

*Annual Report on the Implementation of the
Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme to
Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the
Enlarged European Union
24 April 2008 – 28 February 2009*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Article 8 of the Framework Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Federal Council concerning the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union (hereinafter – the FA) as well as Article 8.2 of the Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by the Partner Country guidelines (dated 23 April 2008), the Ministry of Finance (hereinafter – the MoF), acting as the National Coordination Unit (hereinafter – the NCU) in charge of the coordination of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme together with the Central Project Management Agency (hereinafter – the CPMA), which implements concrete tasks in implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme delegated by the MoF, prepared the *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme* (hereinafter – the report).

The report reflects the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme during the period from 24 April 2008* to 28 February 2009 and contains information with regard to the progress made towards the progress of Project identification/preparation, progress in implementation/preparation of block grant, the Project Preparation Facility, the Technical Assistance Fund, the Scholarship Fund, other items defined in the Article 1.2 of the Annex 2 of the FA. It also describes activities planned for the next reporting period.

Before submission to the Swiss Contribution Office, the report was approved by the Steering Committee for the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme on 9 March 2009.

* The starting date for the 1st annual report was taken due to the reason that on 24 April 2008 the FA came fully into force after both countries finalised their procedures and exchanged with the diplomatic notes.

1. Progress made in the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme against the Conceptual Framework

During the reporting period the main activities of the NCU and other institutions involved were related to the development of the legal and administrative basis for the practical implementation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme as well as preparation of the project outlines. For the cut-off date of this report no practical achievement of objectives foreseen in the FA could be stated.

Progress made under concrete forms of financial assistance described in the FA is presented under part 2 of the report.

2. Reporting on the status of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme

2.1. Reporting on the Programmes within the respective focus areas:

2.1.1. Programme in the focus area “Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment”

The overall aim of the programme is to enhance hospital infrastructure in order to improve health care services while protecting the environment and increasing energy efficiency. It is expected that after the implementation of the programme, buildings of hospitals and energy efficient engineering systems will be renovated/installed, premises of units for perinatal and neonatal care services will be renovated. The programme is directly interrelated with the other programme to be implemented in the focus area „Health“. It is planned that one joint feasibility study for interrelated programmes in two focus areas will be prepared aiming for the complex situation analysis, overview of the material facilities of the hospitals and make proposals on the renewal of these facilities depending on the scope of services provided by each particular hospital and the prospects of activities performed by them.

During the reporting period the Ministry of Health was in process of drafting the project outline and request for the PPF for the programme to be implemented in the defined focus area. The draft project outline was submitted for informal review and comments to the SCO on 12 January 2009. The feedback of the Swiss side was received on 16 January 2009.

The Ministry of Health is in process of drafting the tender documentation for procurement of the above mentioned joint feasibility study. The draft technical specifications are developed and being discussed within the Ministry.

2.1.2. Programme in the focus area “Health”

The overall aim of the programme is to improve the perinatal and neonatal health care system in Lithuania. It is expected that after the implementation of the programme, Lithuanian hospitals (in main cities, regions and periphery) will be provided with the new modern medical equipment, transportation system will be improved, computer database of pregnant, delivering women and neonates health data created and installed, diagnostics and treatment protocols in obstetrics and neonatology developed and implemented, professional competence of medical staff increased. The

programme is directly interrelated with the other programme to be implemented in the focus area „Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment“. It is planned that one joint feasibility study for interrelated programmes in two focus areas will be prepared aiming for the complex situation analysis, overview of the material facilities of the hospitals and make proposals on the renewal of these facilities depending on the scope of services provided by each particular hospital and the prospects of activities performed by them.

During the reporting period the Ministry of Health was in process of drafting the project outline and request for the PPF for the programme to be implemented in the defined focus area. The draft project outline was submitted for informal review and comments to the SCO on 12 January 2009. The feedback of the Swiss side was received on 16 January 2009.

The Ministry of Health is in process of drafting the tender documentation for procurement of the above mentioned joint feasibility study. The draft technical specifications are developed and being discussed within the Ministry.

2.1.3. Programme in the focus area “Research and Development”

On 1 October 2008 the meeting for discussing the programme to be prepared in the focus area “Research and development” was held with the participation of the responsible Swiss and Lithuanian institutions. The representative of the SDC made the presentation on the Conceptual Frame on the Lithuanian-Swiss Research Programme. It was agreed that both parties will provide the necessary additional information in order to proceed further with the preparation of the project outline. In the meeting it was agreed that the MoES will draft the preliminary ideas regarding the objective 1 and 3b of the future programme. These drafts were presented for preliminary opinion of the relevant Swiss authorities on 31 October 2008. Swiss feedback was received on 23 January 2009.

