

**2014-2021 EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania**

**5th ANNUAL MEETING**

**1 June 2022**

**Venue: Hotel Pacai, Didžioji str. 7 Vilnius**

**MINUTES**

**Agenda:**

1. Opening words
2. Overview of Strategic Report 2021 (including Management and Control System Issues, Irregularities and Complaints)
3. Progress of programmes managed by Lithuania (results, risks, challenges, open discussion after each programme presented by the National Focal Point)
4. Progress of programmes managed by FMO (Presentation by FMO)
5. The Status of the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR)
6. Country specific points: Effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on the Grants
7. Communication
8. Conclusions and closing remarks
9. **Opening words**

Ms. R. Dapkutė – Stankevičienė opened the meeting by welcoming everybody to the 5th Annual Meeting alive this time to discuss the progress of the implementation of the 2014-2021 EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania. Then a formal introduction of the meeting participants, introductory speech and greetings by Ms. R. Dapkutė – Stankevičienė, Ms. Torill Johansen, Mr. Ole Terje Horpestad, Ms. Sigrún Bessadóttir and Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson followed.

1. **Overview of Strategic Report 2021 (including Management and Control System Issues, Irregularities and Complaints)**

Ms. M. Jaskelevičienė presented the process of the preparation of the Strategic Report and key achievements for the implementation of the 2014-2021 EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania during the reporting period. She briefly presented BR initiatives improved outside the programmes and bilateral activities improved under the programmes. It was pointed the challenges of the negative impact of the pandemic on the feasibility of initiatives has been successfully addressed through appropriate risk mitigation measures. As a rule, most of the pre-planned initiatives/activities had to be cancelled, while others were held in an online format which resulted in savings. The following actions have been taken: re-schedule project activities if needed, switching to virtual events or returning to contact events if possible, extending project duration, if needed and when possible. The Audit Authority also performed two compliance audits. After summarising the results of the audit of the effectiveness of the functioning of the National Management and Control System (MCS) of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021, the final estimate for the effectiveness of the functioning of the National Level MCS was as follows: works well. The declared expenditure of the Programmes is correct, legal, reasonable and eligible for funding.

Speaking of the implementation, Ms. M. Jaskelevičienė presented financial status of programmes. Total Grant given: 102,4 mln Eur. Funding paid During the reporting period: 12,5 mln Eur. Total funding paid: 30,7 mln Eur.

Ms. Milda Kaminskaitė gave short review about management and control systems (MCSs). During the reporting period there were no amendments of the MCS. She noted one future change, which is going to happen at the end of this year – Programme Operator MITA is going to transform into Innovation Agency. During the reporting period three minor irregularities were detected, which related to public procurement issues.

Ms. Torill Johansen noted that a lot of data is presented in the comprehensive tables of reviews which makes the report very well structured. She also gave a massage about the accurate forecasting. It was noted that the forecast submitted by Lithuania throughout 2020-2021 period has shown more accurate and realistic figures. The current rate of dispersed expenditure in Lithuania is above the average in other countries. Overall programmes are progressing well and Ms. Torill Johansen encourages Lithuania to be flexible in finding solution to accelerate race of implementation and also to mitigate any risk.

1. **Progress of programmes managed by Lithuania (results, risks, challenges, open discussion after each programme presented by the National Focal Point)**

Ms. Vilija Šemetienė presented the progress of the implementation of Justice and Home Affairs programme. For this programme are allocated 40,44 mill euros and about 22 percent of all are paid for implementing activities by now. She briefly presented all five project status.

1. Project “Increasing the Quality, Services and infrastructure in Lithuanian Courst” faces the challenges in implementing of infrastructure activities which causes the delay of the project. Thus there were changed objects of support – Klaipėda Regional Court was switched to reconstruction to other three courts: Panevežys Regional Court, Panevėžys District Court and Tauragė District Court. Project agreement will be changed according to recalculated budget. Project must be finished in time.
2. Project “Building up Modern and Open Prosecution Service in the Republic of Lithuania” consist mainly from soft activities, however it faces public procurement procedures risks. For mitigating this risks it was made decision to include in project budged external services for preparation procurement documents. Soft activities of project are delay because of Covid pandemic reason.
3. Project “Development of Quality based Lithuanian Correctional Service system” is the largest project of this programme. The project faced very serious issues in infrastructure activities. Project promoters started to implement plan B. It was changed infrastructure activities into reconstruction. Also the project is being in the process of public procurement procedures for buying three half way houses in Šiauliai, Plungė and Tauragė and IT infrastructure as well. Therefore the budget is in the process of recalculation. For mitigation of risks is foreseen strict time framework for every activity.
4. Project “Improving Work Quality and Enhancing Competences of the Justice Chain to Protect Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence” shows significant achievements in implementing such activities like preparation methodological material for training police officers. Progress in development in risk management information is about 50 percent.
5. Project “Strengthening of Inter-agency Cooperation and Increasing of Crime Investigation Quality in the Lithuanian Police” has no risks.

