



LITHUANIAN - SWISS COOPERATION PROGRAMME

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, 3 May 2011

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

MINUTES

Lithuania (LT):

Mr. Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Chairman, Vice-minister of the Ministry of Finance, National Coordination Unit (NCU),
Ms. Jūratė Vlaščenkienė, Head of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
Ms. Simona Židonytė, Chief Specialist of International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
Mrs. Rasa Suraučienė, Acting Deputy Director of Central Project Management Agency (CPMA),
Mrs. Jolanta Kačinskaitė, Acting Head of the International Programmes' Management Department, CPMA,
Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis, Head of the EEA and Norwegian Programmes Division, CPMA,
Mrs. Neringa Janušienė, Project Manager of Swiss Programme Division, CPMA,
Mrs. Dalia Krupavičienė, Senior Project Manager of Swiss Programme Division, CPMA,
Mr. Arijus Šlepikas, Head of International Programmes Finance Division, CPMA

Switzerland (CH):

HE Gabriela Nutzi-Sulpizio, Ambassador, Embassy of Switzerland,
Mr. Kurt Kunz, Co-chairman, Assistant Director General of Swiss Enlargement Contribution Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Mr. Patrick Etienne, Programme Manager, SDC,
Ms. Michelle Gysin, Programme Manager of Infrastructure Financing Division, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
Ms. Paula Wey, Programme Manager of Swiss Enlargement Contribution Division, SECO,
Mrs. Christine Grieder, Head of the Swiss Contribution Office (SCO), Embassy of Switzerland,
Mrs. Olita Berzina, Programme Officer SCO, Embassy of Switzerland.

Others participants

Ms. Natalija Kazlauskienė, Head of European Commission Representation in Lithuania.

Presentation on the Implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas opened the meeting and welcomed all the participants for coming.

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas shortly presented the implementation status of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme (see Annex 1). Chairman informed that Agenda of the meeting looks traditional, but the most specific issues that were achieved during the reporting period will be highlighted.

Mr. Kurt Kunz made a small remark to Agenda – suggested to talk more about the planning of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Mr. R. Kriščiūnas agreed with this remark and pointed out that the progress and the planning will be discussed at the each item.

Discussions/Decisions

Reporting period of the Annual Report

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that this Annual Report covers the period from the 1 January 2010 till 17 March 2011. During the reporting period finalization of the Final Project Proposals, preparation for the practical implementation of the project activities and further development of the legal basis for practical implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme were made.

CH proposed and LT agreed that for the next year in the Annual Report the information about the implementation issues and a table that would show helpful information summarizing all relevant decisions taken under the flexibility clause since modifications no longer reflects the Annex 1 of the Framework Agreement (FA) would be included. CH accented that it would help to have a brief overview what exchanges of letters, what kind of amendments and other details were made during concrete reporting period.

Health sector programmes: “Introduction of energy efficient technologies into the Lithuania hospital providing perinatal and neonatal health care service” and “Improvement of perinatal and neonatal health care service in Lithuania”

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that during the reporting period: the joint feasibility study by the “Earnst&Young” (Contractor) was completed, published on the website of the Ministry of Health (www.sam.lt) and the results of the feasibility study in the Congress of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Lithuania on 16 September 2010 were presented. As well as this, the visit to three hospitals representing different levels of provision of services was organized, the Final Project Proposals (FPP) were approved by the Steering Committee and officially submitted to the SCO including confirmation on the compliance audit.

As well as this Mr. R. Kriščiūnas stressed that the Health sector programmes are very extensive so the work plan for 2011 is quite ambitious. It is planned to:

- sign the Project Agreements (PA) of the Health sector programmes (September/October)
- sign the Programme Implementation Agreements (October/November)
- sign the Project Implementation Agreements (November/December)
- start the procurement of programmes’ evaluation services (July, November)
- start the procurement of programmes’ audit services (September, December)
- start the procurement of programmes’ translation services (October, December)

From the operational side Ms. Michelle Gysin pointed out that there will be some differences in the procurement paragraph and it will differ from those Project Agreements that were already signed.

Both parties agreed that those Health sector programmes are very substantial, they take 2/3 of all contribution that is provided through Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

Research and Development Programme

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that during the reporting period, the FPP was approved by the Steering Committee and submitted to Swiss authorities on 8 July 2010, the PA was signed on 14 December 2010 and information about the signature of the PA was published by the main news agencies, NCU, Intermediate Body, Executing Agency and CPMA.

