

FINAL REPORT OF THE STUDY ON THE  
EVALUATION OF RESULTS AND IMPACT OF  
SELECTED PROJECTS CO-FINANCED BY THE  
NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM 2014-2021,  
HOME AFFAIRS PROGRAMME



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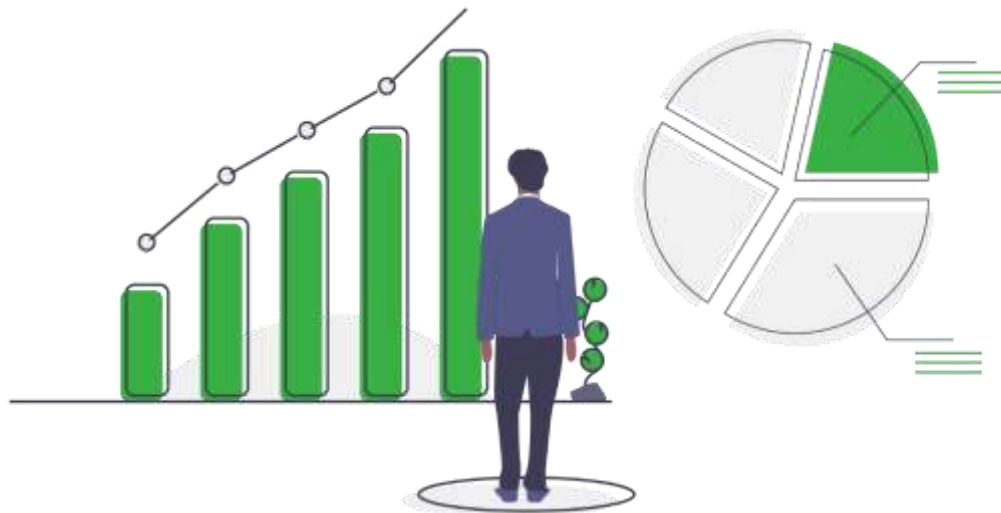
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NFM	Norwegian Financial Mechanism
EEA	European Economic Area
MIA	Ministry of the Interior and Administration
EPIC	European Project Implementation Centre
NFP	National Focal Point
PO	Programme Operator
SI	Supporting Institution
DPP	Donor Programme Partners
PA18	Programme Area 18 (Thematic area “Asylum and migration”)
PA20	Programme Area 20 (Thematic area “International police cooperation and combating crime”)
PA23	Programme Area 23 (Thematic area “Disaster prevention and preparedness”)
CBRNE	Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats
PDP	Predefined Project
ISA	Internal Security Agency
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems
PAS	Polish Academy of Sciences
DSB	Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection

# SUMMARY

The report presents an assessment of the results and impact of selected projects co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 under the Home Affairs Programme. As a form of support to the new EU Member States, the Norwegian funds aim to reduce economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and strengthen bilateral relations.

The context for project implementation includes significant political and social events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the migratory crisis on the border with Belarus and the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The study covered selected projects in the areas of asylum and migration, police and crime cooperation and disaster prevention, as well as bilateral initiatives. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effects of the projects and the Programme's management system, and to formulate recommendations for future editions of the Norway Grants. The main findings are presented below.

## Effectiveness

- All projects surveyed achieved or exceeded their intended outcome indicators, often significantly. A similar situation exists at the level of the whole Programme. This demonstrates the successful implementation of the Programme.
- Both the Programme Operator and Supporting Institution as well as the implementers (Project Promoters with partners) have shown flexibility in the face of challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis on the border with Belarus and the war in Ukraine. The most serious consequence of these events was delays in implementation. Projects, on the other hand, were implemented in accordance with their essential content.
- Key outcomes included improved infrastructure and equipment for the service, intensive staff training, and the development of new tools and systems.
- Strengthened inter-institutional and international cooperation was noted.
- Cooperation with Norwegian partners varied and depended on the thematic area - from crucial to the success of the project to minimal in some cases.
- Disparities were observed in the involvement of the Donor Programme Partners (DPPs) at the management level of the whole Programme. The highest DPPs involvement was observed in area PA23 (Disaster prevention and preparedness), where the Norwegian Directorate of Civil Protection was very active. Representatives of the DPPs suggested that in areas PA18 and PA20 the selection of partners may have been inappropriate. Particularly in area PA20, it was suggested that it would have been better to involve the Norwegian police as DPP.

## Efficiency

- The Programme started late, which shortened the implementation time of the projects, but the flexibility of the management system made it possible to achieve the desired results.

- The management system is based on the division of tasks between the Ministry of Interior and Administration (Programme Operator) and the European Project Implementation Centre of the Ministry of Interior and Administration (Supporting Institution), which was assessed as an effective solution.
- The need to increase the size of the teams involved in the Programme was signalled.
- The programme documentation system was generally useful, although some documents need to be simplified. Lack of the model agreement/agreement for project implementation at the initial stage of the Home Affairs Programme implementation was a problem.
- The project monitoring methods were considered sufficient, with a positive evaluation of the ex-ante controls for the tenders obligatory to be carried out by the Programme Operator for predefined projects.
- Projects were implemented cost-effectively and on time, with minor lapses in documentation.
- The information and promotion activities of the Programme Operator and the Supporting Institution were appreciated by the project promoters, especially the training courses and face-to-face meetings.
- The impact of Donor Programme Partners on the effectiveness of activities was mixed, with the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection as a positive example.
- Programme indicators generally reflected well the actual effects of the projects, although some shortcomings were observed for indicators that would help to assess the sustainability of the effects achieved.
- Project promoters positively assessed the support, responsiveness and flexibility of the national institutions involved in the Programme implementation process.

### Sustainability

- The Programme is designed to ensure the sustainability of the effects, including through the possibility of investment in fixed assets and the requirement to maintain purchased/refurbished properties for at least 5 years after completion of the projects.
- Project promoters and institutions show a strong commitment to continuing the results achieved, although it is difficult to determine precisely how likely they are to be maintained in a 5-year perspective.
- Adequate financial and institutional conditions are key to sustainability, including resources to maintain equipment, continue training and NGO activities, and create an appropriate legal framework (e.g. for responding to CBRNE events).
- There is potential for continued international and national cooperation, but this is dependent on the availability of funding.
- The main beneficiaries are state institutions whose capacity has been strengthened. NGOs have gained opportunities for long-term impact on local communities.

- Investment (“hard”) outcomes are generally judged to be more durable, although the value of established inter-institutional cooperation as a sustainable 'soft' outcome is also emphasised.
- The continuation and potential expansion of bilateral initiatives can contribute significantly to the long-term sustainability of the Programme's effects.

### **Impact**

- Respondents were cautious in their assessments of the impact of the Programme, noting the limited financial scale of the intervention (EUR 20 million).
- Nonetheless, there was a widespread perception that the competences and capabilities of the project promoters had been significantly strengthened, translating into a higher level of security in society.
- The implementation of the Programme has had a significant impact on the cooperation between Polish and Norwegian institutions - if the Programme had not been implemented, the cooperation of these entities would not have had a chance to be established.
- All the projects analysed demonstrated a systemic approach, combining infrastructure and technology development with competence upgrading and changes in institutional practices.
- The comprehensive impact of the projects lays the foundations for lasting change and long-term improvement in the areas covered.

### **Detailed findings from the implementation of projects in the thematic area "Asylum and migration"**

- Projects carried out in this area included both vulnerable groups and people working with migrants (e.g. officers, centre for migrants staff, lawyers).
- A key element of the projects was education through training, workshops and seminars, focusing on children's rights, migrants' rights, including in particular the right to asylum and anti-crime activities.
- The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a shift to online/hybrid training, which increased the number of participants.
- Activities included improving the infrastructure of the centres for migrants, legal aid, monitoring the situation of migrants and setting up support groups, as well as creating sustainable educational materials, including e-learning courses and publication websites.
- The best interest of the child questionnaires were developed as a tool to protect the rights of migrants' children.
- The projects have enabled legal aid to reach closed centres for migrants.
- Significant contacts were established with the Border Guard, which continue after the projects have been completed.
- The intended results have been achieved, but sustained impact requires further funding, especially for continuing training and updating materials.

### **Detailed findings from the implementation of projects in the thematic area "International police cooperation and combating crime"**

- Projects in this area usually combined training activities with investments in various types of equipment. However, a distinction can be made between projects with a predominantly infrastructural character or "soft".
- Among the former are two projects in which forensic laboratories were retrofitted. As a result of the first, all laboratories across the country were provided with modern equipment and software for conducting cryptographic tests on devices such as telephones and computers. In the second, the laboratory of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznan was equipped with equipment unique in the country for analysing biological traces left at crime scenes.
- Both projects enhance the Polish police's ability to obtain reliable evidence that can be presented in court (the first forensic opinion produced in Poznan has already been admitted as evidence in a court case).
- Other projects were primarily training-based, with training provided:
  - Officers from all over the country, from the prevention and traffic departments in recognising the authenticity of identity documents (over 10,000 people);
  - Border Guard officers from all over the country on the identification of victims of human trafficking and the proper ways to deal with such cases (approximately 3,500 people);
  - Officers of the various formations of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz, according to their needs (approximately 1,000 people).
- A measurable effect of the project implemented in Bydgoszcz is the police statistics showing an increase in the number of arrests of drug offenders made by the local prevention unit.
- One of the projects examined was of a 'networking' nature. The aim was to integrate the relatively small, albeit international, community of officers involved in the search for the most dangerous criminals. The personal contacts established are supposed to translate into the quality of working contacts (commitment of partners, speed of action).

### **Detailed findings from the implementation of projects in the thematic area "Disaster prevention and preparedness".**

- One project was implemented, which focused on the cooperation of the Internal Security Agency (ISA) with 9 national and 2 Norwegian partners.
- The project has contributed to laying the foundations of a comprehensive CBRNE response system. Extensive inter-institutional cooperation was established, improving coordination during emergencies. A number of training courses were conducted, an e-learning platform was created, and an alert system was developed, crucial for minimising the impact of potential disasters.
- Investments have been made in specialised equipment and supplies.

The intended results have been achieved, but challenges to the sustainability of the results have also been identified, including staff turnover and the need for continuous competence improvement.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context

The topic of this report is the evaluation of the results and impact of selected projects co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 under the Home Affairs Programme. The Norwegian Financial Mechanism, also known as the Norwegian Funds, is a form of support for the new European Union Member States, including Poland. In return for this financial support, Norway was granted access to the EU internal market. Poland has benefited from these funds since its accession to the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA). The first edition was 2004-2009, the next 2009-2014. The evaluation presented in this report concerns the third edition of the Norwegian Funds (2014-2021). The main objective of projects funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism is to reduce economic and social disparities within the EEA and to strengthen bilateral relations between donor and beneficiary states.

Within the framework of this study, attention was focused on the Home Affairs Programme, which is operated by the Ministry of Interior and Administration (MIA) in cooperation with the European Project Implementation Centre of the Ministry of Interior and Administration (EPIC).

Relevant events that provided the context for the Home Affairs Programme were:

- Covid-19 pandemic, which caused a number of restrictions on movement and encounters.
- Crisis at the Polish-Belarusian border, which necessitated the involvement of officers (representatives of project promoters) in statutory activities. Also, it caused an inability to implement project activities according to schedules.
- Outbreak of war in Ukraine (note as above).
- Flooding in southern Poland (autumn 2024).

The evaluation presented aims to:

- assess the impact that the implementation of projects and initiatives under the Home Affairs Programme has had,
- evaluate the management and implementation system of the Home Affairs Programme.

Recommendations for the next edition of the NFM resulting from the analyses are also presented.

## 1.2 Scope

A selection of projects implemented under the Home Affairs Programme were evaluated. These were:

- 3 projects in the area of “Asylum and Migration” (PA18);
- 6 projects in the area of “International police cooperation and combating crime” (PA20);

- 1 project in the area of “Disaster prevention and preparedness” (PA23);
- 3 bilateral initiatives (i.e. ventures specifically aimed at cooperation and exchange of experience with Norwegian partners), 1 from the PA20 thematic area and two under PA23 thematic area.

This leaves 9 projects and 1 bilateral initiative (1/FWD/2022 RCB) beyond the scope of evaluation. When reading the conclusions of the report, it is important to bear this limitation in mind, all the more so as the documents produced by the projects and the in-depth interviews with project promoters are a key source of data for the study (especially on the effects achieved).

At the time of the report, all projects were complete, while all evaluated bilateral initiatives under evaluation were still in progress.

A detailed summary of the projects and initiatives that were included in the analysis is provided in the table below.

Table 1. Projects and bilateral initiatives covered by the study

Title	Thematic area	Project promoter
Protect minors, including unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, from abuse (predefined) <sup>1</sup>	Asylum and migration (PA18)	Office for Foreigners
Safe House		Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Integration for security - international cooperation in the field of fundamental rights		Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Szczecin
Improving the process of gathering, analysis and estimation of evidence in the area of fight against cross-border cybercrime with use of IT labs network of the Polish Police (predefined)	International police cooperation and combating crime (PA20)	Police Headquarters
Police and non-police international cooperation in the search for the most dangerous criminals in Europe (predefined)		Police Headquarters
Documents – Safety and Control, including Tactical ID-control (predefined)		Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters
Specialised training as an opportunity to increase effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in the fight against organised crime		Voivodship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz
Cooperation and competence as a key to efficiently combating trafficking in human beings. Phase II		International Organisation for Migration Poland

<sup>1</sup> Pre-defined projects are projects that have been identified as being of particular importance and have therefore been selected in a non-competitive procedure.

