MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISM

2021-2028

between

THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY,

hereinafter referred to as “Norway”

and

THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA,

hereinafter referred to as the “Beneficiary State”

together hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”,

WHEREAS the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 establishes a financial mechanism (hereinafter referred to as the "Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028") through which Norway will contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area;

WHEREAS the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 aims to strengthen relations between Norway and the Beneficiary State to the mutual benefit of their peoples;

WHEREAS the enhanced co-operation between Norway and the Beneficiary State will contribute to securing a stable, peaceful and prosperous Europe, based on good governance, democratic institutions, the rule of law, respect for human rights and sustainable development;

WHEREAS the Parties agree to establish a framework for cooperation in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028;

HAVE AGREED on the following:

Article 1
Objectives

1. The overall objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 are to contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary States through financial contributions to promote the thematic priorities listed in paragraph 2. Accordingly, the Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding shall select programmes for funding that aim to contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

2. The financial contributions shall be available in the following thematic priorities:

(a) European green transition;

(b) Democracy, rule of law and human rights;

(c) Social inclusion and resilience.

Article 2
Legal Framework

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be read in conjunction with the following documents which, together with this Memorandum of Understanding, constitute the legal framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028:

(a) the Agreement between the Kingdom of Norway and the European Union on the Norwegian Financial Mechanism for the period May 2021-April 2028 (hereinafter referred to as "the Agreement");

(b) the Regulation on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 (hereinafter referred to as the "Regulation") issued by Norway in accordance with Article 9.4 of the Agreement;

(c) the programme agreements that will be concluded for each programme; and

(d) any guidelines adopted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to as "NMFA") in accordance with the Regulation.

Article 3
Financial Framework

1. In accordance with Article 2 of the Agreement, the total amount of the financial contribution is € 1463 million in annual tranches of € 209 million over the period running from 01 May 2021 to 30 April 2028, inclusive.

2. In accordance with Article 6 of the Agreement, a total of € 31,465,059 shall be made available to the Beneficiary State over the period referred to in Paragraph 1.

3. In accordance with Article 9.7 of the Agreement and Article 1.9 of the Regulation, the management costs of Norway shall be covered by the overall amount referred to above. Further provisions to this effect are set out in the Regulation. The net amount of the allocation to be made available to the Beneficiary State is € 29,262,505.

Article 4
Roles and responsibilities

1. Norway shall make funds available in support of eligible programmes proposed by the Beneficiary State and agreed on by the NMFA within the priority sectors listed in Article 3.1 of the Agreement and the programme areas listed in the Annex to the Agreement. Norway and the Beneficiary State shall cooperate on the preparation of concept notes defining the scope and planned results for each programme.

2. The Beneficiary State shall assure the full co-financing of programmes that benefit from support from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in accordance with Annex B and the programme agreements.

3.The Beneficiary State shall ensure an enabling environment for the unimpeded implementation of the Civil Society Fund in the Beneficiary State and shall refrain from taking any measures that might prevent Fund Operators from independently exercising their role.

4. The NMFA shall manage the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 and take decisions on the granting of financial assistance in accordance with the Regulation.

5. The NFMA shall be assisted by the Financial Mechanism Office (hereinafter referred to as the "FMO"). The FMO shall serve as a contact point for the Beneficiary State for the day-to-day operations of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

Article 5
Designation of authorities

The Beneficiary State has authorised a National Focal Point to act on its behalf. The National Focal Point shall have the overall responsibility for reaching the objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 as well as for the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in the Beneficiary State in accordance with the Regulation. In accordance with Article 5.2 of the Regulation, the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority are designated in Annex A.

Article 6
Multi-annual Programming Framework

1. In accordance with Article 2.5 of the Regulation, the Parties have agreed on an implementation framework consisting of the following financial and substantive parameters:

(a) a list of agreed programmes, the financial contribution from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 and from the Beneficiary State;

(b) identification of programmes, their objective(s), the Programme Operators, the grant amount and amount of co-financing by programme, the bilateral ambitions as well as any specific concerns relating to the implementation of the programmes;

(c) conditions and/or specific concerns at Beneficiary State level relating to target groups, geographical areas or other issues;

(d) identification of Donor Programme Partners, as appropriate;

(e) identification of International Partner Organisations, as appropriate; and

(f) identification of pre-defined projects to be included in relevant programmes.

