*STRATEGIC REPORT
FM14-21*

Lithuania

Reporting period:

20 March 2022 - 20 March 2023

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# 1. Executive summary

The strategic report reflects the implementation of the European Economic Area (hereinafter – EEA) and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 in Lithuania (hereinafter – Grants) during the period from 20 March 2022 to 20 March 2023 and contains the information on progress in developing the programme level Management and Control System (hereinafter – MCS) (since the development of the National level MCS was completed), implementing the programmes, as well as the status of the Fund for Bilateral Relations, performed audits, key communication activities and other important issues.

Several important effects of the Grants are to be mentioned during the reporting period. Health and Culture programmes have significant impacts on the emotional health of the population, and this will have wider social and economic effects. The impact of the largest project of financial mechanisms in the Justice programme implemented by the Department of Prisons under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania is systemic, as it is related to changing the attitude towards detainees and prisoners and improving the conditions of resocialization. The impact of the Innovation programme on Norwegian companies, in addition to the joint development of product or service and the strengthening of business relations with Lithuania, is the internationalization of companies. The Environment programme's most significant project in financial terms is investing in an information and warning system in case of a nuclear accident and is not only of national but also of international relevance. The Research programme is unique in this programming period in that it is implemented in Lithuania and jointly Latvia, and Estonia. This model strengthens synergies between the Baltic researchers.

Due to Covid-19 and restrictions on meetings, activities that required contact meetings started more intensively in 2022. Infrastructural projects have faced serious challenges due to rapidly increasing prices of goods, services, construction works, energy prices and inflation. 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. The risk of incomplete disbursement of funds by the final expenditure eligibility date in 30 April 2025 is still relevant to the Innovation, Health, Culture and Research Programmes, corresponding measures to mitigate the risks are envisaged and thus considered as manageable.

Following russia’s invasion of Ukraine and subsequent humanitarian crisis, the Donor States had made it possible to use available funds from the EEA and Norway Grants for such purpose. The Bilateral Fund was considered as the most appropriate source of funding and three projects aiming to address Ukrainian refugee needs were funded.

During the reporting period, the Audit Authority performed four compliance audits. After summarising the results of the audit of the effectiveness of the functioning of the MCS of the Programmes, the final estimate for the effectiveness of the functioning of the MCS of the Programmes was: works well or works. According to the audit of declared expenditure of the Programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021, in all relevant aspects, the declared expenditure of the Programmes is correct, legal, reasonable and eligible for funding.

The most active use of most mentioned Grants was via web portals and in the regional press. During the 12- month period (1 March 2022- 23 February 2023), a website received over 17 000 visitors. The main communication activity was Facebook. In 2022, 47 posts were posted on a Facebook channel “Norvegija, Islandija ir Lichtenšteinas Lietuvai”. Communication campaign was organised with 10 game series on the radio.

Reallocation of funds and closure of programmes are the issues to be addressed during the annual meeting. No other issues are identified.

# 2. Country Developments and effects of the Grants

Undoubtedly, one of the main factors that had the strongest impact on our country's economy in 2022 - russian aggression in Ukraine. Looking at the results for 2022, the economic growth despite the war was robust. The volume of industrial production increased, retail and international trade grew, the number of job vacancies and the unemployed decreased. In 2022, according to preliminary estimates, gross domestic product amounted to EUR 67.1 billion at current prices. As compared to 2021, the real change in the gross domestic product following the removal of the impact of the season and the number of working days was 2.2 %.

The biggest positive influence on the change in the gross domestic product was made by the performance of industrial sector companies. Last year, industrial production was sold for EUR 38.4 billion at current prices, following the removal of the influence of the number of working days, 9.4 % at constant prices more than in 2021.

Business was able to adapt to the uncertainties of the war, although serious consequences will be felt for a long time. In 2022, both exports and imports increased. According to preliminary data, in 2022, exports of goods amounted to EUR 44 billion, imports – EUR 52 billion. As compared to 2021, exports increased by 27.5 %, imports by 38 %.

In 2022, the turnover of retail trade and catering companies increased. According to preliminary data, the turnover of companies in retail trade, except for trade in motor vehicles and motorcycles, in 2022 amounted to EUR 18 billion and compared to 2021, after removing the influence of the number of working days, it increased by 0.8 % at constant prices. During the year, the turnover of catering and beverage companies increased by 39.6 % at constant prices and amounted to EUR 1.3 billion.

Lithuania, like other countries, faced increased energy and food prices. The annual inflation (in December 2022 compared to December 2021) was 21.7 %. The total annual price change was mainly caused by the increase in the prices of housing-related goods and services, water, electricity, gas and other fuels - 48.3 %, food products and non-alcoholic beverages - 34.7 %, as well as other goods and services. During 2022, consumer goods rose in price by 25.2 % and services by 13.2 %.

Looking at the labour market indicators, it can be considered that in 2022 the situation on the labour market continued to improve. Employment increased, the number of unemployed decreased. In 2022, the unemployment rate in the country was 5.9 %, or 1.2 percentage points lower than in 2021. According to preliminary data, in 2022 the average monthly gross (before tax) wages, including sole proprietorships, increased by 13 % or EUR 206 compared to 2021, and amounted to EUR 1,785.4.

The population of Lithuania, which has been decreasing for a long time, increased by 54 thousand in 2022. On 1 January 2023, 2 million 860 thousand permanent residents lived in Lithuania. The change in the number of permanent residents was influenced by the increase in positive net international migration due to the large number of war refugees from Ukraine. In 2022, 81 thousand foreigners immigrated to the country (85 % of all immigrants). The majority (61.5 thousand or 75.9 %) are citizens of Ukraine.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania is implementing a range of reforms in fields of education, innovation, health and taxation, as well as measures to achieve its goals in these areas.

Programmes are unique in that they often fund innovation and allow for testing practices transferred from donors or other countries. Examples of innovation have been documented in various programmes, such as the multidimensional family therapy programme or the welfare counselling services in the Health Programme, the heritage prevention activities, or the promotion of local cultural entrepreneurship in the Culture programme, the research on the storage of bituminous radioactive waste in the Environment programme, etc.

The likely significant impact of health and culture programmes on the emotional health of the population will have wider social and economic effects. These impacts are felt in the labour market through returns to the labour market and in the public sector through savings, as some services, such as addiction treatment, will not be needed if these problems are prevented in time by Health Programme interventions. Cultural Programme interventions reduce cultural exclusion and contribute to people's emotional health, especially in the regions. In this way, the situation of the person who has participated in the programme and that of their family and community is positively affected. The Culture Programme, through the "Fixus mobilis" project, also has a broader impact by helping preserve cultural heritage assets relevant to our society today and for future generations.

Investments of the Justice and Home Affairs programme should improve the work of justice chain services and strengthen the enforcement of human rights. The funds of the Justice and Home Affairs programme were invested in improving services and infrastructure in Lithuanian courts, in modernizing the activities of the prosecutor's office and increasing the efficiency of criminal prosecution, in inter-agency cooperation, improving the quality of crime investigations in the Lithuanian police, in strengthening competences in order to protect victims of domestic and gender violence. Taking into account the activities carried out, the amount of funds allocated and the fact that funds from financial mechanisms are the main source of funding for changes in the justice, tangible changes in the activities of services and institutions and better protection of public interest and human rights can be expected (ensuring the right to inviolability of human dignity, to a fair trial).

Systematic changes are sought in the system of execution of punishments, more favourable conditions are created for the return of convicts to society. The largest project of financial mechanisms is implemented in the Justice programme (allocated funding amounts to over EUR 20 million). It is implemented by the Department of Prisons under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania together with project partners from Lithuania and Norway. The project continues the changes initiated in the previous programming period with the funds of financial mechanisms in the system of execution of punishments. The impact of the project is systemic, as it is related to changing the attitude towards detainees and prisoners and improving the conditions of resocialization. A dynamic security practice is implemented, which is characterized by a positive personal relationship between officers and detainees and prisoners, aiming to get to know each person well and provide them with meaningful activities, thus ensuring a safe environment for officers and detained and imprisoned persons. Investments are also made in improving the prison conditions of convicts in other ways and in their resocialization. Programmes for those suffering from addictions, anger management programmes are implemented, employment of convicts is expanded and conditions are created for meaningful activities. Non-governmental organizations are included in the process of resocialization of convicts. Places are being set up in half-way houses, where new effective resocialization methods are applied, helping people to change their lifestyle faster and return to society. Interventions should improve the protection of human rights and human dignity in places of recapture and facilitate the reintegration of convicts into society. In the long term, greater public safety can be expected.