NEMESIS - the Novel Elaborated Model of the Enhanced Sexual Assault Investigation System		Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznań
The process of coordination and standardisation in the field of CBRNE as an element of prevention, preparedness and response (predefined)	Disaster prevention and preparedness (PA23)	Internal Security Agency
POL-NOR II Cooperation for the road safety - exchange of experience and best practice	Bilateral initiatives (PA20)	Police Headquarters
Strengthening cooperation and exchange of experience, including modern forms of terrain imaging through geospatial analysis of the area using remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), as a support for decision-making in emergency situations	Bilateral initiatives (PA23)	Internal Security Agency
CoSky - Polish-Norwegian bilateral initiative for increased efficiency of use of drones in civil protection		Space Research Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out a comprehensive and reliable impact assessment of the selected projects co-financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 under the Home Affairs Programme, the following research methods were used:

- Desk research
- Individual in-depth interviews (IDI)
- Case study analysis (additional method)

### **Analysis of the data**

The analysis of the secondary data included a detailed review and analysis of the following documents:

1. NFM Programme Documents 2014-2021
2. Guidelines related to the implementation of the NFM and specific to the Home Affairs Programme
3. Agreement on the implementation of the Home Affairs Programme concluded between the Programme Operator and the Supporting Institution
4. Annual and Strategic Reports
5. Reports prepared during the implementation of the Home Affairs Programme (including final reports on the implementation of projects)
6. Documents relating to individual projects
7. Results of external monitoring or audits
8. Contextual data, i.e. reports, scientific studies

### **Individual in-depth interviews (IDI)**

Individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) were a key research tool to obtain detailed information on the implementation of the Home Affairs Programme, how projects were managed and how their effects and impacts were assessed. The IDIs allowed an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the different stakeholders, identifying the difficulties encountered and the solutions developed.

Representatives of the following institutions were interviewed:

1. Ministry of Interior and Administration (Poland)
2. European Project Implementation Centre of the Ministry of Interior and Administration (Poland).

3. Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy (Poland)
4. Ministry of Justice and Public Security (Norway)
5. Directorate for Civil Protection (Norway)
6. Representatives of project promoters (12 interviews)

#### **Case study analysis (additional method)**

As a complementary research method, a case study analysis was used. This method provided a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of the selected bilateral projects and initiatives, their actual impact and the factors determining success or failure.

The case study analysis was conducted for selected uncompleted projects, focusing mainly on issues of initiation, project co-creation and cooperation with partners.

The use of the above research methods provided a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the Home Affairs Programme, enabled the triangulation of data and ensured a high reliability of the evaluation results.

## 3 PROGRAMME LEVEL - MAIN FINDINGS

### 3.1 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of an intervention can be understood as its ability to achieve its intended objectives. At the operational level, examining effectiveness usually means both analysing the degree to which indicators have been achieved and documenting effects that are not described by indicators (including unplanned effects). The research questions posed by the procurer address both of these issues, as well as various issues related to factors affecting the effectiveness of projects and the Programme more broadly.

However, before these questions are answered, the following is a characterisation of the interventions in each area. This includes both the actions taken and the resources involved, as well as the expected results. The intervention logic thus briefly described will be the starting point for further analyses.

#### **Intervention logic**

The Home Affairs Programme included three thematic areas, each with its own specificities, synthesised below.

#### Asylum and migration (PA18)

The aim of the projects in the PA18 area was to support national asylum and migration management systems and ensure the right to seek asylum. Programme documentation highlights that the Programme was specifically intended to support voluntary return, services for minor asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups. The biggest problem was the lack of information among migrants and asylum seekers, and there was a lack of activities informing people about existing forms of assistance. Other problems identified, which the project activities were intended to respond to were: protection of vulnerable groups, in particular minors, lack of psychological support for migrants, especially those staying in centres. The flow of information between institutions and the building of their capacities and staff competences through educational activities needed to be improved.

In response to these needs, the evaluated projects conducted:

- educational activities such as workshops and training,
- provision of legal services in centres for migrants,
- monitoring the situation of migrants in detention centres, including their access to legal and psychological assistance,

- the creation of support groups for asylum seekers,
- improving the infrastructure in centres for migrants, especially for minors,
- creating questionnaires on the best interests of the child,
- the purchase of tools to prevent and combat crime, in particular human trafficking,
- the creation of educational materials that were available in urban and virtual spaces,
- improving officers' competences through a language course.

Activities therefore included “soft” elements such as training and workshops, as well as investment in equipment and infrastructure. It was also important to establish contacts between institutions, start cooperation and exchange experiences.

Measurable outcomes of the activities are primarily the number of people attending training courses and workshops, including migrants, people working with migrants and members of vulnerable groups - pupils and students at risk of being recruited into criminal groups and forced labour, and the number of people who have benefited from additional services.

The value of all projects carried out in the PA18 area amounted to approximately EUR 3.8 million.

#### International police cooperation and combating crime (PA20)

The aim of interventions in this area was to increase the capacity of Polish law enforcement agencies (primarily the police) to fight organised crime. A reading of programme and project documentation, as well as interviews with project promoters, shows that the projects in this area focused primarily on two challenges. The first was the need to keep abreast of technological changes, and hence the need to implement new working methods and tools into police operations. The second was the need to deepen cooperation (including the exchange of knowledge), between representatives of various entities involved in combating crime, including international ones.

The projects responded to these challenges with three main types of activities:

- Police units were equipped with modern equipment, in many cases very technologically advanced (e.g. equipment and software to analyse and secure traces of cybercrime, laboratory apparatus and software to analyse genetic material left at crime scenes).
- Officers were trained so that they were able to make proper use of the equipment purchased (this was a complementary component to the infrastructure investments and a condition for their usefulness).
- Various types of training, workshops, conferences were held to exchange knowledge, strengthen contacts between representatives of different services and organisations involved in combating crime (these were “soft” activities not directly linked to investment in equipment).



Based on the type of activities, projects can be divided into two main categories, those that combine all types of activities and those of a soft and networking nature, without infrastructure investment.<sup>2</sup>

On the side of the measurable results of the intervention, the programme documentation records mainly the improvement of officers' competences and the implementation of new standards/system solutions for the prevention and detection of organised crime.

The value of all projects carried out in the PA20 area amounted to approximately EUR 11 million.

#### Disaster prevention and preparedness (PA23)

The intervention logic in this area focused on improving Poland's capacity to prevent and respond to these threats. An analysis of the programme documentation and an interview with the project promoter indicates that the project activities focused on several key challenges:

1. The need to improve coordination between the various services and institutions involved in responding to threats of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive threats (CBRNE).
2. Need to improve staff competence in identifying and responding to risks.
3. The need to adapt equipment and procedures to the changing nature of CBRNE threats.

In response to these challenges, the project has undertaken a number of activities, which have been grouped into the following work packages:

- Development of a CBRNE incident response system (WP1) and a public warning system (WP2).
- Creation of innovative training platforms, including virtual simulators (WP3).
- Development of technology for the use of drones in responding to CBRNE events (WP4).
- Development of innovative methods for the detection of biological agents (WP5).
- Analysis of the risks posed by the availability of open-source recipes for CBRNE materials (WP6).
- Development of guidelines for dealing with injured persons (WP7).
- Development of forensic methods at the scene of a CBRNE incident (WP8).
- Testing the functionality of equipment and devices used to counter the effects of CBRNE (WP9).
- Conduct CBRNE incident response training (WP10).
- Creation and development of a Polish CBRNE cluster (WP11).
- Development of a National CBRNE Coordination and Standardisation System (WP12).

These activities ranged from investment in equipment and infrastructure to “soft” elements – training, workshops, development of procedures and guidelines. Particular emphasis was placed on the integration

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<sup>2</sup> Four of the six projects we analysed were in the first group, the other two in the second.

of different services and institutions and the exchange of knowledge and experience, including at international level.

The expected results of the intervention included, first and foremost, increasing the level of preparedness for CBRNE threats, improving the competence of the participating institutions and developing a strategy for a national response system to CBRNE events. Additionally, it was expected that the relevant state authorities would be equipped with specialised equipment and staff trained.

The total value of the project amounted to approx. EUR 7.25 million.

### Bilateral initiatives

Although bilateral initiatives belonged thematically to the PA20 and PA23 areas, they represent a distinct project type that is worth separating from the rest.

Their aim was to strengthen cooperation between the Polish and Norwegian institutions, by learning from each other, taking over and, after adaptation, adapting good solutions (e.g. in terms of increasing road safety).

The main activities undertaken as part of bilateral initiatives included study visits, development of various types of expertise (with a view to implementing Norwegian solutions in the Polish context), technology and good practice transfer (use of drones, maps and 3D models), development of institutional competences (e.g. training in the use of new technologies).

Outcome indicators for bilateral cooperation focus on measurable effects of joint activities of Polish and Norwegian institutions. They include, among others: the number of joint workshops, seminars and conferences organised; the number of study visit participants acquainted with Norwegian solutions; the number of comparative analyses and reports developed. In addition, qualitative aspects of cooperation are measured, such as the level of satisfaction with the partnership and the degree of increased trust between partners.

The value of all bilateral initiatives implemented in the Home Affairs Programme as of 17 October 2024 amounted to approximately EUR 900 thousand. Initiatives amounting to approximately EUR 760 thousand are in the pipeline.

### **Level of achievement of indicator targets**

A set of output and outcome indicators has been developed for each thematic area.

Output indicators were reported on an ongoing basis in progress reports describing the material progress of individual projects and then counted at Programme level. The most typical ones referred to the number of people trained, number of units retrofitted, number of solutions developed. In addition, cross-cutting output indicators describing the development of cooperation with Norwegian partners were introduced for those projects that included such a component.

The reporting data shows that all projects selected for the study achieved all output indicators, in many cases exceeding them. A similar situation can be observed at the level of the whole Programme<sup>3</sup>, practically all indicators were achieved, and many of them were significantly exceeded (even several times - this refers especially to indicators measuring the number of trained people). The only indicator which, in the opinion of the Programme coordinators, may not be fully realised, reached over 90% of the target value.<sup>4</sup> The under-achievement of this indicator is due to the restrictions on travel and face-to-face meetings introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quite frequent cases of inadequate estimation of indicators is due to the change in the format of training courses and workshops changed from onsite to online as a result of the pandemic. Underestimation of indicators is due to objective difficulties in determining the scale of future events (e.g. interest in training). In some projects, especially in the PA20 area, the indicators exceeded the expected values also as a result of the increase in funding in the final phase of the Programme - 2 procedures were launched to manage the savings.

Table 2. Degree of achievement of output indicators at the levels of projects examined and the programme as a whole

Indicator	Level of projects examined			Programme level		
	Expected value	Value achieved	Degree of achievement of the indicator	Expected value	Value achieved*	Degree of achievement of the indicator
Asylum and migration (PA18)						
Number of centres for migrants and asylum seekers improved with additional services	18	20	111%	11	24	218%
Number of professional staff trained in the area of voluntary returns	521	1143	219%	100	1 143	1 143%

<sup>3</sup> Where data from all projects are taken into account, including those beyond the scope of this analysis.

<sup>4</sup> The indicator in question is "Number of staff from beneficiary states participating in project's activities in Norway".

Number of professional staff trained in the area of support for unaccompanied asylum seeking minors and other vulnerable groups	70	70	100%	100	1 461	1 461%
Number of initiatives organised in cooperation with NGOs	17	18	106%	5	16	320%
International police cooperation and combating crime (PA20)						
Number of professional staff trained in crime prevention and investigation	14 437	16 117	112%	700	16 117	2 302%
Number of institutions, including Regional Forensic Laboratories of the Police, possessing highly specialised equipment	19	19	100%	20	19	95%
Creation of an IT tool to combat cybercriminal threats, including breaking cryptographic security and reading data from mobile devices.	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Number of foreign institutions engaged	19	23	121%	7	25	357%
Number of study visits within projects	8	8	100%	5	14	280%
Creation and dissemination of common standards in cybersecurity	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Disaster prevention and preparedness (PA23)						
Establishment of the National CBRNE system	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Internal Security Agency and relevant authorities provided with specialised equipment	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Number of law enforcement services involved in enhancement of system	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Number of foreign institutions involved in programme activities	2	27	1350%	2	27	1350%
Number of professional staff trained	100	1330	1330%	100	1330	1330%
Bilateral cooperation						
Number of seminars, training and workshops between Polish and Norwegian law enforcement services	18	30	167%	10	30	300%
Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project Partner	4	4	100%	5	4	80%

Number of staff from beneficiary states participating in project's activities in Norway	13	14	107%	15	14	93%
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Own compilation based on the final reports of the selected 10 projects and the 2023 Annual Report of the Home Affairs Programme.

\* The value achieved for the indicators at the level of the whole Programme was either taken from the annual report for the whole Programme for 2023 or calculated on the basis of the final reports for the projects examined. The second approach was used when the cumulative indicator value in the final reports of the projects under study was higher than the value reported in the annual report (it is more up-to-date, as the final reports in most cases depict the status as of April 2024).

Outcome indicators are estimated upon completion of the projects and reported for the Programme as a whole, without considering the level of individual projects.

Outcome indicators most often measure the knowledge gain of trainees and monitor the implementation of new solutions/standards/services. At the time of drafting the report, the data needed to estimate all outcome indicators had not yet been collected. However, data has been collected for two indicators showing the increase in competence of police officers and the ISA (measured by questionnaires). Target values for both indicators have been achieved.