2. The implementation framework is outlined in Annex B.

Article 7
Fund for bilateral relations

In accordance with Article 4.6.1 of the Regulation the Beneficiary State shall set aside funds to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the Beneficiary State. The agreed amount is reflected in Annex B and is allocated to the funds for bilateral relations at national and programme level. The National Focal Point shall manage the use of the fund for bilateral relations at national level and shall establish a Joint Committee for the Bilateral Fund in accordance with Article 4.9.1 of the Regulation. The Programme Operators shall manage the use of the funds for bilateral relations allocated to their programmes. For Donor partnership programmes, decisions on the use of the funds for bilateral relations in the programme shall be taken by consensus between the Programme Operator and the Donor Programme Partner(s).

Article 8
Country Report

In accordance with Article 2.6 of the Regulation, the National Focal Point shall submit to the NFMA an Annual Country Report on the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 in the Beneficiary State. The Country Report shall be submitted to the FMC no later than 10 March each year.

Article 9
Annual meetings

In accordance with Article 2.7 of the Regulation an annual meeting shall be held between the NMFA and the National Focal Point. The annual meeting shall allow the NMFA and the National Focal Point to examine progress achieved over the previous reporting periods, discuss risks and agree on any necessary measures to be taken. The annual meeting shall provide a forum for discussion of issues of bilateral interest.

Article 10
Modification of the MoU

1. Annex A and B may be amended through an exchange of letters between the NMFA and the National Focal Point.
2. Cumulative transfers up to 10% of the total eligible expenditure of a programme may be made between programmes without a modification of the Annexes to this Memorandum of Understanding,

provided that the change has been agreed by the NMFA through modifications of the relevant Programme Agreements.

3. In addition, cost savings and amounts not committed to projects may be transferred to the funds for bilateral relations without a modification of the Annexes to this Memorandum of Understanding or the approval of the NMFA, provided that the transfer has been the subject of prior consultation with the Cooperation Committee of the concerned programme. Any such transfer of funds from a programme shall not affect the objectives or outcomes of the Programme. The National Focal Point shall notify the NMFA of such transfers without delay and the NMFA shall update the concerned Programme Agreements and the Bilateral Funds Agreement, as relevant.
4. All transfers made in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 shall not affect any specific concerns, conditions, objectives or other priorities referred to in this Memorandum of Understanding and shall be in accordance with the provisions of the legal framework.

Article 11
Control and Access to Information

The NMFA, the Office of the Auditor General of Norway and their representatives have the right to carry out any technical or financial mission or review they consider necessary to follow the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects as well as the use of funds. The Beneficiary State shall provide all necessary assistance, information and documentation.

Article 12
Governing Principles

1. The implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding shall in all aspects be governed by the Regulation and subsequent amendments thereof.

2. The objectives of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be pursued in a framework of close co-operation between Norway and the Beneficiary State, respecting the common values and principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The Parties agree to apply the highest degree of transparency, accountability and cost efficiency as well as the principles of good governance, partnership and multi-level governance, sustainable development, gender equality and non-discrimination in all implementation phases of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

3. All programmes and activities funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028 shall be consistent with respect for these values and principles and abstain from supporting operations that may fail to do so. Their implementation shall comply with the fundamental rights and obligations enshrined in relevant instruments and standards.

4. The Beneficiary State shall take proactive steps in order to ensure adherence to these values and principles at all levels involved in the implementation of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

Article 13
Entry into Force

This Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into force on the day after the date of its last signature.

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This Memorandum of Understanding is signed in four originals in the English Language.

For the Kingdom of Norway	For the Republic of Estonia
Signed in Tallinn on 27/05/2025	Signed in Tallinn on 27/05/2025
.....	.....
Kingdom of Norway	Republic of Estonia

ANNEX A

National management and control structures

1. National Focal Point

The Grants Development Department of the State Shared Service Centre (hereinafter SSSC) shall act as the National Focal Point. The SSSC is administered by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Estonia.
The Grants Development Department is directly subordinated to the Deputy Director General of the SSSC, who shall act as the Head of the National Focal Point. In its role as Head of the National Focal Point, the Deputy Director General of the SSSC is directly accountable to the Minister of Finance.