All Innovation Programme projects have partners from Norway. It is noticeable, that the Programme encourages other partnerships between Lithuania and Norway, not only those supported by financial mechanisms. The impact of the Innovation programme on Norwegian companies, in addition to the joint development of product or service and the strengthening of business relations with Lithuania, is the internationalization of companies. By becoming familiar with Lithuanian business and opportunities, Norwegian companies simultaneously strengthen their competences to operate in Central and Eastern Europe.

Most of the projects in the Environment Programme can be classified as research and preparatory activities, which pave the way for better solutions to environmental pollution and safety issues. The Environment Programme's most significant project in financial terms is investing in an information and warning system in case of a nuclear accident. Once completed, the project will have a significant benefit in terms of the earliest possible response in the event of a nuclear accident and the potential to minimise negative impacts on the population's health. The project is not only of national but also of international relevance.

Impact assessment of research projects in the Research Programme is a distinct field outside the regular practice of programme impact assessment. However, the likely viability and usefulness of the research projects are reflected in the fact that the projects have been selected in collaboration with international experts. The projects are implemented in different scientific fields and focus on slightly or not interlinked problems, therefore the impact of the programme is fragmented. The Research Programme is unique in this programming period in that it is implemented in Lithuania and jointly Latvia, and Estonia. This model strengthens synergies between the Baltic researchers.

Grants also contributed/are planned to contribute to the mitigation of the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Lithuania. Following russia’s invasion of Ukraine and subsequent humanitarian crisis, the Donor States had made it possible to use available funds from the EEA and Norway Grants for such purpose. Since the Bilateral Fund was considered as the most appropriate source of funding, the JCBF had approved funding (amounting EUR 367,500  in total) to three projects aiming to address Ukrainian refugee needs.

First project “[UA+LT=TULA. Mutual integration of Lithuanian and Ukrainian Families](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIsJr_49iy4)” was developed by local Ukrainian refugee community in collaboration with the Open Lithuania Foundation with the aim to: 1. create safe and emotionally supportive environments/programmes for Ukrainian families in Lithuania; 2. to facilitate the integration of Ukrainian families and young people in Lithuania and the adoption of the common values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights. The project activities focused on three-day camps/retreats that involved cultural exchange, art, sense-making conversation, lectures on parenthood, collaborative creation of dreams activities and family gatherings that revolved around cultural exchange through games and songs, films, literature reading, acquaintances with prominent Ukrainian and Lithuanian personalities, lectures on psychology and self-help, etc. Although the project is still ongoing, it has set a goal to reach and provide support for integration to around 1150 individuals, 70 % Ukrainians, and 30% Lithuanians, through 30 events.

Second project “A new format of education for Lithuanian-Ukrainian classes” was developed by Vilnius University of Applied Sciences. Since Ukrainian pupils who want to attend the Lithuanian schools face different obstacles to acquire quality education, such as a language barrier, cultural differences and different educational curriculum, the main goal of the project is to empower the Lithuanian schools to ensure smooth and quality inclusion of the Ukrainian pupils. The project sets forth to select 20 Lithuanian schools with the highest number of the Ukrainian pupils and motivation and through online learning workshops, 5-day face-to-face learning event, coaching and individual support to schools provide them with the training and skills on innovative approaches and methodologies how to manage diversity in the classroom and implement the principles of democratic education thus promoting smooth and quality inclusion of the Ukrainian pupils. Implementation of the project activities are planned for 2023.

Third project “Rethink Ukraine” was developed in cooperation of the Ukrainian and the Lithuanian civil society activists with the aim to provide a safe space for intellectual engagements between the Ukrainian, Lithuanian and other intellectuals to discuss, learn, strategize and co-create ideas of possible futures, as well as share these insights with a wider public in Lithuania, Ukraine and abroad. Project activities revolve around public discussions with the prominent Ukrainian, Lithuanian and international thinkers, 3 internship grants allocated for young Ukrainian professionals (young journalists, activists or students; 20-35 years) to produce written material, relating to project activities and topics discussed by intellectuals and video productions in order to disseminate ideas and insights generated from discussions among the intellectuals for the broader European audience, seeking to make the Ukrainian and Eastern European voices heard louder. The project is envisioned to be completed by the end of 2023.

Interestingly, the projects that received funding set forth not only to bring about their envisioned goals and targets but also had a spill over effect on engagement and community building of Ukrainian refugee diaspora civil society which resulted in the establishment of “[Ukreate Hub](https://olf.lt/en/civil-society-leaders-of-lithuania-and-ukraine-to-gather-in-ukreate-hub/)” - network of active people of Ukrainian civil society (teachers, academics, intellectuals, journalists and cultural activists). The long term aim is to contribute to the strengthening of Ukrainian civil society and to the preparation for the return to rebuild Ukraine. Hub’s roadmap includes intellectual discussions on rethinking Ukrainian future, brainstorming workshops, project incubation, internship programmes, and residence for human right activists etc.

# 3. Status of programmes

## GENERAL

The situation about each programme is described in the programm's chapter below.

## LT-JUSTICE Justice and Home Affairs

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:** CPMA.**DPP(s):** The Norwegian Ministry of Justice; The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service;The Norwegian Courts Administration;The National Police Directorate.**Other Programme Partner(s):** The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania;The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania;The National Courts Administration of Lithuania;The Prosecutor’s General Office of the Republic of Lithuania;The Council of Europe (CoE). |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 34,376,000EEA Grants: EUR 8,000,000Norway Grants: EUR 26,376,000 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementation** | **Signature of the programme agreement:** 11 February 2020**PDP contracts**: all signed by September 2020 |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **1. Use of alternative sanctions to imprisonment*** A model of an inmate’s release from a correctional institution, half-way house or probation together with the NGOs is created. The competitive calls for project funding for NGOs‘ activities has been implemented and five NGOs have started  their work from 2023.
* Seminars, workshops, best practice meetings, exchange visits in Norway and Lithuania on dynamic security, development of training programmes and trainings for prison staff are being organized.
* The Strategy for Usage of Electronic Monitoring Devices was prepared by the Lithuanian probation staff together with Oslo Probation Office.

**2. Synergies between the programme areas*** This is a horizontal principle that cuts through all the PDPs. As a general principle, all training is not limited to a segment of a justice chain represented by the project promoter, but uses the holistic approach. This is especially true in case of PDP 4 “Improving Work Quality and Enhancing Competences of the Justice Chain to Protect Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence”: Two round table discussions among justice chain authorities and 40 meetings in local municipalities were organized.
* Round table discussions with justice chain as well as online training were organized by the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania involving representatives of NGOs.

 **3. Establishment of a training centre and renovation of up to two pilot correctional centres** * A modification of the Programme Agreement was approved by the donors in September 2022, which included allocation of the reserve to the Programme and changes in the pre-defined project „Development of Quality Based Lithuanian Correctional Service System“.

The modification was related with:* Stopping the plan to build a new Training Centre Upgrading and rebuilding of an existing building to become the New Training Centre in Antavilai instead of construction of a new building. Procurement procedures for repair works, furniture and equipment for Training centre are under implementation.
* Instead of building a new 200 cell type living facility in the Vilnius Correction House there will be established an activity centre for inmates and outdoor sports  facilities as well as the Employment Centre will be established at  Pravieniškės 1st Prison. The  Procurement of technical design project of the Employment Centre at  Pravieniškės 1st Prison  was being prepared and the public procurement documents of Employment Centre of Vilnius Prison was being prepared in 2022.