2.2. Reporting on Special Allocations

2.2.1. NGO block grant

The NGO block grant (hereinafter – the NGO Fund) is planned to be implemented under the Swiss-Lithuanian Cooperation Programme in order to strengthen the NGOs in Lithuania, to enhance the cooperation between the civil society and governmental sector. The NGO Fund shall be implemented by the MoF which is assigned as the Intermediate Body for the NGO Fund. It is planned that the MoF will procure the services of technical secretariat which main responsibilities will be launching of open calls for proposals and execution of other related activities as well as daily administration of the NGO Fund. Seeking for the detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current situation of the NGO sector in Lithuania, identification of the main existing and most serious problems, recommendation on the focus areas and types of activities eligible for financing under the NGO the feasibility study will be prepared.

On 18 February 2009 the NGO Fund project outline was approved by the SC for the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. The outline (together with the request for the PPF funds) was officially submitted to the Swiss Embassy on 19 February 2009.

In December 2008 the MoF started elaboration of the technical specifications for the procurement of services for preparation of the feasibility study. The planned work schedule for the next reporting period under the NGO block grant is described under part 6 of this report.

2.2.2. Project Preparation Facility

The purpose of the Project Preparation Facility (hereinafter – the PPF) is to ensure the efficient preparation of the final project proposals, resulting from project outlines approved by Switzerland. The draft of the PPF agreement was prepared by the Swiss side. The PPF Agreement was signed on 11 December 2008 by the SECO and by the MoF as the NCU on 29 December 2008.

The PPF allocations are now available for the preparation of the Final Project Proposals under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. For the cut-off date of this report one PPF request (for the preparation of the feasibility study of the NGO sector in Lithuania) is submitted by the NCU for the approval of the Swiss authorities. It is expected that the PPF funds will be also used for the elaboration of the joint feasibility study for the two interrelated programmes under the focus areas “Health” and “Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment”.

2.2.3. Technical Assistance Fund

The purpose of the Technical Assistance Fund (hereinafter – the TAF) is to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Lithuanian - Swiss Cooperation Programme. It will serve as the main source and instrument for the NCU to administrate and manage the Lithuanian - Swiss Cooperation Programme. The CPMA which is assigned with the execution of concrete functions while implementing the above mentioned programme will be another beneficiary of the project. The draft of the Technical Assistance Fund (hereinafter – the TAF) was prepared by the Swiss side. The TAF Agreement was signed on 4 February 2009 by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (hereinafter – the SDC) and by the MoF as the NCU on 10 February 2009. The bilateral agreement between the MoF and the CPMA on the implementation of the TAF is being drafted and planned to be signed in the 2nd quarter of 2009.

The aim of the fund is to contribute with additional costs incurred by Lithuania (NCU) for the efficient and effective implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. The NCU is the Executing Agency of the project. The funds can be used by the MoF and the CPMA which implements certain functions of the NCU delegated by the MoF.

2.3. Reporting on the Scholarship Fund

According to the provisions of the FA, Annex 3, part D on the Scholarship Fund (hereinafter – the SF), the fund will be managed by the Intermediate Body of the Swiss side (CRUS).

