

Financial Mechanism Office

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

8 February 2008

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1. Purpose of the FMO

In accordance with the decision by the Standing Committee of the EFTA States¹, the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) shall assist in the management of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2004-2009. The FMO shall also assist in the management of the EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003 as well as the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998.

The FMO reports to the Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) for the new mechanisms, respectively, and to the EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003 Committee (FIC) for the EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003 and the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998 Committee (FMC 1994-1998) for the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998. The FMO is administratively part of the EFTA Secretariat.

The implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms are guided by the Rules and Procedures established by FMC and the NMFA, as well as a number of guidelines and detailed Memoranda of Understanding signed with each beneficiary state. These documents are all available on FMO's web page (www.eeagrants.org).

The Committees for the EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003 and the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998 have established Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the Financial Instrument and Mechanism 1994-1998 (see Annex I for a list of main documents for all mechanisms).

2. FMO's Vision, Mission and Objectives

Our Vision

- Solidarity, by reducing the social and economic disparities in the newly enlarged EEA;
- Opportunity, by helping new EEA members become fully integrated in the internal market; and
- Cooperation, by bringing old and new EEA members together and opening new arenas for political and economic relations.

Our vision is complemented by our commitment to apply the cross-cutting issues of good governance, sustainable development, gender equality and bilateral cooperation to achieve the best use of the Financial Mechanisms.

Our Mission

The FMO strives to manage the mechanisms to the best of its ability and in a way that results in the best possible projects and in the most effective way. The FMO shall provide a service function for the smooth running and management of the Financial Mechanisms for

¹ Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 1/2004 of 5 February 2004, establishing an Office for the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Ref. No.: 1036347

the NMFA and FMC. Through its primary stakeholders, the donor states, it also serves the beneficiary states and the broader public influenced by the mechanisms.

Our Objectives

To efficiently achieve its mission, the FMO operates on the following principles:

Effectiveness

As FMO staff, we are committed always to work effectively and efficiently to achieve the FMO's mission. We are committed to produce results in a timely and competent manner that promptly and accurately meet the expectations of our stakeholders.

Quality

As FMO staff, we are committed to provide services and produce work of the highest quality and standards that brings value to the donor states and the beneficiary states.

Openness and transparency

As FMO staff, we acknowledge the value of working in a manner characterised by openness and transparency. We regard information-sharing and reciprocity as key elements in achieving the best possible results.

