

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

# Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds on the Programming Period 2014-2021

## MINUTES

15 March 2022

The 3rd Joint Committee for Bilateral Funds 2014 – 2021 in Cyprus was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, via video conference. The participants at the meeting were:

1. Mr. Frode Overland Andersen      Ambassador, Norwegian Embassy in Athens
2. Ms Ioanna Kleanthous              Director, DG Growth, Ministry of Finance
3. Mr. Haukur Johnson                Senior Adviser, Embassy of Iceland in Stockholm
4. Ms Elena Hadjiyanni                European Affairs Officer, Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Ms Maria Fola                        EEA Grants Adviser, Norwegian Embassy in Athens
6. Mr. Niels Bekkhus                    Bilateral Fund Officer, FMO
7. Ms Lina Marcinkutė                Country Officer for Cyprus, FMO
8. Ms Leda Skordelli                    Senior Coordination Officer, DG Growth
9. Mr. Pambos Charalambous        Coordination Officer A', DG Growth
10. Ms Myranda Toumazou            Planning Officer A', DG Growth
11. Ms Marina Pieri                      Accountant, DG Growth

## **1. Main topics of the agenda**

- Presentation of the status update on the pre-defined bilateral initiatives.
- Presentation of the proposals for new bilateral initiatives.
- Discussion on any other issues raised.

## **2. Status update on the pre-defined bilateral initiatives and presentation of the new bilateral proposals**

### **(a) Pre-defined bilateral initiatives**

Two of the four pre-defined bilateral initiatives have been completed, namely “How to best implement the UNSCR 1325 in Cyprus”, with a total cost of €1.747,75 and the “Assessment of climate change effects on pollution transport in Cyprus, ACCEPT, with a total cost of €14.000. The completion of the two initiatives was also registered in Grace.

The other two pre-defined bilateral initiatives, “Epidemiology of asbestos cancer in Cyprus and biomarker discovery” and “New infrastructure for diagnosis and treatment of patients” are still in the implementation phase, being delayed due to Covid-19. In view of this delay, an extension was requested by the NFP for up to the end of 2022 and it was approved by the members of the JCBF.

(b) New Bilateral Initiatives

Four new bilateral initiatives were also presented at the JCBF (the presentation is attached as **ANNEX 1**). These are:

- 1) Development of an Information & Collaboration Centre for Young and Female Entrepreneurs (Budget: €35.400).
- 2) Multidisciplinary management through mutual training and study visits (Budget: €20.000).
- 3) The Green Pivot: Cyprus and the regional energy market. An overview of the parameters placing Cyprus at the heart of national and regional interconnected market (Budget: €80.000).
- 4) Evaluation of therapeutic vectors for  $\beta$ -thalassemia in non-erythroid primary cells (Budget €48.685).

The members of the JCBF decided to preliminary approve the first three initiatives (1, 2 and 3 above), until the following conditions are fulfilled:

- (a) Obtain Liechtenstein’s consent on the three proposals (via a written procedure),
- (b) Obtain the Cyprus’s Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry consent on the implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> initiative and
- (c) Revise the budget of Proposal no.3 by PRIO so as to have an updated reduced budget for this bilateral initiative.

### **3. Main conclusions**

- The donors expressed their concern for the current situation in Europe and the unfolding humanitarian crisis as a result of Russia's invasion in Ukraine and encouraged the use of bilateral funds to help Ukrainian refugees as per letter from Mr. Leif Trana, Chair of the Financial Mechanism Committee, dated 11 March 2022. The NFP noted that the Cyprus Government officially expressed its readiness to receive 2500 Ukrainian refugees in Cyprus and within this framework, a possibility to use some bilateral funds to address the refugee crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine will be considered. Regarding this, the NFP will consult the Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The donors are willing to assist in the search for partners where needed and the Norwegian Embassy in Athens can provide valuable help in this matter.
- Approval of the three out of the four new bilateral initiatives are subject to Liechtenstein's consent which will be made via a written procedure. In addition, approval of the proposed bilateral initiatives, "The Green Pivot: Cyprus and the regional energy market" is subject to budget revisions and consent by the Cyprus Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry.
- An extension until the end of 2022 was granted to the two on-going bilateral initiatives that were not completed by the end of 2021, due to COVID-19.