Table 3. Degree of achievement of outcome indicators

Indicator	Programme level		
	Baseline	Expected value	Value achieved
Asylum and migration (PA18)			
Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved	-	1000	n.a.
Number of minors, including unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, provided with support	-	400	n.a.
International police cooperation and combating crime (PA20)			
Level of competence of law enforcement units at a regional level in prevention and detection of organised crime	4,28	7	7,75
Level of competences of police officers in the field of false documents detection	4,28	7	n.a.

A new standard for organised crime prevention developed and adapted by law enforcement authorities	-	1	n.a.
Disaster prevention and preparedness (PA23)			
Level of compliance with NATO standards concerning CBRNE prevention and preparedness	2	4	n.a.
Level of competence of participant institutions in preventing and combating CBRNE risks	4,95	7	7,04
Bilateral cooperation *			
Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership	-	Minimum 50%	n.a.
Level of satisfaction with the partnership	5,7	Target is $\geq 4.5$ , and an increase from baseline	n.a.
Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States	6,13	Target is $\geq 4.5$ , and an increase from baseline	n.a.

Own compilation based on the 2023 annual report of the Home Affairs Programme and the results of the competency surveys made available to researchers

\* Indicators for bilateral cooperation are surveyed by the Financial Mechanism Office.

### Implementation efficiency

The fact that the indicators were achieved and the high value of certified expenditure testify to the successful implementation of the Programme. However, this does not mean that the PO implemented the Programme without difficulties.

Negotiations with the Norwegian side prolonged and postponed the moment of the actual launch of the Programme. In some of the predefined projects, with topics related to new technologies, this meant that assumptions had to be updated (e.g. in PDP II - changing the subject of training, changing the tools to be purchased).

An external event, i.e. the Covid-19 pandemic, the crisis on the border with Belarus or the outbreak of war in Ukraine had an impact on the implementation of the Programme and projects.

The pandemic caused delays in the implementation of tasks and, where possible, a change in working methods (e.g. to hybrid training). In some projects, the change in working methods had a positive effect, increasing the number of possible training recipients. In some, however, it reduced the quality of the exchange of experience (e.g. when study visits were abandoned).

The crisis on the border with Belarus and the war in Ukraine imposed new responsibilities on uniformed officers (e.g. some were seconded to serve at the border, others had to take over their tasks in their home units), which also caused significant logistical problems and delays in projects.

The border crisis has also changed the profile of migrants, for projects aimed at helping refugees this has meant providing support in the form of translation from languages that few people speak in Poland.

The response to these challenges was to make appropriate adjustments to the projects as needed: in terms of objectives, timetable or budget. This was possible thanks to the adequate flexibility of the POs and the good cooperation of the project supervisors with the project promoters (which the latter emphasised in every interview conducted).

In summary, it can be said that the most important implementation difficulties were caused by external factors beyond the control of the project implementers and the Programme. The most serious negative consequence of the problems experienced was delays in the implementation of project tasks. On the other hand, the projects were implemented according to their basic assumptions. Substantive modifications resulted from the need to adapt interventions to changing needs, which was a positive development.

### **Programme effects**

The indicators give only a very partial picture of the Programme's effects. Separate chapters of this study are devoted to showing the benefits brought by the implementation of projects in individual areas. The most important ones are presented here in a synthetic way.

#### Asylum and migration (PA18)

PA18 projects were geared towards assisting vulnerable groups, in particular foreigners seeking asylum in Poland and especially children detained by border guards and in detention centres for migrants, but also towards preventing and combating crime affecting these groups such as human trafficking, forced labour, forced prostitution.

An important benefit that emerged from these projects was the outreach to detention centres for migrants and the development of the best interest of the child questionnaires to be used by border guards and the detention centre. The PA18 projects provided the opportunity to enter detention centres for migrants run by the Border Guard and provide migrants with legal assistance, as well as the possibility to monitor their situation. The cooperation with the Border Guard also led to the idea of creating a questionnaire on the

best interests of the child in Poland, a tool to determine how best to take care of the child's welfare, including in a refugee situation. This tool can be used by the Border Guard during arrests, but also presented in court. The relationships established between the institutions during the project are still being cultivated.

In addition to legal aid (live and online services), people in and out of the centres were also provided with psychological support in the form of support groups.

Projects in the PA18 area have also had noticeable effects in terms of increasing the competences of those working with vulnerable groups, i.e. police officers, border guards and officials, among others. Educational activities have increased their awareness of the rights and needs of asylum seekers, including children. Police officers have improved their English language skills, which will make it easier for them to communicate with foreigners.

Part of the educational activities involved the production of audiovisual and textual materials, posted in urban spaces such as waiting rooms, buses, in centres for foreigners and on websites. The results of the project are publicly accessible websites with educational materials,<sup>5</sup> as well as an e-learning course on child protection standards designed for employees of the Office for Foreigners.

There was also an overhaul of the infrastructure of the centres for foreigners (furnishing of rooms and renovation of the playing field) and the purchase of equipment for training on preventing and combating crime.

#### International police cooperation and combating crime (PA20)

In two of the projects analysed, forensic laboratory infrastructure was significantly supported.

The PDP II project retrofitted all 18 forensic laboratories from across the country with state-of-the-art hardware and software for cryptographic testing on devices such as phones and computers. These tools provide, among other things, the possibility of breaking security, recovering data from damaged devices and advanced data analysis. On the other hand, in the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznań project, equipment for advanced analysis of biological traces left at crime scenes was purchased for the laboratory there. These projects are designed to increase the laboratories' ability to obtain reliable evidence that can be presented in court (either to document a crime or to identify the perpetrators). In Poznań, thanks to the equipment purchased, the first forensic opinion has already been produced and admitted as evidence in a court case.

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<sup>5</sup> Page 1: <https://refugeeaid.pl/> ,

Page 2: <https://zachodniopomorska.policja.gov.pl/sz/aktualnosci/projekty-realizowa/norweski-mechanizm-finansowy-i>



The remaining projects (of the group analysed) were mainly of a “soft” nature (although they also included the purchase of equipment).

The PDP III project was about integrating the relatively small community of officers working in ENFAST network member units, which is involved in international searches for the most dangerous criminals. The project organised three conferences for the exchange of knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, the most important result of the project was to bring officers working in the ENFAST network together and get to know each other better. The project coordinators are convinced that this will translate into the quality of working contacts (commitment of partners, speed of actions taken).

The PDP IV project aimed to improve the skills of police officers from prevention and traffic departments across Poland in recognising the authenticity of identity documents. In total, more than 10,000 officers were trained. The project also achieved an additional, unplanned effect. It was the training of an additional 10,000 people from other state institutions, who requested training from voivodeship police headquarters. This was possible thanks to the cascade structure of training in the project. Several experts trained 140 officers from the provincial police headquarters, who became trainers in their home units and could also respond to the demand of other institutions.

The project of the Voivodship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz, in turn, was a response to the training needs of the various formations comprising it. Training courses on various subjects covered: specialists from the forensic laboratory, prevention officers, the anti-terrorist unit and the criminal division. In total, more than 900 people were trained. A measurable effect of the project is the police statistics showing an increase in the number of arrests of drug offenders made by the Police Prevention Unit in Bydgoszcz (from 163 in 2022 to 386 in 2023). The project coordinators directly link this increase to one of the training modules included in the project. The project also had the additional unplanned effect of creating a separate workshop that specialises in reading data from damaged electronic media.

A project targeting Border Guards, implemented by the International Organisation for Migration, focused on improving officers' competences in identifying victims of human trafficking and appropriate ways to deal with such cases. 476 officers took part in on-site trainings and more than 3,000 officers took part in online trainings. Due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the influx of many refugees, the target group was expanded to include representatives of other services and state administrations. This is an additional unplanned effect of the project.

#### Disaster prevention and preparedness (PA23)

The implementation of the project “Strengthening Security in CBRNE - Coordination and Standardisation” has produced a number of significant results that have significantly contributed to improving the security of the state and citizens. A key achievement was the creation of the foundations of the National CBRNE Coordination and Standardisation System, which is a fundamental step towards unifying and improving the response to potential threats. Equally important was the development of a

CBRNE threat warning system and the creation of innovative training platforms, including virtual simulators and an e-learning platform. The project has also produced tangible results in terms of staff development - a number of training courses were conducted, including 11 training cycles comprising a total of 550 hours of teaching, attended by 132 specialists from various services. It is noteworthy that the implementation of the project has contributed to the establishment of sustainable cooperation between a number of national and Norwegian entities, creating a valuable network that can be used for future CBRNE security initiatives.

It is also worth mentioning that in all areas, the effect of deepening cooperation between the actors involved in the project was noted. This deepening of relations could be of an informal character, consisting in the establishment of working contacts ("on the phone") between employees/functionaries of different entities, or of a formal character in the form of official cooperation within the framework of subsequent projects,<sup>6</sup> or in the scope of training support. This type of closer relationship has occurred both between Polish organisations and between Polish and Norwegian partners. However, Polish-Norwegian cooperation, depending on thematic areas and projects, has been heterogeneous, as described below.

### **Cooperation with Norwegian partners**

Based on the interviews with project promoters, it can be said that the influence of the Norwegian partners on the substantive course of the projects varied greatly. Apart from projects where the participation of the Norwegian partner was crucial for the success of the project, e.g. PDP II in the PA20 area and PDP VI in the PA23 area, there were projects where it was of lesser importance (e.g. the project of the Voivodship Police Headquarters in Poznań in the PA20 area). In the case of the surveyed projects in the PA18 area no substantive cooperation took place. Project promoters in this area indicated that they lacked direct contacts with their Norwegian partners, and that invitations to meet with them were politely declined.

It is also worth noting that the projects in which the cooperation was most intensive and substantive, i.e. PDP II and PDP VI, will continue in further joint initiatives. It can therefore be said that the experience of good cooperation "fuels" subsequent joint ventures.

It can also be added that there is an apparent disparity in the involvement of project partners (DPPs) at the management level of the entire Programme. The PO, in the 2023 Strategic Report, notes that DPP involvement is highest in the PA23 area and lowest in PA20. In the case of PA18, engagement is noticeable, but often the issues raised by DPPs were not directly within the substantive jurisdiction of the MIA. In other words, the involvement of the DSB as a Donor Programme Partner was greater than that of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice. This observation is corroborated by the DPP representatives themselves who were interviewed: while in the case of thematic area PA23 the partner was selected correctly; in the case of the other two thematic areas it was suggested that the selection of the partner

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<sup>6</sup> Or preparations for future projects.

itself was inappropriate. Especially for the PA20 area, a better option would have been to involve the Norwegian police as DPP.

## 3.2 Efficiency

The analysis of the Programme's efficiency includes an assessment of the adequacy of resources, the effectiveness of implementation methods and the timeliness of activities. It is also important to examine the influence of the Donor Programme Partners on the Norwegian side on the effectiveness of the Programme's activities.

The analysis of the efficiency of the Programme's implementation needs to take into account the significant delay in the Programme's start-up due to the protracted negotiations with the Norwegian side in 2017-2019. As a consequence, the time for the actual implementation of projects was significantly reduced, which posed a major challenge for project promoters, especially in the case of complications in tender procedures. Despite these difficulties, the achievement (and in some cases exceeding) of the targeted indicators (discussed in detail in the chapter "Effectiveness") demonstrates the flexibility and efficiency of the Programme management system. This made it possible to achieve the assumed results despite time constraints.

The management system for the implementation of the Home Affairs Programme is based on a division of tasks between two main institutions.

1. The Ministry of Interior and Administration, which acts as Programme Operator (PO). Ministry of Interior and Administration:

- Is responsible for the overall Programme and coordinates its implementation.
- Carries out substantive checking of projects/initiatives.
- The unit responsible for implementation is the Department of European Funds.
- Each thematic area has an assigned content coordinator, also each project has an assigned mentor.

2. The European Project Implementation Centre of the Ministry of Interior and Administration, which acts as the Supporting Institution (SI). The Centre is responsible for the financial control of implemented projects.

Both institutions have separate teams for tasks related to the Norwegian Funds. Additionally, other organisational units of the MIA (e.g. Legal Department, Administrative Office) and EPIC (e.g. legal team and chief accountant) are involved in the process.

The division stems from the Donor's regulations, which require the separation of strategic and substantive decision-making from the financial element.

In the opinion of both institutions, the division of tasks is appropriate and effective. The Ministry of Interior and Administration has an insight into the financial progress of the Programme and projects, and EPIC has an insight into substantive issues. Representatives of both institutions are involved in the evaluation of applications, requests for changes and are in constant contact with project promoters.

The analysis of the interviews showed that both representatives of PO and SI signalled a potential inadequate size of the teams involved in the implementation of the Programme. Although this was not considered to be a key determinant of the success of the Programme, an increase in staff numbers could help to improve the comfort of work and the quality of project supervision. Cases were reported where staffing constraints made it difficult to fully verify project documentation. This aspect becomes particularly important in the context of the Programme's shortened implementation time due to the delayed start.

An organisational aspect that has been particularly appreciated by project promoters is the introduction of the institution of project supervisors.

The Norwegian partners unequivocally stressed the professionalism of the Polish side, especially in the preparation and conduct of the Cooperation Committee and Project Selection Committee meetings.

The implementation of the Programme was based on a precise documentation system, which project promoters found useful, providing a clear legal and procedural framework. However, some variation was observed in the reception of the documentation depending on the type of project promoters. For call projects, especially those implemented by organisations with extensive grant experience, the documentation was assessed positively. Such project promoters, by virtue of their experience, generally did not have a problem finding their way around the document templates and procedures in force. Nevertheless, they valued the training sessions, during which various issues could be clarified face-to-face.

On the other hand, public institutions acting as project promoters more strongly signalled the need for additional training to help them find their way around the applicable documentation, which is particularly useful for organisations receiving this type of funding for the first time.

