



# LITHUANIAN - SWISS COOPERATION PROGRAMME

## 9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, 30 May 2017

Venue: hotel "Narutis", Vilnius  
10.30 – 13.00h

### MINUTES

#### Switzerland (CH):

1. Ms Elisabeth von Capeller, Ambassador, Vice-Director, Head of Department Cooperation with Eastern Europe, SDC
2. Ms. Dominique Petter, Charge d'affaires, Embassy of Switzerland for Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia,
3. Mr. Siroco Messerli, Head of the New EU Member States Division, State Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC,
4. Mr. Markus Eggenberger, Programme Manager, Division NMS (New EU-Member States), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC),
5. Mr. Hugo Bruggmann, Head of the Enlargement Contribution Division, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO),
6. Ms. Paula Wey, Project Manager, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO),
7. Ms. Olita Berzina, Project Manager, Swiss Contribution Office for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

#### Lithuania (LT):

1. Ms. Loreta Maskaliovienė, Vice-minister of the Ministry of Finance, National Coordination Unit (NCU),
2. Ms. Audronė Nikšaitė, Head of the International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
3. Ms. Jūratė Vlaščenkienė, Deputy Head of the International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
4. Ms. Lina Plieniūtė, Chief Specialist of the International Financial Assistance Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, NCU,
5. Ms. Rasa Suraučienė, Deputy Director of the CPMA,
6. Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis, Director of International Programmes Management Department, CPMA,
7. Ms. Asta Liutkevičiūtė, Project Manager of the Swiss Programme Unit, International Programmes Management Department, CPMA,
8. Ms. Neringa Janušienė, Project Manager of the Swiss Programme unit, International Programmes Management Department, CPMA
9. Ms. Gytė Sirgedienė, Head of the International Projects Management Division, Ministry of Health,

10. Ms. Aušra Gribauskiėnė, Chief Specialist of the Science Division, Department of Study, Science and Technology, Ministry of Education and Science,
11. Ms. Vaida Petraviėienė, Deputy Head of National Courts Administration,
12. Ms. Aistė Vilkanauskytė, Head of the International Programmes Division, Research Council of Lithuania.

### **Opening of the Meeting**

Ms. L. Maskaliovienė welcomed all the participants and opened the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme to Reduce Economic and Social Disparities within the Enlarged European Union (Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme).

Ms. D. Petter thanked for hosting the Meeting and possibility to discuss the achievements of the last year of Programme implementation. As a representative of the Swiss Embassy she also noted for a very good cooperation between the competent authorities in Lithuania and Switzerland during all 10 years. She stressed that the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme is an important element of the bilateral cooperation. Ms. D. Petter expressed the gratitude for the Swiss side and the SCO for the work done. She also informed about the changes in the ambassador position.

After introduction of participants on both sides, Ms. E. von Capeller congratulated the Lithuanian side on what has been achieved within the Programme and expressed her special thanks for the closing event on 29 May. She thanked the NCU for the comprehensive annual report which allowed the Swiss side to have full understanding on what happened in the implementation process. She expressed an agreement to the proposed agenda and wished everybody a fruitful discussion during the meeting.

Ms. L. Maskaliovienė thanked the Swiss side for a fruitful discussion during business breakfast on the macro-economic issues and possible future co-operation. After that she passed the word to Ms A. Nikšaitė to present the Annual Report and introduce the status of the Programmes.

### **Discussions/Decisions**

#### **Reporting on the status of the Programmes and other measures**

##### **Introduction of Energy Efficient Technologies into the Lithuanian Hospitals Providing Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Services**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė pointed out that the remaining activities were completed as planned during the reporting period. She informed about the final financial audit conducted and noted that no major deficiencies have been detected, also about the survey on patients satisfaction on the measures introduced under the programme. M. A. Nikšaitė elaborated in more detail on energy efficiency audit activity and presented the main conclusions formulated by experts. She shortly informed about the achievement on all levels of indicators planned (*more detailed information is provided in Slides No 5 – 8, Annex 1*).