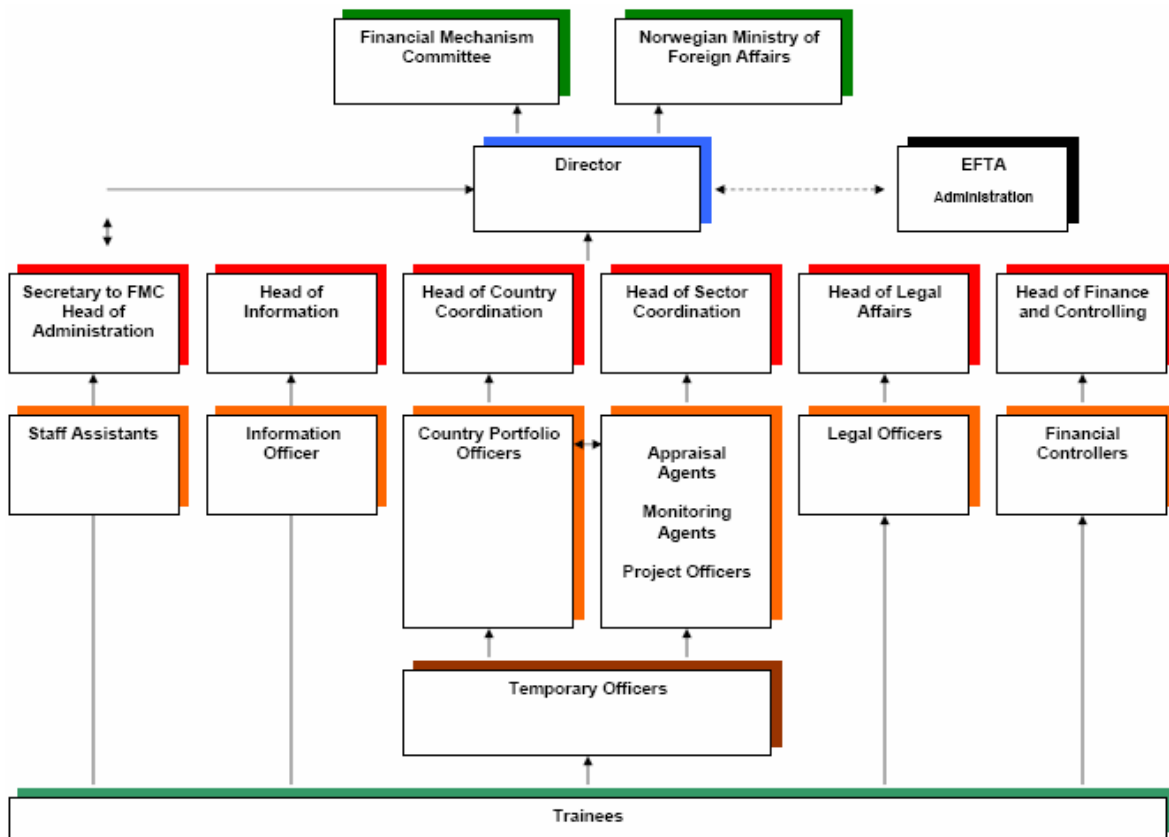
Integrity

As FMO staff, we will act with integrity in all our official activities, avoiding any behaviour that would reflect adversely on oneself or on the FMO.

Impartiality

As FMO staff we will act with impartiality, not allowing personal relationships or considerations - including bias or favouritism -to influence the performance of our official duties. Our official conduct will be characterised by objectivity and professionalism. We will also avoid situations that create a conflict of interest.

3. Organisational Structure of the FMO



4. Roles of the Financial Mechanism Office Staff

4.1 OVERALL COORDINATION

The director of the FMO is responsible for its management and day-to-day operation and ensures development and completion of all tasks. Additionally, the director is responsible for human resource issues and liaison with the EFTA Secretariat on administrative matters. The director reports to the FMC, the NMFA, the FIC and the FMC 1994-1998, as well as to the Standing Committee of the EFTA States. The director is responsible for the overall collaboration with the Beneficiary States, the EEA-EFTA States, the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission or the EC) and other stakeholders.

When out of the office, she/he designates a senior officer/team leader as acting director. The team leaders meet with the director on a weekly basis to coordinate the work, and FMO-wide staff meetings are organised on a monthly basis.

4.2 PROJECT COORDINATION

One of the most important tasks for the FMO staff is to review and prepare applications for decision by the NMFA and FMC. Details on the FMO's processing of applications are listed in section 6. 2.

4.3 COUNTRY COORDINATION

Country coordination is conducted by the country officers (COs). In addition to reviewing applications, the COs keep in close dialogue with the Focal Points and the donor states. Other important tasks include keeping an overview of the projects in her/his country/ies, preparing annual meetings, answering policy questions, and guiding the FPs on all issues related to the financial mechanisms.

4.4 PRIORITY SECTOR COORDINATION

In addition to their task of reviewing and preparing applications for decision by the funding states, the project officers (POs) are responsible for the priority sector work. The POs keep an overview of the sector distribution in the beneficiary states and each build expertise in one or more of the priority sectors. The head of the priority sector coordination team is also in charge of coordinating and monitoring FMO's work with the appraisal and monitoring agents.

