



KS' International Projects

2016 Annual Report

About KS' International Projects

KS INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

KS International Projects is the international unit of The Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities (KS). The unit receives support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and the European Economic Area (EEA) financial mechanisms through projects and participation in programmes. KS International Projects consists of five full-time project managers. Professional expertise from other KS staff as well as from KS members is drawn into the projects when needed. The international project unit also co-operates with other relevant organisations and ministries in Norway, depending on the focus and theme of the project.

EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

The Grants are the contributions of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway towards reducing economic and social disparities and strengthening bilateral relations with 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe. Through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are partners in the Internal Market with the 28 EU member states. The countries also share common values and responsibilities with other European countries to promote equality of opportunity, tolerance, security, environmental sustainability and a decent standard of living for all. Funds are set aside in all beneficiary countries to support networking and foster project partnerships on initiatives of mutual interest. The financial mechanisms are organised around programmes, with pre-defined projects and open calls under each programme. For more see www.eeagrants.org.

In the outgoing EEA Grants period (2009-2014) KS was Donor Programme Partner (DPP) for capacity-building and institutional co-operation in Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as in the field of children and youth at risk in Estonia.

The next period runs from 2017 until the end of 2021, with the possibility of prolonging projects until 2024. The total budget is €2.8 billion. The donor countries and beneficiary states are at the moment negotiating the individual content of country-specific programmes, but it is already clear that KS will be a donor programme partner in Romania and Bulgaria. In Romania, the programme has a budget of €70 million, for Local Development and Enhanced Roma Inclusion. In Bulgaria, the budget is €35 million, for Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups. KS may also become a programme partner or project partner in other countries under the EEA and Norway Grants.

NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

KS has also received funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) for numerous co-operation projects. Norway has a solid local government sector and has a lot to offer in helping build strong and stable local democracies in partnership local government associations in other countries. KS International Projects have NMFA-funded projects in several European states outside the EU.

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Preamble

Many programmes and projects funded by EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 were finalised in the past year. KS contributed as donor programme partner to five of those programmes and to a great many projects from which Norwegian local governments have been able to draw significant knowledge and new competencies. Moreover, our member municipalities have gained valuable experience from participating in capacity-building activities with associations or local governments in other member states of the Council of Europe.

2016 marked the beginning of a new EEA and Norway Grants period (2014-2021), with the EU and donors (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) in agreeing to allocate to €2.8 billion to reducing economic and social disparities in Europe as well as to strengthening co-operation with 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics. Negotiations towards Memoranda of Understanding with beneficiary states opened from June 2016. Priority sectors and programme areas were agreed after extensive consultations in September 2016. Romania concluded the first beneficiary negotiations and signed its agreement in October 2016.

KS has already been selected as donor programme partner for “local development, poverty reduction and enhanced

Roma inclusion” programmes in Romania and Bulgaria. We are in the loop for partnering in programmes in other countries and stand ready in due course to become project partners in selected pre-defined projects relevant to local governments. New international opportunities for our members to share and to learn will open up.

Municipalities play a vital role in securing safety, dignity and freedom for all citizens in Norway. They play a key role in implementing many national policies. The delivery of services by local bodies controlled by elected institutions in good co-ordination with other tiers of government has proven to be an effective, efficient and sustainable model for prosperity. The Norwegian local government system therefore provides examples of good practice which are relevant and useful to share as part of Norway’s international engagement for sustainable development.

In the past year, KS actively advocated for a stronger role for local government in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 17 calls for stronger partnerships between different stakeholders. KS promotes co-operation between different tiers of government. We represent Norway’s local governments in formalised consultation with the Norwegian government. This well-established consultation system was put forward



as good practice worth studying in order to enhance sustainable development in other countries on several occasions in 2016.

Nationally, KS is working to strengthen social inclusion. Education and knowledge is a key part of preventing exclusion. Local governments, being inclusive democratic institutions close to and mandated by citizens, can provide an excellent opportunity to offer inclusive education and other services which will prevent future exclusion, thus also preventing future increases in social benefit costs.

In the Paris Accord on Climate Change concluded in 2015, local governments were recognised for their role in both the prevention of and adaptation to climate change. Local governments in their function as planners and societal developers can help to significantly

reduce emissions and limit the impact of climate change, and thus contribute to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals’ environmental targets.

KS wants local governments to play their role in the new International Development Agenda 2030. We therefore contribute to building capacity for them to better provide quality services and be accountable for their actions. Access to experiences and good practices from other countries is helpful. KS is proud to contribute to the international development agenda for the benefit of Norwegian local governments and their counterparts in other countries and for better and more easily assessable inclusive services to citizens around the globe.