Ms. Toril Johansen committed to be flexible regarding changes of the programme. Mr. Frank Arne Sandsund mentioned his role as a programme manager for the FMO is to support Lithuania in the best possible manner to help to achieve good results. Ms. Vilija Šemetienė reminded that the amendment of programme agreement will going to be provided by FMO in nearest future.

Ms. Laura Sabulienė presented the progress of the programme “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs” implementation. All open calls were launched on the programme covering both focus area - Green industry innovation, Information and communication technologies as well as horizontal measure Business skills.

1. Projects of open call’s under the Green industry innovation focus area are still in implementation stage and tangible result have not been achieved yet. Projects experiences challenges which may lead to setbacks in their implementation. Project promoters are facing difficulties to execute procurements in full compliance with national law. To tackle the problem the programme operator created and published guidelines on execution of procurements. Furthermore programme promoters are facing issues within a supply chain. Therefore the programme operator together with project promoters are discussing possible solutions how to amend budgets in the most efficient way and still implement projects on time.
2. Open call under Information and communication technologies focus area covers 11 projects, which contracts were signed in the second half of 2021. All projects are with research and development projects activities. Some project promoters are facing difficulties in finding employees with relevant competencies for projects’ implementation.
3. Horizontal measure “Business skills” was closed on April 29, 2022. Four applications were submitted under the call with a requested funding sum of €‎30,000. During the eligibility assessment it was determined by the programme operator that all four applications do not meet the eligibility criteria and will be rejected. There are some factors, why open call had lack of interest: small funding sum, global situation, difficulties in finding partner from Norway. In the nearest Committee meeting the programme operator is going to suggest either to relocate funds under the Green industry innovation focus area, if a high number of application is received or to change the method of selection and implementation of the projects under the call i.e. develop a training (acceleration) programme and then select companies.

Ms. Toril Johansen expressed concern, if it will be enough time to implement the projects of the programme. Ms. Ina Sinkevičiūtė commented that the programme operator is planning to finish selection of all projects under the last open call till August 2022. The duration of projects is 18 months, and that means, that there should not be any risk not to finish on time. The representative of the programme operator also mentioned that all applicants or project promoters are private companies with no experience in public procurement and that is a challenge, but the programme operator makes every effort to help project promoters to implement projects smoothly.

Ms. Agnė Navikienė presented short overview of the implementation of Environment, Energy, Climate Change programme. At this stage not all projects have demonstrated an impact on Programme’s results framework yet – but most of the projects indicators will be achieved when suppliers implement public procurement contracts (at the end of 2022 and 2023). The main challenges in projects are: prolonged preparation of procurement documents and procedures, significant increases in the prices of labor, goods and services in the market. The measures have already been put in place to mitigate the risk of increasing prices – relocation of savings in the projects, conducting market analysis before the start of public procurement procedures. Most of soft activities and bilateral visits were postponed due to Covid-19. Now project promoters started to plan and implement visits from Lithuania to donor countries or from donor countries to Lithuania. In 2023 will be one small grant scheme open call (SGC). This small grant scheme will complement the activities of the pre-defined project LT-ENVIRONMENT-0006 “ClimAdapt-LT” and was planned to start on second semester 2022. But due to the prolonged procurement procedures the project promoter plans to finish the main activities of the project in 2023. Due to that the launching of SGC is postponed to 2023. Preliminary SGC projects duration 6-12 months. Programme operator and project promoter will start preparing for the open call before the end of the project LT-ENVIRONMENT-0006 “ClimAdapt-LT”. Preliminary estimated that contracted projects will be implemented by the end of April 2024.Despite some delays in projects activities, at present, there is no risk that projects will not achieve their goals and results by the end of April 2024.