**4. Focusing on the concept of the European judicial culture and the European Convention on Human Rights in the programme area “Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening the Rule of Law”** * The New model for selection and evaluation of judges was prepared and legal acts implementing the new model were prepared and approved.
* The Study on managerial competencies for effective management of courts was prepared.
* The Study on conducting of court proceedings was prepared.
* In 2022, the technical specifications of the repair works of three courts (Tauragė District Court, Panevėžys District Court, and Panevėžys Regional Court) were prepared. Construction works are expected to start in the  2nd quarter of 2023.

**5. Focusing on bilateral cooperation with the Norwegian Police Service to combat cross-border and organised crime*** The training courses (workshop on fingerprints and probabilities organized by University of Lausanne) was attended by representatives of the Lithuanian Police Forensic Science Centre together with colleagues from the Norvegian National Criminal Investigation Service (KRIPOS).
* Six operational meetings in Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Netherlands were carried out in co-operation with KRIPOS or other European law enforcement agencies.

**6. Focusing on the objectives and values behind the Istanbul Convention, policy improvements, police investigations, court proceedings and best practice developments.*** Study on the implementation of legal regulations with recommendations for improvements in the area of domestic violence was being developed.
* Workshops with Oslo Police District on the topic of domestic violence took place in Lithuania and in Norway.
* Awareness raising meetings for the public to promote a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence were arranged.
* Two round table discussions among justice chain authorities and 40 meetings in local municipalities were organized.
* Project representatives participated in the digital events of the SYNERGY Network against gender-based and domestic violence.

Servers and body-worn cameras were purchased and delivered.  |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | Overall risk of not absorbing of all funds and not achieving some targets is medium.In 2022, the risk that the pre-defined project **LT-JUSTICE-0003**  would not achieve some indicators within the eligibility period of the project has been reduced. A modification of the Programme Agreement was approved in September 2022, the project steering group was established, weekly meetings of the project promotor and the Ministry of Justice have been organized to discuss and speed up activities.Risk of price increase for construction materials is mitigated by constantly conducting market research related to the price assessment of construction materials. Expenditure categories of projects are/will be reviewed and, if necessary, savings are/will be transferred to cover the increased prices. Risk of delay in public procurement is mitigated by keeping implementing ex-ante assessment of procurement documents, providing consultations and advice to the project promoter. |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with Donor State entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme**  | A number of important bilateral initiatives and meetings that strengthened bilateral relations on both Programme and project levels were organized:* Lithuania’s Justice and Home Affairs Programme participation in the SYNERGY Network against gender-based and domestic violence is funded by the Bilateral Fund.
* Three workshops with the aim to share and exchange knowledge, challenges, and experiences in the work with cases concerning domestic violence together with Oslo Police were organized in the project LT-JUSTICE-0004.

The meeting with representatives of KDI, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania and FMO was organized in 2022 by PO regarding Modification of the Programme Agreement.  |

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## LT-INNOVATION Business Development, Innovation and SMEs

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:**  Innovation Agency (Programme Agreement amendment – transfer of PO functions from Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology to the Innovation Agency – entered into force from 4 July 2022)**DPP(-s)**):Innovation Norway.**Other Programme Partner:** the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania. |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 14,402,000EEA Grants: EUR 0Norway Grants: EUR 14,402,000 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementatio**n | **Programme agreement signed**: 17 September  2019**Programme launch event**: 12 November  2019 **Programme MCS approved by NFC:** 20 April 2020. **Programme implementation status:**In 2022, Programme projects (which contracts were signed in 2021) continued,  two new open calls were launched. Under the open call (under focus area of green industry innovation (hereinafter – GII) there were 3 new contracts signed at the end of the third quarter of 2022, while the call for the development of business skills was not successful, and no new project contracts were signed. |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **Increasing competitiveness of the Lithuanian private enterprises by innovation in two focus areas: GII, including bio economy, and information and communication technologies (hereinafter – ICT).**The two focus areas are directly transferred to the call texts. Investments in projects are expected to ensure a long-term tangible impact measured by developed, commercialised and applied products or technologies, growth in net operational profit and turnover, new jobs created and decrease of CO2 emissions as well as the energy consumption. Additionally, the Programme designed to stimulate BRs and new collaborative activities between the Lithuanian and Norwegian industry. |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | The call (which was launched in the first quarter of 2022) for the development of business skills was not successful, because after the eligibility assessment, all 4 submitted applications were rejected.During the Cooperation Committee meeting, which took place on 23 June 2022, it was agreed to use unallocated funds under the Programme by launching a new call (under focus area of ICT), which shall focus on application, i.e., automation and digitalization of manufacturing processes in Lithuanian private entities. The Call was launched on 4 January 2023.Programme implementation was quite slow in 2022. The main reasons:-project promoters tend to postpone procurements, although this process takes a lot of time;- project partners, tend to join projects later than it was planned, and also fail to submit relevant documents for the incurred expenditure to be declared on time.In order to manage these risks, PO regularly meets and communicates with project promoters and partners, advises on issues of concern, draws up action plans by mutual agreement and monitors their implementation. |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with Donor State entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme**  | Bilateral Outcome: All 20 contracted projects are bilateral and are being implemented with at least one Norwegian partner. High number of bilateral projects was achieved by a combination of communication activities implemented prior to launch of the calls. |
| **Work plan outlining the milestones for the implementation of the programme over the next year (according to the supplementary information) – including, as relevant, expected calls, meetings of the CC(s), and information and communication activities**  |

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| **Timing***04/01/2023**28/03/2023**03/04/2023**20/04/2023**30/04/2023**19/05/2023**8/09/2023**17/11/2023* | **Milestone***Open call No 4 for projects under the ICT focus area is launched**Cooperation Committee meeting**Changes in PO organisational structure**Selection committee meeting**Projects are selected / Decision to finance projects is made**Contracts with Project Promoters are signed**Mid-term event**Cooperation Committee meeting* |

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## LT-ENVIRONMENT Environment, Energy, Climate Change

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:** CPMA.**DPP(s):** N/A.**Other Programme Partner(s):** The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania  |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 12,000,000EEA Grant: EUR 0Norway Grant: EUR 12,000,000 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementation:** | **Signature of the programme agreement:** 11February  2020**Programme implementation status:**Seven pre-defined projects were ongoing; in 2022, project promoters were carrying out public procurements to purchase goods and services in the projects. The main activities are being implemented in most of the projects, but not all projects have demonstrated an impact on Programme’s results framework yet. |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **All the specific concerns stated in the MoU are relevant and now are at the implementation stage.**Decommissioning of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant and secure waste management will be addressed by PDP 4 “Safety of Ignalina NPP Radioactive Waste Management” with Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant acting as the project promoter and the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority acting as DPP. The establishment of an early warning system on nuclear safety of Lithuania will be addressed by PDP 7 “Development of An Early Warning System on Nuclear Emergency of Lithuania“ with the State Fire and Rescue Service acting as the project promoter and the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority acting as DPP.Measures related to hazardous waste and marine management capacity will be addressed by PDP 1 “Monitoring of marine litter“, PDP 2 “Improved mapping and monitoring of the ecological status of marine and inland waters“ and PDP 3 “HAZ-IDENT“. |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | Overall risk of the Programme has decreased compared to the previous reporting period.There are some delays in achieving Programme indicators, some of the indicators will not be achieved PDP 7 (“Development of An Early Warning System on Nuclear Emergency of Lithuania“) but by the end of the Programme majority of planned indicators shall be achieved as foreseen. It is planned to include the small grant scheme call (SGS) activities in the scope of the project PDP 6 (“ClimAdapt-LT”). In PDP 7 the project promoter refuses the development of the single emergency information system, additional purchase of 130 sirens is being considered.The request for the amendments of PA will be sent to the FMO at the end of the I Q of 2023. |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with Donor State entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme:**  | Project promoters and partners from donor states are cooperating and communicating by e-mail and online meetings. Three bilateral initiatives were implemented by the partners of the pre-defined projects: • PDP 7 “Development of an early warning system on nuclear emergency of Lithuania”. In June 2022 a meeting in Tromso was organized where the FRD, State Nuclear Power Safety Inspectorate (VATESI) meet the project partner - the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (DSA). The purpose of the meeting – to discuss civil protection exercise scenarios, preparation and evaluation strategy. Preliminary scenarios and activities have been agreed. In the meeting there were 18 participants (12 from Lithuania, 6 from Norway).• PDP 3 “HAZ-IDENT”. In October 2022 a meeting in Oslo was organized where the representatives of Lithuanian environmental institutions (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania; Environmental Protection Agency of Lithuania; Environmental Protection Department of Lithuania) met with the representatives of Norwegian institutions (Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment; Norwegian Environment Agency) and business enterprises (NOAH and “Revac AS”). The purpose of the meeting - to share good practices applied in Norway regarding the management of hazardous waste, identification and classification of hazardous waste, and control of waste handlers. In the meeting there were 24 participants (15 from Lithuania, 9 from Norway).• PDP 4 “Safety Enhancement of Ignalina NPP Radioactive Waste management”. In November 2022 the first project coordination meeting in Oslo was organized where the State Enterprise Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (INPP) met the project partner – DSA. The purpose of the meeting – to assess the conditions for the implementation of the project until 15 April 2024. This includes the review of the agreements between the project partners, as well as the review of the project implementation plan and project budget. In the meeting there were 5 participants (3 from Lithuania, 2 from Norway). |