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that for 2011 it is expected to:

- sign the Programme Implementation Agreement (May)
- sign the Project Implementation Agreements (May)
- approve a Guidelines for the applicants (May, June)
- organize information day for potential applicants and to launch I call (June)

LT assured that Lithuanian Research Council has enough experience and capacities in implementing research projects. Both sides agreed that it is very important to make this programme visible and to put as much as possible attention by making it well known for society.

NGO block grant (NGO Fund)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that NGO Fund FPP was approved by the Steering Committee on 23 September 2010, submitted to the Swiss authorities on 24 September and decision letter on the approval of the submitted proposal from the Swiss authorities issued on 3 January 2011. The feasibility study on the NGO sector in Lithuania was developed by the public institution “Social and Economic Development Centre”, approved on 28 May 2010 and published on the websites: www.finmin.lt , www.swiss-contribution.lt. 17 March 2011 the representatives of the NCU and CPMA participated in the meeting where the NGO Fund of the Lithuanian–Swiss Cooperation Programme of the NGO coordination commission in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour Information was presented.

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that for the next reporting period it is planned to:

- sign the Block Grant Implementation Agreement on the NGO Fund (June)
- approve and publish the Guidelines for applicants (May/June), collect (July/August) and evaluate (August-November) the applications
- approve and publish the NGO Fund implementation and financing rules (May/June)
- organize information seminars for potential applicants in 10 main regions (June/July)
- sign the sub-project agreements and start the sub-project implementation (December 2010 /January 2012)
- train the beneficiaries of the sub-projects on implementation issues (December 2010 /January 2012)

LT informed that there are no representatives from NGO in the NGOs Fund Steering Committee, but NGO coalition that includes NGO representatives has taken an important role by shaping the Guidelines and will play very important role (like an observers) in evaluation procedures as well.

CH inquired if there are specific measures taking for partnership between Swiss and Lithuanian NGOs. LT informed that a plan for development of partnership between Lithuanian and Swiss NGOs was prepared, with the NGO Fund Steering Committee was discussed and to the Swiss Contribution Office on 21 April 2011 was submitted. Besides, the information about the

possibilities for cooperation with the Swiss NGOs was already presented during various meetings, public events on NGO issues and published in the websites of NCU and CPMA.

Technical Assistance Fund (TAF)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that during the reporting period detailed budget of TAF for 2011 was approved on 7 December 2010, combined interim and annual project report No.2 on implementation of the TAF was submitted to the SCO on 28 March 2011. As well as this, 3 Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme Steering Committee meetings were organized by NCU, audit services for implementation of the final financial audit of the Project Preparation Facility (PPF) were procured by CPMA, a total of 6 employees of the CPMA who work with the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme attended the training courses in Lithuania and the contracted audit company 2 reimbursement requests of the NCU/CPMA for the TAF checked and approved.

CH inquired about the plans for TAF for the next period. LT informed that with some technical modifications they follow the detailed budget of the TAF that was approved in the TAF Agreement.

Project Preparation Facility (PPF)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that PPF during the reporting period was completed. LT proposed to relocate unused 0,060038 MCHF (of them: 0,051032 MCHF for the Swiss grant and 0,009006 MCHF for the co-financing) into the project budget of the individual project (IP) on introduction of the video-conferencing system in the Lithuanian courts. CH took this proposal as significant one but left it for further considerations.

Individual project (IP)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that the Project Outline of the IP, prepared by the National Court Administration (NCA), by the Steering Committee was approved, to the Swiss authorities on 8 July 2010 was submitted and the decision letter on the approval on 23 September 2010 was issued. Likewise the FPP by the Steering Committee was approved, to the Swiss authorities on 25 November 2010 was submitted and confirmation on the compliance audit to the Swiss authorities on 12 January 2011 was provided.

Both sides agreed that it is a very complex project, technical changes are very quick today so it is very important to be careful to sustain this project and maintain it in a proper way because additional expenses is going to be future.

LT informed that NCA has a contact with the similar organizations in Switzerland. NCA has collaboration and discussions about the significant questions with the Court Administration institutions in Latvia as well

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that for the next reporting period it is planned to:

- sign the Project Implementation Agreement (June)
- create the Public tender for the analysis of the video-conferencing system and launch the preparation of technical specification (July)
- launch the Public tender for the procurement of the technical and programming parts of the video-conferencing system (November)
- organize the study visits (3-4Q)

Scholarship Fund (SF)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that Memorandum of Understanding between CRUS and the Lithuanian Research Council (LRC) on 11 August 2010 was signed and by the Sciex Steering committee a decision to finance 6 LT applications of the 1st open call on 26 August 2010 was taken. The 2nd call for applications was launched on 3 January 2011 (ended on 1 April 2011), 16 applications from Lithuania were received (the same amount of applications from Lithuania during the 1st open call on 2010 were received).