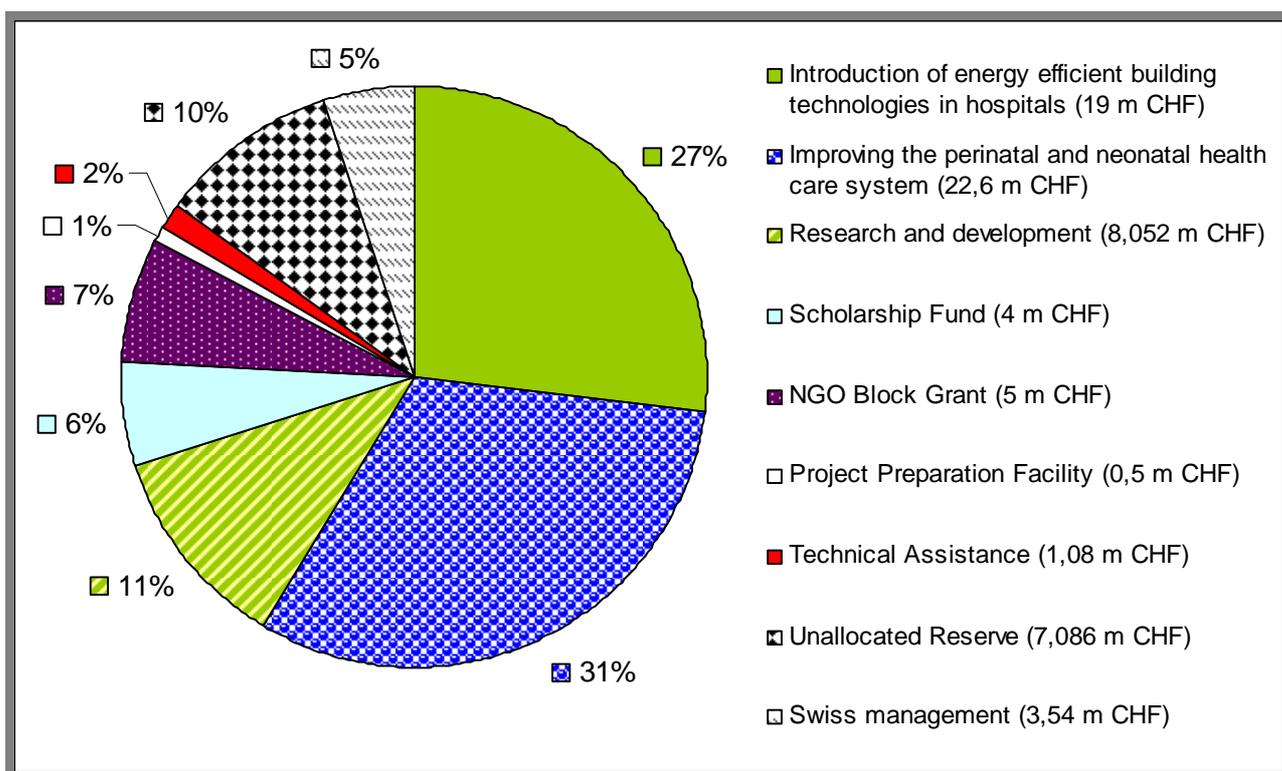
On 1 October 2008 the meeting for discussing the SF issues was held with the participation of the responsible Swiss and Lithuanian institutions. The representative of the CRUS presented the information on the Swiss Research Area. The representative of the SDC made a presentation on the Conceptual Frame on the Scientific Exchange Programme between Switzerland and the New Member States of the European Union. Presentations were followed with the discussions with regard to the implementation of the SF.

The drafts of the SF Agreement and the Programme Document were prepared by the Swiss institutions and presented to the Lithuanian NCU for comments on 5 December 2008. The feedback on the draft documents was sent to the Swiss Contribution Office on 7 January 2009.

2.4. Overall financial statement on the past and tentative future disbursements and Commitments for the entire Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme

The figure below presents the distribution of funds available under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme (total amount – 70,858 M CHF):

Figure No. 1 Allocation of the budget available under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme



Commitments and disbursements of the reporting period

Up to the end of the reporting period two Project Agreements were signed between the Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Confederation for the financing of the following projects:

- *Project Preparation Facility Agreement*: grant from the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme is 500 000 CHF. Lithuanian national co-financing is 88 000 CHF (15% of the total eligible actual costs).
- *Technical Assistance Fund Agreement*: grant from the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme is 1 080 000 CHF. No co-financing included.

Total amount committed: 1 580 000 CHF (2,35% of the total amount to be committed under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme (67,32 mln CHF)).

No disbursements by the Lithuanian side nor reimbursements by the Swiss side were made during the reporting period. Due to this reason, the yearly financial statement was not prepared for this reporting period.

Tentative commitments and disbursements for the next reporting period

It is foreseen that the following agreements will be signed during the next reporting period:

- Agreement on the Scholarship Fund for the Republic of Lithuania;
- Project Agreement for the Programme “Research and Development”.