Mr. H. Bruggmann noted about the excellent presentation and very good results achieved. He was very satisfied to hear about the possibilities for further future cooperation in the mentioned field. He highlighted only a question about the possibilities to improve the whole procurement process to accelerate next time the project implementation. Mr. A. Žarnovskis informed about the changes under the Law on Public Procurement which shall come into force on 1 July 2017. As turning to the experience regarding the procurements under the energy efficiency programme he noted about the good practice in preparation of typical documents for acquisition of solar collectors and photovoltaic power stations for hospitals (to escape certain mistakes, to fasten the procurement process, etc.). The preparation of typical documents, typical evaluation criteria could make the process easier and faster in possible future activities. Ms. L. Maskaliovienė added that additional

consultation for beneficiaries regarding planning and design from behalf of the CPMA could have been helpful.

Ms. P. Wey enquired about the two indicators which were not achieved as planned and the reasons of this situation (mistakes in planning, question of differences in measurements, etc.). Ms G. Sirgedienė informed that this happened as the indicators were estimated due to the recommended need for effective surface area in a planning stage. After preparation of technical projects in case of several hospitals it became clear that the actual effective surface area for solar collectors and (or) photovoltaic power stations was smaller than it has been stated in the feasibility study (e. g. there were no technical possibilities (free space) to install photovoltaic power stations on the roofs of 3 hospitals as it was planned in the feasibility study, so, the scope of works in was adjusted). Ms. P. Wey noted about the future perspectives of the renewable energy in health and other sectors of economy in Lithuania. Vice-minister of Finance has confirmed this field of activity as the important in Lithuania. Ms. P. Wey also enquired about the lessons learned, conclusion as regards such activities. Ms. G. Sirgedienė concluded that it was the first such experience for hospitals, all of them were happy with the result. She also added that more on practical dimension could be noted this autumn (on efficiency of this type of equipment). Theoretical conclusions by expert on energy audit are very positive as regards efficiency.

### **Improvement of Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care Services in Lithuania Programme**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė reported about the successful implementation and completion of all planned activities, patients satisfaction and final financial audit. Ms A. Nikšaitė draw the attention on development of the IT database which was quite challenging to achieve the good final result but successfully completed. Additional activities were also successfully implemented (*more detailed information is provided in Slides No. 9 – 14, Annex 1*). Ms. G. Sirgedienė reported in detail about achievement of planned indicators on impact, outcome and output levels. She also informed about the steps made by the Ministry of Health to promote the use of the IT database.

Ms. O. Berzina enquired about the biggest challenge in implementation of the programme. Ms. G. Sirgedienė replied that this was the use of savings which became available due to the favourable currency exchange rate. Due to the limited time left all actions (starting from analysis of extra needs of hospitals and planning up to implementation of procurements and further contracts) had to be implemented quite quickly and in due quality. Ms. G. Sirgedienė thanked all institutions for cooperation during implementation of both programmes.

Ms. E. von Capeller was very happy about the successful inter-ministerial cooperation as this is quite challenging in other countries as well. She enquired about the patients' satisfaction rate – what should be done to achieve even higher satisfaction rate (up to 80 - 90%) in future. Ms. G. Sirgedienė draw the attention to the fact that if everything is fine in hospitals patients take it as usual and do not even notice the particular things that had been improved. But she noted that hospitals should work further in strengthening of professional competence of medical staff as this is a permanently progressing field.

Mr. S. Messerli asked about the baby-friendly hospital status. Ms. G. Sirgedienė explained about the process on how this status could be achieved by hospitals (steps to be made in preparation, evaluation stage, etc.). She noted that this status is not an obligatory one and the hospital itself has to express an intention to achieve this status. There were 21 out of 29 hospitals providing perinatal and neonatal health care services that expressed such intension. 9 hospitals have received a “baby-friendly” hospital status, 12 hospitals have been committed to become (have been named as “seeking baby-friendly”) and the revaluation of those 12 hospitals will be performed in July.