Gunn Marit Helgesen
President of KS

Projects Overview 2016

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Bulgaria	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Bulgarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Technical Assistance Directorate, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria	Norway Grants €30 000 for 2016
Bulgaria	Strengthening the Capacity of the National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Bulgarian Municipalities through Co-operation with Norwegian Local Authorities	The National Association of Bulgarian Municipalities and Regions - NAMRB	Norway Grants €185 000 for 2009-2014/16
Estonia	Donor Programme Partner for Children and Youth at Risk	Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Justice	EEA Grants €22 000 for 2016
Georgia	Quality products and services to NALAG members	National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	NMFA €200 000 for 2016
Hungary	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Hungarian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	The Prime Ministers' Office	Norway Grants €70 000 for 2016
Hungary	Capacity Building and Institutional Co-operation between Hungarian and Norwegian Local Authorities	The Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities - TÖOSZ	Norway Grants €178 000 for 2009 – 2014/16
Latvia	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry for Environmental Protection and Regional Development in Latvia	Norway Grants €33 000 for 2016
Latvia	Smart governance and performance improvement of Latvian municipalities	Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) and State Regional Development Agency in Latvia	Norway Grants €285 000 for 2009 – 2014/16
Lithuania	Donor Programme Partner for the programme Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Lithuanian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania	Norway Grants €42 000 for 2016

Country	Project	Partners	Funding to KS
Lithuania	Pre-defined project for sustainable energy and environmental quality management in local governments	Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania	Norway Grants €28 000 for 2016
Moldova	Effective, Consultative and Devolved Governance in Moldova	Congress of Local Governments of Moldova	NMFA €190 000 for 2016
Poland	Building competences for inter-municipal and inter-sectorial co-operation as tools for local and regional development	Association of Polish Cities in co-operation with the Association of Polish Counties and the Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland	EEA Grants €230 000 for 2009 – 2014/16
Poland	Polish-Norwegian co-operation platform for climate and energy conservation	Association of Polish Cities in co-operation with the Polish Network of Energy Cities	EEA Grants €86 000 for 2016-1017
Portugal	Sexual and moral harassment at the work place	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment and seven other Portuguese institutions	EEA Grants €130 000 for 2009 – 2014/16
Romania	A Green Way to Sustainable Development	The Environmental Protection Agency Sibiu	EEA Grants €587 000 for 2009 – 2014/17
Russia	Presidential Programme: Internships for Norwegian and Russian public employees	The Presidential Academy for National Economy and Public Administration, North-West Institute, Saint Petersburg	NMFA €566 000 for 2014 - 2017
Ukraine	Efficiency Networks, with an applied research component and a Local Democracy Survey (2015 – 2018)	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) and Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC)	NMFA €1 400 000 for 2015 – 2018

** EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 with implementation until 2017



PART 1: Review 2016



Polish-Norwegian Co-operation Platform for Climate and Energy Efficiency

In an EEA and Norway Grants 2009- 2014 co-operation project between KS, the Association of Polish Cities (APC) and the Network of Polish “Energie Cités” (PNEC) ten Polish municipalities - Bielsko-Biala, Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Milanówek, Pałacznica, Płońsk, Rumia, Raciechowice, Sopot and Sztum - received funding to develop climate and energy efficiency concepts in urban development, building renovation, district heating, education and increased use of renewable energy.

The Polish municipalities visited Norway in September 2016. In Drammen, the group was briefed on the urban transformation the city has gone through over recent years and visited the municipal waste management company Lindum, which has state of the art facilities including for the production of biogas.

The group in Bærum was introduced to urban development with business facilities and housing estates at Oslo’s disused old airport of Fornebu and visited a retrofitted office building which now produces more energy than it uses (Power House Kjørbo).



Lithuania: Local action for better air quality and sustainable energy solutions

The group was taken to ESVAL environmental park in Nes municipality, which recycles different fractions of municipal and business waste, as well as to a district heating plant producing energy from many different renewable sources (Akershus Energi). The Eco Lighthouse Certification Scheme was presented, giving the group insight into a certification system for climate and environment-friendly buildings.

Partnerships between Polish municipalities and GLØR Waste Treatment Facility (Green Business Norway), Dalane and Bryne Upper Secondary Schools (Rogaland County Council) as well as Ullensaker, Frogn, Hvaler, Nes, Oslo and Drammen municipalities will be continued in a new exchange of practice planned for March 2017.

Two webinars for Norwegian and Polish energy experts were organised and a final project conference is scheduled for April 2017.

More information is available on the project web page: <http://www.pnec.org.pl/en/dzialalnosc/projektycat/5-projekty-obecnie-realizowane/459-polsko-norweska-platforma-wspolpracy-dla-poszanowania-energii-i-klimatu>

The Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (ALAL) collaborated with KS on a Norway Grants pre-defined project to strengthen Lithuanian municipalities' ability to better contribute to the implementation of Lithuanian law on air pollution and energy. In particular, this effort focused on increasing the capacity of local government to promote sustainable energy solutions and improved air quality at the local level.