4.5 SECRETARY TO THE FINANCIAL MECHANISM COMMITTEE 2004-2009 (FMC)

The secretary to the FMC coordinates the information flow from the FMO to the FMC, and he/she presents the agenda for the FMC meetings and prepares and distributes the meeting minutes. Similarly, the secretary is responsible for providing the NMFA decision-making structures with support as required. The secretary ensures that the FMC and the NMFA have the required overview of the status of the implementation of the mechanisms.

4.6 SECRETARY TO THE EEA FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT 1999-2003 COMMITTEE and THE FINANCIAL MECHANISM 1994-1998 COMMITTEE

The secretary to the FIC and FMC 1994-1998 communicates with the chairmen of the two committees and ensures that the decisions of these are implemented. In addition to preparing the agenda for committee meetings and preparing and distributing the minutes from the meetings, he/she informs the committees about information received from the beneficiary states/Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB). He/she also provides support to the FMO director for reporting to the committees, and to the director and the chairmen of the FIC and FMC 1994-1998 for reporting to the EFTA Standing Committee.

4.7 LEGAL

The legal officers are responsible for the provision of legal expertise to the FMO, the FMC, FIC, and FMC 1994-1998 and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They draft the legal documentation pertaining to the overall management of the mechanisms, and provide advice related to the implementation of projects and interpretation of the Rules and Procedures, the Guidelines, Grant Agreements and other documents related to the operation of the FMO. The legal officers also handle governance and misconduct issues. The legal officers carry out quality assurance of all grant recommendations prior to their conclusion.

4.8 FINANCE AND CONTROLLING

The financial controllers are responsible for financial controlling and audit in the FMO. In addition to being responsible for financial procedures of the mechanisms and the Financial

Instrument, budgeting and liquidity prognosis, they oversee the fund management arrangements including the verification of payment claims. The finance team is responsible for the FMO grant management and case-handling system. They may also participate in the task teams and be task managers.

The financial controllers liaise with the EFTA Secretariat, the beneficiary states' paying authorities, the donor states, national audit agencies, the EFTA Board of Auditors, and the Office of the Norwegian Auditor General. The financial controllers are responsible for the overall coordination with the FMO disbursement bank and the accountant.

4.9 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

The information team provides expertise to the FMO with regard to communication and information activities, and is responsible for the development and implementation of the FMO's communication strategy. The team is also responsible for developing and maintaining the website of the mechanisms, as well as information activities vis-à-vis the different stakeholders in the EEA-EFTA States, Beneficiary States, the general public and the media.

4.10 ADMINISTRATION

The administrative team provides general support to all FMO staff both with regard to project management tasks and administrative tasks. They are back-ups to the FMO grant management and case-handling system, assist in the preparation of meetings as well as the preparation, editing and distribution of documents. The staff assistants are also responsible for travel arrangements and the management of the FMO archives.

4.11 TEMPORARY OFFICERS, NATIONAL EXPERTS AND TRAINEES

Temporary officers are hired on a need basis to help out with the work load. The FMO has hired one national expert who is working in the Commission, DG REGIO Coordination Unit. His principal task is to facilitate the EC screening process. The trainees support a number of activities in FMO, including FMC preparation, project reviews, information activities, and disbursements.

5. External Communication, Coordination and Cooperation

The FMO serves as a contact point and a clearing house for information for all parties with interest in the financial mechanisms.

5.1 EEA-EFTA STATES

The FMO is to assist in that management and give guidance to the donor states in their management of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms, the EEA Financial Instrument and the EEA Financial Mechanism 1994-1998.

5.2 BENEFICIARY STATES

The national Focal Point (FP) is the FMO's counterpart in the beneficiary states. Their responsibilities include organising open calls for proposals, promotional activities, providing information to applicants, monitoring and overall responsibility towards the funds provided by the financial mechanisms. Applications are collected and processed by

the FP with the aim to prioritise applications and send these prioritised applications on to the FMO for appraisal and decision by the FMC and/or the NMFA. The FP is further responsible for the monitoring of all projects, including enforcement of any grant conditions and applicable regulations. The FP verifies project progress and payment claims in cooperation with a paying authority.

