



LITHUANIAN - SWISS COOPERATION PROGRAMME

5th ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, 23 April 2013

Venue: Ministry of Finance, Vilnius
Conference Room 331
9.30 – 12.30h

MINUTES

Switzerland (CH):

1. Mr. Markus Dutly, Ambassador Designee (Ambassadeur Designe) of Switzerland, Embassy of Switzerland,
2. Mr. Hugo Bruggmann, Head of Division, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, SECO,
3. Ms. Paula Wey, Programme Manager, Division Swiss Enlargement Contribution, SECO,
4. Mr. Patrick Etienne, Programme Manager WU Member States Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Head of Swiss Contribution Office (SCO),
5. Mrs. Olita Berzina, Programme Officer of the Swiss Contribution Office, Embassy of Switzerland.

Lithuania (LT):

1. Mr. Aloyzas Vitkauskas (Chairman), Vice-minister of the Ministry of Finance, National Coordination Unit (NCU),
2. Mrs. Audronė Nikšaitė, Head of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
3. Mrs. Jūratė Vlaščenkienė, Deputy Head of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
4. Ms. Simona Židonytė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
5. Ms. Ieva Stanaitytė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
6. Ms. Gita Šematovičiūtė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
7. Mrs. Lidija Kašubienė, Director of Central Project Management Agency (CPMA),
8. Mrs. Rasa Suraučienė, Deputy Director of CPMA,
9. Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis, Deputy Head of the International Programmes' Management Department, CPMA,
10. Mr. Roman Romas, Deputy Head of the International Programmes' Management Department, CPMA,
11. Ms. Giedrė Vilčinskaitė, Chief Project Manager of Swiss Programme Division, CPMA,
12. Mrs. Virginija Ambrazevičienė, Head of the International Financial Assistance Division, Health Economics Department, Ministry of Health (MoH),

13. Ms. Agnė Jaruševičiūtė, Chief Specialist of the International Projects Management Division, MoH,
14. Mrs. Aušra Gribauskienė, Chief Specialist of the Division of Science, Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Ministry of Education and Science,
15. Mr. Mindaugas Kliučikas, Head of the Project team, Hospital of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kaunas Clinics (Kaunas Clinics),
16. Ms. Daiva Tirvaitė, Project Coordinator, Kaunas Clinics,
17. Ms. Vaida Keinaitė, Chief Specialist of IT division of the National Courts Administration,
18. Ms. Jurgita Stonytė, Chief Officer of the International Affairs Unit of the Research Council of Lithuania.

Opening of the Meeting

Mr. A. Vitkauskas welcomed all the participants and opened the 5th Annual Meeting of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme (LT-Swiss Programme).

Chairman presented the content of the draft Agenda and proposed to approve it. Swiss delegation (CH) had no additional comments. Agenda was approved.

Mr. A. Vitkauskas made a short overview about the progress and further planning of the LT-Swiss Programme. He noted that commitment of Swiss contribution successfully completed before the deadline and during the reporting period LT-Swiss Cooperation Programme activities were mainly related to signing of the programme and project implementation agreements, evaluation of applications submitted under the open calls, preparation of procurement documents and implementation of public procurement procedures. Before the Annual Meeting the NCU prepared and submitted to Switzerland an Annual Report on implementation of Swiss contribution in Lithuania covering period from 1 January 2012 – 1 March 2013. Mr. A. Vitkauskas marked that in general implementation progress could be evaluated as good; details on implementation with some arising issues would be presented and discussed during the presentation under the 2nd point of the Agenda.

Mr. H. Bruggman expressed satisfaction of the Swiss side with good cooperation with the LT counterparts also progress achieved in implementation of the ambitious LT-Swiss programme. He also informed about CH delegation impressions from the site-visits on the eve of the meeting of the one of the research co-operation projects and noted good progress of the implementation and bilateral relations between LT and CH of the visited project. He also suggested discussing all the measures in more detailed according to the approved Agenda.