The perspective of the institutions managing the Programme revealed some inadequacies in the existing documentation. Checklists for financial reports were criticised: "We developed and received approval for the financial reports checklist. However, experience has shown that it is overly detailed and impractical. Its extensive level of detail actually hinders efficiency by significantly extending the expenditure approval process. As a result, even we find it cumbersome to use." (source: interview with EPIC representatives).

Problems were also highlighted with external documents such as procurement guidelines. Problems were also highlighted regarding external documents, such as procurement guidelines. Specifically, for purchases with a net value exceeding PLN 50,000, where the principle of competitiveness applies. These guidelines are defined as "incomprehensible" and "written in a very legalistic manner". However, it should be noted that this is a condition beyond the control of the Programme Operator.

The lack of a model project agreement proved to be a significant problem, which made the process particularly difficult in the case of open calls for proposals. Representatives of the Ministry of Interior and Administration emphasised that the lack of such a template prolonged the process of negotiations and adjusting the provisions to the expectations of project promoters, especially NGOs. The introduction of a standard template agreement in future editions of the Programme could significantly improve this stage of implementation.

The analysis of programme documentation and interviews with representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme indicate that the methods adopted for project monitoring were largely sufficient. At the outset, it should be emphasised that the monitoring and control system was precisely and transparently described in the programme documentation, which provided a solid basis for its effective implementation.

The main features of the monitoring and control system included:

- Annual monitoring plans approved by the Programme Operator.
- Monitoring of a sample of not less than 10% of the number of projects, selected on the basis of risk analysis and random sampling.
- Assumption that each project will be monitored at least once during implementation through an on-site visit.
- Monitoring visits taking into account the physical and financial progress of the project, the timetable for the implementation of activities and the correctness of the documentation.
- Ability to carry out ad-hoc monitoring where warranted.
- Administrative (“behind the desk”) and on-site project inspections.

The effectiveness of the adopted monitoring methods is confirmed by the opinions of the representatives of institutions involved in the Programme implementation. The comprehensiveness of the monitoring activities carried out, covering both financial and substantive aspects, was indicated. Monitoring visits were conducted jointly by the Department of European Funds of the MIA and EPIC, which ensured a multidimensional assessment of the progress of projects.

A particularly valuable element of the monitoring system was the verification of original documents, comparing them with scans received earlier, checking the correctness of the description of the documents and checking the accounting and filing system of project promoters.

MIA and EPIC have demonstrated a proactive approach to monitoring, going beyond formal, mandatory reports. MIA and EPIC representatives were in regular contact with project promoters to review progress and identify possible problems requiring support. MIA representatives emphasised that, in the absence of contact from the project promoter, supervisors from the PO made contact to verify whether the project promoter needed any kind of support.

An important element of the control system, which brought tangible benefits, was the obligation of ex-ante control for tendering procedures under the Public Procurement Law, under all predefined projects.

Although this procedure was somewhat cumbersome, it proved to be extremely effective. According to the documentation analysed, a total of 88 ex-ante controls were carried out, which in most cases resulted in comments and recommendations. Significantly, following the ex-ante controls, no weaknesses were identified at the ex-post control stage, which demonstrates the high effectiveness of this mechanism.

It is worth emphasising that the cost of conducting ex-ante control (approximately 110 thousand PLN) was much lower than the potential losses resulting from financial corrections, which were avoided thanks to these controls. In one case, a 100% correction of approx. 220 thousand PLN was avoided, which proves that spending on ex-ante controls was cost-effective from the point of view of project promoters' budgets.

Checks by both the PO and the SI (in their respective scopes) were carried out on all projects analysed. On the basis of the financial control reports made available, it can be concluded that the projects were implemented in a cost-effective and timely manner. The financial and substantive audits showed that projects generally proceeded according to plan and without delay. The project teams had adequate subject matter expertise and are committed to the tasks. The project promoters documented the expenses incurred on an ongoing basis and presented them for audit.

No significant irregularities in the financial and accounting records were identified during the audit. Records were kept correctly and the equipment purchased was appropriately labelled and is being used for its intended purpose.

The only objections were raised in the case of project no. NMF/PA20/022, where it was found that some of the financial documents were not correctly labelled. The project promoter had introduced a new system of labelling documents, but the auditor pointed out that this should not be done retrospectively to closed reporting periods.

It can therefore be concluded that the project promoters showed good organisation and discipline in project implementation. There were only minor lapses in documentation, which were addressed appropriately.

It is interesting to note from the interviews that some project promoters would like more frequent monitoring in order to have confirmation that they are carrying out the activities correctly and to have the chance to intervene quickly in case of irregularities. The PO stresses that monitoring "from behind the desk" (including verification of periodic financial reports) is carried out on an ongoing basis.

In terms of information and promotion activities, some areas for improvement were identified. The monitoring carried out revealed that not all project promoters had developed communication plans on time, which are required according to Donor regulations. Consequently, it was necessary to oblige these project promoters to fulfil this obligation without delay.

As far as the information and promotion activities carried out by the PO and SI are concerned, their positive impact on the achievement of project results was confirmed by the project promoters. Most of

them expressed high appreciation for all forms of contact with the Ministry of Interior and Administration and the European Project Implementation Centre. The project promoters particularly appreciated:

- training courses that they found valuable and needed, while expressing a desire to participate in more such events,
- the opportunity to exchange experiences during meetings and project presentations,
- form of face-to-face (offline) meetings, which they found particularly relevant.

These positive opinions testify to the effectiveness of the PO's and SI's information and promotion activities in terms of supporting project promoters and contributing to the achievement of project results. At the same time, they indicate the need to continue and potentially extend such activities in the future, with particular emphasis on training and direct meetings enabling the exchange of experience between project promoters. Representatives of PO underlined the added value of meetings with project promoters, at the same time drawing attention to the amount of time and human resources necessary to be involved in the implementation of such meetings (the public procurement procedure for the organisation of meetings in 2024 took six months).

In order to assess the commitment of resources by the project promoters, the agreements signed with the project promoters were analysed in terms of their willingness to contribute their own resources to the projects. It was observed that such contribution took place in the case of two call projects: NMF/PA18/003 and NMF/PA20/022. The common feature of these projects is that not Polish public entities, but a non-governmental organisation (Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights) and an international organisation (International Organisation for Migration) acted as project promoters. The differentiation in terms of own contribution is a direct result of the adopted programme procedures. According to them, public entities could receive full (100%) co-financing of the project, while entities from outside the public finance sector were obliged to provide their own contribution (min.10% of the project value). A more reliable indicator of the involvement of resources could be the analysis of non-financial outlays, such as the involvement of additional staff or the use of own infrastructure beyond the minimum requirements of the project, but data in this respect was not systematically collected as part of project monitoring.

The assessment of the impact of Donor Programme Partners on Programme implementation is mixed. As mentioned earlier, the involvement of DPPs in project implementation was characterised by unevenness, suggesting that their impact on the effectiveness of implemented activities varied.

A particularly clear impact can be seen in the case of the DSB, which acted as a Donor Programme Partner in the PA23 thematic area. The involvement of this partner has had a tangible effect. Firstly, the Norwegian partners spearheaded the continuation of the ongoing project, which led to its transformation into a Bilateral Initiative (see Annex for case studies). This transformation demonstrates a recognition of the long-term value of the project and a desire to develop cooperation. Secondly, based on interviews conducted with both representatives of the Directorate and project promoters, it can be concluded that a



key factor influencing the effectiveness of the cooperation was a genuine interest in the content of the projects on the part of the Norwegian partner.

A comparison between the indicators set and the activities actually implemented makes it possible to conclude that the indicators largely reflected the actual effects of the projects.

In thematic area PA18 (Asylum and migration), the indicators generally reflected well the nature of the activities carried out. For example, the indicator "Number of beneficiaries of services provided or improved" corresponded to the activities actually carried out, such as the organisation of prevention and education meetings for different target groups. Similarly, the indicator "Number of professional staff trained in the area of voluntary returns" corresponded to the training provided to police officers and psychologists.

In the thematic area PA20 (International police cooperation and combating crime), the indicators largely reflected the nature of the activities carried out. The indicator "Number of professional staff trained in crime prevention and investigation" corresponded to the numerous training courses provided by the projects. The indicator "Number of institutions possessing highly specialised equipment" reflected actual purchases of specialised laboratory and computer equipment.

In thematic area PA23 (Disaster prevention and preparedness), indicators such as "Level of compliance with NATO standards concerning CBRNE prevention and preparedness" and "Level of competence of participant institutions" corresponded well with the activities carried out, such as the creation of the National CBRNE Coordination and Standardisation System and the delivery of training on responding to CBRNE events.

On the one hand, the set indicators were characterised by precision, which enabled the project promoters to plan project activities effectively. On the other hand, the indicators were characterised by a certain degree of flexibility, which was particularly important in the context of equipment purchases. They did not impose specific types of equipment, leaving the project promoters free to choose the most appropriate technical solutions. This flexibility allowed the measures to be better adapted to the specific needs of the projects and the changing conditions of their implementation.

When analysing the adequacy of indicators, it is also worth pointing out a number of shortcomings that make it difficult to assess the sustainability of the Programme's effects. This theme will be discussed in more detail in subsection "3.3 Sustainability".

Project promoters positively assess both the quality of the support received and the responsiveness and flexibility of the national institutions involved in the Programme implementation process.

Project promoters emphasise that they were never left on their own when they needed advice or assistance from national institutions. Project supervisors were competent and able to answer questions that arose. In the absence of the person directly in charge of a project, another person, who was also knowledgeable about the project and able to help, took over. Decisions made by project supervisors were made quickly.



One of the challenges for the project promoters was the need for changes in the design of projects. It arose as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (when some activities changed form to online), but also as a result of inflation, price increases, inability to find contractors. The project promoters are positive about the attitude of the PO and SI, who showed a great understanding of the challenges that arose. Their flexibility enabled projects to be completed successfully.

The information flow path is clear for project promoters and partners and is assessed to be the most appropriate one, although it sometimes happened that the partner contacted the PO directly only informing the project promoter. This was due to a desire to reduce time and save effort for the project promoter. Otherwise, the partner would have to pass the questions to the project promoter, who in turn would send a message to the PO.

### 3.3 Sustainability

The sustainability of the results of the Home Affairs Programme is a key aspect of assessing its long-term impact. The sustainability analysis focuses on the prospect of sustaining positive results for at least five years after the completion of the projects, taking into account both the Programme assumptions and the real capacities of the project promoters and the institutions involved in its implementation.

The Programme is designed to ensure the sustainability of results through a number of mechanisms. Of key importance is the possibility to invest a significant part of the assistance (up to 60%) in fixed assets, thus creating a solid material base for the activities to be implemented. At the same time, the requirement to maintain purchased or renovated real estate and equipment with a unit value of more than PLN 10,000 for at least 5 years, together with the obligation to secure adequate financial resources for this purpose, is intended to guarantee the continuity of use of the resources created. Another important factor is the participation of the Polish state in financing the projects, which increases the sense of responsibility and commitment to the long-term maintenance of the results achieved.

Interviews conducted with project promoters and institutions involved in the implementation of the Programme indicate a strong commitment and desire to continue the results achieved. All respondents stressed the importance of maintaining and developing the benefits of the projects implemented. However, accurately determining the likelihood of sustaining these benefits in a five-year timeframe proved difficult on the basis of the data collected. This is due to a number of factors, including uncertainty about future financial and institutional conditions.

The analysis of the collected material allows us to conclude that adequate financial and institutional conditions are crucial for the sustainability of the Programme results. In the financial aspect, it is important to ensure funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the purchased specialist equipment, as well as to secure funding for the continuation of in-house training of trainers, which will enable further dissemination of knowledge within the services. Last but not least, it is important to guarantee funding for the continuation of activities by NGOs that have received funding under the Programme. In the context of

institutional considerations, of particular note is the need to create a legal framework and regulations for responding to CBRNE events in the PA23 area, which is essential for the full potential of the implemented project.

An important aspect of the sustainability of the Programme is the prospect of continued national and international cooperation, especially with the Norwegian side. Analysis of the respondents' statements indicates cautious optimism in this respect. Both the institutions managing the Programme and the project promoters express hope for continuation of cooperation, positively evaluating the contacts and partnerships established. However, the practical implementation of this cooperation will largely depend on the availability of adequate financial resources. It is worth emphasising that real proof of the desire to continue cooperation is provided by bilateral initiatives that result from previously implemented projects and are based on a genuine interest on both sides to cooperate on specific, often narrow topics.

The situation is similar regarding the continuation of cooperation with national partners. Although there is a clear desire to continue this cooperation, the lack of new funding sources significantly limits its possibilities and scope. Particular attention should be paid to the project carried out in the PA23 thematic area, where the established foundations of the National Coordination and Standardisation System require further intensive inter-institutional cooperation.

When analysing the sustainability of the benefits for the different target groups, the impact of the Programme varies. The main beneficiaries are state institutions, whose capacity has been strengthened thanks to the implemented projects, which indirectly translates into benefits for wider circles of society and strengthening of state security including building resilience in many aspects. NGOs, as direct recipients of the funding, were given the opportunity to score activities in their chosen theme. Within the PA18 thematic area, a particular target group is migrants, for whom the development of tools for, among other things, the protection of minors from migrant families is a lasting benefit. In addition, the target group is service officers who are in contact with migrants.

The assessment of the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes shows some differentiation between “hard” (investment) and “soft” outcomes. Project promoters generally assess investment outputs as more durable, as exemplified by equipment used to fight crime or respond to emergency situations. At the same time, the value of established inter-institutional cooperation, which continues after the projects have ended, is highlighted as an important “soft” outcome with a potentially long-lasting impact.

