	Place	Date	Time	
	DGOTDU - Lisbon	14 May 2009	Start	15h00
			End	17h30

ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY PORTUGAL 14 May 2009

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The participants list is in Annex. The following agenda was adopted:

09:00 – Departure from Lisbon (meeting point at DGOTDU, Campo Grande, 50) **to Site Visit** to project “PT0027 - Historical Route of Defensive Lines of Torres Vedras” at Mafra Municipality

12:30 – Lunch (Turcifal, Torres Vedras)

14:30 – Return to Lisbon


At DGOTDU, Campo Grande, 50 - Lisbon

15:00 – Annual Meeting Welcoming Address by the Secretary of State for Spatial Planning and Towns.

15:15 – High-level session for the EEA Financial Mechanism

- Opening comments from donors
- Brief presentation of the Annual Report by the NFP
- Annual Report feedback from the Donors
- Programing framework considerations
- Block grants – NGO and STF implementation
- Critical Urban Areas Projects
- Work plan for 2009

16:30 – Coffee Break

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16:45 – Working-level session for the EEA Financial Mechanism

- High-level session conclusions
- Annual Report and feedback from FMO/Donors
- Individual Projects – disbursements and monitoring of approved projects
- Block Grants – NGO and Scholarship Fund implementation
- Critical Urban Areas Projects – state of play
- Activities of the FP and the PA and preparedness for the last two years of implementation.
- Work Plan for 2009

17:30 – Conclusions and Closing Session

2. Summary


The Annual Report for 2008 activities was formally submitted and approved.

The NFP and the Intermediary bodies presented the main issues contained in the Report and the Donor States' feedback was given.


The planned actions for the remaining implementation period were addressed.

3. Decisions and Action Points


Annual Meeting Welcoming Address by the Secretary of State for Spatial Planning and Towns	<p>After giving a word about the health condition of Mr. Manuel Pisco, Mr. João Ferrão, the State Secretary, opened the annual meeting under the key thought that Consolidation is the word that best characterises the work done in this period. Some of the major achievements are in the areas of institutional co-ordination, collaboration with project promoters, monitoring and bilateral relationships.</p> <p>He added that the low completion rate is a weakness that has to be overcome soon. The problems are identified and the measures that are being taken will allow for the budget completion rate to increase in a matter of weeks.</p>
Opening comments from donors	<p>Mr. Anders Erdal initiated his intervention by appreciating the site visit to the project PT0027.</p> <p>Addressing the best wishes and quick recovery of Mr. Manuel Pisco, the Donors stated their satisfaction with the implementation of the FM in Portugal, as 100% of the fund was committed until April 30th.</p> <p>Highlighting the good performance of the NFP, and referring that Portugal is number 1 in terms of project partnerships with the EFTA States, the Donors will now carefully follow-up the implementation of the projects.</p>

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<p>Brief presentation of the Annual Report by the NFP</p>	<p>Mr. Lourenço de Carvalho presented the major lines of the annual report, which describes the 2008 efforts and achievements, updating data until the final commitment date, end of April 2009, upon the recent revision of the document.</p> <p>Regarding the TA Fund, he stated that 35% financial and 55% of physical implementation has been reached, as well as all set TA indicators were reached in terms of calls, approvals and contracts, doubling the number of running projects from 2007 to 2008.</p> <p>The report explains why and how the NFP is now focused on monitoring activities – how all projects are permanently monitored by the NFP’s staff, with site visits, technical meetings, financial follow-up, etc., how the Monitoring committee was established and through what instruments receives inputs from these permanent monitoring activities.</p> <p>He also informed that no auditing activities were promoted at the 1st level (NFP), due to the low rate of validated expenses. Nevertheless, auditing arrangements (sampling procedures, etc.) have been taken for eventual auditing during the 2nd semester 2009. .</p> <p>In a context where 100% of the funds are committed and all the grant agreements and contracts signed, he stated that the report tries to give an overall picture of the Individual Projects, in terms of regions, priority sectors and types of applicant, relating it to some constraints and strong points (universities – eligibility; public administration – decision processes, etc.). Some considerations were made in terms of the projects financial impact and the reasons for it.</p> <p>Although the financial impact (disbursements) has a significant time-gap to reveal results (long period PIRs, promoters delays, difficulties in eligibility during validation), he showed how Projects show already significant physical results, considering the proposed implementation indicators.</p> <p>He also highlighted one of the driving efforts of the NFP during the implementation of the FM: the number of partnerships with DS more than doubled from 1st call to 2nd call projects.</p> <p>Finally, he referred to the report describing the main communication actions taken and the updated list of “publicity friendly projects” which have a greater potential for broader communication outreach, many of which had already several media coverage. Some of these projects were addressed through some photos in slide show.</p>
<p>Annual Report feedback from the Donors</p>	<p>Mrs. Inga Magistad referred to the good cooperation between the NFP and the Royal Embassy of Norway. The Donors stated that the Annual Report presents a good picture of the work done, giving useful information on the FM implementation status and that the focus now is on the lessons learned.</p> <p>It was also underlined that there has to be an effort to make sure that project results are sustainable and activities will continue in the future.</p>
<p>Programming framework considerations</p>	<p>Mr. Lourenço de Carvalho took the floor to state that other than the core data already referred – 100% commitment of funds - the NFP would only add the need to proceed with the CUA projects PIP changes to include the amendment approvals.</p> <p>And considering the stage of the FM implementation, no other changes were at the table in terms of programming framework.</p> <p>The Donor States agreed.</p>
<p>Block grants – NGO</p>	<p>Mr. Anders Erdal considered very positive that the NGO fund had a large adherence of applicants.</p>