Ms. Toril Johansen commented that as it seems these projects have very long implementation period, she encourages keep in close contact with FMO regarding the progress. Also in view of the rising price levels and other consequences of Covid19 and also the war in Ukraine she encourages to be open and flexible with regards to adjust the programme and also other measures that help to mitigate the risk.

Mr. Sigitas Miškinis presented the progress of the implementation of Research programme. This programme is specific because it has very strong international element. All projects covers three Baltic countries and Donor countries. Programme goals: Consolidation of research potential of Baltic States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; Strengthening of regional cooperation in research relevant to the countries of the region; Filling of the gap between the national research funding and the ESIF. Projects have very wide field of activity – from social science to physical science and as well as agriculture, health, new materials thematic. 40 % of the total funding had been paid to projects. There were problems with Covid19 restrictions: travel restrictions — some of the planned projects events or meetings are canceled or delayed;

delays in the delivery of some of the materials needed for experiments. Problems solving: organising events, conferences remotely or by transferring activities to 2022; accelerate up project implementation activities 2022/2023. Research council is planning programme committee meeting in September 2022 where will be involved all projects.

Ms. Toril Johansen hopes to achieve with the programme is that Lithuania can use the bilateral partnership that was established also for them to apply for other funding outside EEE Grants. Ms. Asta Aleksandravičienė comments that application for further funding is one of the indicators in the project. There are already two projects which applied for the further funding in the frame of horizon. They mostly apply in the same thematic as the projects are.

Mr. Ole Terje Horpestad added that this is a very good programme and especially that this programme has joint Baltic dimension, which is a very good practice.

Ms. Banga Vaitkutė presented the implementation status of Health programme. Key aspects of the programme are: the programme provides support for mental health promotion and prevention measures with particular emphasis on the well-being for children and youth and their families; the programme mainly focuses on soft measures such as development of new models of service provision. These services are planned for different target groups such as for children and youth with complex behaviour problems, for expecting mothers (bearing the first child or risk pregnancies) by providing services during the pregnancy and two years after birth, for parents by developing positive parent-child relationships, for people experiencing emotional difficulties by providing consultations based on cognitive behaviour therapy. It is important to mention that only 20 percent of funding is available for infrastructure (for hard measures). There are five pre-defined projects under implementation and the total amount contracted is 4,2 mill euros. Total amount paid to project promoters: € 1,97 mill. In the programme agreement there were planned six calls for six different measures. However there were three extra calls launched for the same measures because of bad quality of applications or not enough applications. Evaluation of the projects is already finished. 61 projects are contracted for 11,78 mill euros. After reallocation of savings 3 new project contracts (0,45 mill euros) will be signed in the second quarter of 2022. These 3 contracts will be the last project contracts in this programme. Total amount paid to project promoters: 4,22 mill euros.

Main challenges of the programme. There were delays in public procurement procedures in one pre-defined project. At the moment project activities are under implementation, however implementation of the activities takes longer than it was expected. 3 extra (relaunch) calls for proposals were organized because of bad quality of applications which were rejected or not enough applications were received in the first calls. In this case the Ministry of Health as the programme partner has organized some meetings for municipality in order to encourage possible applicants to participate in the calls, training material was posted in the website of the programme operator. Due to Covid19 some events were postponed and training activities changed their format from physical ones to online ones. Thus the challenges are no longer relevant.

Ms. Toril Johansen asked why there was lack of interests in some of the open calls. Ms. Banga Vaitkutė answered that one of the reason is Covid19 because in one call possible applicants was primary health key institutions. Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis added that requirements for the application was quit strict and the expectations from the ministry for programme operator was quite high. So the result is high demotivated project promoters and in some cases there are not enough money because of the rising prices and the inflation rate.

Ms. Banga Vaitkutė presented the progress of the implementation of Culture programme. There is one pre-defined project. The main goal of the project is to ensure heritage preservation via preventive maintenance and strengthening of practical skills. The project is under implementation (contract signed in 2019); 143 objects (out of 200 required) were selected so far, 70 of them were inspected, repaired and provided with individual guidance for maintenance of the objects. Total amount contracted is € 1,611 mill euros. Total amount paid to project promoters is € 1,450 mill euros. There are already 2 calls launched and already closed for 2 measures in 2020-2021. Evaluation of projects is finished. Total projects contracted - 14 (5,686 mill euros). Total amount paid to project promoters - 1,162 mill euros.