## LT-RESEARCH Research

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:**  The Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter – RCL)**DPP(s):*** The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (DIKU)
* The National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)
* The Research Council of Norway (RCN).

**Other Programme Partner:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania  |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 10,757,000EEA Grants: EUR 10,757,000Norway Grants: EUR 0 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementation**  | In January, 2022, RCL have completed the independent expert evaluation of 12 projects’ annual reports, which aim to check whether the projects are on track to meeting their objectives and executing work planned for the reporting period, also, whether the expenditure for activities in the project fit initially planned. The independent experts approved all 12 annual reports. |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **All the specific concerns stated in the MoU are relevant and now are at the implementation stage.**The programme has one main objective for research - Enhanced performance of Baltic research internationally.Apart of value added generated by cooperation and collaboration between Baltic and donor states at various levels, the programme based on a joint research response to common societal challenges increases the socio-economic impact of R&D. The experts when evaluating projects’ annual reports also stressed important aspects disclosing essential features of the impact on dealing with the economic and social sustainability issues by promoting new working places, reducing CO2 pollution, providing technological innovations internationally including Baltic and Nordic countries, generating new knowledge, providing opportunities for young researchers to participate in world class research. |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | Overall risk of the Programme has not changed as compared to the previous reporting period.Indicators *Number of joint applications for further funding* and *Number of jointly registered applications for Intellectual Property Protection* will not be achieved because of too ambitious targets settled for the indicators. For mitigation this problem RCL continue regularly and precisely follow the implementation of the projects towards indicators’ targets have to be achieved. The project promoters will be informed and consulted on the indicators individually, distributing them advices by email and also in seminars organised on the implementation aspects, including indicators.  |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with Donor State entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme**  | New bilateral fund initiative launched by programme operator in the middle of 2022 gives an opportunity to strengthening existing or creating new relations between the Lithuanian research organisations and researchers and partners from donor countries. Those applicants which were not selected for funding under the Baltic Research Programme call in Lithuania in 2020 are given another opportunity to apply to this call. 11 applications have been submitted in total in 2022: 4 applications to Iceland and 7 to Norway. After administrative check, all of them were approved for funding. The applicants applied for the funds of almost € 16,000. This bilateral fund initiative can be continued till 31/03/2024.On 26-27 September, 2022, in the frame of the Programme Committee meeting in Vilnius, the PC members and observers participated in site visits of all 12 projects implemented in Vilnius, Kaunas and Kaunas region. Based on the information provided in presentations and complemented orally by the presenters, each PC member has estimated their observations on each joint project effectiveness and implementation by fulfilling a special form with their grades. |

## LT-HEALTH Health

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:** CPMA.**DDP(s):** The Norwegian Institute of Public Health**Other Programme Partners:** The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania; The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 15,264,000EEA Grants: EUR 15,264,000Norway Grants: EUR 0 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementation**  | **Signature of the Programme agreement:** 3September  2019**PDP assessment:** all 5 contracts of PDPs were signed in early 2020. All PDPs are under implementation or in the last implementation stage. **Calls for proposals:** all calls have been fully completed, all projects were contracted. In total, 64 projects are under implementation.  |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **All specific concerns in the MoU were addressed in the Programme agreement. All projects with activities focused on children and youth mental health are already under implementation.**The Programme provides support for mental health promotion and prevention measures with particular emphasis on the well-being of children and youth as well as their families by promoting:* evidence-based activities by targeting and correcting children and youth behaviour problems;
* consulting services for people experiencing emotional difficulties;
* home visitation early intervention model;
* youth-friendly health care services;
* multi-dimensional family therapy;
* other.
 |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | Overall risk of the Programme has not changed as compared to the previous reporting period.There are some delays in achieving Programme’s indicators but project promoters put great effort aiming that by the end of the Programme all planned indicators shall be achieved as foreseen. Some projects have been extended in order to fully achieve all project outputs and indicators. Due to Covid-19 and restrictions on meetings, activities that required contact meetings started more intensively only in 2022.In 2022, amendment to the Programme agreement was initiated and finalized in order to reallocate funds of the Programme between measures to finance new projects or additional activities of the projects which are already under implementation. |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with donor state entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme**  | There were several important visits and meetings organized in the reporting period that strengthened bilateral relations on both Programme and project levels:* Study visit in Norway on the improvement and implementation of long-term care in Lithuania;
* 2 international visits to Norway and Netherlands and 1 remote international conference took place in the pre-defined project “Multidimensional Approach to Children and Youth Behavioural Problems through Implementation of the MDFT Programme”;
* 1 experience exchange (new “Headspace” model training) with donor partners from Island was performed in Lithuania in the project “Valley of Joy "Implementation of the model for improving the mental and emotional health of children and youth").
 |

## LT-CULTURE Culture

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| **COMMON INFORMATION:** |
| **Responsible institutions:** | **PO:** CPMA.**DPP(s):** The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Arts and Culture Norway**Other Programme Partner(s):** The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania |
| **Programme Grant:** | Total: EUR 7,000,000EEA Grants: EUR 7,000,000 Norway Grants: EUR 0 |
| **STATUS OF THE PROGRAMME:** |
| **Overall progress – Programme development and implementation**  | **The programme agreement signed**: 19 June  2019**PDP assessment:** project agreement for PDP “FIXUS” signed on 12 December 2019. Project activities have been implemented.**Calls for proposals:** 2 open calls are fully completed, all projects selected are contracted. In total, 16 projects are under implementation. |
| **How specific concerns in the MoU have been addressed:** | **To stimulate local development and regeneration through support for cultural, creative and cultural heritage revitalization activities that involve and empower local communities, to ensure social inclusion and anti-discrimination and cross-sector partnerships.**Regarding Open Call 1 with the primary goal to improve the access to culture and enhance cultural education, the importance of partnership between international, national, regional and local organisations putting emphasis on multi-level cooperation, including local stakeholders, and addressing their specific needs, is attached and was available in the Guidelines for applicants.Within Open Call 2, which aims at supporting local cultural entrepreneurship, the importance of local context of specific communities was also communicated in the Guidelines for applicants.The PDP of the Programme aims at stimulating the revitalisation of local-level cultural heritage via consultations to heritage owners on the subject of maintenance of those objects. |
| **Problems related to programme development and implementation, with suggested solutions**  | Overall risk of the Programme has not changed as compared to the previous reporting period.There are some delays in achieving the Programme indicators but by the end of the Programme all planned indicators will be achieved as foreseen.Due to pandemic there were some delays in implementation of project activities but 2022 was a critical year when many activities took a strong pace.Infrastructural projects have faced serious challenges in 2022 due to rapidly increasing prices of goods, services, construction works, energy prices and inflation. The shortage of staff in construction business has also influenced problems with deadlines, failed public procurements. In order to solve these challenges, project promoters managed to get additional funds, project implementation time was extended. |
| **Progress in strengthening BR with donor state entities, including the use of bilateral funds allocated to the programme**  | There were several important visits and meetings organized in the reporting period that strengthened bilateral relations on both Programme and project levels. For instance, virtual meetings of the Cooperation Committee, meeting of the Programme Operators in Vilnius and Kaunas; various joint exchange events between project promoters and Donor partners. |

# 4. Status of bilateral funds

**The status of the FBR in the programmes.** The allocations from the FBR in the programmes are made by organising open calls or based on pre-defined activities. The allocations set in the MoU are distributed by POs in cooperation with the CC (where applicable). The FBR spending in 2022 is presented in the last column of Table 1 below.