The FP is also the interface at national level for central, regional and local administration, other stakeholders, etc. They have their own communication and publicity roles, and maintain contacts with the embassies of the donor states.

5.3 POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Potential applicants or other stakeholders seeking information about the financial mechanisms are directed to the EEA Grants website and advised to contact the FP in the respective beneficiary state (see www.eeagrants.org for links to relevant websites). The information team handles day-to-day questions and requests received by the FMO, and responses are co-ordinated with other FMO teams as appropriate, such as legal and finance and the COs.

5.4 EFTA and NMFA BODIES

EFTA Secretariat

In accordance with a decision by the Standing Committee² the FMO is administratively part of the EFTA Secretariat.

Standing Committee of the EFTA States

The FMC and the FIC report regularly on their activities and operation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 and the Financial Instrument 1999-2003. The FMC submits an annual report to the Standing Committee³, whereas the FIC normally submits a bi-annual report.⁴ The FMO prepares the draft reports for comments and approval of the respective committees. Due to the completion of the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998, the FMC no longer submits reports to the Standing Committee.⁵

EBOA/Office of the Norwegian Auditor General

In accordance with Article 6.3 of the Rules and Procedures of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Article 6.3 of the Rules and Procedures of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the EFTA Board of Auditors (EBOA) and the Office of the Norwegian Auditor General may conduct audits of selected projects and of the management of the financial mechanisms. In addition, Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA states No. 1/2006/SC of 27 April 2006 gave EBOA a mandate to audit the management of the EEA Financial Mechanism by the FMO. The FMO assists these entities in their auditing tasks by, among other things, providing them with all documents or information they may deem necessary.

² Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 1/2004/SC of 5 February 2004 Establishing an Office for the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. Ref. No.: 1036347

³ Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 4/2004/SC of 3 June 2004 Establishing a Financial Mechanism Committee, Article 7. Ref. No.: 1039950

⁴ Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 1/2000/SC of 2 October 2000 Establishing a Financial Instrument Committee and Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 4/1994/SC of 10 January 1994 Establishing a Financial Mechanism Committee.

⁵ The last FMC 1994-1998 meeting was held on 14 December 2006.

In accordance with Article 13 of the Annex to the Decision of the EEA Joint Committee no 47/2000 EEA Financial Instrument Modalities of implementation and Decision of the Standing Committee of the EFTA States No. 2/2005/SC of 28 April 2005 regarding the audit of the financial management of and projects under the Financial Instrument, the EFTA Board of Auditors (EBOA) may conduct audits of selected projects and of the financial management of the Financial Instrument. The FMO assist EBOA in its auditing tasks and provides them with all documents or information they may deem necessary.

5.5 THE EUROPEAN UNION

European Commission

Applications are screened by the Commission before the FMC/NMFA signs an agreement on the granting of assistance. The secretary to the FIC and the FMC 94-98 liaises with the Commission on behalf of the respective committees.

European Investment Bank (EIB)

Under the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998 the EIB administered the interest rebates on loans granted directly or through the intermediaries by the EIB and administered also grants provided for under the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998. The remaining completion reports are expected in 2008.

5.6 APPRAISAL AND MONITORING AGENTS

Framework agreements have been developed between the FMO and a pool of appraisal and monitoring agents as the result of a public procurement process. Appraisal agents are used to evaluate project applications. Monitoring agents are reviewing approved projects, and evaluate progress and/or verify payment claims.

Potential appraisal agents were identified according to their specialist areas and language/local knowledge. The procedures for external appraisal by appraisal agents are described in the FMO Appraisal Manual.

Monitoring plans are developed on a yearly basis and in accordance with the FMO External Monitoring Manual. The monitoring agents may also be used for monitoring assignments on projects within the Financial Instrument framework. Both the appraisal agents and the monitoring agents may also be used for other assignments, such as for example baseline studies, reviews and evaluations.