Main challenges of the programme. Covid19 pandemic has extended calls for proposals in 2020 so there are delays in implementation of the programme. Some public procurements have not started because of rising prices and in some cases there is non-participation of contractors in procurement. Due to failed public procurement the time available for the implementation of project activities is reduced.

Ms. Toril Johansen commented that the programme operator has achieved excellent progress during last year. It is good that all projects are implemented also in bilateral cooperation. She wondered what does the programme operator doing in order to help the project promoters about the challenges with public procurement. Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis answered that they invest a lot in public procedures and the process. There are some typical documents, which are checked before they are announced, more they prepare draft requirements for project promoters who don’t have enough experience in this field. Every project has one project manager in programme operator. About 70 percent of the time is dedicated to public procedures because then when it is signed public procurement document, amendments sometimes is needed. There are some risks in this programme, however these risks are manageable. Thus they organise open doors, trainings, seminars to help applicants with typical public procurement documents.

1. **Progress of programmes managed by FMO (Presentation by FMO)**

Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson presented the status of Active Citizens Fund in Lithuania programme. The programme benefits from the consortium organization solid grant making experience and also very strong ties to the social society sector in Lithuania. Feedback from the applicants and project promoters highlights the transparent procedures of the programme. He noted that the importance the investing in a strong civil society sector has become more evident than ever as Lithuania civil society has been at the far front in mobilising citizens and providing support for Ukraine refugees. This is very key signal of the importance of investing and increasing capacity in the sector. They are in general pleased the programme is progressing well with most project selected in implementation. The main risks of the programme include relatively few low quality applications. As well as from the organizations represent national minorities. There has been a strong oversubscription across all the open calls and the programme is expected to reach a high absorption rate. 71 projects selected from a total of 169 applications. The Fund Operator remains committed to the bilateral objective and has organised several matchmaking events. Sixteen of the projects approved for funding so far include one or more donor project partners.

Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson continued with the status of Social Dialogue – Decent Work and Lithuania programme. This programme has started in 2018 and has 1,250 mill euros available for projects in Lithuania. There are 580 000 euros allocated to open calls. 7 projects have been selected on the 2 calls on proposals. In this programme there are no specific risks identified in any of Lithuania projects.

There are 7 projects in implementation following the two open calls:

* The project “Better Social Dialogue – Better Work!” aims at strengthening social dialogue and improving the quality of social partnerships by strengthening employee’s capacities and create social partnerships between two institutions (the Fire and Rescue Department and the Environmental Protection Department) to create a new collective agreement.
* A project promoted by the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania aims to strengthen the bipartite dialogue and consultations at local level and increase the participation of municipal administration in the social dialogue.
* The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation is the promoter of a project whose main aim is to improve social dialogue by encouraging bilateral negotiations using the experience of Norwegian social partners and establish an environment for future collective agreements.
* The project “Development of social dialogue procedures and cooperation in the law enforcement services” will implement an improved social dialogue and cooperation in the Lithuanian Police by using the best Norwegian practices and knowledge.
* The Lithuanian Industry Trade Union Federation is the promoter of a project that aims to improve the model of cooperation between social partners.
* The Lithuanian Trade Union Alliance is the promoter of a project that aims to develop a long-term bilateral cooperation network between three Norwegian and five Lithuanian organisations to strengthen tripartite cooperation between employer organizations, trade unions and public authorities.
* The Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists is the promoter of a project that aims to support bipartite and tripartite social dialogue in the implementation of the Decent Work agenda.

These projects show very encouraging progress in this programme.

Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson continued with the Fund for Youth Employment. Programme Grant: 60,61 mill euros in total funding (no country allocation) from EEA and Norway Grants. He pleased to see Lithuanian organizations are very active in the Fund of youth employment. They take part in 10 projects. Lithuania projects aim to support hundreds of persons who are not participating in training educational work. This Fund also support mothers, who want to return to labour market. According to the assessment all projects are in implementation and no significant challenges have been noted. The last call for proposals was closed in January 2021. 138 applications were submitted, with 24 Lithuanian entities active. Two additional projects with three Lithuanian entities were contracted after the call.

Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson continued with the Fund for Regional Cooperation. Programme Grant is 31,89 mill euros in total funding (no country allocation) from EEA and Norway Grants. Lithuanians organizations have been very active as applicants to this fund.

