November 2014. A Complimentary Action in the area of Assisted Returns was also decided and it will be organized with the contribution of the International Organization for Migration in Athens.

7. Monitoring

Since the implementation of the Programme started in mid 2014, some monitoring activities have already been carried out. Furthermore, according to the Programme Proposal, the Programme Operator concluded an agreement with the project promoters, which will state all details relating to the performance of the

duties and obligations which are to be performed by the specific project promoter. This agreement serves as the specification of the Management and control system and requires standardized monthly reporting by each project. The monitoring of projects will normally be carried out in accordance with a monitoring plan prepared annually by the Programme Operator This will facilitate the work of the Programme Operator giving at the same time the opportunity to monitor effectively the process of the actions. Besides the requirements of the Regulation, the specification of the MCS also has details on the obligations and responsibilities of the independent entity which will carry the monitoring and control functions that the Programme Agreement requires. Furthermore, the independent external party which conducts some of the monitoring activities of the Programme has already performed auditing on the justifications-documents relating to assigning and the quality of the rendered services and products that are performed by the suppliers in the signed contracts. Moreover, the monitoring plan for the new year has been prepared to be implemented by the external party.

8. Need for adjustments

As already mentioned in the section 2 of this Annual Report, there have been some changes in Greek reality that have had social effects on migration matters. The main and more recent change for the Programme is the new political context which might bring structural changes. According to that, Project Promoters might have different procedures to follow. Taking this into account, and along with the consideration of the importance of having efficient operation of the system, there is an intention that any modification which will be needed will be asked for approval from the FMO after the consultation of the Focal Point.

9. Risk management

According to the Programme Proposal there were some risks foreseen. Since political changes have been made, these risks are modified. As a result, the assessment of their likelihood is changed according to new assessments and the new assessments for the previous stated risks are seen below

Description of risk	Assessment		Risk mitigation plan
	Likelihood [low/medium/high]	Impact [low/medium/high]	
Delay in personnel recruitment, recruitment of limited personnel or recruitment of personnel with inadequate knowledge on the scope of operation of the Asylum Service	High	High	Recruit personnel by means of the project and increase the number of personnel to be deployed by means of the project. Thorough training program to the newly recruited staff / to the staff transferred from other public services
New government might make substantial changes in the structures of the Project Promoters causing some delays to the implementation of the Projects	High	High	PO has already informed the new political hierarchy there will be difficulty in introducing changes in the competences of the PP and expects that there will be the least affecting ones

As far as the identification of new risks is concerned, the main risk which is analysed in the chapter 4 is formulated in the chapter 12. Attachments to the Annual Programme Report

10. Information and publicity

Since the Programme formed the Communication Plan it is taken into consideration. Furthermore, together with the Focal Point there has been since 2014 a collaboration in implementing information activities yet not have completed. The PO is in the process of procuring and constructing a dedicated website for the Programme; a delay has been evident in this subject – due to personnel restraints.

11. Cross cutting issues :

The implementation of the Programme has ensured that enforcement of the migration management system is achieved by making the best use of resources at the disposal while following transparency rules and regulations as well as ensuring that the priorities and needs of various groups , in terms of gender, disability and vulnerability are respected, promoting equality and antidiscrimination. The First Project of FRS gives the insurance that appropriate housing conditions are provided to migrants who initially come in the territory of Greece. The Second Project is ensuring that the right of migrants to seek for Asylum is respected by financing the competent Authority with EEA Grants. Furthermore, the Third Project which is going to be implemented in 2015 will produce results that meet the needs of society for taking care of vulnerable groups while making the use of resources by the EEA Grants.

2. Attachments to the Annual Programme Report

Programme GR06	Type of objective ¹	Description of risk	Likelihood ²	Consequence ³	Mitigation planned/done
	Operational issues:	Delay in personnel recruitment, recruitment of limited personnel or recruitment of personnel with inadequate knowledge on the scope of operation of the Asylum Service	4	3 This delay may eliminate the achievement of the project indicator within the time of the programme	Recruit personnel by means of the project and increase the number of personnel to be deployed by means of the project. Thorough training program to the newly recruited staff / to the staff transferred from other public services
	Structural issues	New government might make substantial changes in the structures of the Project Promoters causing some delays to the implementation of the Projects	4	4 This may cause delays and therefore eliminate the achievement of the project indicator within the time of the programme	PO has already informed the new political hierarchy there will be difficulty in introducing changes in the competences of the PP and expects that there will be the least affecting ones

¹ The risks should be categorised in one of 3 ways, depending on whether it poses a risk to the cohesion objective, the bilateral objective, or is more of an operational issue.

² Each risk should be described as to whether it poses a risk to the cohesion outcomes (programme outcomes), the bilateral outcome or crucial operational issues 4 = Almost certain (75 – 99% likelihood); 3 = Likely (50 – 74%); 2 = Possible (25 – 49%); 1 = Unlikely (1 – 24%)

³ Assess the consequence(s) in the event that the outcomes and/or crucial operations are not delivered, where 4 = severe; 3 = major; 2 = moderate; 1 = minor; n/a = not relevant or insignificant.