Second question raised by Mr. S. Messerli was about the IT database and the number of hospitals using it presently. In answering the question Ms. G. Sirgedienė informed that the database is presently used by Kaunas Clinics. However, statistical health data on 36,170 delivery cases, 34,450 newborn infants data and 33,509 patients data from 3 hospitals (Kaunas Clinics, Santariškės Clinics

and Klaipėda University hospital) are accessible through the IT database. She reminded that the IT database developed during the implementation of the programme is a part of the whole e-health system. She also informed that the Ministry of Health is currently improving and updating some elements in the e-health system, therefore, the other hospitals will be using the IT database after the improvements and update of the e-health system is completed.

Third question presented by Mr. S. Messerli was about the study commissioned by the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute. The study looked whether the needs of hospitals were satisfied. The study showed positive results on hospitals' need, also that the programme was carefully planned, implemented and monitored. He noted that the study expressed a concern highlighting that equipment provided was obviously quite expensive and that expenses needed for its maintenance could be also higher than for other equipment. The recommendation of experts of the study was to consider the possibility to conduct an economic analysis on the costs which will raise in future and how they might be covered. The question addressed to the Lithuanian side was on the plans for future maintenance costs and also possible further investments with regard to expensive equipment. Ms. G. Sirgedienė informed that suppliers provide 24–36 months warranty on delivered equipment. Thereafter hospitals are obliged to maintain / repair the equipment at their own expenses. Some of the hospitals have the engineers at places, while the others are purchasing maintenance services from their own funds that hospitals receive from the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund for the health care services provision. She added that all equipment received is carefully maintained by hospitals and that hospitals which received the Swiss financial assistance in 1990s, still use the equipment procured at that time. Mr. A. Žarnovskis added that after implementation of energy efficiency programme hospitals are more flexible with maintenance of equipment as they could achieve savings due to introduction of energy efficient technologies.

### **Research and Development (R&D) Programme**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė informed the participants about the completion activities as regards this programme, achievement of indicators and elaborated in more detail on the external evaluation conducted specifically for the research programme (*more detailed information is provided in Slides No. 15 – 18, Annex 1*).

Ms E. von Capeller noted that research is an important field for innovations and also employment of young students. The experience learned during the implementation of the present programme in research field will be very useful for future with regard to possible improvements and coming up to even more appropriated system. She also noted the mutual interest in possible continuation of similar programmes in future (in case of possible next phase of the Swiss Contribution).

Mr. S. Messerli appreciated the Lithuanian institutions on reaction to the currency exchange rate fluctuation issue and the analysis made by the CPMA on this matter. He noted the importance to have certain mechanisms (in case of possible future continuation of research programme) for reaction to possible losses faced by the researchers. Ms. L. Maskaliovienė noted that the Lithuanian side will have to analyse more about the practice faced in implementation process and stressed the huge potential for future taking into account the Swiss leadership in Innovation scoreboard in Europe. As Lithuania has invested a lot of EU funds to research infrastructure, it would be very useful to concentrate in future common activities of Lithuanian and Swiss researchers that could give the high scientific value.

Ms. A. Gribauskiene agreed to everything that has been mentioned as regards programme implementation and expressed a wish to simplify the project administration in future perspective.

## **Technical Assistance Fund (TAF)**

Before turning to the reporting on the TAF, Ms. A. Nikšaitė enquired if the Swiss side has any questions to the representative of the National Courts Administration about the sustainability and use of video-conference equipment. No questions or comments were raised.

Ms. A. Nikšaitė informed shortly about the implementation of this fund used by the Ministry of Finance and the CPMA for better administration of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme (*more detailed information is provided in Slide No 19, Annex 1*).

Ms. E. von Capeller had no comments on fund implementation but enquired about the future of staff presently working with the Swiss Contribution. Ms. A. Nikšaitė and Ms. R. Suraučienė informed that the staff will continue working with other programmes during the gap period (e.g. the European Economic Area and Norwegian financial mechanisms, CPMA staff – also with international development programmes in which Lithuania is a donor country, also structural funds projects).