In conclusion, the Home Affairs Programme shows significant potential to generate sustainable benefits, particularly in the area of institutional capacity strengthening. Ensuring stable sources of funding, both for the continuation of activities and for the maintenance of purchased equipment, will be key to maintaining this sustainability. It is worth considering the introduction of mechanisms for monitoring the long-term effects of the projects, especially in the area of “soft” results and their impact on the effectiveness of the institutions which received support. The introduction of additional qualitative indicators into the monitoring system could enable a better assessment of the sustainability of results in the future. Finally,

the continuation and potential expansion of bilateral initiatives appear to be an effective mechanism for sustaining international cooperation, which can significantly contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Programme's effects.

### 3.4 Impact

The evaluation of the impact of the Programme is one of the key aspects of the evaluation to understand the broader context and long-term effects of the activities undertaken. In the case of the Home Affairs Programme, the impact analysis focuses on identifying the direct and indirect impacts of the intervention on the areas and target groups covered. Particular attention was paid to the extent to which the Programme contributed to improving the functioning of the institutions responsible for internal security and how it affected the overall level of security in society.

The survey carried out revealed that respondents from institutions managing the Programme as well as National Focal Point (NFP) representatives were cautious in formulating explicit assessments of the impact of the Programme. Attention was drawn to the fact that the financial scale of the intervention (EUR 20 million) may not be sufficient to expect fundamental changes in the functioning of the institutions concerned in Poland. However, the implementation of the Programme had an impact that could not be overestimated in terms of cooperation between Polish and Norwegian institutions - if the Programme had not been implemented, cooperation between these entities would not have had a chance to be established, and in this context the financial aspect was not the most important one. Another frequent theme in the respondents' statements was the conviction that the Programme had significantly contributed to strengthening the competence and capabilities of the services responsible for internal security. Consequently, according to the respondents' opinion, this translated into an increase in the general level of security in society. This perception of the impact of the Programme, although difficult to measure precisely, indicates its positive impact in key areas of internal security.

When analysing the impact of the activities undertaken by the selected projects on the target groups and areas covered, a significant and multidimensional impact can be observed.

The PDP I project, focusing on adapting centres for foreigners to the needs of families with children, brought tangible benefits both for the foreigners themselves and for the staff of the institutions working with them. A key aspect of the impact of this project was the holistic approach to improving the living conditions of families with children in the centres. Through comprehensive infrastructural and educational measures, the project not only improved the physical conditions of stay, but also provided psychological and educational support. It was particularly important to raise the competence of staff in the area of child rights protection, which contributed to a systemic change in the approach to underage foreigners. The development and implementation of new standards and tools, such as best interest of the child questionnaires, has the potential to have a long-term impact on institutional practices.

In the case of the PDP II project, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Police to combat cybercrime, the representative of the project promoter emphasised the significant impact on the effectiveness of law enforcement activities in this area. The systemic approach, covering all forensic laboratories in the country, contributed to levelling the level of competence and equipment nationwide. The key effect has not only been to improve the technical skills of staff, but also to increase the reliability of digital evidence in court proceedings. This, in turn, will translate into higher effectiveness in combating cybercrime in the long term.

The PDP IV project, with its focus on strengthening the capacity of services to verify the authenticity of documents, has demonstrated a broad impact beyond the original target groups. The significant surpassing of the number of people trained demonstrates the high demand for this type of knowledge and skills in various public institutions. The impact of the project in the context of current migration challenges, such as the crisis on the border with Belarus or the influx of refugees from Ukraine, proved to be particularly significant.

In the NMF/PA20/029 project, aimed at strengthening capacity to combat sexual crime, a key aspect was to combine technological innovation with competence development and inter-institutional cooperation. The introduction of advanced methods for analysing biological evidence has the potential to significantly increase the effectiveness of perpetrator identification. At the same time, networking and training activities have contributed to better coordination between the various actors involved in the justice chain, which can have a long-term impact on the effectiveness of the system as a whole.

In summary, all the projects analysed showed a significant and multidimensional impact on their target groups and areas of action. A characteristic element was the systemic approach, combining infrastructure and technology development with competence enhancement and changes in institutional practices. Such a comprehensive impact lays the foundations for sustainable change and long-term improvement in the project areas.

## 4. DETAILED FINDINGS OF THE PROJECTS

### 4.1 Thematic area "Asylum and migration"

Three projects from the thematic area 'Asylum and Migration' were analysed:

- project "Protect minors, including unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, from abuse", implemented by the Office for Foreigners together with the "Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę" (Empowering Children) Foundation,
- "Safe House" project implemented by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights together with the Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre and UNHCR,
- "Integration for security - international cooperation in the field of fundamental rights" implemented by the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Szczecin together with the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Wrocław, the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Gorzów Wielkopolski and the West Pomeranian Voivodeship Office.

The projects focused on vulnerable groups, i.e. migrant children, including those in detention centres for foreigners seeking international protection, victims of trafficking and violence, and migrants, including irregular migrants and those in detention centres for foreigners seeking international protection.

The projects covered both vulnerable groups and their material and social environment. Some of the activities were aimed directly at migrants and children of migrants, and some at people in professional contact with migrants, i.e. police officers, border guards, employees of the Office for Foreigners, employees of open and closed centres for foreigners, lawyers, NGO employees and people involved in helping migrants voluntarily. Focusing on people who work with migrants, allowed to develop their competences in situations of contact with persons from vulnerable groups, resulting in the ability of members of vulnerable groups to enforce their rights.

An important component of all the evaluated projects was education delivered through training, workshops and seminars. Educational activities were focused around 3 main thematic areas:

- children's rights and child abuse, including children in humanitarian crisis,
- the rights of migrants and in particular the asylum application procedure,
- crime prevention, particularly the fight against trafficking in human beings.

The integration function of these meetings was also important. The trainings were not only aimed at imparting knowledge on primarily children's rights, human rights and the asylum procedure, but also at developing the cultural competences of foreigners.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic-induced change in the training format to online or hybrid training, more people participated than originally planned, which is evident in the exceeded participation rates.

The lasting effect of the projects is the educational materials, which are present in centres for foreigners, offices and urban spaces, as well as online. A course on child protection standards for employees of the Office for Foreigners is available at the e-learning platform to the Office workers. Publicly accessible websites with educational materials including book publications and reports have also been created.<sup>7</sup>

Other types of non-educational activities focused primarily on migrants (adults and minors) in detention centres and included:

- improving the physical environment by renovating the infrastructure (classroom equipment, pitch renovation),
- reaching out to them with legal aid,
- monitoring the situation in the centres in terms of access to legal information, psychological and medical assistance,
- creation of support groups. The groups also bring together foreigners who have left the centres and live in and around Warsaw,
- creating questionnaires on the best interests of the child.

On the other hand, activities geared towards preventing and combating crime, in addition to training, included the purchase of equipment (new technologies) to combat the trafficking of human beings and for training to build competence to combat the trafficking of human beings, as well as English language courses for officers to improve their language skills and enable them to communicate with foreigners.

All project promoters indicated the importance of establishing contacts with the Border Guard and maintaining these contacts despite the completion of the projects. The projects made it possible to reach the closed centres for foreigners run by the Border Guard with assistance, mainly legal assistance. This is a valuable contribution of these projects to the functioning of the asylum and migration management system, as persons in these centres are cut off from any contact with the outside world and there is a risk that without the above-mentioned projects they would not be able to exercise their rights, including the right to seek asylum, or would even be unaware of these rights. Reaching out to people in detention centres with legal aid has increased the ability of foreigners to apply for asylum and therefore improved the functioning of the system as a result.

The projects have also helped to care for migrant children in detention centres, those at risk of ending up in these centres and those who have already left them. One project created a *questionnaire on the best interests of the child*. The questionnaire will be used by officers at the border and during detention and will allow them to determine which detention procedures to apply to a child. Developed also a

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<sup>7</sup> Website 1: <https://refugeeaid.pl/> ,

Website 2: <https://zachodniopomorska.policja.gov.pl/sz/aktualnosci/projekty-realizowa/norweski-mechanizm-finansowy-i>

questionnaire for the staff of the family detention centre in Lesznowola to identify the child's needs, mental and physical state and recommend appropriate solutions to the court.

Children are also to be protected through the training received by officers and officials, which presented the perspective of the migrant child and sensitised officials to the migrant children's rights. Increasing their knowledge of children's specific situation and their rights, can increase their responsiveness to the needs of migrant minors and thus improve the performance of the system.

Although, in the case of all evaluated projects, the intended results were achieved, the maintenance of lasting results requires financial outlays, which the project promoters do not have at their disposal. In order to maintain the effects of the trainings, it is necessary to repeat them to consolidate the knowledge once acquired, but also to familiarise new employees and newly arrived foreigners with the subject. There is a great interest in training courses. Some of them are conducted by volunteers, but even this form requires covering transportation costs. NGOs that have conducted training are not in a position to bear these costs in the long term if they do not receive financial support. The educational materials on the websites are lasting results but will need to be updated after some time to suit changing circumstances. Similarly, the child's best interest questionnaires will need to be updated.

## 4.2 Thematic area "International police cooperation and combating crime".

The study analysed 5 projects carried out by police commands and 1 focused on supporting Border Guard, which corresponds well with the fact that the whole PA20 area was dominated by "police" projects.

An analysis of the police projects included in the survey shows that they can be divided into two types due to the predominant type of activities:

- projects whose essential character is determined by infrastructural measures, i.e. equipment purchased ("soft" measures complement them);
- projects with a training, networking profile (with a possible hardware component).



### Projects of an infrastructural nature

Referring to this division, infrastructure projects include the PDP II project<sup>8</sup> carried out by the Police Headquarters and the NMF/PA20/029 project<sup>9</sup> carried out by the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznań.

**The PDP II project** consisted of the retrofitting of 18 forensic laboratories<sup>10</sup> across the country with hardware and software for cryptographic testing on devices such as phones and computers. This equipment included:

- Highly specialised workstations used for data decryption work;
- Chip-off stations that allow data to be extracted directly from the memory chips of electronic devices (i.e. extracting data from defective devices);
- Software for data acquisition from mobile devices;
- Software to break the cryptographic security of mobile devices;
- A suite of tools (software) to analyse the acquired data.

The project initially involved training, most of which was the responsibility of the project partner, the Norwegian Police University, which specialises in computer forensics, followed by the purchase of highly specialised hardware and software. Twenty-two editions of training courses were held, attended by experts and certified experts from forensic laboratories from all over Poland. They were held in small groups, were very practical in nature and the trainers were specialists from Norway, Spain, Ireland, Estonia, Germany and Belgium. According to the project coordinator, the training sessions were of a very high standard and the Polish participants were very satisfied with them. Some of the participants are also in informal contact with the trainers, discussing with them the 'more difficult cases' they face in their work. In addition, one of the training courses was conducted by a Polish entity, and concerned the extraction of data from damaged devices using chip-off stations.

A total of 104 people were trained in the project.

The primary benefit of the project is to improve the ability of forensic laboratories to acquire, analyse and secure digital material so that it can provide hard-to-evade forensic evidence in computer crime cases. The equipment and software are currently being used in test mode. However, according to the

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<sup>8</sup> Project title: PDP II Improving the process of gathering, analysis and estimation of evidence in the area of fight against cross-border cybercrime with use of IT labs network of the Polish Police.

<sup>9</sup> NEMESIS - the Novel Elaborated Model of the Enhanced Sexual Assault Investigation System

<sup>10</sup> These included the laboratories of all the Voivodeship Police Headquarters, as well as the Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters and the Central Police Forensic Laboratory.



coordinator, this should soon change and the project should translate into concrete evidence used in courts.

As part of **the Nemesis Project**, the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznań equipped the forensic laboratory at this police station with a research line for genetic testing. This is a set of equipment allowing the identification of biological traces which were secured, among other things, after sexual crimes.

Its most important element was the so-called cell separator. This is a device with which individual cells can be extracted from the mixed biological material and then assigned to specific individuals (including the perpetrators of the crime). According to the project coordinator, this is a very modern piece of equipment, which is not available to any forensic laboratory in Poland<sup>11</sup>. Complementary to the cell separator, there are devices that prepare the material for the basic examination.

The equipment was purchased for use by Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Poznań and Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Gorzów Wielkopolski, which does not have a forensic laboratory.

The project also included training in the use of the purchased equipment and training in statistical methods and methods of analysing genetic material (for representatives of forensic laboratories from all over Poland). The latter training was conducted by experts from Germany and the Netherlands, and involved working on raw results obtained from the separator, learning and practising advanced methods of data analysis and interpretation.

Seminars were also held, addressed to groups other than genetic specialists. These were devoted to the following topics: counteracting trafficking in human beings and prostitution (for criminal services), collecting and preserving biological traces (for investigation services) and various legal issues related to the prosecution of sexual crimes (for various services: police, prosecutors, as well as scientists, NGOs). A representative of the Norwegian partner, i.e. the University of Oslo, participated in the last event (she had one of her speeches there).

As in the previous project, a key outcome was to equip the police with tools that make it possible to obtain reliable evidence. In this case, the aim is to unambiguously identify the perpetrator of the crime on the basis of the biological traces he or she has left behind. According to information obtained from the project coordinator, this is already taking place. Using the purchased equipment, at least one forensic opinion has been produced as evidence in a court case.

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<sup>11</sup> The Poznań University of Medical Sciences has a similar one, but it is used strictly for medical purposes, to identify cancer cells.