One open call in 2018. Over 700 applications received, 19 projects selected. Of which, 117 Lithuanian organisations are active in the project consortia. 36 as lead partners. 20 projects were selected by the Donors in 2020. 19 are currently in implementation. Six Lithuanian organisations are involved in four projects, two as lead partners. The selected projects have almost exhausted all of the funds – no future open calls planned yet.

The projects covers topics of improving environmental performances of municipalities, strengthening the rule of law. The war in Ukraine has effected the Ukrainian project partner department of cities infrastructures. Lithuanian lead partner has been in close contact with the Ukrainian beneficiary partner during the war and has offered support. So there is another aspect of regional cooperation has been tested in this difficult times. The risks of this fund mostly are conditioned by Ukrainian war. The mitigating measures have been taken because of this acpect.

As it seems from the presentation these programs and projects work well.

1. **The Status of the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR)**

Mr. Matas Cancingeris presented the status of the Fund for Bilateral Relations and provided some key information about the development of the use of fund bilateral relations to address the Ukraine crisis and implications to Lithuania. In the Memorandum of understanding in total 2,3 mill euros is allocated to bilateral relations. The highest amount of funds – 863 thousand eur is allocated to bilateral initiatives under the program. Regarding the initiatives outside the programme, total funding reaches amount of 721 thousand euros. As a result there are at least 768 thousand available funding left of which 387 thousand are assigned for programme operators for expression of interest and 380 thousand euros left to national level bilateral initiatives.

The status of BR development on a programme level. Around 30% of funds allocated to programmes have been already spent. The situation among programmes themselves is not uniform. Lowest expenditure rates are identified in Research, Environment and Health programmes, while the highest are in Culture, Innovation and Justice. It is important to note that expenditure/available funds balance in LT-Justice programme would be even better, however, the programme operator has requested for additional funds that amount 163,000 Eur which was approved by the JCBF.

Yearly tendencies of FBR expenditure within the programmes. To have a better grasp on some general tendencies of FBR status under the programmes, it is important to look at the data from another angle and asses the status from a yearly expenditure. The tendency is that the development of Bilateral relations has grew and fostered during the beginning of the grants. Expenditure rates have dropped dramatically since 2020 and haven’t since recovered judging from the 2021 data as development of BRs has experienced a significant uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 5 out of 6 programmes have not incurred any expenditure over the year 2021. Drawing from the yearly expenditure pace, National Focal Point has identified the most significant risks of incomplete expenditure of funds in the Environment, Health and Research Programmes. In response, the National Focal Point has surveyed relevant programme operators to provide their future expenditure plans. With an exception of Environment programme, programme operators are well-acquainted with the current expenditure status of the FBR and have established corresponding measures to mitigate the risks of low appropriation of available funds. In contrast, additional funding was assigned to Justice programme based on expression of interest. In addition, Health and Culture programme operators are in the final stages of submitting two more expressions of interest. Regarding the LT-Environment programme, the Programme operator suggested that the available and unused funds for bilateral relations which amounts ~ 65 thousand Eur, could be reallocated to other needs. POs suggestion was presented to JCBF during annual meeting and JCBF agreed on the option proposed as current funding needs stemming from Ukraine crisis and other POs based on expression of interest. As for the next step, National Focal Point will soon inform Programme operators about the JCBF decision and request to Programme operator to consider the question in the Cooperation Comity.

Use of funds outside the programmes. In total, JCBF so far has approved 12 pre-defined BR initiatives out of which seven are already successfully completed. In addition, it is envisioned to complete three more initiatives in 2022 and two either in 2024 or 2025. Moreover, the NFP has received 3 concept notes and 2 pre-defined initiative proposals for funding.

Regarding the time-frame of pre-defined initiatives that are yet to be completed, we identify no significant risks of being overdue of till the last day of eligibility of support in 30 April 2025.