Following a kick-off conference in Vilnius in June 2015, during which Bergen Municipality's Climate Action Plan was studied, five groups totaling 75 Lithuanian municipal leaders and local politicians in 2016 visited Oslo, Bærum, Ringerike, Sarpsborg, Ullensaker, Bergen, Os and Fjell Municipalities as well as Hordaland County Council to study how Norwegian local governments work with these issues. The groups were given insight into systems for measuring local air pollution, how spatial planning initiatives are trying to minimise pollution emissions from traffic, integration of public health initiatives with pollution reduction

efforts, energy efficiency in buildings, energy recovery from waste, electrification of harbour facilities and ships at port and more.

Inspiration from these five visits to Norway were discussed in three follow-up seminars gathering a total of 150 municipal technicians in Kleipida, Kaunas and Vilnius to discuss issues of energy mix, energy efficiency in buildings as well as actions to reduce local air pollution. Based on new knowledge and improved capacities, seven municipalities drafted new energy plans with some external assistance. Five municipalities prepared air quality improvement plans. These pilot initiatives served as the basis for new guidelines from ALAL to members on how to strengthen the implementation of national energy and air pollution legislation at the local level.

Project activities were closed during an experience wrap-up event for 80 participants, where the Norwegian Institute of Air Research (NILU) presented the Norwegian national air quality measurement set-up.



Local self-governance in Georgia

Since the establishment of its current local self-government system in 2004, Georgia has made progress in strengthening local democracy and improving services to citizens. Also, the country's only local government association NALAG (the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia) has become a respected voice of local government and an appreciated provider of support to its members. Further devolution of powers is being considered in Georgia in order to enhance services to citizens and to counter the strong centralisation tendency the country now sees through implementing new regional

development measures. Municipalities will in the future take a stronger role in regional development.

Before going forward, it is, however, necessary to better monitor the performance of municipalities. As part of its co-operation programme with KS, covering 2015-2018 and with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NALAG therefore has launched a process to select, develop and implement enhanced performance management in Georgian municipalities.

A group of 12 experts composed of 4 academics and 8 members of NALAG's



support network throughout Georgia was established in early 2016 to identify needs, analyse the current situation and offer a new performance management model. This group met in a first seminar in April to discuss approach and listen to Norwegian best practice cases covering Norwegian local governments' role in social and economic development, as well as performance assessment and improvement in Norwegian municipalities covering the local government to state reporting system KOSTRA, user lead performance improvement techniques, KS' various tools offered to members and LEAN methodology.

Following this kick-off seminar, the group of experts surveyed issues of concern to NALAG members, analysed this data and reported back at a new seminar in September 2016, where the case of performance improvement in the Norwegian municipality of Vestre Toten also was studied. Based on conclusions from the preparatory work, NALAG has selected a performance-based management model which will be offered to all members from 2017, once tested and fully developed.



Public sector mutual exchange programme between Norway and Russia

The Presidential Programme, which was started in 2000, allows for the exchange of civil servants between Norway and Russia and is managed by KS in partnership with the North-West Institute of Management of the Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in St. Petersburg. Within the scope of the programme, the participating civil servants complete an internship period (1.5 weeks for Norwegians in Russia, 3 weeks for Russians in Norway) with one or more relevant institutions in the other country, thereby increasing their understanding and knowledge of the institutions and working methods across the border. It is hoped that the interaction will, in turn, encourage increased co-operation and contact and possibly engender new cross-border project opportunities, something that is much needed in the current era of fraught relations between Russia and the West.

In the spring of 2016, 11 civil servants from different parts of Norway embarked on their trip to Russia, first spending several days in St. Petersburg to prepare for their internships, before traveling to the site of their internships to spend a week at their host institution. The return leg of the exchange took place in October, when 14 Russian civil servants from cities such as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Pskov and Novgorod came to Norway for three weeks. They first spent a week in Oslo following a general programme prepared by KS, before heading off to their respective internships in different parts of Norway, many of them visiting county governor offices, county councils and municipalities in Finnmark, Troms, Nordland, Trøndelag, Hordaland and Telemark.

The vast majority of participants from both Norway and Russia expressed

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Maria Karimova

great satisfaction with their internships in 2016, which had given them a variety of interesting and educational experiences in the context of another culture. Maria Karimova from Monchegorsk, who stayed in Sortland municipality, expressed her opinion of the experience in an interview with the local online newspaper Vesterålen Online:

“It has been a very interesting visit. I have learned a lot about the tourist industry in Northern Norway and I will bring many ideas home to Monchegorsk.”

The internship period in Norway was concluded by a thematic conference on the topic of political engagement in contemporary Russia, a theme that was inspired by the parliamentary

and local elections held in Russia a few weeks prior. Here, academics from Norway and from Russia, as well as an election observer from NORDEM presented their views and took questions from the public. In 2017, the thematic conference will be organized by the Russian North-West Institute of Management in St. Petersburg at the end of the stay of the Norwegian participants sometime in the spring.

The Presidential Programme is organized on an annual basis and is open to anyone working in the public sector in Norway or in Russia.