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and STF implementation	<p>The representative of APA gave a presentation on the process and implementation status of the environment component of the Fund, mentioning that between the beginning of February and the 15th April 2008, some preparing tasks were carried out, namely the elaboration and approval of the specific Regulation of the Project, and all the administrative procedures needed to publicize the Project and prepare the launching session. The Fund was officially launched on the 15th April 2008 and the call for proposals was open until the 30th June 2008. The Evaluation Committee was established according to the Fund Set-Up and the specific Regulation.</p> <p>The representative of CIG also shared some elements on the implementation of the social NGO fund. Namely, that the Open Call started on 25th of February and was available until May, 15, during which period CIG received 108 applications.</p> <p>He then stated that after the evaluation process, CIG (management team) and the Steering Committee selected 14 projects to be financed. The list with these projects became then public on CIG's website. Five from the 14 granted projects started yet in December and the rest have been progressively starting during the first trimester of 2009.</p> <p>The Donors questioned the monitoring system of the Scholarship and Training Fund but since the FCT representative was not present, the NFP took note of the questions to verify the situation and will reply as soon as possible.</p>
Critical Urban Areas Projects	<p>Mrs. Fátima Ferreira took the floor to convey information about the CUA projects. , The low rates of financial performance in the 3 territories are mainly due to constraints in the initial selection and training of technical teams and also due the process of partners consultation and concerting of actions, which are methodological characteristics of the Initiative. IHRU is already working to overcome the delays, although the legal framework on public expenditure is a major constraint to speed the implementation of some actions.</p> <p>At the communication level she referred the preparation of an international seminar, taking place from 25th to 27th May, during which the official website of the Critical Urban Areas will be launched.</p> <p>Mr. Fátima Ferreira also referred that in Cova da Moura the delay in the development of the detailed land use plan is affecting the immediate rehabilitation of public spaces, action that was supposed to absorb some of the funds granted by the financial mechanism. This is a question that, in due time, must be considered under a possible project reprogramming.</p> <p>Finally, she informed that in Vale da Amoreira IHRU is preparing an application for EU funds to find additional funding in order to enable the development of some activities included in the action program.</p> <p>Mr. Anders Erdal appreciated the report and emphasized that the CUA projects absorb a considerable proportion of the EEA Grants in Portugal and therefore a greater attention should be now put into financial completion.</p> <p>Mr. João Ferrão concluded by informing that new administrative advancements are expected very soon in Cova da Moura regarding the land ownership situation.</p>
Work plan for 2009	<p>Mrs. Ana Catita presented the 3 focus areas of action for 2009:</p> <p>(i) Follow up the implementation of projects and monitoring activities. This will continue to be performed on a regular basis and guided by 3 major concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid major delays in project implementation ▪ Ensure the promoters adopt the correct procedures and comply with FM rules

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check project results and see how they match the expected results <p>(ii) Ensure constant and regular financial reporting and disbursement. To succeed in this objective, critical factors are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sure we have effective verification/validation instruments, shared by all agents involved (UNG, PA, Promoters) ▪ Guarantee a good coordination between the UNG e the PA ▪ Set up a timeframe for promoters to answer questions or clarify any issues ▪ Keep close contact with the FMO <p>(iii) Identify good practices as project results and publicize project impacts. This will result mostly from monitoring and it will be a good way to look into the future.</p> <p>She finally referred that a closing event will be prepared with the collaboration of the Royal Embassy of Norway.</p> <p>Mrs. Dina Ferreira gave a brief presentation about the supervision and certification activities by the Paying Authority, referring the role of the 3 departments involved in the process of validation, certification and reimbursement of expenses.</p> <p>She also mentioned the coordination efforts between the Paying Authority and the NFP in accelerating theses processes.</p>
<p>Working-level session for the EEA Financial Mechanism</p>	<p>Mrs. Stine Andersen took the conclusions of the high level meeting, stressing the need to have the projects running and closed in 2 years.</p> <p>Some bottlenecks were addressed and solutions were sought.</p> <p>The FMO recommends PAGs to correct programming to catch-up financial implementation and the NFP informed of the new instruments and tools to simplify and support this purpose.</p> <p>The NFP referred the meeting on 20th February in which difficulties were identified and explained the actions taken to overcome them.</p> <p>The NFP raised a question about the template for waste disposal declaration and it was agreed that the NFP would send more information for the FMO to look into it.</p> <p>Having no further issues to address, the meeting was closed.</p>

Analysed Documents:

- Annual Report 2008

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ANNEX

List of Participants

Entity	Name	Title
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Anders Erdal	Deputy Director General, NMFA
	Vibeke Rysst-Jensen	Assistant Director General
	Inga Magistad	Norwegian Ambassador to Portugal
	Gro Dahle	First Secretary, Norwegian Embassy
Financial Mechanism Office	Stine Lundin Andresen	Director
	Ágústa Ýr Thorbergsdóttir	Country Portfolio Officer
	Hjörtur Bragi Sverrisson	Senior Legal Officer
Secretary of State for Spatial Planning and Towns	João Ferrão	Secretary of State
	Ana Cristina Catita	Adviser
European Economic Area Financial Mechanism	Ana Isabel Resende	Adviser and Financial Manager
	Lourenço Xavier de Carvalho	Adviser and Information Manager
	Dora Carvalho	Financial Officer
Financial Institute for Regional Development	Dina Ferreira	Vice-President
Foundation for Science and Technology	Isabel Reis (absent)	Science and Technology Officer
Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Institute	Maria João Freitas	Member of Administration Board
Portuguese Environment Agency	Isabel Raposo	Technical Officer
Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality	João Pereira	Technical Officer