Data on tentative disbursements of the Swiss Contribution funds for the next reporting period are presented in the Table below:

Item	Tentative disbursements for year 2009 (in thousand CHF)	Tentative disbursements for year 1st quarter 2010 (in thousand CHF)
Technical Assistance	137	50,5
Project Preparation Facility	118	382
Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and Improvement of the environment	0	0
Health	0	0
Research and development (without the Scholarship Fund)	0	0
NGO Block Grant	0	0
TOTAL	255	432,5

2.5. Summary and main conclusions of the financial audits of the Projects

The implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme is in the programming stage when the project outlines are being developed by the Intermediate Bodies. The PPF and TAF projects are in the initial stage of their execution, therefore, no financial audits were performed so far.

Conclusions of the first audit report – Intermediary Financial Audit of the Technical Assistance Fund – is to be presented to Swiss authorities by 31st March 2010.

2.6. Statistics of tenders, contract awards and successful bidders

N/A at this stage of implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

3. Proposals for the allocation of non-committed funds

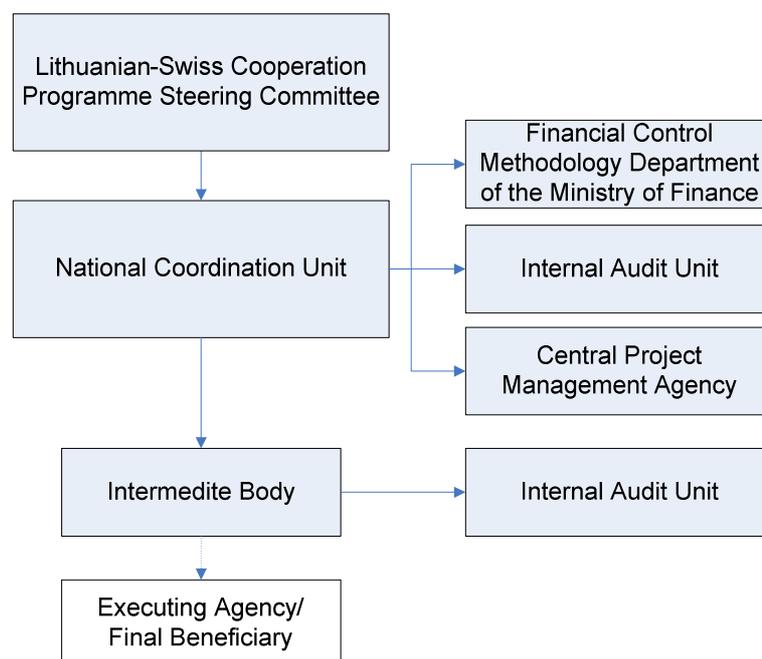
N/A at this stage of implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

4. Reporting on administrative implementation issues

Managerial set-up

The managerial set-up for the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme is presented in the figure below.

Figure No. 2. The managerial set-up for the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme



National Coordination Unit

The MoF acts as the NCU of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Based on the provisions of the FA, execution of certain functions is delegated to the CPMA. This was done by the Order of the Minister of Finance (No. 1K-418, 5 Dec., 2008) “On the Approval of the Rules for Administration of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme”.

Within the Ministry, two independent administrative units participate in the implementation of the NCU functions:

- International Financial Assistance Coordination Division executes the functions related to coordination matters while implementing the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme;
- State Treasury Department executes the functions related to the management of all operations regarding the financial transactions. The financial management is separated from other functions of the NCU in order to increase the quality of operations and ensure good governance practices.

The Swiss Contribution Office of the Swiss Embassy for Lithuania (hereinafter – the SCO) is the direct and main counterpart of the NCU with regard to the official information and day-to-day communication on the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

Intermediate Bodies

The following ministries are assigned by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as the Intermediate Bodies (hereinafter - IB) under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme:

- Ministry of Health is the IB for the projects (programmes) to be prepared and implemented in the focus areas “*Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment*” and “*Health*”;
- Ministry of Education and Science is the IB for the project (programme) to be prepared and implemented in the focus area “*Research and Development*”;

- Ministry of Finance is the IB for the project (block grant) to be prepared and implemented in the NGO sector.
- Ministry of Finance is the IB for the PPF (this is defined in the FA, Annex 3).