*Table 1. Fund for Bilateral Relations Programme Budgets and Expenditure Rates:*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **EEA** | **NOR** | **Expression of interest for additional funding** | **EEA & NOR 2014–2021, Total** | **Expenditure by 03/2022** | **Expenditure by 03/2023** (expenditure in the reporting period) |
| Research | 100,000 |   | - | 100,000 | 24,976 | 15,159.35 |
| Business Development, Innovation and SMEs | - | 125,000 | - | 125,000 | 51,904 | 17,398.15 |
| Environment, Energy, Climate Change | - | 45,000 |   | 45,000 | 4,719 | 8,834.29 |
| Culture | 100,000 | - | 68,774.55 | 168,774.55 | 52,188 | - |
| Health | 100,000 | - | 53,550 | 153,550 | 27,723 | 534.17 |
| Justice and Home Affairs | 75,000 | 125,000 | 163,567 | 363,567 | 98,583.72 | 17,533.78 |
| **Total:** | **375,000** | **325,000** | **255,891.55** | **955,891.55** | **260,093.72** | **59,459.74** |

As seen in the Table 1 above, all the programmes (except for Culture) have incurred expenditure over the year of 2022. Similarly to previous years, Justice and Home Affairs programme remains the most active programme in terms of being engaged in the development of bilateral relations. Culture programme has not incurred any expenditure/implemented any activities largely due to delay of previously planned bilateral activities that should begin in the second part of 2023. The delay was significantly impacted by the changes in staff from both Donor and Beneficiary state partners. Although the levels of incurred expenditure are still relatively low and account for 33% of total funding assigned to the bilateral objective on the programme level, there is a positive trend of increased bilateral activity compared to the COVID-19 pandemic period. According to the NFP survey, programme operators are well-acquainted with the current expenditure status of the FBR and have established plans for bilateral activities in the future that should significantly bridge the gap between available funding and incurred expenditure levels.

Health and Culture programme operators have identified an additional demand to fund bilateral activities in the future and expressed interests for additional funding from the FBR to the JCBF. Additional funding requests were approved in their entirety (Culture) or in part (Health). Contrary, as a result of the NFP survey, Environment, Energy, Climate Change programme operator has reassessed programme’s ability to use all of the available funds by the final eligibility of expenditure date (30 April 2025) and after JCBF’s permission returned EUR 30,000 of funds assigned to the programme to other FBR funding needs.

**The status of the FBR outside the programmes**.

*Table 2. Activities of the NFP in 2022 (until March 2023):*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Activity** | **Date** | **Result** |
| Regular consultations with the potential BR initiative promoters on funding possibilities from the FBR. | All year | 5 BR initiative funding proposals and 2 concept notes received.  |
| Pre-evaluation of the BR initiatives proposed by the various potential initiative promoters. | All year | 5 BR initiative proposals and 2 concept notes pre-evaluated. |
| Organization of the JCBF meetings (written procedures) for the consideration of proposed BR initiatives. | All year | 4 BR initiatives approved for funding.  |
| Evaluation of expressions of interest from the programme operators (Health and Culture) for additional funding. | All year | 2 expressions of interest for additional funding evaluated and put forward for the consideration to the JCBF. |
| Organization of JCBF meetings (written procedures) for the consideration of proposed expressions of interest by the programme operators (Health and Culture) for funding. | All year | 2 expressions of interest for additional funding approved in part or in entirety by the JCBF. |
| Work Plan renewal | November – December 2022 | Work plan renewal approved by the JCBF on 15 December 2022. |
| Organisation of 2 the JCBF annual meetings.  | May and December 2022 | 20 May 2022 Annual meeting decisions: -  Prioritize pre-defined initiative proposals that address the refugee crisis in Lithuania;- Reallocate available funds for BR activities in Environment programme to other FBR funding needs.- Approve funding for one pre-defined bilateral initiative to address Ukrainian refugee needs. 15 December 2022 Annual meeting decisions:- Approve Work Plan renewal.- Approve additional funding for Health programme based on expression of interest by the programme operator. |
| Preparation of the Annual Strategic Report 2022 | February – March 2023 | Approval of the Annual Strategic Report 2022 by the JCBF. |

Since the outbreak of russia’s invasion in Ukraine, the NFP’s and JCBF’s all year activities largely revolved on efforts to address the refugee crisis in Lithuania as Donor States deemed the FBR as the most appropriate source to fund such purpose. Accordingly, the NFP analysed the funding needs and determined that since the humanitarian refugee needs were significantly addressed by the NGOs, volunteers and public authorities, more efforts could be focused in funding Ukrainian diaspora projects with a bottom-up approach. In cooperation with Open Lithuania Foundation – programme operator of the Civil Society programme, an initiative group of local Ukrainian refugees and Lithuanians was formed. As a result, three project ideas were developed and later approved by the JCBF (total funding for 3 projects – EUR 367,500). More information about the projects, their aim and main activities can be found in part 3 of the strategic report.

The strategic areas for bilateral cooperation agreed by the JCBF were supplemented by the Ukrainian refugee needs and currently are as follows: cooperation between municipalities in the field of cultural heritage; sharing best practices between institutions and/or relevant organisations in the sphere of innovation (investment approach in social investment area, social innovations in business, services delivery sector, health technology assessment), children’s rights and human rights, equal opportunities, cooperation between the Lithuanian and Norwegian municipalities in the field of entrepreneurship, Ukrainian refugee needs.

