



## **ANNUAL MEETING ON THE EEA AND NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECHANISMS 2009-2014**

Thursday, 25 April 2013

Venue: Ministry of Finance, Vilnius  
Conference Room 331  
10.00 – 12.30 h

### **MINUTES**

#### Norway:

Mr. Anders Erdal, Co-Chairman, Director General, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
H.E. Mr. Leif Arne Ulland, Ambassador, Norwegian Embassy,  
Ms. Berit Helene Pettersen, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Ms. Inga Aalia, Officer for the EEA/ Norway Grants, Norwegian Embassy.

#### Financial Mechanism Office (FMO):

Ms. Stine Andresen, Director,  
Mr. Falk Lange, Senior Country Officer.

#### Lithuania(LT):

Mr. Aloyzas Vitkauskas, Co-Chairman, Vice-minister, Ministry of Finance, National Focal Point (NFP),  
Ms. Audronė Nikšaitė, Head of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP,  
Ms. Aušra Baliukonienė, Director of National Fund Department, Ministry of Finance, Certifying authority (CA),  
Ms. Aušra Nausėdienė, Head of International Financial Assistance Expenditure Declaration Division, National Fund Department, Ministry of Finance, CA,  
Ms. Inesa Šumskienė, Chief Specialist of International Audit and Financial Control Methodology and Monitoring Division, Internal Audit and Financial Control Methodology Department, Ministry of Finance, Audit Authority (AA),  
Ms. Džilda Grybaitė, Senior Specialist of International Audit and Financial Control Methodology and Monitoring Division, Internal Audit and Financial Control Methodology Department, Ministry of Finance, AA,  
Ms. Asta Koveckytė, Head of European Union Assistance and Cash Funds Accounting Division, State Treasury Department, Paying Authority (PA),  
Ms. Eglė Vilčinskaitė, Senior Specialist of European Union Assistance and Cash Funds Accounting Division, State Treasury Department, PA,  
Ms. Gita Šematovičiūtė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP,

Ms. Lina Kliukienė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP  
Ms. Ieva Stanaitytė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP,  
Ms. Simona Židonytė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP,  
Mr. Vytautas Tamašauskas, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NFP,  
Ms. Julija Motiejūnienė, Chief Financial Officer, NGO Fund Operator,  
Mr. Tomas Kubilius, Programme Coordinator, Human Rights Monitoring Institute (NGO Fund Operator).

## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

Co-Chairman A. Vitkauskas opened the meeting by welcoming everybody and making a few introductory points. The Co-chairmen agreed proceeding with the discussion according to the Agenda.

## **Outstanding programming issues/ amendments to the Memorandums of Understanding**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė briefed on the status of the LT programmes and main problems encountered during the reporting period. She also mentioned a need to amend the Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), to formalize the latest agreements among the parties also stressed the main future steps (more detailed information is provided in Slides No.3-4, Annex 1).

Mr. A. Erdal pointed out that almost all programmes operated by the Lithuanian entities were approved and expressed the hope that although there were some problems with the LT08 Programme Operator (PO) capacities, they would be solved soon and LT08 programme would also be approved in the nearest future. After adopting all the programmes, both sides will exchange the letters to formalize the necessary amendments to the MoU.

Mr. A. Erdal stressed that donors were looking forward to sign the Technical Assistance Agreement in the nearest future.

## **Bilateral relations**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented the information on approved and potential partnerships at all levels of the mechanisms. She noted that 9 out of 12 programmes operated by the Lithuanian POs would be implemented with Donor Programme Partners from Norway, 10 pre-defined projects would be implemented with Norwegian partners and 1 pre-defined project - with Icelandic partner. Most of the programmes having open calls will prioritize partnership projects during appraisal process (more detailed information is provided in Slide No.5, Annex 1).

Presenting the status of the of the National Bilateral Fund ( hereinafter – the NBF), Ms. A. Nikšaitė stressed that a work plan with the description of the implementation strategy, measures and procedures of the NBF was recently approved by the donors (on 10 April 2013) and introduced 3 main components of the Fund (more detailed information is provided in Annex 1).

Mr. A. Erdal highlighted the importance of long-term bilateral relations for the donors and stressed that in this area Lithuania was well advanced and among the leaders.

Ms. S. Andresen noted that the implementation process of the Bilateral Funds at national and programme levels would be the learning process for all parties involved and the biggest challenge would be to work smoothly together with new partners who might have different experience, different opinion and different ways of thinking.

### **Reporting on horizontal concerns**

Mr. A. Erdal noted that horizontal concerns, such as good governance, focus on anticorruption antifraud activities, tolerance, human rights, freedom of speech and multicultural understanding were prioritized by the donors. The NFP and POs are encouraged to pay particular attention to these issues and to seek synergies and potential cooperation.

Ms. A. Nikšaitė noted that some aspects of the mentioned horizontal issues have already been included in the programmes and the NFP, in its daily work, would highlight them in the communication with the POs.

### **Risk assessment/risk mitigation**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė introduced the risks identified by the NFP in implementation of the mechanisms and planned mitigation measures (more detailed information is provided in Annex 1).

Mr. A. Erdal highlighted that risk management was essential during the implementation period of the programmes. As the risks differ in different sectors, the donors encourage the NFP to consult with the FMO and share good experience in coping with the identified risks. Mr. A. Erdal also noted that the risks and the means to mitigate them described in the Strategic Reports formed a good base for the effective and comprehensive risk management.

Ms. S. Andresen suggested for the next year to have a technical meeting in addition to the annual meeting to discuss the risks which were visible from different sides also to share good experience in how to mitigate them.

Mr. A. Vitkauskas also highlighted significance of the risk assessment and adequate risk mitigation measures. He also stressed that in order to make the mechanisms run smoothly, the competent staff is highly required at all levels and the best way to have such competent motivated staff is to train the staff members. Mr. A. Vitkauskas also noted that, regrettably, currently the staff training was not supported from the EEA and Norway Grants technical assistance and asked about the possibilities of reconsidering this matter.

Mr. A. Erdal noted that the value of the staff training was indisputable and the donors were open to discuss about it.

### **Status of Strategic Reports**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented the Strategic Reports for 2012 (more detailed information is provided in Annex 1).

Mr. A. Erdal noted that the Strategic Reports were comprehensive, however more concentrated on the past and the donors would send to the NFP their comments. After the Strategic Reports are corrected, taking into account the mentioned comments, they will be considered to be approved.

### **Presentation by Operator of NGO fund**

Mr. T. Kubilius presented the information about the status of the LT04 programme “NGO Fund”, the activities already implemented and next steps. The representative of the NGO Fund Operator informed that the 1<sup>st</sup> open call was announced in March 2012, a great interest by potential applicants was expressed, so a large number of applications was expected (more detailed information is provided in Annex 2).

### **FOLLOW\_UP:**

The NFP will amend the Strategic Reports for 2012 by taking into account the comments sent by the FMO.

### *Enclosures:*

1. Annex 1: Presentation “2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009–2014”;
2. Annex 2: Presentation “Briefing on NGO Programme in Lithuania”.