Steering Committee

Steering Committee (hereinafter - SC) of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme was established and its' personal composition approved by the Order of the Minister of Finance No. 1K-017 of 27 January 2009. The SC is composed of the representatives of the MoF (chair), Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, non-governmental sector and the CPMA. It is foreseen that the representative of regional authorities should be also included into the SC composition, but the Union of County Governors did not nominate their representative yet. Other institutions interested and the representatives of the Swiss Embassy (Swiss Contribution Office) are invited to the meetings of the SC as observers. On the 1st SC meeting (18 February 2009) the chairman expressed an initiative to expand the composition of the SC by including the partners from health and scientific research sectors which receive the financial assistance under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

The functions of the SC are detailed in the Rules for Administration of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme and the Work Regulation of the SC and are as follows:

- presents recommendations on the project outlines and final project proposals to the NCU (on submission to the SCO, corrections, rejection);
- presents recommendations on the revision of the focus areas of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme to the NCU;
- supervise the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme and its' compliance to the provisions of the FA;
- discusses and takes decision (on approval or rejection) on the annual report on the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

According to the work regulation of the SC, the SC meetings shall be organised at least once per year. If necessary, SC meetings can be organised more frequently.

The Committee decisions are taken by voting at the meeting. All Committee members have 1 vote each. Voting can be „for“ and „against“. The restraint is not allowed, except the cases when the participant of the meeting must restrain due to the conflict of interests. The decision is considered to be made if the voting „for“ is made by majority of the Committee members participating in the meeting (or their authorised representatives). In case of the equal distribution of votes, the chairman's vote is decisive. If there is a necessity to decide on important and urgent issues a written procedure could be applied.

Financial Control Methodology Department of the Ministry of Finance

As described in the FA, the Financial Control Methodology Department of the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the coordination of the verifications of the effective functioning of management and control system for the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. The list of tasks assigned is presented in Annex 2 of the FA.

Internal Audit Units

Internal audit units perform audit of functioning of management and control system for the implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. The list of tasks assigned is presented in Annex 2 of the FA.

Legal aspects

Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Administration of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme in Lithuania was adopted on 19 November 2008 (No. 1178). By this resolution the following Intermediate Bodies were appointed: Ministry of Health (focus areas “Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment” and “Health”), Ministry of Education and Science (focus area “Research and Development”) and Ministry of Finance (NGO Block Grant).

The roles and responsibilities of the main actors are outlined in the *Annex 2 of the FA* (part 5.1). The functions and responsibilities of the NCU, IBs, the CPMA, Executing Agencies, SC are elaborated in more detail in the *Rules for Administration of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme*, approved by the Order of the Minister of Finance No.1K-418 of 5 December 2008.

The SC of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme was established and personal composition approved by the Order of the Minister of Finance No. 1K-017 of 27 January 2009.

The following documents on the administration of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme are being drafted by the NCU and the CPMA:

- Order of the Minister of Finance on the Approval of the Visibility Rules for the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Planned to be adopted in the 2nd quarter of 2009;
- Bilateral agreements between the NCU and the CPMA on the implementation of the PPF and the TAF;
- Amendments to the Governmental Resolution No. 590, dated 30 May 2005, on the Approval of rules for refund of financial assistance, paid and (or) used in contravention with the legal acts, to the State Budget of the Republic of Lithuania. Amendments are made seeking to define the relevant provisions with regard to the implementation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme. Planned to be adopted in the 2nd quarter of 2009.

The NCU presented its comments on the draft Standard Project Agreement, prepared by the Swiss institutions (in November and December). It is planned that after having agreed on the final version of the draft Standard Project Agreement, the NCU will present it for the authentic translation into Lithuanian language and will officially coordinate the text with the respective institutions (Ministry of Justice, European Law Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). This will save some time when the Project Agreement for concrete programme will have to be processed according to the requirements of the Law on International Treaties of the Republic of Lithuania.

5. Strategy and activities to inform the general public about the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme and the Projects implemented

With regard to implementation of publicity measures of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme, the separate web page www.swiss-contribution.lt was designed and became operational on 22 February 2008. This webpage forwards the searcher into the particular section of the webpage of the MoF. Webpage is available in Lithuanian and English languages.

The webpage of the MoF (both Lithuanian and English versions) contains the following information:

- Assistance from Switzerland/ Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme:
 - Priority Areas and Forms of Assistance:
 - Programmes

- Block Grant
 - Other forms of assistance
- Monitoring of Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme Implementation
 - Steering Committee
 - Annual Meetings
- Documents
- Links

Information about the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme is also published on the website of the CPMA: www.cpva.lt.