For more information about the possibility to participate in the programme, please get in touch by sending an e-mail to christian.larsen@ks.no.

Capacity Building and institutional co-operation with Hungary

KS has been Donor Programme Partner in Hungary for the programme Capacity Building and Institutional Co-operation with Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities. Several projects have been implemented, and the total grant was €10.8 million. The objective is strengthened institutional capacity and human resource development in public institutions, and local and regional authorities. This is achieved through co-operation and transfer of knowledge with similar institutions in Norway.

KS has also been partner in a successful project for capacity building in the municipal sector, together with our sister association TÖOSZ. The project “Capacity-building in municipalities through Norwegian-Hungarian co-operation”, aimed to increase the knowledge and professionalism of local governments, share experiences and examples between Hungarian and Norwegian local governments and public institutions, and support local democracy through capacity-building of local governments associations in Hungary with support from KS.

Several Norwegian municipalities were active in this project; Oppegård and Øvre Eiker were hosts and shared experiences on elderly care. There were study trips to Hamar, Elverum and Tolga with a focus on local development, Trysil on energy efficiency and renewable energy, and Rygge and Nittedal on municipal reform.

The programme had several other Norwegian project partners ensuring bilateral exchanges. There were three predefined projects with the Directorate for Cultural Heritage, the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB) and the Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate as the Norwegian partners.

Eight smaller projects with Norwegian project partners received funding. The municipalities of Elverum and Stor-Elvdal co-operated on a project on energy efficiency, Øvre Eiker on elderly care, and Rissa on vocational training for handicrafts. Lillehammer University College, the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning and SINTEF also participated in projects.



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Mr. Sandis Cakuls

Successful local self-governance capacity building in Latvia

KS has been Donor Programme Partner in the programme “Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities. The objective has been strengthened institutional capacity and human resource development in public institutions, local and regional authorities in the beneficiary states within the agreed priority sectors, through co-operation and transfer of knowledge with similar institutions in Norway.

The programme has included several areas of capacity-building, such as marketing strategies, health, education and housing. Networking and knowledge transfer among municipalities has been the main focus of the capacity-building. With help from Norwegian experiences, a municipal database has also been developed with success.

We interviewed Mr. Sandis Cakuls, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development about the outcome of the project:

Why was it important for Latvia to have this program?

The programme is unique for Latvia as for the first time all governance levels involved in regional development have been gathered to raise cross-level knowledge and competences for better co-operation in policy planning and implementation processes. In close co-operation with our Norwegian colleagues we had a chance to pilot practical hands-on experience sharing and establish a fundamental basis for regional development in Latvia for the upcoming years.



What are the main results of the programme and pre-defined projects?

The programme contributed to professional growth of local, regional and state development planning experts. Positive change can take place only if there are experts who see the development potentials of their specific territories and are willing to grow, learn and contribute to fulfilment of development visions

In addition, the programme strengthened investment attraction abilities at the local level, especially in the least-developed region of Latvia – Latgale. It also supported 30 new entrepreneurs in starting their businesses and fulfilling their innovative business ideas, it encouraged local governments to seek

their own specific advantages and select their own methods to improve living standards via taking over the Benchmarking system from Norway and Poland.

What achievement are you most proud of?

We see that the most integral result of the programme is the change in mindset towards a more co-operative, open, willing to learn and accountable one, especially at the local expert level. It is important to communicate both to institutions as well as to society that creative, motivated and development-focused professionals, who learn and apply new methods in development planning, are of a great value for a faster and more balanced development in Latvia.



One of the milestones of our programme was taking over and adapting the Benchlearning system to Latvian conditions. KS provided Latvian partners with consultations on Norwegian Benchlearning methodology (efficiency networks) and supported Latvian local governments in their efforts introducing the Benchlearning system in Latvia.

What are the contributions of the Norwegian partners?

Active involvement of Norwegian project and programme partners, especially KS, was appreciated at each programme implementation phase, starting with the idea about the programme and continuing with its preparation and implementation. The Partners took a very active part in each project – institutions from Norway were the main actors of experience exchange and transfer of best practices, expertise and knowledge.

Partners followed the programme implementation closely and played a major role in enhancing bilateral relations both among institutions and people, supporting the establishment of strategic partnerships. Additionally, the programme has broadened its scope of addressed issues thanks to the Partners who initiated organising experience exchange events on the issue which almost every country in Europe was affected by in 2016 – the migration crisis. The knowledge gained as a result of the events has been and will continue to be used among Latvian experts. Norwegian expertise will also be used in developing the Regional Policy Guidelines for 2020 – 2026.

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Mr. Sandis Cakuls, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Why is it important to have a Norwegian partner?