## Soft projects

Projects with a predominance of “soft” activities include two pre-defined projects PDP III<sup>12</sup> and PDP IV<sup>13</sup> implemented by the Police Headquarters and the NMF/PA20/001<sup>14</sup> project implemented by the Voivodship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz.

The **PDP III** project consisted of three conferences on various issues related to the conduct of international searches for the most dangerous criminals.

The main recipients of the project were officers from units forming the ENFAST network, which brings together so-called targeted search teams from European countries. On the Polish side, they were officers of the Search and Identification Unit of the Criminal Bureau of the National Police Headquarters and of all the Dedicated Search Units from Voivodeship Police Headquarters/Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters.

The events were attended by a total of 126 people. In addition to participants from Poland, there were representatives from most European countries.

Topics at the conference included: the legal conditions and tools that police in different countries can use when conducting targeted searches, discussion of experiences to date of international cooperation, use of the latest technology, and cooperation with external entities in the search for criminals.

Although the exchange of knowledge and experience was an important aspect of the project, according to the coordinators, its most important aim was to bring officers working within the ENFAST network to meet in person and get to know each other better. This was underpinned by the belief that this would have a positive impact on the quality of their working relationships (e.g. on the commitment of partners, speed of action)<sup>15</sup>. It is difficult to disagree with this assumption and it seems that such effects of the project should emerge. However, due to their nature, and the scope of this study, they are elusive for us.

In turn, the main objective of the **PDP IV** project was to improve the skills of police officers in recognising the authenticity of identity and entitlement documents, i.e. the driving licence.

The project was aimed primarily at officers from the traffic and prevention departments of all Voivodeship Police Headquarters (and the Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters). The idea was to reach the officers who most often perform the ID checks and are the first “filter” for assessing the

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<sup>12</sup> PDP III Police and non-police international cooperation in the search for the most dangerous criminals in Europe

<sup>13</sup> PDP IV Documents – Safety and Control, including Tactical ID-control

<sup>14</sup> Specialised training as an opportunity to increase effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in the fight against organised crime

<sup>15</sup> Through personal acquaintance, it is possible to make quick contacts “on the phone”, to set certain actions in motion, before all formalities and communication through official channels have been completed.

authenticity of identity documents. A broader context that determined the need to launch the project was the fact that in Poland, along with increased migration flows, there are also more and more cases of foreigners using false documents.

Training in the project had a cascade structure. First, experts from the Forensic Laboratory of the Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters, the Polish Security Printing Works and the Norwegian partner in the project, the Norwegian ID Centre, trained 140 officers from provincial headquarters. They became trainers and then trained officers in their home units. Ultimately, the project covered more than 10,000 officers.

The project also purchased equipment. These included portable document authenticity testers and digital microscopes with computer connectivity. The testers were distributed to 10,000 trained officers and the microscopes to trainers.

It should also be added that the cascade training sessions have achieved additional, unplanned results. The presence of trainers in the voivodship headquarters made it possible to extend the training to the employees of other institutions that had requested it from the police. Nearly 10,000 people from such entities as the General Inspectorate of Road Transport, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, the Forest Guard, the State Protection Service and the Military Police benefited from additional training.

The last of the police projects discussed here was a response to the training needs of various formations subordinate **to the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz**. The training covered:

- Computer forensics specialists from the crime lab:
  - in the recovery of data from mobile devices and the analysis of acquired data;
- Prevention officers:
  - training for police service dogs and handler officers (including on first aid for dogs after possible injury in action);
  - training on how to deal with the discovery of packages containing substances suspected of being narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, explosives;
- Officers from the anti-terrorism squad:
  - diving and parachute training;
  - climbing training;
- Officers from the criminal division:
  - training in criminal profiling;
  - training on cryptocurrency as a tool for crime and money laundering;
  - training on driving techniques in difficult conditions.

A total of 925 officers were trained.

The project was complemented by the purchase of equipment needed by various departments. The most significant expenditure was a spectrometer for the forensic laboratory (a device used to detect and identify chemical substances). In addition, equipment and software for breaking security and reading data from

electronic devices, a parachute kit, climbing equipment, GPS locator collars and other minor equipment were purchased.

The project coordinator assesses that the trainings were of high quality and well adapted to the officers' needs. Some of them were not initially planned, they appeared in response to reported needs, sometimes as a continuation of training already received.<sup>16</sup>

A measurable effect of the project are police statistics showing the number of drug offenders disclosed by the Police Prevention Unit in Bydgoszcz. In 2023, 386 perpetrators were apprehended, compared to 163 in the whole of 2022. According to the coordinator, this increase can be directly linked to the project's training on the disclosure and handling of suspected substances. With regard to other trainings, there is no data to similarly capture their effects.

It should also be added that, thanks to the project, i.e. the IT forensics equipment purchased and the training, a new laboratory specialising in reading data from damaged electronic media (e.g. phones) was set up within the structure of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Bydgoszcz. This was an unplanned result of the project.

The only project subject to evaluation **project** in this area **aimed at Border Guards** was also of a training nature. The project was implemented by the International Organisation for Migration, which had already carried out similar activities under the NFM.

The trainings emphasised increasing the competence of Border Guard officers in identifying and dealing with victims of human trafficking. A total of 476 officers took part in stationary trainings, and more than 3,000 officers took part in online trainings. Additionally, with the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the massive influx of refugees, the target group was expanded to include officers from other services and representatives of administration involved in direct assistance to refugees.

Another important aspect of the project was a workshop where Border Guard officers met with representatives of the State Labour Inspectorate. They served the purpose of exchanging experiences and discussing threats related to human trafficking, especially in the context of forced labour. The project coordinator believes that this could be a contribution to further cooperation between the two institutions, e.g. in planning joint inspections in enterprises employing foreigners.

It is difficult to assess how the training has translated into the officers' work practice (we do not have such data). Having been in contact with Border Guard officers for a long time, the coordinator has noticed positive changes in their approach to victims of trafficking over the years. Officers generally have a greater knowledge of the rights of victims of trafficking, a better understanding of their needs and the need to avoid secondary victimisation. Hence, it can be argued that such training is needed and has positive effects.

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<sup>16</sup> It was possible thanks to savings and increased funding in the final phase of the project.

### 4.3 Thematic area "Disaster prevention and preparedness".

Within the thematic area 'Disaster Prevention and Preparedness', one project was carried out, the essence of which was the establishment of cooperation between the Internal Security Agency and 9 national partners (Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy of the PAS; Institute of Optoelectronics of the Military Academy of Technology; Ministry of Health; State Atomic Energy Agency; Government Security Centre; Fire Academy; University of Lodz; Jagiellonian University; Faculty of Cybernetics of the Military Academy of Technology) and 2 Norwegian partners (Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection; Norwegian Defence Research Establishment).

Based on the conclusions presented from the analysis of the documents and the interview with the project promoter, it can be concluded that the implementation of the project under the PA23 thematic area has had a significant impact on increasing and improving the capacity for disaster prevention and preparedness, with a particular focus on CBRNE hazards.

First of all, it should be emphasised that the implementation of the project has contributed to laying the foundations for a comprehensive response system to CBRNE hazards. This is a key element in building the country's capacity to effectively prevent and respond to potential disasters related to these hazards. The creation of such a system is an important step towards harmonising the procedures and standards of operation of various services and institutions.

The project enabled cooperation between the ISA and nine national partners. This broad coalition of institutions, including the Police and the Fire Service, among others, has allowed the development of the coordination mechanisms necessary in emergency situations. Effective cooperation between these entities is crucial for an effective response to CBRNE threats.

The project provided a number of training courses that significantly improved the competencies of personnel involved in responding to CBRNE threats:

- 11 editions of training courses, in which 132 people were trained,
- specialised training courses, seminars and workshops, attended by 602 people.

Such extensive training activities have undoubtedly contributed to enhancing the readiness of the services to act effectively in emergency situations.

The creation of an e-learning platform on CBRNE threats and a VR (virtual reality) system represents an innovative approach to training in this area. This allows staff to continuously improve their skills and maintain a high level of preparedness, which is particularly important in the context of dynamically changing threats.

The development of an alert system is a key element in preventing and minimising the effects of potential CBRNE-related disasters. Prompt and effective communication in emergency situations can make a significant contribution to reducing losses.

The development of a report on the use of drones in CBRNE response indicates a proactive approach to the use of modern technology in enhancing disaster preparedness. Drones can significantly enhance reconnaissance and situation assessment capabilities in hard-to-reach or dangerous areas.

Finally, the investments made in specialised equipment and supplies directly translate into an increase in the technical capacity of the institutions involved in responding to CBRNE threats, which is crucial for the effectiveness of emergency operations.

Despite the project's significant achievements, it is important to note the potential challenges to the sustainability of its outcomes. Firstly, staff turnover may make it difficult to maintain the continued involvement of key individuals and effectively manage the solutions developed. Secondly, the dynamically changing nature of CBRNE threats requires continuous training and upgrading of services' competencies, which entails continuous financial and organisational investment.

In summary, the implementation of the project under the PA23 thematic area has had a significant and multidimensional impact on enhancing disaster prevention and preparedness capabilities, particularly in the context of CBRNE hazards. The project has contributed to establishing a systemic basis, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, developing staff competencies, introducing innovative educational tools and increasing the technical capacity of the services. However, it will be crucial to maintain and further develop the results achieved in the face of the challenges identified.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Home Affairs Programme achieved, and in many cases significantly exceeded, the assumed output indicators. In the case of some indicators, the achievement of a higher value was due, inter alia, to the change of the training formula to a hybrid or on-line one, which enabled a larger number of people to participate than at the planning stage of the Programme. A mechanism for periodic verification and updating of indicators during the Programme could be considered.

The Programme showed great flexibility in adapting to unforeseen external circumstances (the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis on the Belarusian border, the war in Ukraine), which allowed the effective implementation of project objectives despite the difficulties encountered. In future editions of the Programme, it is worth maintaining and strengthening the flexible approach to Programme management.

The cooperation between managing authorities and project promoters was evaluated very positively, contributing to the smooth resolution of problems and adaptation of projects to new challenges. The model of close cooperation between managing authorities and project promoters should be continued and developed.

The division of tasks between the Programme Operator (MIA) and the Supporting Institution (EPIC) was effective, but the teams involved in the Programme implementation may have been insufficiently numerous. In future editions of the Programme, an increase in the number of teams responsible for its implementation should be considered, especially in the case of an extension of the thematic scope and an increased allocation for the MIA (a larger allocation means a larger number of projects and, consequently, reports, monitoring). Increased workload on individual workstations should be taken into account.

The Programme's documentation system was generally useful, but some elements, such as checklists for financial reports, proved too detailed and time-consuming. The lack of a model project agreement prolonged the negotiation process with project promoters. It is worth reviewing the documentation system with a view to simplifying and optimising it. It is worth developing a standard model project agreement, which will speed up the process of negotiating and concluding agreements with project promoters, especially in the case of open calls.

The project monitoring methods adopted were sufficient and effective. The ex-ante controls for tendering procedures in the predefined projects were particularly valuable and avoided potential financial losses. In the next editions of the Programme, the system of ex-ante controls should be maintained and potentially extended, especially for tendering procedures which may contribute to quicker identification and resolution of potential problems.



The information and promotion activities implemented by the PO and SI were highly appreciated by the project promoters, especially as regards training and direct meetings enabling the exchange of experience. In the future editions of the Programme, the information and promotion activities should be continued and potentially extended, with particular emphasis on training courses and direct meetings enabling the exchange of experience between project promoters, taking into account the human, financial and time capabilities of the PO.

The programme shows significant potential for generating sustainable benefits, particularly in the area of institutional capacity strengthening, but it is difficult to determine precisely the likelihood of these benefits being sustained over a five-year horizon due to the uncertainty of future financial and institutional conditions. It is worth considering the introduction of a system for long-term monitoring of project effects, especially in terms of soft outcomes and their impact on institutional effectiveness.

Adequate financial and institutional conditions are crucial for the sustainability of the Programme's results, including the provision of funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the specialised equipment purchased, funding for the continuation of training, and the creation of an appropriate legal framework (e.g. in the area of response to CBRNE events).

There is a clear desire to continue international cooperation (especially with the Norwegian side) and national cooperation, but its practical implementation will largely depend on the availability of adequate funding. Bilateral initiatives resulting from previously implemented projects provide real evidence of the desire to continue cooperation and can be an effective mechanism for sustaining international cooperation.

The Home Affairs Programme, despite its relatively small financial scale (EUR 20 million), has demonstrated a significant and multidimensional impact on target groups and areas of intervention. A systemic approach combining the development of infrastructure and technology with the enhancement of competencies and changes in institutional practices proved particularly effective. The projects contributed to strengthening the capacity of the services responsible for internal security, which, according to the respondents, translated into raising the overall level of security in society and building the multi-faceted resilience of the State. Future editions of the Programme should continue and strengthen the systemic approach to project implementation, combining investments in infrastructure and technology with competence development and institutional change.

The experience of the project promoters of the Home Affairs Programme has been overwhelmingly positive. The project promoters highly appreciated the cooperation with the Programme Operator and the Supporting Institution, emphasising their flexibility, responsiveness and the competence and friendliness of the team. They particularly appreciated:

- Effective adaptation of activities to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which in many cases contributed to increased project coverage.
- Flexibility to modify projects in response to the changing migration and geopolitical situation.



- Valuable training and meetings organised by the PO, enabling the exchange of experiences between project promoters.
- Opportunities to forge new relationships and project partnerships.