5.7 FMO DISBURSEMENT BANK

The FMO has concluded a five-year contract with Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, SA (BBVA), for the period 2005-2010. The FMO has opened three bank accounts in BBVA: the EEA Financial Mechanism account, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism account and the so-called Joint account. The two financial mechanism accounts are replenished by the donor states based on a request from the FMO. Project disbursements are executed from the financial mechanism accounts to the designated bank accounts in each beneficiary state. The Joint account is credited with funds from the financial mechanism accounts, and is in particular used for paying expenses related to appraisal and monitoring services, as well as ex-post evaluations of projects.

The financial controllers are responsible for the overall coordination with the disbursement bank.

5.8 ACCOUNTANT

The FMO has appointed Consulatet, a Norwegian state authorised public accounting firm, as accountant for the period 2006-2009.

The accountant is responsible for the bookkeeping of all transactions of the financial mechanism bank accounts as well as the Joint account, based on vouchers provided by the FMO. The accountant also prepares electronic bank transfer files in relation to transactions from the Joint account. Moreover, the accountant provides reports to the FMO on a regular basis.

The finance controllers are responsible for the overall coordination with the accountant.

5.9 GRANT MANAGEMENT AND CASE HANDLING SYSTEM DEVELOPERS

The companies GoPro and Concise Management have been hired to develop and maintain FMO's grant management and case-handling system.

5.10 OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

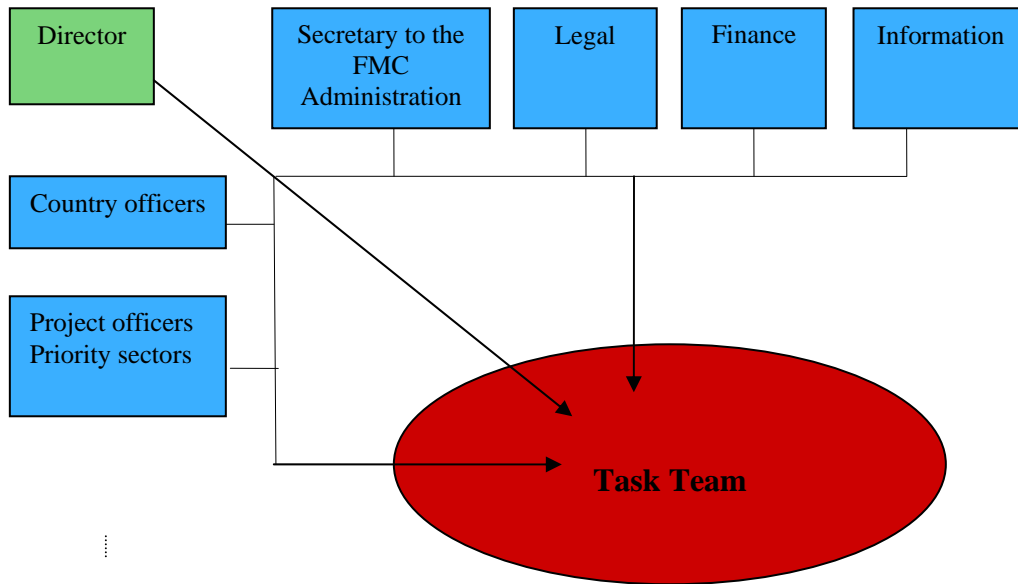
The information team is responsible for coordinating overall communication with stakeholders, including the donor states, FPs, media, potential applicants, project promoters, civil society and social partners.

6. Project Cycle for the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2004-2009

6.1 FMO'S PROJECT CYCLE

The internal procedures for the FMO build on and are consistent with the Rules and Procedures for the Implementation of EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The FMO project cycle is facilitated by the FMO's grant management and case handling system. The system provides a detailed workflow in respect of the project cycle. The workflow ensures consistent procedures and in the same time supports users' tasks from the processing of application, through the approval and implementation, up to project closure. The following description gives a brief overview of this process. An internal Task Management Manual provides more detailed guidance to task managers and other staff.