Again and again we have come to the conclusion that before coming up with new untested solutions it is crucial to take a look around and explore if somebody already has experience dealing with the same problem or challenge. Very often it is more efficient to learn from other experiences, take over practices and adapt to local particularities. Regardless of economic indicators or geographical differences, people living both in Latvia and in Norway are pretty much similar, with similar human needs. The Partners’ contribution was in ensuring transfer of approved and working methods for comparable challenges which can

be adjusted to specific conditions of the country, gradually raising the level of inhabitants’ well-being in Latvian regions.

International co-operation, experience exchange and knowledge transfer is one of the main pre-conditions for an effective and purposeful capacity-building in a world where joint goals and challenges play an increasingly important role. Taking that into account, part of the efforts of the programme was aimed at establishing strategic partnerships between Latvian and Norwegian institutions.



Ukraine's future stability and local government

When President Poroshenko held his inaugural speech as the newly elected president in summer of 2014, he emphasised increased local autonomy and decentralisation as one of the main priorities of his administration. As a part of this effort, Ukrainian local communities are also undergoing a consolidation reform. Most oblast councils have approved plans for community amalgamation, thereby making themselves ready for a process that aims to establish viable self-governance units instead of the

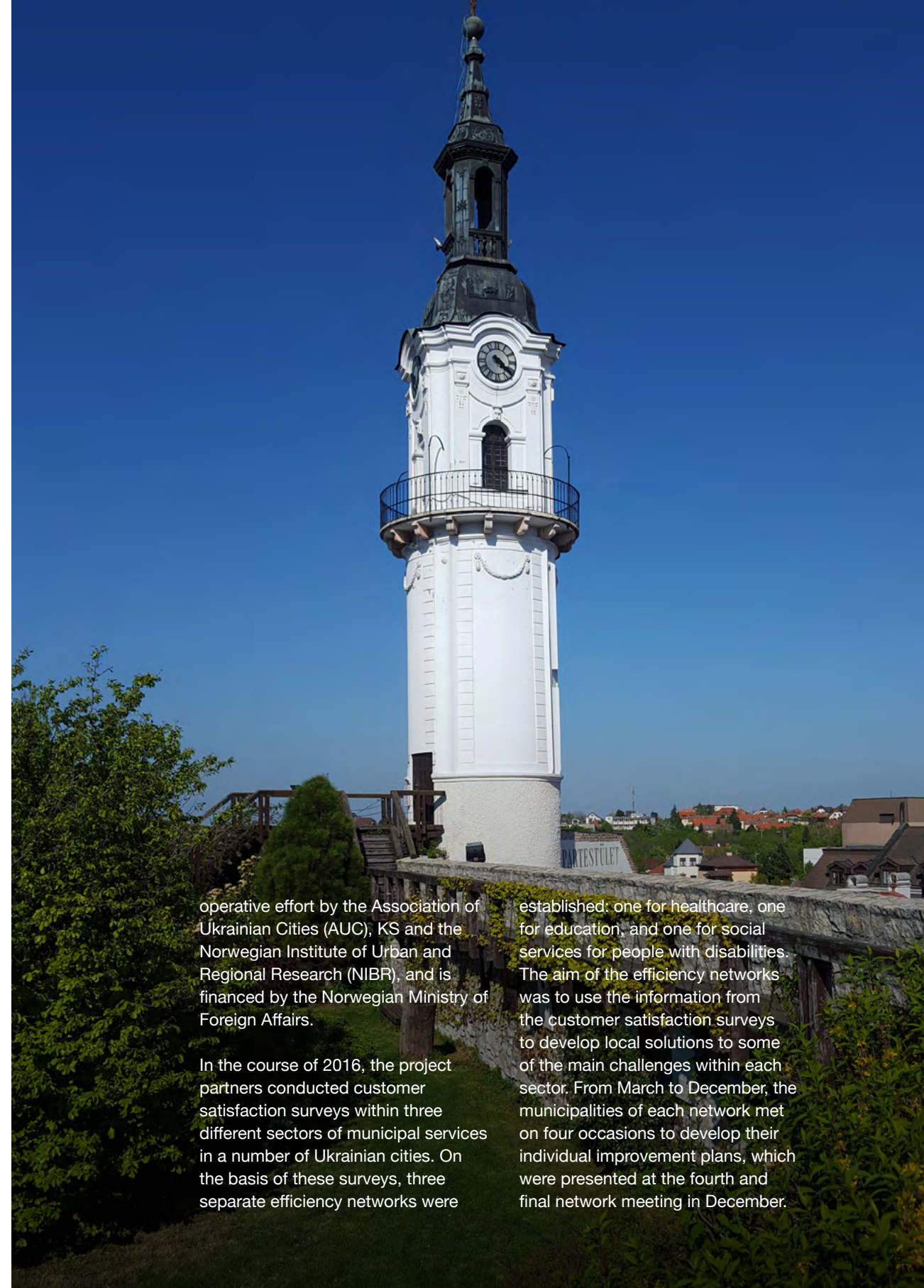
current fragmented network of villages and settlements. As a consequence of this reform, the total number of local governments at the community-level is expected to fall from 11 000 to 1 500.