The Grants Development Department of the SSSC is also responsible for the coordination and management of the European Structural Investment Funds and other foreign assistance.
The roles and responsibilities of the National Focal Point are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.3 thereof. In addition, The National Focal Point shall be responsible for the preparation and submission of irregularities reports on behalf of the Beneficiary State. The roles and responsibilities are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Chapter 12 thereof.
The National Focal Point shall provide the FMC with copies of any audit report that is made by the National Audit Office of Estonia regarding the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

2. Certifying Authority

The Norwegian & EEA Certifying Unit of the Grants Payments Department of the SSSC shall act as the Certifying Authority. The SSSC is administered by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Estonia.

The Certifying Authority is directly subordinated to the Director General of the SSSC, who shall act as the Head of the Certifying Authority. The Certifying Authority shall be functionally independent of the National Focal Point. If the Director General of the SSSC is incapable of carrying out functions as Head of the Certifying Authority, these tasks cannot be delegated to the Head of the National Focal Point.

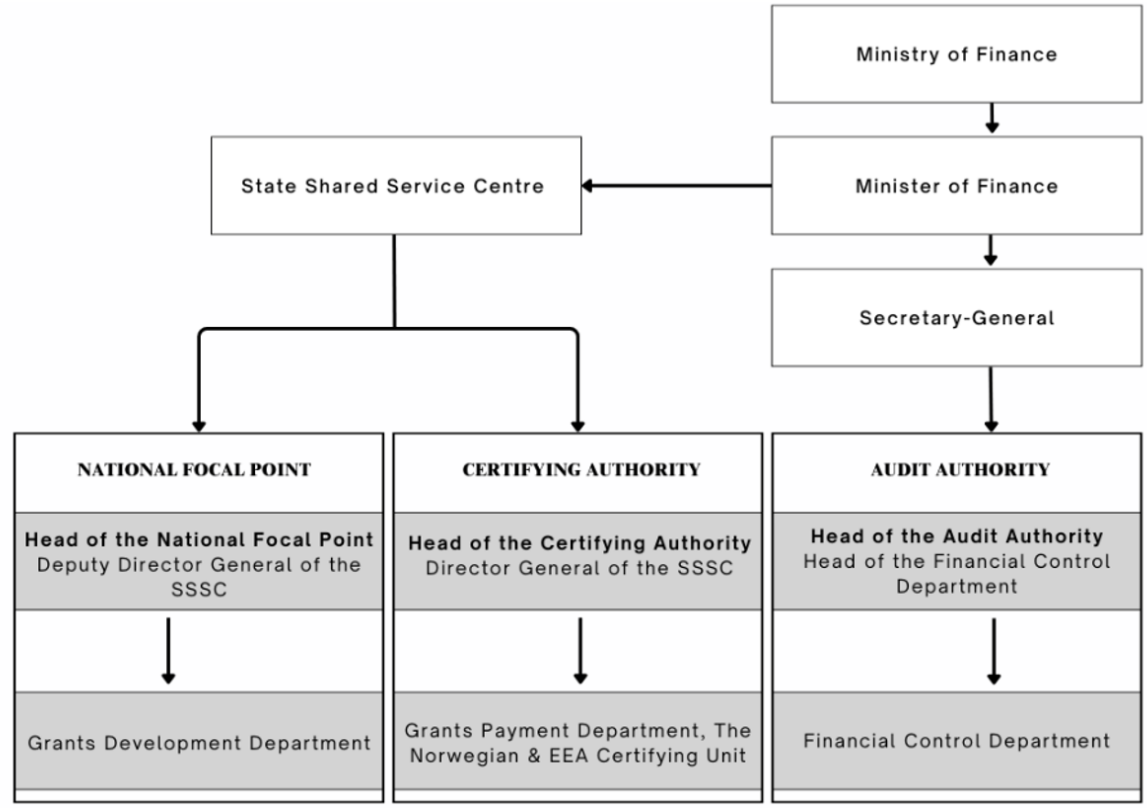
The roles and responsibilities of the Certifying Authority are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.4 thereof.