FMO Team Structure



6.2 PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS

Registration

The FPs send applications to the FMO, which are automatically uploaded to the FMO grant management system and given a case number. The formal date receipt of an application is the date on which it is received by the FMO both in electronic and hard-copy format together with all necessary attachments.

Task Team

When an application arrives in FMO, a team is formed to review the application. Following a discussion between the heads of the country and sector teams, a task manager and team member(s) for the project are assigned by the heads of the country and sector teams. The task manager will take the project through the whole project cycle. Where workload permits, this is normally the CO for the country in which the project is located or a project officer responsible for the sector, but could also be another officer. The task manager also supports the financial officers in their review of disbursement claims and is responsible for handling project amendments through the Project Amendment Group.

Initial Review

The task manager is responsible for checking the application for completeness and ensuring that all the relevant application documents are stored in the grant management system. He/she ensures that the proposed project is compatible with the priority sectors listed in Protocol 38a and/or the Agreement on a Norwegian Financial Mechanism and the relevant MoU(s). He/she creates the initial review report based on his/her initial review of the application together with his/her task team. The task manager, with the support of the task team, singles out the issues for the appraisal to focus on. The FP shall be given the

possibility to correct any formal shortcoming detected during this procedure, and can be approached with a request for additional information.

Appraisal

An application may go for either an internal or external appraisal. If **external appraisal** is decided, the task manager informs those responsible for coordination with the appraisal agents. Once an appraisal agreement is made with an appraisal agent, the agent is required to deliver a detailed appraisal report according to the FMO Appraisal Manual. Group appraisal where an appraisal agent reviews more than one application at the same time is used when appropriate. If an **internal appraisal** has been decided in consultation with the director, it is the task manager, with the support of the task team, who will normally carry out the appraisal. The task manager may in any case make his/her own investigations as he/she deems necessary in order to present the project to the FMC/NMFA for approval.

Screening by the European Commission

Once the decision has been made to proceed with the appraisal, the project is sent for screening to the European Commission.

Recommendation to the FMC/NMFA

When the appraisal has been completed, the task manager drafts the grant recommendation. The recommendation is reviewed by the finance and legal teams and the director. Their combined approval causes the project to be sent for approval/rejection to the FMC and/or the NMFA.

Grant Decision

Once the FMC/NMFA has made its/their decision, including any modifications required by the FMC/NMFA, a Grant Offer Letter is prepared. The FP is expected to accept the offer with its conditions within a reasonable period.

If a FP rejects any of the conditions and sends its response within a reasonable period, a legal officer – in cooperation with the task manager - will evaluate the response and present a recommendation to the FMC/NMFA. A second FMC/NMFA grant decision is deemed to be final.

Project implementation plans (PIPs)

The PIP is the representation of the project plan in a standard format. The PIP serves as a baseline for monitoring the performance of a project in terms of its scope, schedule and budget. The task manager generates a tailor-made PIP template for each project through the FMO grant management and case handling system. It is then sent via the FP to the project promoter. After its completion, the project promoter returns the PIP to the FMO via the FP in electronic format to a dedicated e-mail address in the FMO. The PIP will be printed out and annexed to the Grant Agreement.

Rejected applications

If an application is rejected by the FMC/NMFA, the FP will receive a letter stating the reason for the rejection. The FMC/NMFA can allow the FP to resubmit an application once. If the FMC/NMFA again decides to reject the application, this decision is deemed to be final. The FP will then receive a letter informing it of the reasons for this final rejection.

Signing of Grant Agreement

As soon as an acceptance of the Grant Offer Letter has been received from the FP, and a PIP is concluded, the legal officers prepare a grant agreement. The grant agreement is signed between the FP and the FMC/NMFA.