Taking into consideration the importance of the publicity and executing the function to ensure information and publicity about the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme (assigned to the NCU in the FA) the MoF drafted the internal Rules on Publicity of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. For the cut-off date of this report, the draft document is under harmonisation with the CPMA and the Law Department of the MoF. These rules will set forth the detailed provisions for the administrating institutions (the NCU, the CPMA, the Intermediate Bodies), executing agencies, final beneficiaries how to publicise the financial assistance of the donors through the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

Publicity activities performed during the reporting period:

- Project Preparation Facility:
 - after signing the Project Agreement with the Swiss Confederation, on 30 December, 2008 the press release was prepared and distributed for the mass media informing about the signature of the first Agreement with Switzerland (under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme) by which Lithuania receives financial assistance for preparation of the Final Project Proposals. The press release also informed about the possible beneficiaries and provided some general information about the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.
 - Information about the signature of the Project Agreement was also published in the websites: www.finmin.lt (www.swiss-contribution.lt) and www.cpva.lt.
- Technical Assistance Fund:
 - Information about the signature of the Project Agreement was published in the websites: www.finmin.lt (www.swiss-contribution.lt) and www.cpva.lt.

6. Work plan for the next reporting period

Lithuanian work plan for the next monitoring period (March 2009 – March 2010) is presented in the table below:

Task	IQ/2009	IIQ/2009	IIIQ/2009	IVQ/2009	IQ/2010
Tasks related to the programmes in the focus areas „Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and Improvement of the environment“ and „Health“					
Preparation of the Project Outline and presentation to donors for approval	X	X			

Preparation of tender documentation, tender and selection of contractor for preparation of feasibility study		X	X		
Preparation of feasibility study (for the Final Project Proposal)				X	
Tasks related to the programme in the focus area „Research and development“					
Preparation of the Project Outline and presentation to donors for approval	X	X			
Preparation of the Final Project Proposal and presentation to donors for approval		X	X		
Preparation and conclusion of the Project Agreement between the NCU and the donors				X	
Tasks related to the Scholarship Fund					
Preparation and conclusion of the Scholarship Fund Agreement	X	X			
Tasks related to the NGO block grant					
Preparation of tender documentation, tender and selection of contractor for preparation of feasibility study	X	X	X		
Preparation of feasibility study (for the Final Project Proposal)			X	X	
Preparation of the Final Project Proposal and presentation to donors for approval				X	X
Tasks related to the Project Preparation Facility					
Preparation and conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the NCU (Ministry of Finance) and the CPMA on implementation of the PPF		X			
Preparation and conclusion of the agreement between the NCU (MoF), the CPMA and the MoH on implementation of the PPF		X			
Interim Report on the PPF			X		X
Annual Project Report on the PPF					X
Preparation of Reimbursement Request to Switzerland					X
Procurement of external certified Audit Organisation`s services for a closing Final Financial Audit (together with procurement of services for the intermediary Financial Audit of TAF) (3-year contract)				X	
Tasks related to the Technical Assistance Fund					

Preparation and conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the NCU (Ministry of Finance) and the CPMA on implementation of the TAF		X			
Preparation of tender documentation, tender and selection of contractor for translation services			X	X	
Preparation of tender documentation, tender and selection of contractor for publicity services			X	X	
Procurement of external certified Audit Organisation`s services for the intermediary Financial Audits of TAF (3-year contract)				X	
Procurement of services for review of Final Project Proposals (for the MoH programmes)					X

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the reporting period all actions by the NCU, CPMA Intermediate Bodies and other responsible Lithuanian institutions involved in the implementation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme were concentrated on the preparation of the internal procedures, establishment of the administrative implementation system and preparation of the project outlines in the respective focus areas. It must be noted that informal review of the documents by the Swiss institutions and the SCO was very effective in elaborating the documents. With the help of “discussions on-line” the quality of documents can be improved.

The practical implementation phase had not begun thus it is not yet possible to assess the implementation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme and achievement of the objectives set in the Framework Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Federal Council. This will be the subject for future reports.

During the next reporting period the programming and system work will be continued. The NCU and the CPMA shall concentrate their attention and efforts on the finalisation of the project outlines by the Intermediate Bodies and assisting them in this important work, if necessary, and the preparation of the final project proposals. All related institutions shall strive for ensuring the quality of the feasibility studies, other documentations necessary for the preparation of the final project proposals, in further perspective – the monitoring, control and audit of the projects under implementation.

The NCU would like to propose the responsible Swiss institutions to share the standard forms/templates for preparation of requested documentation. Some important requirements could be presented in a form of guidelines.