3. Audit Authority

The Financial Control Department of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Estonia shall act as the Audit Authority. The Head of the Financial Control Department shall be the Head of the Audit Authority. The Financial Control Department is accountable to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Estonia, which again is accountable to the Minister of Finance concerning the responsibilities carried out by the Audit Authority.
The Financial Control Department’s main responsibilities are auditing the activities of authorities providing and beneficiaries using grants and external assistance, fulfilling the tasks of an official cooperation partner of the European Anti-Fraud Office and conducting external assessments of internal audit units. The Financial Control Department carries out the functions of the Audit Authority for the European Structural Investment Funds and other foreign assistance.
The roles and responsibilities of the Audit Authority are stipulated in the Regulation, in particular Article 5.5 thereof.

The Audit Authority shall be functionally independent of the National Focal Point and the Certifying Authority.

4. Organigram



ANNEX B

Implementation framework

In accordance with Article 2.5 of the Regulation, the Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding have agreed on an implementation framework outlined in this annex.

1. Financial parameters of the implementation framework

	Estonia	**Norway Grants contribution**	**National contribution**
	Programmes		
1	Green Transition	€ 14,300,000	€ 2,523,529
2	Green ICT	€ 13,200,000	€ 2,329,412
	Other allocations		
	Technical Assistance to the Beneficiary states (Art. 1.10)	€ 865,289	N/A
	Funds for bilateral relations at national level (Art. 4.7)	€ 697,216	N/A
	Reserve for completing projects under FM 2014-2021	N/A	N/A
	Funds for bilateral relations at programme level (Art. 4.10)	€ 200,000	N/A
	Net allocation to Estonia	**€ 29,262,505**	**€ 4,852,941**

2. Conditions

3. Specific concerns

The agreed allocations to the programmes and bilateral funds include the Norwegian Financial Mechanism contribution to Estonia related to the challenges experienced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine, which amounts to €1,785,113. The funding shall be made available through the bilateral funds and programmes, where the use of these funds shall be described in the concept notes.

In accordance with Article 8.11.4 of the Regulation, the allocation to technical assistance is set at 2.75% further to the request of the National Focal Point and the submission of justifications. The National Focal Point shall ensure that the entire allocation is necessary for the performance of the tasks of the National Focal Point, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority.

Gender equality and digitalisation will be mainstreamed and form part of all relevant programme areas. The concept notes shall describe how this shall be achieved.

The amount of funds for bilateral relations allocated to each programme shall be included in the respective programme agreements. Activities related to cybersecurity will be explored in the Bilateral Fund at national level.

4. Substantive parameters of the implementation framework

The programmes described below are to be implemented subject to the approval of the NMFA, in accordance with Article 6.3 of the Regulation.

A. Green Transition

Programme objective:	Acceleration of the green transition towards a more sustainable society.
Programme grant:	€ 14,300,000
Programme co-financing:	€ 2,523,529
Programme Operator:	Ministry of Climate
International Partner Organisation(s):	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - to be decided
Programme area(s):	Green transition

	Education, training and youth employment
Programme specific concerns:	The programme will support the integration of environmental awareness and enhanced green skills in formal and non-formal education. Partnership with Donor project partner(s) shall be explored when developing the concept note. A pre-defined project with the OECD that contributes to the area of support "Green governance" shall be explored in the concept note. A pre-defined project on low-emission vessels with a grant from the programme not exceeding €4,800,000 shall be developed in the concept note.

The programme will be implemented in conjunction with the programme Green Transition implemented under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2021-2028.

B. Green ICT

Programme objective:	Green value creation and competitiveness.
Programme grant:	€ 13,200,000
Programme co-financing:	€ 2,329,412
Programme Operator:	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
Donor Programme Partners(s):	Innovation Norway (IN)
Programme area(s):	Green business and innovation
Programme specific concerns:	The programme will focus on creating a climate-resilient economy based on a low-carbon, circular economy model. The promotion of female entrepreneurs shall be included in the programme. The possibility of pre-defining project(s) focusing on improving private enterprises' knowledge, skills and capacity shall be explored when developing the concept note.