It is in this context that KS is coordinating a project that focuses on capacity-building for Ukrainian local governments in service provision and evidence-based policy dialogue, as well as the strengthening of local democracy and citizen participation. The project is implemented as a co-

operative effort by the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), KS and the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), and is financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the course of 2016, the project partners conducted customer satisfaction surveys within three different sectors of municipal services in a number of Ukrainian cities. On the basis of these surveys, three separate efficiency networks were

established: one for healthcare, one for education, and one for social services for people with disabilities. The aim of the efficiency networks was to use the information from the customer satisfaction surveys to develop local solutions to some of the main challenges within each sector. From March to December, the municipalities of each network met on four occasions to develop their individual improvement plans, which were presented at the fourth and final network meeting in December.



“When President Poroshenko held his inaugural speech as the newly-elected president in summer of 2014, he emphasised increased local autonomy and decentralisation as one of the main priorities of his administration.”



The delegates from the different municipalities showed considerable enthusiasm for the interactive working method promoted by the efficiency networks, which for many was a new approach to problem-solving. They worked hard to come up with their respective improvement plans, and in 2017 a follow-up meeting will be held to see how successful the municipalities have been in implementing them.

Among the activities of 2016 was also a training session for the trainers who will help elected councilors of newly created amalgamated local

government to successfully tackle the duties and responsibilities imposed on them the local government reform.

Beyond these councilor trainings, KS will build on the results achieved in 2016 by continuing its co-operation with AUC and NIBR on the following activities:

- furthering an evidence-based policy dialogue between AUC and the central government with regards to the situation of the local government sector in Ukraine and the ongoing reforms

- using efficiency networks to increase the quality of services by building the capacity and competence of local governments and enabling local authorities to make decisions based on evidence through focus groups and surveys

- conducting a nationwide local democracy survey and using efficiency networks to enhance local democracy in newly amalgamated communities

“They worked hard to come up with their respective improvement plans...”



Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue in EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021

The EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 included a Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue (DWTD). The objective was to promote the decent work agenda and foster tripartite dialogue. By improving this dialogue the social partners in each country will better contribute to a more sustainable economic and social development.

The Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue will be continued in the EEA and Norway Grants period 2014-21.

KS has a long history in participating with projects related to decent work and tripartite dialogue. In 2009-2014, KS was project partner in 7 projects in the beneficiary states, in co-operation with the Norwegian Union for Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE). Projects were implemented in projects in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Romania. KS

is the second-largest employers' association and the largest one in the public sector, and NUMGE is Norway's largest trade union for municipal employees.

Three of the projects focused on improving social and tripartite dialogue, and the remaining four on threats and violence at the workplace, also known as third-party violence. All projects ended in December 2014, and the evaluation of the projects we were involved in was very positive. Among the results were:

- Improved social dialogue through bottom-up processes in Poland. The project brought new insight to Polish municipalities on the subject of social dialogue value in the workplace.
- Opening the path towards an effective implementation of a social dialogue mechanism in Romania. The project included a study visit



to Norway, a comparative study on social dialogue mechanisms and practices in public administration in Romania and Norway, and a curriculum for training of civil servants was developed.