It is worth noting that the problems reported by the project promoters were sporadic and do not indicate systemic shortcomings in the implementation of the Programme. Nevertheless, some areas could be improved, especially as regards support for new project promoters. To this end, it is proposed to continue the activities that proved successful in the evaluated perspective, first of all, in the area of trainings preparing for project activities, such as trainings before announcing calls for proposals, working meetings before submitting applications for the Bilateral Cooperation Fund, as well as trainings on completing interim reports and other formalities necessary for project implementation.

## ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

### Documents - security and control, including tactical control (PDP IV)

#### Background and genesis of the project

The project is a continuation and extension of an initiative carried out between 2009 and 2014, which focused on training officers from the capital garrison and representatives of the municipal police and city hall in document authenticity verification. The new edition of the project has significantly expanded its geographical and institutional reach, encompassing officers from provincial commands from all over Poland, as well as representatives of other uniformed formations and public administration institutions, such as the Border Guard, the Voivodeship Office, Forrest Guard, State Protection Service, the Centre for Personalisation of Documents of the Ministry of Interior and Administration, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The genesis of the project stemmed from an identified skills gap in comprehensive training for officers on document authentication. This problem became particularly important in the context of increasing crime related to the use of false documents, e.g. by drivers transporting passengers. The project aimed to fill this gap through an extensive training programme, implemented in cooperation with the Norwegian partner, the Norwegian ID Centre, and the Polish Security Printing Works.

#### Objectives and intended results

The main objective of the project was to improve the qualifications of police officers and employees of the Polish Security Printing Works in the area of identity document control. The project involved the training of approximately 9800 police officers and 200 employees of the Polish Security Printing Works.

#### Course of implementation

The main project activities included:

1. Organisation of the opening conference by the Warsaw Metropolitan Police Headquarters.
2. Conducting the first round of training, led by project partner Norwegian ID Centre, among others.
3. Implementation of a second round of training, delivered by previously trained individuals in a cascade format.

In addition, the project envisaged equipping officers with the necessary tools to verify the authenticity of documents, which was expected to increase efficiency in detecting forgery and preventing crimes related to the use of forged documents.

### **Achieved results (outputs and outcomes)**

The implementation of the project significantly exceeded the original objectives in terms of the number of people trained. In response to strong interest from various institutions, such as the Civil Registry Office, the Border Guard and other public administration entities. In the end, a total of more than 12,000 people were trained, including almost 11,000 police officers.

The trainings were conducted in a cascade formula - one hundred trainers, trained by Norwegian and Polish partners, then transferred knowledge to officers across the country. Initially, the training was planned to be delivered in a stationary format, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced a change in the formula to online or hybrid training. This unforeseen situation made it necessary to adapt the technical infrastructure and extend the project period until December 2022.

The project also included the purchase of document authentication equipment: 10,000 portable testers and 140 digital microscopes, which were given to frontline officers and trainers. In addition, two sets of professional document examination equipment were given to the forensic laboratory and the Polish Security Printing Works, significantly strengthening the capacity of these institutions to analyse the authenticity of documents.

### **Challenges and how to overcome them**

The main challenge during the implementation of the project was the need to adapt the training formula to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The originally planned classroom training had to be converted to an online or hybrid format. This required significant changes to the technical infrastructure, the purchase of additional equipment and a rescheduling of the project schedule.

The project management team showed great flexibility and creativity in the face of these challenges. By adapting efficiently to the new situation, it was not only possible to implement the planned activities, but even to train a much larger number of people than originally planned.

A key success factor in overcoming the difficulties was good cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and Administration and the European Project Implementation Centre. Efficient communication and support from these institutions enabled quick decision-making and necessary changes to the project.

### **Cooperation with partners (especially Norwegian)**

Cooperation with the Norwegian project partner was seamless and crucial to the success of the initiative. Experts from the Norwegian ID Centre, were responsible for training one hundred trainers, who then provided cascade training. The contact established during the development of the project, right through to the organisation of the training sessions with Norwegian experts, ran smoothly and efficiently.

Among the national partners, a key role was played by the Polish Security Printing Works, which is the only institution in the country involved in the production and security of documents. Cooperation with the Polish Security Printing Works included, among other things, the development of templates of authentic

documents that were used during training. Importantly, contact with the Security Printing Works is still maintained after the end of the project, especially with regard to the use of borrowed equipment.

### **Good practices**

A number of good practices were applied in the project, which may inspire similar initiatives in the future:

1. The use of the cascade training model, enabling the effective dissemination of knowledge and skills on a wider scale and fostering the sustainability of the results achieved.
2. Effective utilisation of the potential of national and international partners, which allowed the combination of diverse perspectives and experiences.
3. Flexible adaptation of the training formula to changing conditions, including a smooth transition to an online and hybrid format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Maintaining long-term cooperation and knowledge exchange, which contributes to the sustainability of project outcomes.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The project has shown a huge demand for training in document authentication among different services and institutions. Consideration should be given to the creation of a permanent, nationwide training programme in this field, accessible to a wide range of public institutions.

The online and hybrid training formula proved to be effective and allowed many more people to be trained than originally anticipated. Future training projects should consider remote or hybrid training as a standard option, which can increase the reach and effectiveness of training.

## **POL-NOR II Cooperation for the road safety - exchange of experience and best practice (Bilateral Initiative)**

### **Background and genesis of the initiative**

The initiative “POL-NOR II Cooperation for the road safety - exchange of experience and best practice” was born in the Road Traffic Bureau of the National Police Headquarters. This idea, aimed at the exchange of experiences and good practices in road traffic safety between Poland and Norway, met with the approval of the Norwegian side. The initiative is part of a broader drive to improve road safety and a desire to learn from countries that have achieved considerable success in this area.

### **Objectives and intended results**

The initiative had two main objectives. The first was to organise a study visit of Polish police representatives to Norway. The visit was to enable Polish officers to become acquainted with Norwegian

road safety solutions, the organisational structure of the local traffic police and the tools and practices they use.

The second objective was to prepare and develop a comprehensive comparative study of the state of road safety in Poland and Norway. This study was to be crowned with a conference summarising the project, during which it was planned to present the results of the analysis and the conclusions and recommendations developed.

### **Course of implementation**

Implementation of the initiative began with the completion of a Polish delegation comprising representatives of the Road Traffic Bureau of the National Police Headquarters, traffic chiefs from the largest garrisons in Poland and provincial commanders. This group of experienced officers was intended to provide a broad view of road safety issues from the perspective of the various organisational levels of the Polish police.

A key element of the initiative was a study visit to Norway, which took place from 24-28 April 2023. During this visit, the Polish delegation had the opportunity to learn about the organisation of traffic surveillance in Norway. The participants learnt about the structure and tasks of the Norwegian National Traffic Police, including priority road safety activities and cooperation with other entities involved in this issue.

In addition, the delegation was presented with the activities of other institutions carrying out road safety activities, such as the Norwegian Public Road Administration, the Research and Knowledge Department of the Norwegian Road Safety Council, the Department of Forensic Medicine at Oslo University Hospital and the Norwegian Road Traffic Center - Eastern Region. Particular attention was given to the concept of “Vision Zero”, the basis for all road safety activities in Norway.

In parallel to the study visit, work has started on a comprehensive comparative study of the state of road safety in Poland and Norway. To this end, a tender for this task was announced. After a lengthy procedure in which there were some complications, including an appeal to the National Appeal Chamber, an agreement was finally concluded on 23.05.2024 with the selected contractor - the TOR Economic Advisors Team.

### **Achieved results (outputs and outcomes)**

The main product of the initiative was a study visit to Norway, during which the Polish delegation gained valuable knowledge of Norwegian road safety solutions. The participants became acquainted with the traffic surveillance system in Norway, including police activities, educational campaigns, research and legislative solutions.

The second key product is the ongoing development of a comprehensive comparative study of the state of road safety in Poland and Norway. Although this study is still in progress, it is expected to provide valuable conclusions and recommendations for improving safety on Polish roads.

### **Challenges and how to overcome them**

The implementation of the initiative encountered several significant challenges. The first and most serious of these was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the postponement of scheduled study visits to Norway. This situation required flexibility and constant communication with the Norwegian partner to adapt the schedule to the changing epidemiological conditions.

The second challenge was to coordinate the collaboration between the different actors involved in the initiative. It was necessary to combine the perspectives and experiences of police officers, engineers and scientific experts, which required the development of common approaches and conclusions, despite different points of view.

The third challenge was related to the preparation of the study. Outsourcing this task to external experts involved ensuring that they had access to the relevant material and allowing interviews with the Norwegian partner. In addition, making a sound assessment and comparison of the state of road safety in the two countries proved to be a difficult task.

To cope with these challenges, a number of measures were taken. Constant contact and a flexible approach in communication with the Norwegian partner was maintained, allowing the schedule to be adapted to the changing situation. Expert meetings were organised with various stakeholders to develop a comprehensive approach to the analysis and conclusions. A team of recognised experts from various fields was also involved, who were able to draw on material and discussions with the Norwegian side.

### **Cooperation with partners (especially Norwegian)**

The cooperation with the Norwegian partner (Norwegian National Road Policing Service) was assessed very positively by the Polish side. No major problems or difficulties in interaction with the Norwegian Road Police were reported. The Norwegian partners showed full understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, which hampered the implementation of planned activities. Together, it was possible to reschedule the study visits while maintaining good communication and flexibility.

The Norwegian side was keen to share its knowledge and experience, providing the Polish delegation with extensive information on the organisation and operation of its traffic police. Detailed data was provided on the structure, equipment used, legal solutions and road safety action plans. This openness and readiness to cooperate contributed significantly to the success of the project and the achievement of the objectives.

### **Good practices**

The implementation of the initiative has identified several good practices that can be used in future ventures of a similar nature. The first of these is the building of international partnerships to share experiences between practitioners. The participation of experienced traffic police officers, including chiefs and commanders, enriched the analysis with a practical perspective and real-life experiences from everyday service.

The second good practice is the involvement of an interdisciplinary team of experts. The initiative involved specialists from different fields, such as engineering, law or psychology, which allowed for a comprehensive approach to analyse and compare the state of road safety in both countries.

The fourth good practice is openness to new solutions and flexibility in action. The Polish side has shown a willingness to learn from Norwegian partners and adapt their good practices, while remaining flexible in implementing the initiative and adapting to changing conditions.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

International exchange of experience and good practices in the field of road safety is extremely valuable and may contribute to improving the situation on Polish roads. International cooperation in the area of road safety should be continued and expanded, not only with Norway, but also with other countries that have achieved significant successes in this area.

An interdisciplinary approach to road safety analysis, combining the perspectives of practitioners and researchers, allows for a more complete picture of the situation and the development of more effective solutions. In future road safety projects and initiatives, interdisciplinary teams should be sought, combining the experience of practitioners with the knowledge of experts from different scientific fields.

## **Strengthening CBRNE security - coordination and standardisation (PDP VI)**

### **Background and genesis of the project**

The project grew out of an earlier initiative called "Shield", carried out in 2017. "Shield" focused on conducting exercises simulating a cargo explosion and the spread of an unknown substance, with the aim of identifying gaps in the response system to CBRNE events. The results of these exercises were alarming - as many as 37 gaps in the response system were identified, clearly indicating the urgent need for further action in this area.

The project preparation period lasted approximately three years. During this time, intensive work was done on developing the concept, attracting national and foreign partners and signing partnership agreements. The lengthiness of the process was due to the large number of actors involved and the need to work out detailed arrangements, which is typical for projects of such complexity and high importance for state security.

### **Objectives and intended results**

The main objective of the project was to significantly increase the level of state and citizen security. This was intended to be achieved by developing and implementing effective methods to prevent and combat

CBRNE threats. This ambitious goal reflected the growing awareness of potential threats in the modern world and the need for a comprehensive approach to national security.

### Course of implementation

Project implementation was a complex and multi-faceted process, spread over a three-year period. The project structure consisted of 12 work packages, each with its own institutional leader (project partner) responsible for implementation.

The project was under constant intensive monitoring by the PO as all other projects under the scrutiny. Monitoring included regular expenditure checks, site visits and detailed verification of progress. This close monitoring, although demanding, contributed to maintaining the high standards of project implementation.

### Achieved results (outputs and outcomes)

The implementation of the project has yielded a number of tangible results that have significantly contributed to improving the security of CBRNE threats.

1. The foundations of a National CBRNE Coordination and Standardisation System have been laid. This is a fundamental step towards unifying and improving the response to potential threats. The system integrates the knowledge and experience of different services and institutions, creating a coherent framework for action in emergency situations.
2. A CBRNE emergency warning system has been developed. This system is crucial for a quick and effective response in the event of a real threat. It includes, among other things, the development of CBRNE educational content to be uploaded to a dedicated online platform.
3. Innovative training platforms were created. An innovative e-learning platform was developed, including a virtual reality system, a virtual simulator with extensive scenarios of activities in an urban environment.
4. Eleven training cycles were conducted, comprising a total of 550 teaching hours. 132 professionals from various services and institutions (including 10 women) were trained in responding to CBRNE incidents.
5. Innovations have been made in the area of biohazard detection and analysis.
6. A report on the use of drones in responding to CBRNE threats has been produced.
7. Standardisation of procedures and action algorithms has been carried out: a sequential algorithm for dealing with a CBRNE incident has been developed; an outline of procedures for emergency services (first responders) taking into account CBRNE risks has been created; a document containing an action algorithm in the event of a CBRNE incident has been developed for the National Emergency Medical Service system.
8. There has been an expansion of the research infrastructure. In particular, the purchase of specialised equipment has been made, including a DNA sequencer, VR simulation and training equipment, and specialised equipment for the detection of CBRNE agents.