1. **Country specific points: Effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on the Grants**

Russia’s invasion in Ukraine implications for Lithuania and the use of FBR to address them. Since Russia’s invasion in Ukraine on 24 February, more than 53,000 Ukrainian refugees fled to Lithuania (about 1.9 % of total Lithuania’s population). New and significant funding needs have occurred to accommodate the needs of refugees. In order to address the issue, Donors have welcomed a more flexible use of Grants. FBR is considered as the most appropriate source funding for such purpose due to availability of funds, direct and quick decision-making mechanism (JCBF). In regard that humanitarian needs of refugees are covered by national/local authorities, NGOs and Lithuanian citizens, Civil Society programme operator – Open Lithuania Foundation (OLF) has identified a need fund other needs/activities. It was decided to empower local Ukrainian refugee community and allow them to develop their own project concept notes to address most significant refugee community needs. As a result, one pre-defined initiative proposal has been already approved by the JCBF and two more are under way as they are in preparation stage. They will be shared with all of the JCBF members as they are mature and ready. The implementation of the initiatives (if approved by the JCBF) would be carried out by the authors of the initiative proposals (Ukrainian refugees).

Ms. Toril Johansen noted that under grants in total there are approximately 10 mill euros to support the Ukrainian refugees mostly in Poland, Romania and also Slovakia. It covers a lot of areas: humanitarian assistance, it opens up for instance in research programmes (using this programme savings for Ukrainian researches).

Mr. Ole Terje Horpestad gave some brief comments about the Embassy’s involvement into the management of the Bilateral Funds. Some projects which were implemented in the past shows this combination of business promotion and using the Grants for this focus as well. Also the Hate free project is an important one. This week they are implementing bilateral project Baltic Pride in Vilnius which is being sponsored through the bilateral funds. He also noted that there are allocated quite a big amuont of money for the Ukrainian refugees support. In general he thanked for the really good cooperation with national Focal Point and the Joint Comity on the Bilateral funds.

Ms. Mariann Murvoll inquired about empower local Ukrainian refugee community. Mr. Matas Cancingeris answered that in order to address the Ukrainian war crisis implications in Lithuania there were looking for the solutions how the funds could be better utilized. One solution proposed by the Open Lithuania Society Fund was to empower the local Ukrainian refugee itself and allow them to assess their needs, whether the Fund for Bilateral Relations could be used to address those needs.

1. **Communication**

Ms. I. Skukauskaitė presented the main communication developments of the 2014-2021 EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania in the year 2021. She emphasized that the communication is a very special one, because it can be used for the civil society to spread the relationship between the countries and to give more strength between the citizens who will understand how it can give many good things in our daily life. Last year was published 39 news in common portal www.eeagrants.lt/[www.norwaygrants.lt](http://www.norwaygrants.lt), also in Facebook account was stated 31 posts. They are on the way to spread more information in social media as well.

Public Survey. The logo of mechanisms is quite well known. Awareness of financial mechanisms increased till 42 percent.

She gave a short message about the communication activities as National Focal Point.

The balloon story in 2021. It was created the advertising campaign. The logo on the balloon was created to increase the awareness of the financial mechanisms logo. 80 flights per year (and at least 240 flights per 36 months during the flight season). Advertising service for 36 months will cost 26 000 EUR. First flight of the balloon was in a really nice mid-summer concert in Vilnius in July 22, 2021. She noted, that this event was promoted in Lithuania television without anything spent for that, because it was created the wining prize to fly with the balloon. In the morning television show averaged audience of 225 000 viewers per day.

Another communication activities. The seminar „The Significance of Social Media and their use in the Communication of Financial Mechanisms” was held in September 9th 2021 in Vilnius. 145 participants (live/zoomTV platform). NFP presented guidelines for the communication of the Financial Mechanisms, noted the availability of a media. Social media project was implemented as well. 4 content projects and their advertising. Each project - 4 different success stories (36 month). 16 well advertised were shown video stories on a social media. Minimum 100 000 views for each video. 12 posts written by opinion leaders/influencers on social networks. Minimum 1000 interactions/likes/repost /comments each post. Each video was published on the Facebook, the audience of unique users reached at least 100 000 viewers. There

were created 3 posts with the opinion leaders, each post contains a link to the Grant web site, the click through rate of this link is at least 1000 times.

Future communication activities: there are plans to have short trip Lithuanian journalists to Norway (2023); also to reach 10 original posts from influencers with a link to active citizens fund; success stories: 4 in photo reportage style and 4 in video format; possibility to win the air balloon trip on social network radio; to launch one video of 30 sec. with an advertisement on youtube.

Ms. Toril Johansen expressed satisfaction with the balloon story and reached high number of awareness of financial mechanisms – 42 percent. She also noted, that they have used the stories, which Lithuania produced when they report to their Parliament in white papers and also in other reports on the sustainable development goals.