## **Other important issues in implementation of Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme**

### **Disbursements**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented the information (in general figures and by each programme) regarding the disbursements made during the reporting period and tentative disbursements in 2017 (*more detailed information is provided in Slides No 21 – 23, Annex 1*). She noted that last year was very busy in finalising major activities under certain projects, naturally big disbursements have been made accordingly.

The Swiss side did not present any specific questions, comments.

### **Information and Publicity Activities**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented information and mentioned publicity activities that were successfully performed at the level of the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme in general and under each concrete project. She noted that all responsible bodies were very active in these activities by communicating the final results achieved (*more detailed information is provided in Slides No 24 – 26, Annex 1*).

On behalf of the Swiss side Mr. S. Messerli appreciated the actions done with regard to publicity and visibility of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme what is an important aspect for Switzerland. He also enquired about the future of the websites in which the results and other useful information has been publicised. Ms. A. Nikšaitė noted that there is no separate website on the Swiss Contribution and publicity is being conducted while using the websites of concrete institutions. She informed that operational information would be taken out but information on results achieved should remain for the public.

### **Independent Evaluation**

Mr. V. Nakrošis and Ms. A. Makarevičienė presented information on the external evaluation conducted on implementation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme (*more detailed information is provided in Annex 2*).

Ms. E. von Capeller thanked for a very substantial presentation on the work done. She noted that this is a very sound basis for discussions in case of continuation of the Swiss Contribution. Ms. E. von Capeller admitted that the simplification of administration of the Cooperation Programme is also in interest of the Swiss side but nevertheless the minimum requirements from the donor-country side shall

be taken into account. She was interested in the idea of the evaluators on the possible synergy between the NGO and research funds and thematic areas.

Mr. S. Messerli found presentation as very interesting and useful. His two questions were related to too complex administration of the Swiss Contribution programme (which was noted in other countries as well) and proposal on the usage of the simplified costs. Mr. V. Nakrošis explained that simplified costs (e. q. unit costs) would be more efficient way of payments in certain cases than the payments based on incurred expenditures which cause much higher administrative burden. Such simplification (where appropriate) could make the programme more attractive. As an example of a too complex project (in terms of administration) the evaluators mentioned the programme “Research and development”.

Mr. H. Bruggmann reacted to the comment of evaluators on possible diversification of requirements for beneficiary countries. He admitted that Switzerland has to cooperate with 13 beneficiary countries and can not treat them differently. Ms L. Maskaliovienė noted that application of simplified costs does not mean more corruption, on the contrary – the fixed unit costs is more effective way to focus on results. She also stressed the importance of sound and effective management of the financial assistance with 2-3 levels of administration instead of 5-6 levels of a bureaucratic approach. Ms. E. von Capeller assured that the Swiss side will try to simplify the administration as much as possible (taking into account the different set-ups of concrete countries) at the same time seeking to fulfil their minimum standards.

Mr. H. Bruggmann also expressed an opinion that a two-loop procedure is absolutely justified. He stressed that each Project proposal is also an investment on the partner state side. If the project idea would be approved in the 1<sup>st</sup> loop, then it is much more likely that the final project proposal will be also approved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> loop. The two loop procedure is a clear investment in quality and sustainability. Ms. L. Maskaliovienė agreed that transparency and effectiveness are very important in that context. Ms. E. von Capeller noted that after agreement on strategic issues and systemic changes, the rest of the process could be faster. Mr. S. Messerli expressed an opinion that the two loop procedure as such is not a problem. A problem is how it has been implemented in details. 1<sup>st</sup> loop could be rather simple and the 2<sup>nd</sup> loop - more detailed part.

Ms. A. Nikšaitė informed that the NCU shares the observations and recommendations made by external evaluators, part of them were already noted by the administrating institutions during the implementation process.

### **Closing remarks**

Ms. L. Maskaliovienė thanked all the participants for their input during the discussions and closed the meeting.

*Annex 1. NCU presentation ‘Implementation of the Lithuanian - Swiss Cooperation Programme: 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting’, 28 slides.*

*Annex 2. Independent Evaluation of the Lithuanian – Swiss Cooperation Programme, 25 slides.*