9. A range of education and outreach materials have been developed: comprehensive training materials, including presentations, instructional videos and interactive exercise scenarios; guidance and information materials for services and the public.

### **Challenges and how to overcome them**

The implementation of the project was not free of challenges. One of the main problems was the fluctuation of the project management staff. During implementation, there was a change of project supervisor after a year and a half, followed by a change of administrative person two months later. These changes posed a major organisational challenge, requiring the smooth introduction of new people to the project and giving them a comprehensive knowledge of the project so far and the planned activities.

Complex procurement procedures proved to be another significant challenge. The purchase of specialised equipment and services required an extremely detailed description of the subject of the contract. These procedures were not only time-consuming, but also required efficient coordination between the various organisational units involved in the project.

The nature of the project, involving multiple partners - 9 national and 2 Norwegian - also posed an organisational challenge. During the course of the project, it was necessary to continuously enforce the timely completion of tasks from all partners, which required considerable management and diplomatic skills.

To overcome these challenges, the project promoter took a number of countermeasures. In the case of staff changes, care was taken to ensure a smooth handover of the project to new people, drawing on the knowledge and experience of those previously involved. On procurement issues, Project Promoter cooperated closely with the PO, who supported the project promoter with their knowledge and experience.

The foundation for success in overcoming the challenges, however, was building good cooperation and effective communication with the project partners. Regular meetings, open exchange of information and mutual support allowed for efficient coordination of activities and timely implementation of project tasks.

### **Cooperation with partners (especially Norwegian)**

Cooperation with numerous partners was one of the key aspects of the project. The involvement of 9 national partners and 2 Norwegian partners not only enriched the project with diverse perspectives and competences, but also significantly influenced its organisational complexity.

Already at the project preparation stage, the need to sign partnership agreements with each entity proved to be a process requiring time and patience. It should be noted that the partners were state-owned entities, which entailed an extensive organisational structure and complex decision-making procedures.

Despite these initial difficulties, the project promoter assesses that cooperation with the partners during the project went very well. Regular meetings to discuss progress, identify problems and coordinate

activities proved to be the key to success. The project promoter adopted an attitude of openness and support towards its partners, which was particularly important for those who were participating for the first time in a project of this scale and complexity.

Cooperation with Norwegian partners deserves special mention. The project promoter emphasises that it went very well and brought additional value to the project. Thanks to this cooperation, contacts have been established with new Norwegian organisations, which has not only enriched the project itself, but also opened up prospects for potential further cooperation in the future. The exchange of experiences and good practices with Norwegian partners has brought a valuable international perspective on CBRNE security issues to the project.

### **Good practices**

The implementation of the project resulted in the identification of a number of relevant good practices that can provide valuable guidance for future initiatives of a similar nature.

One of the key good practices was effective networking and contact building. The project has enabled collaboration between a number of national and international actors, creating a sustainable network that can be used for future projects and initiatives.

Another valuable practice has been the continuation and development of existing projects. The project is a continuation of previous activities. In turn, a new Bilateral Initiative was launched as a result of this project. This shows the importance of building on existing experiences and lessons learned.

The productive involvement of a diverse range of partners is also worth noting. The project brought together a wide range of actors, including scientific institutions, uniformed services and administration. This interdisciplinary approach allowed for a comprehensive view of the problem and the use of diverse knowledge and experience, which contributed to the development of comprehensive and effective solutions.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Above all, the project confirmed that national security issues, especially in the area of CBRNE, require long-term planning and continuity of activities. Therefore, it is recommended to continue this type of initiative in the future, using the experience to date as a solid basis for further development.

The project has clearly demonstrated that inter-institutional and international cooperation is key to creating an effective CBRNE response system. It is therefore recommended to further develop and strengthen the networks established during the project. Maintaining and expanding these relationships can bring tangible benefits in the future, both in the context of the implementation of further projects and in real emergency situations.

The project experience highlights the need for management stability in such complex ventures. It is recommended that a strategy be developed to minimise the risk of staff turnover, which may include

appropriate incentive schemes, succession plans and comprehensive training programmes for new team members.

## Strengthening cooperation and exchange of experience, including modern forms of terrain imaging through geospatial analysis of the area using remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), as a support for decision-making in emergency situations (Bilateral Initiative)

### Background and genesis of the initiative

The initiative was initiated by the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and is a direct continuation of the activities undertaken under the PDP VI pre-defined project (“The Process of Coordination and Standardisation in the Field of CBRNE as an Element of Prevention, Preparedness and Response”). During the implementation of this initiative, particularly under work package 4, the focus was on the use of drones in emergency situations, mainly to protect human health and life. The cooperation with Norwegian partners in this area was extremely intensive and fruitful.

Following the completion of the PDP VI project, the Norwegian side came up with a proposal to continue cooperation. They saw potential in further developing the subject of drone use, this time focusing on terrain mapping and monitoring the situation on Poland's eastern border. This proposal fitted perfectly with the current needs of the Polish services, related to the dynamically changing geopolitical situation in the region.

The new initiative is therefore a natural evolution of previous cooperation, building on the experience and relationships gained. The Internal Security Agency (partner on the Polish side), seeing the potential benefits of developing this technology in the context of border security, enthusiastically accepted the Norwegian partners' proposal.

### Objectives and intended results

The main objective of the initiative is to develop advanced spatial visualisations to identify potential threats and to prepare services for emergency management. Particular emphasis is placed on enhancing both drone and command centre capabilities. The initiative involves the use of artificial intelligence technology to enhance situational awareness, enabling real-time data interpretation, effective mapping and the provision of contextual information.

A key element of the initiative is to verify the feasibility of using artificial intelligence to analyse areas by comparing high-resolution satellite imagery with images provided by unmanned aerial vehicles. The aim

is to accurately plan the activities of services in hard-to-reach areas, even in adverse weather conditions. Rapid terrain analysis is expected to enable dynamic planning of operational activities, minimising the risk of failure.

The initiative also involves the development of advanced mapping capabilities to identify and track objects while modelling a specific area in 3D. This includes detecting changes in the environment with reference to the high-resolution satellite maps provided.

### **Course of implementation**

The funding agreement for the initiative was concluded on 2 October 2024.

The implementation of the initiative is based on close cooperation between the Polish and Norwegian sides. The ISA is responsible for administrative, legal and financial issues. The Norwegian side is actively involved in agreeing key elements of the initiative.

Key activities under the initiative include the purchase of specialised equipment, including drones, software and satellite maps. In parallel, activities are being carried out to develop the institutions' competence in the use of these tools for mapping the terrain and monitoring the situation at the border. Cooperation with Norwegian partners focuses on the exchange of experience and good practices in this area.

Despite the intense pace of work, the initiative is progressing as planned. Regular project team meetings are also taking place to discuss progress and new challenges.

### **Achieved results (outputs and outcomes)**

As the initiative is still ongoing, it is not yet possible to talk about final results. Nevertheless, the current progress indicates that the intended goals are gradually being achieved. A detailed evaluation of the outputs and results will be possible once the initiative is completed.

### **Challenges and how to overcome them**

The initiative faces a number of challenges, the most significant of which is the short implementation period of six months. It requires very precise planning and strict adherence to a schedule and budget. Unlike longer projects/initiatives, there is no room for greater flexibility in time and resource management.

Another challenge is the need to react quickly to the dynamically changing geopolitical situation in the region. This is also the main reason for the implementation of this project, which requires the project team to be highly flexible and ready to adapt activities to current needs.

The sensitivity of the subject of drone use presents further challenges. Potential privacy and human rights concerns require special attention and sensitivity. While the initiative operates within the limits of the law, these issues can be controversial and require an appropriate communication approach.

### **Cooperation with partners (especially Norwegian)**

Cooperation with Norwegian partners is a key element of the initiative. The initiative for this cooperation came from the Norwegian side, which offered to continue previous cooperation in the area of drone use. The Norwegian partners, who have extensive experience in terrain mapping, offered to share their knowledge and practice with the Polish side.

The cooperation between the partners has been smooth, largely due to the experience gained from the earlier PDP VI project. Previous familiarity significantly facilitates communication and mutual understanding.

Challenges in working with the Norwegian partner include language barriers and difficulties related to holiday periods, which can hinder ongoing communication. Despite these difficulties, the project is progressing as planned and the parties are actively exchanging experiences and good practices.

### **Good practices**

Although the initiative is still a work in progress, some good practices can already be identified.

Firstly, together with the previously discussed PDP VI project (which itself also built on previously established collaborations), this Bilateral Initiative is an excellent example of building on previous experiences and partnerships to more effectively implement new initiatives.

Secondly, it is noteworthy to highlight the consideration of the ethical aspects of the use of new technologies in the area of public safety.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

As the initiative is still a work in progress, it would be premature to formulate final conclusions and recommendations. Nevertheless, the experience so far points to several important aspects:

1. Continued international cooperation in the area of security brings tangible benefits by allowing the exchange of experience and good practice.
2. The use of advanced technologies, such as drones and artificial intelligence, in the area of border security appears to be a promising development.
3. The initiative's short lead time, while challenging, can be an effective way to quickly implement innovative solutions in response to rapidly changing threats.

## **CoSky – Polish-Norwegian bilateral initiative for increased efficiency of use of drones in civil protection (Bilateral Initiative)**

### **Background and genesis of the initiative**

The “CoSky” initiative has its roots in an international conference held as part of another bilateral initiative (International Conference on Disaster Prevention). At this event, one of the key themes was the use of modern technology, including drones, in risk analysis and in preventing and combating a variety of disasters, both natural and man-made.

During this conference, Tiepoint gave a presentation on the innovative use of drones in crisis management, which aroused a lot of interest on the Polish side. It turned out that the Centre for Crisis Information (based at the Space Research Centre of the PAS) also conducts similar activities, albeit on a smaller scale.

This meeting and exchange of experiences with the Norwegian partner became the catalyst for the birth of the “CoSky” initiative. It was discovered that the areas of interest of both parties were extremely convergent, which created the potential to develop synergies in a joint venture.

### **Objectives and intended results**

The main objective of the “CoSky” initiative is to improve and enhance the effectiveness of drone use in emergency management operations. This overarching goal is the leitmotif of the whole endeavour.

The initiative involves an intensive exchange of experience and knowledge between the Polish and Norwegian sides in two key areas. The first is air traffic management, which includes coordinating and ensuring the safety of operations involving both drones and manned aircraft. The second area relates to the use of geospatial information acquired by drones, including the creation of maps, 3D models and the effective dissemination of this data between various institutions involved in crisis management.

The long-term goal of the initiative is to develop a coherent vision for further, broader cooperation between Poland and Norway in these two areas. It is assumed that after the current, time-limited initiative ends, this cooperation can be continued and developed on a larger scale.

### **Course of implementation**

At this stage, the “CoSky” initiative is in the start-up phase. As the initiative is only at the beginning of its journey, it is not yet possible to talk about concrete implementation stages or milestones reached. The application form is under evaluation by the PO.

### **Achieved results (outputs and outcomes)**

As the “CoSky” initiative is in the start-up phase, it is not yet possible to talk about concrete, achieved effects or results.

### **Challenges and how to overcome them**

The “CoSky” initiative has encountered several significant challenges already in the planning and launch stages. One of the main problems was the significant delays in the launch of the initiative. It was originally planned that the initiative would start more than a year earlier, but the implementation system

of the Norwegian Funds required a number of administrative actions on both the Polish and Norwegian sides – approval of the Cooperation Committee to take action, adoption of the Cooperation Committee resolution on the initiative, sending the proposal to the Inter-ministerial Team for the Home Affairs European Funds, submission of the application to the PO. The proposal and partnership agreements are currently being reviewed. It will then be possible to sign a financing agreement for the implementation of the initiative.

Another challenge was the reduction in the initiative's budget compared to the original intentions. Funding was eventually obtained, but to a much smaller extent than originally planned. This forced the need to adapt the scope of the initiative to the available funding. The smaller funding is due to the limited savings in the Programme from which the initiative is to be implemented.

The challenge was to clarify the system of financial flows between entities (advance vs. reimbursement). This poses a particular challenge for Polish institutions, such as the Polish Academy of Sciences, which does not have significant financial reserves. An advance funding system would be strongly preferred by Polish partners, especially institutions with limited financial resources. After the project promoter's consultation with the PO, such a system was introduced.

Despite these challenges, the initiative's partners have shown flexibility and determination in pursuing their objectives. They have adapted the scope of the initiative to the resources available, while at the same time trying to preserve its key elements.

#### **Cooperation with partners (especially Norwegian)**

Cooperation with Norwegian partners under the “CoSky” initiative is based on a solid foundation of previous contacts and shared experience. The Crisis Information Centre was already familiar with the Norwegian partner, the Directorate for Civil Protection and Tiepoint, with whom it had cooperated in organising the conference in Krakow.

At the stage of preparing the application, cooperation with the Norwegian partners went very well. Both parties showed great interest in the topic and determination to pursue the initiative, which greatly facilitated the agreement process. The Norwegian partners stood out for their flexibility, positive attitude and willingness to help in all aspects of preparing the initiative.

The division of tasks and roles between the parties was seamless due to the compatibility of their capabilities and areas of interest. This synergy of competences and experiences provides a solid basis for the future implementation of the project and the achievement of its objectives.

#### **Conclusion and good practices**

Although the “CoSky” initiative is only in its start-up phase, some good practices can already be identified at this stage that can inspire other similar initiatives. Above all, the initiative demonstrates the value of building long-term relationships and exchanging experiences between partners from different

countries. The earlier cooperation on the Krakow conference has laid the groundwork for a more advanced initiative such as “CoSky”.