1. **Conclusions and closing remarks**

Ms. Toril Johansen and R. Dapkutė – Stankevičienė (NFP) summarised the discussions.

Ms. R. Dapkutė – Stankevičienė thanked the donor states, the FMO and the partners and for all the support and flexibility being offered in the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania. She expressed satisfaction seeing high level of Bilateral relations in these projects.

Ms. Toril Johansen informed about the coming negotiation meeting on the 16th June in Brussels for the future financing period. She summarised the discussions and thanked Lithuania for the meeting and an effective funds investment in this period and also thanked for the close cooperation with FMO

**Decision taken:**

The donors approved the Strategic Report.

**Participants:**

**Donors:**

**Norway**

1.Ms. Torill Johansen, Deputy Director, Section for Central Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway (Head of delegation)

2. Ms. Elin Graae Linnestad, Senior Adviser, Section for Central Europe and the EEA and Norway Grants

3. Ms. Mariann Murvoll, Senior Adviser at the Section for Nordic Countries, the Baltics and European Green Deal

4. Mr. Ole Terje Horpestad, Ambassador of Norway to Lithuania, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Vilnius

5. Ms. Inga Rudzinskaite, EEA/Norway Grants Political Officer, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Vilnius

**Iceland**

1. Ms. Sigrún Bessadóttir, Senior Advisor and Consular Affairs Officer, Icelandic Embassy in Helsinki (online)

**FMO:**

1. Mr. Borgar Thor Einarsson, Deputy Managing Director of the Financial Mechanism Office, Director of the Country and Bilateral Cooperation Department

2. Mr Frank Arne Sandsund, Sector Officer, Financial Mechanism Office

3. Mr. Niels Bekkhus, Bilateral Officer, Country and Bilateral Cooperation Department

4. Ms. Sofie Laksaa, Trainee, Country and Bilateral Cooperation Department (TBC)

**Lithuania:**

1. Ms. Rūta Dapkutė-Stankevičienė, Director, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – Head of NFP
2. Mr. Matas Cancingeris, Chief Specialist, Investment Policy Division (NFP)
3. Ms. Banga Vaitkutė, Advisor, Social Investment Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Health, Civil society programmes
4. Ms. Vilija Šemetienė, Advisor, Social Investment Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Justice programme
5. Mr. Sigitas Miškinis, Chief specialist, Investment for Growth Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Research programme
6. Ms. Agnė Navikienė, Chief specialist, Investment for Growth Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Environment programme
7. Ms. Laura Sabulienė, Chief specialist, Investment for Growth Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Innovation programme
8. Ms. Ilma Skukauskaitė, Advisor, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Unit, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Communication
9. Ms Milda Kaminskaitė, Advisor, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Management and control system
10. Ms Akvilė Svirkė, Advisor, Investment Analysis Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Reporting
11. Ms Marija Jaskelevičienė, Chief specialist, Investment Analysis Division, Investment Department, Ministry of Finance (NFP) – responsible for Reporting
12. Ms. Aušra Baliukonienė, Director, Investment Expenditure Declaration Department, Ministry of Finance – Head of CA /IrA
13. Mr. Rolandas Pauža, Head of the Centralised Internal Audit division, Ministry of Finance (AA)
14. Ms Rasa Mockuvienė, Advisor , Centralised Internal Audit division, Ministry of Finance (AA)
15. Ms Aušra Urniežė, Head of the Expenditure Declaration Division, Ministry of Finance (CA)
16. Ms Natalija Ranceva, Head of the Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division, Ministry of Finance (CA/IA)
17. Ms Jurgita Vileitienė, Chief specialist, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division, Investment Expenditure Declaration Department, Ministry of Finance (CA/IA)
18. Ms Justina Žvirblytė, Chief specialist,  Economic Analysis and Evaluation Division, Financial Policy Department, Ministry of Finance – responsible for evaluations
19. Mr. Artūras Žarnovskis, Head of Lithuanian and International Programs Department, Central Project Management Agency – representative of PO with delegated functions of NFP
20. Ms. Ina Sinkevičiūtė, Head of Norwegian Mechanism Group of Science, Technology and Innovation Agency
21. Ms. Asta Aleksandravičienė, programme cordinator, Research Council of Lithuanian
22. Ms. Sandra Adomavičiūtė, Managing Director of Open Lithuania Foundation