CH inquired if SF is well known among the academics. LT informed that the information day for the interested doctoral and post-doc fellows at the LRC on 21 January 2011 was held (approximately 50 participants attended this event). LT informed that the information on the SF and the related procedures in Lithuania is being well spread, constant communication to the academic community by e-mail and phone is extended.

Disbursements and Commitments

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas shortly informed about the Commitments and Disbursements made at the reporting period:

- Grant amount committed: 9 052 000 CHF (includes Project Agreement on the programme “Research and development”)
- Disbursements made by Lithuania were 312 056,54 CHF (of the Swiss grant) and 46 269,28 CHF (of the national co-financing)
- Reimbursements made by Switzerland were 64 368,95 CHF (including TAF and PPF)
- Commitments since the signature of the Framework Agreement takes 32,5 % of the total amount to be committed (percentage includes Individual and NVO Project agreements that were signed at the 3rd Annual Meeting)

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that for the next reporting period it is planned to finish the Commitment period by signing two remaining agreements: Project Agreement for the Programme on energy efficiency in hospitals (19 MCHF) and Project Agreement for the Programme on perinatal and neonatal health care services (26,6 MCHF).

CH inquired about the guarantees for additional financing of the Lithuanian-Swiss cooperation programme projects. LT ensured that The Ministry of Finance takes this issue as a priority and the co-financing of the Lithuanian-Swiss programme from the State Budget of the Republic of Lithuania will amount 15% of the total Programme eligible costs.

CH asked about the interest accumulated and LT informed that the total amount of the accumulated interest for 2010 was 3,07 EUR. CH asked for information on interest to always be included in the annual financial reporting.

Administrative legal basis

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas briefly informed that due to the Individual Project the main changes in the legal framework were: the Rules for implementation and financing of the programmes and individual project were created and approved as a new legal act, Rules for Administration of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme and Publicity rules of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme were modified and the drafting of the legal acts (Rules for implementation and financing of the

NGO Fund; Implementation Agreements for the research programme, NGO Fund, Courts project) were made.

Swissness

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that alongside the Scholarship Fund that provides the possibility for academics to study in Switzerland, joint research and institutional partnership projects between Lithuania and Switzerland will be financed as well (“Research and Development” programme). For a Health sector programmes 1 Swiss expert was already included into the team of the Contractor which prepared the joint feasibility study (completed 18 August 2010). It is planned to have a cooperation with a partners in Switzerland in implementation of training related activities and to amplify the possibility for the Swiss private sector to participate in public procurements in the future. Finally for a Individual Project it is planned to have a study visit to Switzerland on exchange on the use of video conferencing equipment in court proceeding and to amplify the possibility for the Swiss private sector to participate in public procurements.

Both sides agreed that through the communication all the possibilities have to be taken to develop and strengthen the partnership and cohesion between the Switzerland and Lithuania.

Information and Publicity Activities

Mr. R. Kriščiūnas informed that information on www.swiss-contribution.lt, NCU and CPMA websites with the latest information being constantly updated.

Since the cooperation programme is now entering into the implementation phase, LT agreed with CH that more result-oriented reporting will be possible in the future. For monitoring purposes Switzerland will need information about the progress towards the achievement of the specific objectives of the Swiss Contribution. Also more public activities will be organized at key moments in order to spread the information about the progress (especially about the outputs, outcomes and impacts) of the Lithuanian-Swiss cooperation programme in Lithuania. LT informed that by signing the Project Agreements of the Health sector programmes a publicity event will be organized.

Signing the Project Agreements

During the 3rd Annual meeting the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) signed grant agreements on allocation of assistance to the Lithuanian court system and NGO Block Grant implemented under the Lithuanian - Swiss Cooperation Programme.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

Parties agreed that the minutes of the Annual Meeting will be drafted by the NCU and submitted to CH for approval within 15 workdays after the meeting. Approved minutes will be published on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

Annexes

Annex 1. NCU presentation “Implementation of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme: 3rd Annual Meeting”.