6.3 APPROVED PROJECTS

Project Interim Reports (PIRs)

The promoters/intermediaries prepare the PIRs which include information on the financial and physical progress of the projects. The reports are sent to the FP, which is required to certify the project progress section. The FP forwards the PIRs to the paying authority, which is required to certify the financial section. The certified reports serve as basis for the paying authority's disbursement requests to the FMO.

Project amendments

Requests from promoters/intermediaries for amendments to projects are approved by the FP and normally validated by the Project Amendment Group (PAG), which makes a recommendation to the FMO Director, or – in specific or exceptional circumstances – the the FMC/NMFA. The PAG is made up of members of the country, financial, legal and sectoral teams.

Disbursements

When the FMO receives a disbursement request, the financial controllers and task managers process the request and possibly prepare a bank transfer order once the conditions have been fulfilled.

Monitoring

The FP will report at least once a year on the projects in progress. The task manager reviews the reports and determines whether future information is needed. The CO in cooperation with the task manager arranges for external monitoring of projects on the basis of a monitoring plan.

Auditing

The FP is responsible for the financial control and audit of approved projects.

In the FMO, the financial controllers oversee the auditing. They ensure close cooperation between the FMO and EBOA/the Office of the Norwegian Auditor General. The team shall in particular provide the auditors with the documents and information necessary to the completion of their tasks.

In line with the Rules and Procedures, the FMC and the NMFA may arrange separate audits and inspections.

Irregularities

The FP is responsible for reporting on irregularities in accordance with the Guideline on Irregularities. If irregularities are reported, finance offers and legal officers review the case and, in co-operation with the CO and/or the task manager, propose actions to be taken by the FMC/NMFA.

6.4 PROJECT COMPLETION

Completion Reports

The FPs prepare the completion reports and forward these to the FMO. A financial controller, in cooperation with the task manager and a legal officer, then ensures that the conditions to allow for the final disbursement to take place, including any pre-completion conditions stipulated in the grant agreement, have been met. Completion reports are sent to the FMC/NMFA for approval. The final project interim report, the project completion report and all grant conditions need to be accepted for the final disbursement to take place.

Evaluation

External evaluations will be carried out in accordance with the Rules and Procedures.

Post-Completion Obligations

The task manager follows up on the projects for which he/she is responsible to ensure that any post-completion obligations are fulfilled.

7. Project Cycle for the EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003

The internal procedures for the Financial Instrument build on the Modalities of implementation annexed to the Joint Committee decision 47/2000 and on the Operational Guidelines by the Financial Instrument Committee, adopted 31 May 2001, and the amendments thereto.

The commitment period for the Financial Instrument expired on 31 December 2003, therefore only the relevant part of the project cycle is explained in this document.

7.1 DISBURSEMENTS

The disbursement procedures are described in the Disbursement Agent Agreement with Den norske Bank.

The disbursements are based on predefined disbursement criteria established in connection with the disbursement schedule, which is part of the total payment plan. If payment cannot be executed in accordance with the payment plan and/or disbursement schedule, consultations between the Beneficiary State and the FIC may take place.

7.2 MONITORING DURING THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Normally, the FIC Monitoring Agents report to the beneficiary state and the FMO at least once a year whether or not disbursements have been made. The FMO is responsible for the follow-up of possible inconsistencies with the project implementation plan/disbursement schedule and advises the FIC on appropriate measures which may have to be taken.

With FIC's approval the FMO may request additional information from the FIC Monitoring Agents. Such requests are copied to the beneficiary state and the FIC Disbursement Agent is kept duly informed.

7.3 COMPLETION/EVALUATION REPORTS

The Monitoring Agents prepare a completion/evaluation report as stipulated in the Commitment Letter and the Grant Agreement and in accordance with the FIC's general

guidelines for Project Evaluation Reports and other post completion obligations. The FMO receives the reports and examines them. The FMO forwards the reports to the FIC together with its comments and possible proposals for action.