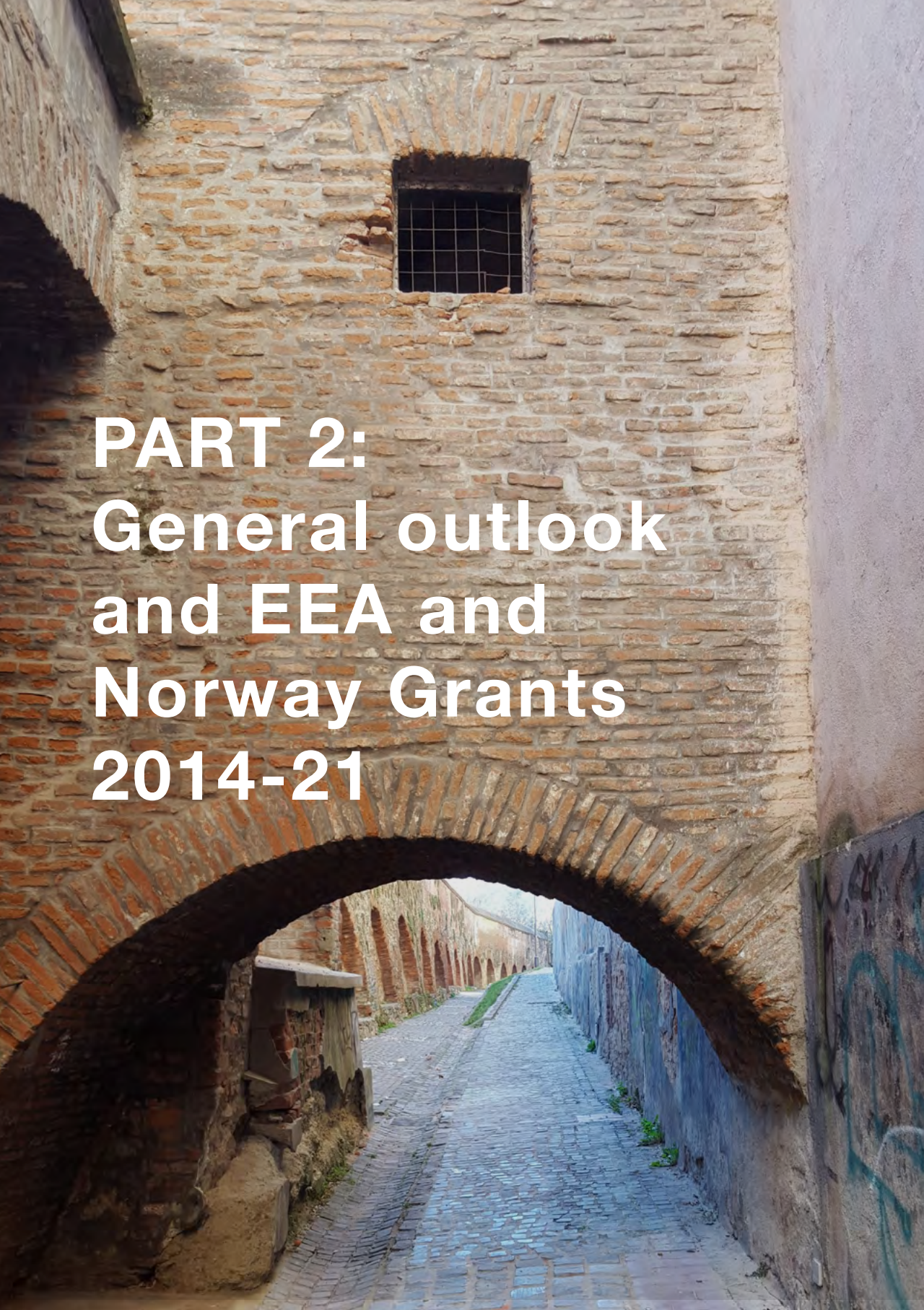
- Norwegian trade unions and employers' organizations have extensive international co-operation experience and are an asset in promoting bilateral relations.

The work was also evaluated by Nordic Consulting Group, and the findings were published in January 2016. The evaluation showed the impact of Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue projects in beneficiary states:

- The DWTD has in some cases provided a first ever opportunity for social partners to meet directly and communicate on social dialogue and working conditions, even in some cases directly resolving common challenges.
- Trade unions, employers and governments in the beneficiary countries are generally very receptive to assistance on decent work and social dialogue, and DWTD project promoters have been very enthusiastic about elements of the Nordic Model, especially openness, trust and direct co-operation between Norwegian social partners.

Hence, in the next period, KS and NUMGE will include participants from other Norwegian organisations and institutions when relevant. This should mainly be Norwegian municipalities, but also the National Institute for Occupational Health (STAMI), and the National Labour Inspection Authority and other relevant stakeholders, such as Norwegian Ministries and Directorates.

During the former project period (2012-2014), KS and NUMGE co-ordinated the projects through meetings organised by the two European umbrella organisations, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU). This co-ordination will continue in the next period in order to ensure the sustainability of results and networks, as well as to strengthen the European Social dialogue institutions.



PART 2: General outlook and EEA and Norway Grants 2014-21



KS advocacy and involvement in international policy formulation

KS, through membership in pan-European organisations and as a member of the international local government community, has advocated for the inclusion of local governments as an important stakeholder in formulation of the New International Development Agenda towards 2030, as well as delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was therefore natural to engage in a dialogue with the Norwegian Government on how Norway will deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Our effort was rewarded with a

reference in Norway's voluntary reporting on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals from June 2016, stating that "the Government will also make use of existing mechanisms for co-operation with local and regional authorities."

The existing consultation mechanism mentioned in the above reference was otherwise selected as a best practice example in a UCLG policy brief on Development Effectiveness and Local Governments.



In 2017, the Norwegian Government will present a White Paper to Parliament on how the Sustainable Development Goals can better be met through Norwegian development aid. KS took part in consultations during the drafting process of the White Paper and used the occasion to further emphasize the need to recognize local governments as relevant stakeholders and a useful resource for programmes and initiatives that promote sustainable development.