*Table 3. The List of the BR Initiatives Approved by the JCBF (N.B. BR Initiatives marked in green are already completed):*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Title** | **Implementing entity** | **Partner(s)** | **Allocation, EUR** | **Implementation period** |
| 1 | Exchange of Experience in Investment Approach in the Social Investment Area | CPMA | Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, MoF of the Republic of Lithuania | 40,000 | 3-4 Q of 2019 |
| 2 | Promotion of Social Innovations Related to Welfare Technologies: Pre-Study on Bilateral Opportunities in the Welfare Sector | Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology (ASIT) | Innovation Norway | 15,999.07 | 1 Q of 2019 – 3 Q of 2020(was prolonged upon request of the initiative promoter) |
| 3 | Improvement of the Lithuanian Innovation System | ASIT | Innovation Norway | 34,568.12 | 3 Q of 2019 –     2 Q of 2022(prolonged by the request of the initiative promoter) |
| 4 | Protection of the Rights of the Child | Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania | Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection;State Children’s Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the MoSSL of the Republic of Lithuania | 21,959 | 2 Q of 2019 –4 Q of 2020(was prolonged upon request of the initiative promoter) |
| 5 | Cycle of Events "Cultural Routes as a Tool for Promoting Regional Development" | Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania | Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Norwegian Association of Municipalities, Arts Council Norway; Lithuanian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, Lithuanian Council for Culture, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, College of Cultural Self-Government | 34,640.77 | 2 Q of 2019 – 1 Q of 2020(was prolonged upon request of the initiative promoter) |
| 6 | Baltic Pride 2019: Promoting LGBT\* Human Rights through the Norwegian-Baltic Cooperation | National LGBT\* Rights Association LGL | Oslo Pride; Association of LGBT and their friends Mozaika; Estonian LGBT Association | 41,000 | 1-4 Q of 2019 |
| 7 | Strengthening the Assessment of Public Health Interventions through the Norwegian-Lithuanian Cooperation | Institute of Hygiene | Norwegian Institute of Public Health;Lithuanian University of Health Sciences | 57,487.72 | 3 Q of 2019 – 4 Q of 2021(prolonged upon request of the initiative promoter) |
| 8 | The Creation of International Synergies in Correctional Service Area | Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania | Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service;Prison Department under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania;Training Centre Under the Prison Department | 146,988 | 4 Q of 2020 – 2 Q of 2025 |
| 9 | #HATEFREE: Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation Between Norway and Lithuania in Tackling Hate Speech and Promoting Equal Opportunities | Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson of the Republic of Lithuania | Royal Norwegian Embassy in Vilnius;Public institution Nomoshiti Initiative | 79,345.94 | 1 Q of 2021 –     2 Q of 2022 |
| 10 | Leadership Conference “reFOCUS” for business executives and decision makers | ISM University of Management and Economics | Royal Norwegian Embassy in Vilnius;Lithuanian-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce;Norwegian-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce | 36,479 | 1 Q of 2021 – 2 / 3 Q of 2021 |
| 11 | Mainstreaming equal opportunities in twin cities (Vilnius-Oslo) | National LGBT Rights Association LGL | Oslo City Municipality;Vilnius City Municipality;Lithuanian Diversity Charter | 149,060.03 | 2 Q of 2021 – 4Q 2022  |
| 12 | Strengthening the Capacities for Evaluation of Public Health Programs Implemented in Lithuania Through Norwegian-Lithuanian Cooperation | Institute of Hygiene (Lithuania) | Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Lithuania);Norwegian Institute of Public Health (Norway);Regional Centre for Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Welfare (Norway) | 90,000 | 3 Q 2022 – 4 Q 2024 |
| 13 | UA+LT= TULA. Mutual integration of Lithuanian and Ukrainian families | NGO social change incubator “Domus solis” | NGO Open Khata (UA);NGO Zorelovy (UA);NGO Kaunas School “Atradimai” (LT);NGO “Varnų sala“ (LT);Vilnius Kunigaikštis Gedminas Progymnasium (LT);NGO “Interstela” (LT). | 184,700 | 2 Q 2022 – 3 Q 2023 |
| 14 | A new format of education for Lithuanian- Ukrainian classes | Vilnius University of Applied Sciences (VIKO) |   | 140,000 | 3 Q 2022 – 3 Q 2023 |
| 15 | Rethink Ukraine | VšĮ Civic Initiatives | Public association “Integral Institute for Integral Development” (Ukraine);VšĮ Open Lithuania Foundation  | 42,800 | 1 Q 2023 – 4 Q 2023 |
|   | **Total:** | **1,115,027.65** |   |

Drawing from Table 3 above, since the outset of the programming period the JCBF has approved 15 pre-defined BR initiatives on the national level. 10 BR initiatives have been already completed and 5 are ongoing. Total funding disbursed to the pre-defined BR initiatives amounts to EUR 1,115,027.65, out of which, according to the most recent estimates, 90% have been already incurred.

The distribution of the FBR funding/ allocations outside the programme is/are indicated in Table 5 below.

*Table 5. Work Plan Allocations:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | **Budget,** **EUR** |
| Activities carried out by the NFP |   |
| Pre-defined activities outside the programmes *(total budget for approved pre-defined initiatives by the JCBF)* | 1,115,027.65 |
| Funds for programmes (MoU + EoI) | 955,891.55 |
| Funds still to be allocated for the 2019–2021 period for pre-defined initiatives outside the programmes | 0.00 |
| Funds set aside for the 2022–2024 period for pre-defined initiatives outside the programmes | 0.00 |
| Funds to be allocated | 283,080.8 |
| **TOTAL** | **2,354,000.00** |

# 5. Management and implementation

## a. Management and control systems (MCS)

In order to ensure the uniform implementation of the requirements for Mechanisms and all the programmes, also taking into account the scope of the programmes and institutional administrative experience from the previous funding periods, the National level DMSC of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms was approved on 16 December 2019.

Amendments of the National level DMSC of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms:

* On 24 April 2020 due to the structural changes of the CPMA (the name of the division responsible for the administration of the Bilateral Cooperation Fund has been changed and the subordination of the Law and Quality Control Division moved from the Director of the International Programme Management Department to the Deputy Director). The FMO was informed about these changes on 5 May 2020.
* On 23 May 2022 due to the structural changes of the CPMA (the Financial Division in the Lithuanian and International Investment Department was abolished, after this the project financiers were transferred to the EEA/NOR division. The independence and functional separation of the staff responsible for verifying expenditure incurred and certifying payments from the other staff responsible for implementing the programme is ensured by separation of staff subordination). The FMO was informed about these changes on 13 January 2022.
* On 30 January 2023 due to the transfer of PO functions from Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology to the Innovation Agency (Programme Agreement amendment entered into force on 4 July 2022) and due to a new structure of the NFP (transfer of the evaluation of Programmes function from Fiscal Policy Department of the MoF to Public Investment and Project Evaluation Division of the MoF).

DMCSs of all programmes (“Culture”, “Health”, “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs”, (“Research”, “Environment, Energy, Climate Change”,” Justice and Home Affairs“) was prepared and reviewed by the AA during the previous reporting periods. The information on DMCS of each programme is provided in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **Unqualified audit opinion** |
| Culture  | 27 November 2019  |
| Health  | 6 January 2020  |
| Business Development, Innovation and SMEs | 6 February 2020 |
| Research  | 16 June 2020 |
| Environment, Energy, Climate Change | 15 July 2020 |
| Justice and Home Affairs | 10 July 2020  |
| Business Development, Innovation and SMEs | 1 December 2022 |

## b. Complaints

During the reporting period, no complaints were received regarding the 2014-2021 European Economic Area and Norwegian financial mechanisms.

## c. Irregularities

During the reporting period from 20 March 2022 to 20 March 2023, seven irregularities in projects were detected, out of which:

* Five minor irregularities, which fell under the provisions of Article 12.5 (3) of the Regulations and should be reported only upon request from the FMO;
* One irregularity in project No LT01-6S-GP-VI-001 (Bilateral Funds for Programme LT-JUSTICE), which fell under the provisions of Article 12.5 (2) of the Regulations, was detected on 13/05/2022 and reported to the FMO on 22/02/2023. The case of the irregularity is related to the expenses of bank account operations and account management fees and the ineligible expenditure related to the irregularity equals to EUR 32.45.
* One irregularity in project No LT06-5-GP-VI-001 (LT-JUSTICE), which fell under the provisions of Article 12.5 (2) of the Regulations, was detected on 19/04/2022 and reported to the FMO on 22/02/2023. The case of the irregularity is related to the expenses of bank account operations and account management fees and the ineligible expenditure related to the irregularity equals to EUR 146.22 (including grant and national co-financing).

There were no irregularities, which fell under the provisions of Article 12.5 (1) of the Regulations, detected.

## d. Audit

During the reporting period the AA performed:

* The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Health Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021.
* The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Culture Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021.
* The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Innovation, Business Development, and SMEs Programme under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021
* The audit of declared expenditure of the Programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021.

These audits were planned and performed in regard to the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of Article 5.5(1) of the Regulations and the results of the risk assessment.

The purpose of the system audits was to analyse the actual functioning of the MCS of the Programmes and to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the functioning of the MCS of the Programmes, i.e. to analyse and assess whether the MCS of the Programmes is working well and ensures the successful achievement of the objectives and results, the appropriate and efficient use of funds of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 as well as reasonableness, legality and eligibility of the expenditure declared.