8. The EEA Financial Mechanism 1994-1998

The internal procedures for the Financial Mechanism 1994-98 were based on the Operational Guidelines by the Financial Mechanism Committee, adopted 18 July 1997, supplementary Operational Guidelines adopted on 21 December 1998 and Guidelines for partial reimbursement adopted on 11 April 2002.

The commitment period for the Financial Mechanism 1994-1998 expired on 31 December 1998, and the final requests for disbursements were received by the end of 2005. However, the FMO is still receiving completion reports.

The account balance will be refunded to the donor states in 2008.

9. FMO Administrative and Human Resource Systems

9.1 ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Administratively, the FMO is linked to the EFTA secretariat. Thus, EFTA's Staff Regulations and Rules and administrative guidelines are observed. This includes salaries, leave, and other benefits. The EFTA's administration provides services to the FMO within the field of IT (including telephone system), human resources and finance services. The arrangement builds on cost sharing and these costs are included in the FMO's administrative budget.

9.2 FMO CODE OF CONDUCT

The FMO code of conduct is a guide for staff conduct, and is applicable to all FMO staff, including temporary staff, trainees, and in certain instances also to external service agents. It builds on the rules defined in the EFTA Staff Regulations and Rules, to which FMO staff are subject. The code of conduct outlines the FMO's vision, mission and objectives. It is a basis for ensuring the good administrative behaviour and working ethics of FMO staff, particularly in relation to its dealings with the public and with the financial mechanisms' donor and beneficiary states.

9.3 FMO'S PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS POLICY

For the EEA Financial Mechanism, the FMO's policy on public access to documents is aligned with that of the EFTA Secretariat in Brussels. Requests for public access to documents related to the EEA Financial Mechanism can be submitted by e-mail to fmo-access@efta.int or by post to: Financial Mechanism Office, Head of Information, 12-16 Rue Joseph II, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Public access to documents related to the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, are governed by the Norwegian Freedom of Information Act. Any requests for public access to documents related to the Norwegian Financial Mechanism should be forwarded to the NMFA section dedicated to the financial mechanisms (email: seef@mfa.no).

9.4 FMO GRANT MANAGEMENT AND CASE HANDLING SYSTEM

The FMO grant management and case handling system ('Rolf') serves as a case handling and document filing system. Each FMO staff member has user access to the system and is responsible for filing documents in the system. All important documents are registered in the system under appropriate cases. Each case has a responsible staff member who ensures the accuracy and completeness of documents registered under the case. Stakeholder organisations and contacts are also maintained in the system.

The system provides a very detailed workflow adapted to the project cycle. The workflow ensures consistent procedures and in the same time supports users' tasks from the processing of application, through the approval and implementation up to project closure. The 'super-user' is responsible for the overall coordination of system related questions.

9.5 INTERNET

Information on FMO's activities, including the Financial Instrument and Financial Mechanism 1994-1998 is available on the EEA Grants website (<http://www.eeagrants.org>). The information on the website will be updated on a regular basis by the information team.

9.6 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

The administrative team is responsible for the general office management (including e.g. supplies, meeting rooms, visitors, archiving). The FMO staff members use the EFTA's common calendar system.

MAIN DOCUMENTS

EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2004-2009:

The documents referred to in these standard operating procedures are available on the website for the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism: www.eeagrants.org.

- Protocol 38a, including the addendum in respect of Bulgaria and Romania
- Norwegian Agreement
- MoUs
- Rules & Procedures
- Guidelines
- FMO Code of Conduct
- FMO Appraisal Manual
- FMO External Project Monitoring Manual

EEA Financial Instrument 1999-2003:

The following documents are available upon request, please contact fmo@efta.int.

- Protocol 31
- Operational Guidelines
- Rules of Procedure
- Disbursement Agent Agreement

Financial Mechanism 1994-1998:

The following documents are available upon request, please contact fmo@efta.int.

- Protocol 38
- Rules of Procedure
- Operational Guidelines
- Fund Management Agreement