Discussions/Decisions

Reporting on status of the Programmes and other measures: status of implementation, issues, next steps in 2013

Health Sector Programmes: “Introduction of Energy Efficient Technologies into the Lithuanian Hospitals Providing Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Services” (further referred as to the Energy Efficiency Programme) and “Improvement of Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Services in Lithuania” (further referred as to the Perinatal Programme)

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė presented expected results, the progress, a work plans for 2013 and the main issues of Energy Efficiency Programme (more detailed information is summarized in the Slides No. 5, 6, 7, *Annex I*).

Mr. H. Bruggman remarked that CH side is worried about delays in implementation of the health sector programmes and reminded that all disbursements should be made till June 2017. Mr. H. Bruggman also remarked that there was lack of information with explanations in the Annual Report about the delays and measures suggested to solve the problems. Mr. A. Vitkauskas agreed that deadlines were important and solutions to speed up the implementation process in most efficient way should be found and suggested to discuss all the technical details regarding the proposal how to distribute the reserve funds from Energy Efficiency Programme in the technical meeting in afternoon the same day. He also assured that more detailed information will be provided in the forthcoming Annual Reports. LT and CH sides agreed that more specific questions under the Energy Efficiency Programme would be discussed during the technical meeting.

Mr. H. Bruggman inquired for additional information about progress in projects implemented by Tauragė, Kaunas and Klaipėda University hospitals. Mr. A. Žarnovskis informed that Klaipėda University hospital was in satisfactory progress with preparation of tender documentation, however very little progress was in Kaunas hospital project due to administrative problems (administration of hospital changed 6 times in 9 months). Execution of works started in February in Tauragė hospital project. Mrs. Paula Way reminded that Swiss side needed to receive a detailed budget for the Tauragė hospital project.

Mr. H. Bruggman informed that Swiss side proposed to finance additional feasibility study for energy efficiency measures and to discuss this proposal in more detailed during technical meeting. He also mentioned that savings accrued in health sector programmes should be used for the hospitals from the priority list approved by Swiss side. Only hospitals that are part of the SDC programme can be included in the SECO programme. Mr. H. Bruggman also remarked that after decision was made regarding reallocation, respective Agreements should be amended, detailed budgets for all the hospitals and logframe matrix updated.

Regarding the procurements, Mr. H. Brugmann noted that Swiss side encouraged LT executing agencies to continue with practice to use not only price criteria but also number of quality criteria while evaluating tender proposals.

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė continued presentation with information on the Perinatal Programme (more detailed information is summarized in the Slides No. 8 – 12, *Annex I*) and highlighted issues as partnership agreements between the Swiss and Lithuanian hospitals that were not signed yet. Mr. A. Vitkauskas expressed the hope that all the important procedures will be facilitated and finished on time due not to delay the implementation. Mr. Patrick Etienne assured to look in to this issue a.s.a.p.

Mr. P. Etienne noticed that a number of tenders in Perinatal Programme failed due to lack of qualified tenders and asked to explain this situation. Mrs. V. Ambrazevičienė commented that as the hospitals seek not to buy the cheapest but to have equipment of a high quality – the respected quality requirements are introduced in the procurement documentation. Mrs. A. Žarnovskis added that the repeated public procurement procedures were organized due to the lack quality of tender proposals provided during first announcements.

Mr. H. Bruggman proposed to reduce requirements for tender documents. Mrs. V. Ambrazevičienė remarked this could not be possible in most of the cases seeking to purchase equipment of a high quality.

Research and Development (R&D) Programme

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė informed the participants about the progress during 2012, main issues and a work plans for 2013 under the Research and Development programme (more detailed information is provided in the Slides No. 13-15, *Annex 1*).

Mr. P. Etienne inquired about the possible use of money that would not be spent due to the cancellation of the project under the R&D programme. Mrs. A. Nikšaitė noted that amount left was not enough to finance the projects from the reserve list so the money would be left as a reserve for mitigation of currency exchange rate risk.

Scholarship Fund (SF)

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė informed about the activities of the responsible Lithuanian institutions and main issues while implementing the SF (more detailed information is provided in the Slide No. 16, *Annex 1*).

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė presented the LT proposal to organize additional call in autumn 2013. Mr. P. Etienne agreed that formal procedures to introduce additional open call should be initiated.