The purpose of the declared expenditure audit was to verify the declared expenditure of the Programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 and to assess whether these expenditure have been incurred and paid without prejudice to the Regulations, Memoranda of Understanding, other legislation of donor states and the Republic of Lithuania governing the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 and are correct, legal, reasonable and eligible for funding from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 and co-financing (in case of co-financing).

The information on the results and findings of the aforementioned audits is provided below.

**The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Health Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021**

After completing the audit procedures, it was determined that the PO and the PP carry out the attributed functions and procedures set out in the Regulation, Memorandum of Understanding, other legislation of donor states and the Republic of Lithuania, procedure manuals and guidelines governing the management and control of the Financial Mechanisms. Regarding the effectiveness of the functioning of the Programme MCS, the final estimate was as follows: **works well** (minor improvements are needed). According to the assessment methodology, such a final estimate was the basis **for an unqualified opinion** (the MCS of the Health Programme works well and effectively, ensures the successful implementation of the Programme, the achievement of the envisaged objectives and results of the Programme, the proper and efficient use of assistance and reasonableness, legality and eligibility of the expenditure declared).

**The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Culture Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021**

After the audit procedures, it was determined the PO and the PP carry out the attributed functions and procedures set out in the Regulation, Memorandum of Understanding, other legislation of donor states and the Republic of Lithuania, procedure manuals and guidelines governing the management and control of the Financial Mechanisms. Regarding the effectiveness of the functioning of the Programme MCS, the final estimate was as follows: **works well (**justone minor observation has been made regarding the amendment to the procedure manual). According to the assessment methodology, such a final estimate was the basis for **an unqualified opinion** (the MCS of the Culture Programme works well and effectively, ensures the successful implementation of the Programme, the achievement of the envisaged objectives and results of the Programme, the proper and efficient use of assistance and reasonableness, legality and eligibility of the expenditure declared).

**The audit of effectiveness of functioning of the MCS of the Business Development, and SMEs Programme** **under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021**

Summarising the audit findings, it can be concluded that the PO and the PP perform the functions and procedures assigned by the Regulation, the Memorandum of Understanding and other legal acts of the donor states and the Republic of Lithuania, Programme DMCS and the guidelines governing the management and control of the Financial Mechanisms, but 8 observations have been identified, relating to description and assignment of the procedures, performance of the PP functions.

After summarising the results, the final estimate for the effectiveness of the functioning of the MCS of Programme was as follows: **works**. According to the assessment methodology, such a final estimate was the basis for **an unqualified opinion** (MCS of the Programme works, ensures the implementation of the Programme, the achievement of the envisaged objectives and results of the Programme, the proper and efficient use of assistance and reasonableness, legality and eligibility of the expenditure declared).

Considering all the findings of the audit of the effectiveness of the functioning of the MCS of the Programme, it should be noted that there is no reason to recognize that findings and disadvantages should be considered to be of a systemic character. Moreover, no irregularities or significant deficiencies were found during this audit.

It also should be noted that the PO of the Programme changed in 2022. Until 31 August 2022, the operator of that Programme was Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology (MITA), and since 1 September 2022 the Innovation Agency is entrusted with the functions of the PO of the Programme laid down in Article 5.6 of the Regulation. The change of the PO and the MCS of the Programme Operator was assessed during this audit. It was established that this change has no negative impact on the successful implementation of the Programme. In addition, it should be noted that the audit has not determined any significant weaknesses in the compliance and functioning of the MCS due to the change in the PO. In view of the above, we consider that the changes of the MCS and the PO of the Programme are compatible with the provisions of the Regulation. Also, such changes of the MCS of the Programme are not in prejudice to the provisions laid down in the Memorandum of Understanding, other legal acts and guidelines of the donor states and the Republic of Lithuania governing the management and control of Financial Mechanisms.

It should be noted that no irregularities were found during all these audits.

**Audit of declared expenditure of the Programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021**

After completing all audit procedures, no ineligible declared expenditure was found. Since the total error rate (TER) < 2, it was concluded that all expenditure of the programmes (projects costs and programme management costs), technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 declared to the FMO in 2022 were incurred without prejudice to the Regulations, Memoranda of Understanding, other legislation of donor states and the Republic of Lithuania governing the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021, and is correct, legal, reasonable and eligible for funding from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 and co-financing (in case of co-financing).

According to the assessment methodology, such a final estimate was the basis for **an unqualified audit opinion** stating that, according to the audit procedures, in all relevant aspects, the declared expenditure of the programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 is correct, legal, reasonable and eligible for funding from the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 and co-financing (in case of co-financing).

In addition, it should be noted that neither observations nor recommendations were provided in the Audit Report on Expenditure of the Programmes, Technical Assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021 Declared in 2022. Also, no irregularities were found during this audit.

# 6. Monitoring and evaluation

## a. Monitoring

The NFP constantly monitors the progress and quality of the implementation of the programmes by participating in the Programme Committee meetings as an observer, also analyses and checks the annual programme implementation report submitted by the PO, monitors the FBR implementation, also supervises the functions delegated to the CPMA. The NFP constantly analyses risks related to a successful implementation of all programmes, the supervision is carried out by taking into account the Risk Management Plan.

The NFP supervises and ensures the information and communication of the Grants (for more information see Annex E“Communication summary”).

## b. Evaluation

Two evaluations of all programmes, except for the Programme “Active Citizens Fund” and the “Social Dialogue - Decent work” are planned, the first one, the mid-term evaluation, was planned in 2022, the second one, the final evaluation (ex-post) – in 2024. The evaluation of the Baltic Research Programme is also planned in 2023.

The mid-term evaluation has been already completed in December 2022[[1]](#_ftn1). The evaluation covered 6 programmes: „Health”, “Culture”, “Environment”, “Energy”, and “Climate Change”, “Justice and Home Affairs”, “Business Development, Innovations and SMEs” and “Research”. It also included the evaluation of the Bilateral Cooperation Fund implemented through these programmes. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and impact of the programmes' investments in order to improve the use of programmes’ investments in Lithuania. The results of the evaluation were presented in an evaluation report, which also contains evaluation recommendations. The evaluation report was presented at the public evaluation presentation event in December 2022. The relevant institutions were informed about the evaluation recommendations intended for them.

The evaluation of the Baltic Research Programme was started and public procurement was launched in January 2023 and proposals are currently being assessed. The contract is planned to be signed in March 2023.

[[1]](#_ftnref1) Interim Evaluation of the European Economic Area and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms for Lithuania in the Programming Period 2014 - 2021

# 7. Issues for the annual meeting

# ANNEXES

**A. Risk assessment and management plan**

**B. Evaluation plan**

**C. Cooperation with Donor Programme Partners and/or International Partner Organisations**

**D. Technical assistance report**

**E. Communication summary**

## Annex A: Risk assessment and management plan

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LT-JUSTICE** | **Overall level of risk****3** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible delays due to the public procurement process. | A constant supervision of the processes until the construction contracts are signed. | Ex-ante assessment of procurement documents, providing consultations and advice to the project promoter on public procurements. | Ex-ante assessment of procurement documents, providing consultations and advice to the project promoter on public procurements. |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Several coordination meetings organised in 2022. | Regular common coordination meetings in the future to mitigate risk of not absorbing all funds and not achieving some targets. |
| Price increase for construction materials. | Allocation of reserve funds, thus creating a safety pillow for possible price increases. | Constantly conducting market research related to the price assessment of construction materials, allocation of reserve funds. | In the event of an increase in the price of construction materials, other expenditure categories are/will be reviewed and, if necessary, savings are/will be transferred to cover the increased prices. |
| **LT-INNOVATION** | **Overall level of risk****1** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Ongoing communication with PO. Participation in Cooperation Committee meetings. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. |
| **LT-ENVIRONMENT** | **Overall level of risk****1** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Ongoing communication with PO. Ad hoc meetings with PO and national Programme partner. Participation in Programme Committee meetings. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. |
| **LT-RESEARCH** | **Overall level of risk****1** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Several coordination meetings organised in 2022, with participation PO from Baltic countries and donors.Participation in Cooperation Committee meetings. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. |
| **LT-HEALTH** | **Overall level of risk****1** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Ongoing communication with PO. Ad hoc meetings with PO and national Programme partners. Participation in Cooperation Committee meetings. | Since all PDPs and all open calls of the Programme have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. |
| **LT-CULTURE** | **Overall level of risk****1** |
| Risks | Previously planned response | Actual response | Planned future response |
| Possible inefficient programme management at any level due to a sub-optimal communication. | Since PDPs of all programmes and most open calls have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. | Ongoing communication with PO. Ad hoc meetings with PO and national Programme partner. Participation in Cooperation Committee meetings. | Since PDP and all open calls of the Programme have already been contracted, regular common coordination meetings are not needed in the future and will be organised ad hoc. |

## Annex B: Evaluation plan

Please note this Annex is uploaded separately and is not visible in this document. Please download and print separately if needed.