2016 saw the conclusion of a new agreement on the continuation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 to reduce social and economic disparities in Europe and strengthen relations between the three EEA countries and the 15 eligible EU beneficiary states. During open consultations on priority sectors and programme areas, KS advocated actively to better include the relevance and role of local governments. Our comments led to several improvements; in particular

under “Programme area n° 16 – Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency”, where comments from KS resulted in the reformulation of parts of the draft text under “capacity building” to read “competence and skills development within all levels of public administration”

Links to policy documents:
<http://eeagrants.org/layout/set/bluebook>

<http://www.cib-uclg.org/news/new-cib-policy-brief-development-effectiveness-and-local-governments>

https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/utvikling/sdg_rapport_ny2.pdf





Relevance of EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 to KS' long-term strategy

The EU Commission and the donor states Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway reached agreement on EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 in 2016. Country specific negotiation on programme content is currently underway. Romania was the first country to reach agreement with donors in October 2016. KS served as Donor Programme Partner during EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014 in Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania, providing strategic advice on the conception of programmes, on programme management and assisting in identifying bilateral opportunities. KS will continue to provide such

advice in selected programmes during EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and has already been invited in as a Donor Programme Partner in local development and poverty alleviation programmes in Romania and Bulgaria.

EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 are divided into five sectors covering a total of 23 programme areas, in line with EU priorities for responding to the challenges facing Europe.

The chosen sectors – innovation, social inclusion, environment, culture, and justice – correspond well to KS' long term plan 2016-2019

INNOVATION, RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

This programme area has several objectives which will support sustainable growth through linking knowledge, education and training with labour market requirements. Combating youth unemployment, promoting gender equality and promoting social dialogue are important issues.

Programme areas measures include business development, innovation and SMEs, research, education, scholarships, apprenticeships and youth entrepreneurship, work-life balance as well as social dialogue and decent work.

KS, also an employer organisation, is a relevant partner and actor on Norwegian employment issues. Reduced absenteeism and expanding full time

employment will be particularly important over the next year. We will, moreover, focus on developing inclusive employment for a multicultural work force. KS works strategically to renew services and practices offered by municipalities.

KS as Donor Project Partner has in the past taken part in EEA grants projects Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue as well as on Work-Life Balance.

SOCIAL INCLUSION, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Equal opportunities and the empowerment of vulnerable groups are key to EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and can be reached through inclusive economic growth, social inclusion of vulnerable groups as well as expanded



access to education and employment. Important measures include the European public health challenges, Roma inclusion and empowerment, children and youth at risk, youth participation in the labour market as well as local development and poverty reduction.

Over the coming years, KS will co-operate with the Norwegian Government to promote mental health for children and youth and to better articulate labour, education and training.

KS has EEA and Norway Grants experience as Donor Programme Partner in programmes for Capacity-Building and Institutional Co-operation between Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities as well as Children and Youth at Risk.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND LOW CARBON ECONOMY

The EU has a comprehensive and active environment and climate agenda. This sector is a priority in EEA and

Norway Grants 2014-2021, and programme areas include environment and ecosystems, renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

KS' work plan 2016-2019 focuses on the challenge to secure a balanced and sustainable development that is adapted to regional and local realities. This requires that Norwegian regional and local authorities take a lead in sustainable societal development. KS works with members for the transition towards a low carbon society.

KS seeks to enhance knowledge, capacity and funding to deal with the consequences of climate change and for climate change adaptation. Local government planning capacity and competence must be strengthened for a more sustainable local environment.

KS' past EEA and Norway Grants experience with transition towards a low carbon society includes projects such as A Green Way to Sustainable Development, Local and Public

Participation in Environmental Impact Assessment Processes and Polish-Norwegian Co-operation Platform for Climate and Energy Efficiency.

CULTURE, CIVIL SOCIETY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

A vibrant civil society and active citizenship are pillars of an inclusive democracy. Under this sector, EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 seeks to strengthen cultural dialogue and awareness of diversity. Fundamental rights and democratic freedoms are, moreover, vital for assuring rule of law and active citizenship.

Programme measures include cultural entrepreneurship, cultural heritage and cultural co-operation, civil society, good governance, accountable institutions, transparency and human rights.

Norwegian local democracy is functioning well, but could and should be improved. The elected institutions have a special role as decision-making authorities; they are committed to the people through elections and must be held accountable. The elected officials must apply active leadership and ensure that the citizens are seen, heard and given responsibility and trust.

KS' long term plan 2016-2019 emphasises inclusion of vulnerable groups such as young people, long term welfare beneficiaries and newly-arrived refugees.

KS' has past relevant experience from EEA and Norway Grants participation in projects on Smart Governance and Performance Improvement, Creative Governance as well as Competences for Inter-Municipal and Inter-Sectorial Co-operation as Tools for Local and Regional Development.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Citizens' trust in the government rests on civil rights, equal treatment and protection. Trust can break down due to corruption, poor administrative procedures and incapacity in protecting citizens from everything from gender-based violence to repeated natural disasters. Under EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021, partners will work to retain public trust in institutions and reduce risk to life and property.

The programme areas include measures in asylum and migration, correctional services and pre-trial detention, international police co-operation and combating crime, effectiveness and efficiency of the judicial system, strengthening rule of law, domestic and gender-based violence, disaster prevention and preparedness.

KS will, over the coming years, work for optimal conditions for and good co-operation with the government to quickly integrate refugees into work or education

KS has previously advised EEA and Norway Grants beneficiary states on asylum and integration processes.



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