Individual Project (IP) "The Creation and Implementation of the System for Video Transaction, Recording and Storage in Courts"

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė presented the information about the main achievements, activities implemented under the project, also a plan for the year 2013 (more detailed information is provided in the Slides No. 17-19, *Annex 1*).

Mrs. O. Berzina expressed a concern how it would be secured that a new video conference equipment is used in a proper way. Ms. V. Keinaitė informed that to ensure proper use of the new equipment a number of seminars for the users would be organized in the respective regions.

NGO Fund

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė informed the participants about the main activities implemented by the Ministry of Finance (as the IB) and the CPMA (as the EA) during the reporting period and plans for the year 2013 (detailed information is provided in the Slides No. 20-22, *Annex 1*).

Mr. P. Etienne congratulated with the end of the sub-project selection procedures. The wish to participate in on-the-spot checks of the projects from CH was raised. Mr. A. Žarnovskis informed that a plan for the on-the-spot checks is already prepared and would be sent to the SCO a.s.a.p.

Mrs. O. Berzina inquired about the 36 complains that were received after the 2nd phase of evaluation procedures of the sub-projects. Mr. A. Žarnovskis explained that most of the complainants asked for more detailed information about the mistakes that they did in their applications to avoid such a mistakes in the future.

Technical Assistance Fund (TAF)

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė informed about the main activities of the NCU and CPMA under the TAF during the reporting period (detailed information is provided in the Slides No. 23, *Annex 1*).

Mr. H. Bruggman noted that costs for hiring of the experts for Energy Efficiency Programme to have the similar references as the expert hired for the Perinatal Programme who reviews technical specifications are eligible from TAF. Mr. A. Žarnovskis reminded that one expert for such purpose was already hired at the CPMA.

Other important issues in implementation of Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme

Disbursements and Commitments

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė shortly presented the information about the Commitments and Disbursements made during the reporting period (more detailed information is provided in Slides No. 25-26, *Annex 1*). She also noted that most of the disbursements according to the plans are expected during the year 2014 and 2015 when concrete projects will be in the stage of implementation.

Swissness

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė presented information on the Swissness for each programme and other measure (the detailed information is provided in the Slides No. 27, 28, *Annex 1*).

Information and Publicity Activities

Mrs. A. Nikšaitė presented information and publicity activities that were performed at the level of the LT-Swiss Programme, under each programme, NGO Fund, IP (more detailed information in the Slides No. 29-32, *Annex 1*).

Mr. Patrick Etienne expressed a wish to have more intensive publicity activities of the LT-Swiss Programme.

Mr. H. Bruggmann expressed the hope to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the institutions more intensively. Mr. A. Vitkauskas agreed with this note and was happy for this successful cooperation between LT and CH sides.

Other issues for Discussions

Mr. H. Bruggmann presented the monitoring and evaluation procedures that also would be implemented under LT-Swiss Programme, highlighted importance of the two LT cluster projects (under “Health” and “R&D” programmes) (more detailed information in “Monitoring & evaluation” presentation, *Annex 2*).

Ms. P. Wey congratulated LT side with a good quality reports. It was agreed that the LT side would include more detailed information about delays of the programmes and projects. It is expected to receive more details about achievements of the outputs and outcomes of the projects in the forthcoming Annual Reports as well.

Ms. P. Wey expressed a wish of the CH side to join site visits more often. CH would like to visit each project at least once and – based on risk oriented aspects – even several times during the implementation phase. Mr. A. Žarnovskis informed about the site visits plan that was done based on the Risk Management methodology and will be sent to the SCO. It was agreed that future Annual Reports will contain an updated monitoring plan for the coming year. Mr. A. Vitkauskas noted that participation of the CH side was more than welcomed during the site visits as participation of the donors would definitely increase project promoters' commitment to reduce risks of the projects. H. Bruggmann noted that it could be useful to visit projects already during implementation (critical stages) and not only at the end.

LT side had no further comments provided or questions raised regarding the monitoring and evaluation issues presented by the CH side.

Chairman thanked participants for their input during the discussions and closed the meeting.

Annexes:

Annex 1. NCU presentation “Implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme: 5th Annual Meeting”, 33 slides;

Annex 2. Swiss presentation “Monitoring & Evaluation”, 15 slides.