## Annex C: Cooperation with Donor Programme Partners and/or International Partner Organisations

DPPs and international programme organization(-s) (hereinafter-IPO(-s)) of all the programmes provided an invaluable input in the preparation of the Concept Notes, proactively participating in the process in the most effective manner and sharing their experience and insights with the Lithuanian PPs and POs. As the implementation of the Financial Mechanisms have moved from the programme preparation to the project stage, the participation of donor programme partners is still strong and valuable, and a vivid work of the Programme Cooperation Committees is the channel of sharing good experience at every level.

Some examples of good practice:

The SYNERGY Network against Gender-based and Domestic Violence brings together governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from all relevant programmes under different priority areas of the EEA/NG, which address gender-based and domestic violence. The Lithuanian Justice and Home Affairs Programme participation in the Network is funded by the Bilateral Fund.

In 2022, the CoE organised and partially funded two conferences for SYNERGY Network members on Digital Dimension of Violence against Women and on the protection of asylum seeking, migrant and refugee women and girls. In November, a Study Visit to Strasbourg was organised to discuss intersectional concerns when addressing violence against women in Norway Grants programmes, focusing specifically on Roma communities.

 A follow up 2023 SYNERGY conference and meeting will be held in Sofia in June 2023, involving the Programme. To achieve the indicator ”Number of joint best practice events organized“, three workshops (two in Lithuania and one in Norway) were organized under project LT-JUSTICE-0004 together with Oslo Police District on topics ”Is domestic violence more than a private matter?“, ”Do we satisfy the needs of those going through the criminal justice process?“ and ”Unifying investigative & protective strategies on domestic violence through leadership“. The aim of the workshops was to share and exchange knowledge, challenges, and experiences in the work with cases concerning domestic violence.

 In addition, the CoE representatives took part in the Cooperation Committee meeting last year as IPO. The CoE is also a part of three thematic Working Groups under PA 19 on (i) prison and probation improvements through conferences and seminars, (ii) training and development of prison and probation staff and (iii) evaluation of activities and indicators. These working groups were put in place in 2019 at Norwegian Correctional Service’s initiative including partners from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania and several sessions were organised to date (two in April and May 2022). The CoE was invited to support and participated in the working group sessions, advising on human right standards in the prison and probation field and sharing its experience in running similar projects. Its aim is to discuss and agree on a common streamlined approach and to reinforce the synergies between all countries. In addition, in October 2022, the Norwegian Correctional Service organised an international conference on Correctional Service world-wide (with all beneficiary countries) and CPT Secretariat as well as CPDL were invited to present the work in the relevant sectors.

## Annex D: Technical assistance report

### Overview of main activities

Overview of the main activities

The Investment Department of the MoF, as the NFP, participated in the meetings with the donor states and the FMO, other Beneficiary States related to the implementation and administration of the Financial Mechanisms outside Lithuania.  Also, meetings are organised every other month with the FMO to discuss the issues related to communication.

During the reporting period, the Centralised Internal Audit Division of the MoF, as the AA, performed the following audits: the audit of effectiveness of functioning of the management and control system of the Health Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021; the audit of effectiveness of functioning of the management and control system of the Culture Programme under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2014–2021; the audit of effectiveness of functioning of the management and control system of the Innovation, Business Development, and SMEs Programme under the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 and the audit of declared expenditure of the Programmes, technical assistance and the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014–2021, and the follow-up of recommendations specified during the audits performed in the previous accounting years.

**The activities implemented by the CPMA during the reporting period are as follows:**1) Development and administration of the management, monitoring and control system of the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 (NORIS). The operation of NORIS was assured, necessary developments of the system were implemented. NORIS was maintained by the service provider (joint venture partners PLC DevOcean LT and PLC Technologiniu paslaugu sprendimai (Technology service solutions) whose contract expired on 31 December 2021. A new public procurement for maintenance of NORIS was conducted in February-April 2022 and a new contract with the service provider - PLC ”DevOcean LT“ - was signed on 2 May 2022. The Contract is valid until 2 May 2023 with the possibility of extension until 2 May 2024.

2) Administration and maintenance of the website for the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 in Lithuania (www.eeagrants.lt). The website is operational and is used to publish the programme information, news, open calls and other relevant information on the EEA and Norway Grants.

3) Necessary amendments to the NORIS legal acts.

4) Supervision and verification of the eligibility of expenditure of the National level predefined bilateral initiatives implemented under the Fund for Bilateral Relations. Bilateral funds (National level) have already been distributed to 14 bilateral initiatives (3 of them were approved in 2022), 7 of them have been successfully completed (3 of them were completed in 2022).

5) 2 technical evaluations of the Programme Operators` requests for additional funding from the Fund for Bilateral Relations under the Programmes Culture and Health were conducted by the Fund Administrator in 2022.

6) Carrying out of public procurements necessary for the implementation of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms.

### Budget overview

The actual information on the implementation of the technical assistance budget during the reporting period is set out below, EUR:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** |  **CA** | **NFP** | **AA** | **Other entities** | **TOTAL** |
| I. Additional management systems (Article 8.11.2 (a)) |   | 756,00 |   |  68,394.37 | 69,150.37 |
| II. Annual and other meetings with the donor states (Article 8.11.2 (b)) |  1,977.28 | 14,628.74 | 2,005.38 |   | 18,611.40 |
| III. Meetings and conferences to share experience (Article 8.11.2 (c)) |   |   |   |   |   |
| IV. Promotional and information activities (Article 8.11.2 (d)) |   | 15,149.20 |   |   | 15,149.20 |
| V. Audits (Article 8.11.2 (e)) |   |   | 20,323.16 |   | 20,323.16 |
| VII. Reviews and evaluations (Article 8.11.2 (g)) |   | 36,575.88 |   |   | 36,575.88 |
| IX.  Preparation of the implementation of the FM 2014-2021 (Article 8.11.2 (i)) |   |   |   |   |   |
| **TOTAL** | 1,977.28 | 67,109.82 | 22,328.54 | 68,394.37 | 159,810.01 |

### Procurement

The MoF carried out 7 public procurements related to the EEA and Norway Grants 2014–2021:

* Radio advertising services. JSC “Reklamos ekspertai”. Contract No. 228/2022 of 23 August 2022. Procurement value EUR 4,356.00.
* Radio broadcasting services. JSC “Derybininkai”. Contract No. 14P-24 of 2 May 2022. Procurement value EUR 36,148.63.
* Audit. JSC Audit&Accounting. Contract No. 14P-12 of 9 February 2023. Procurement value EUR 3,654.00.
* Assessment services. JSC "Smart Continent LT". Contract No. 14P-39 of 20 June 2022. Procurement value EUR 34, 485.00

During the reporting period the CPMA carried out  the following public procurements which exceed the national thresholds for the public procurement:

* 2 public procurements related to NORIS performance:
* outsourced data centre services: supplier - Telia Lietuva AB, contract No. 2022/4-1-4 concluded on 17 January 2022, CVPIS procurement No. 563146. Contract value – EUR 500,000.00 (inc. VAT).
* NORIS maintenance services: supplier - PLC „DevOcean LT“, contract No. 2022/4-1-63 concluded on 2 May 2022, CVPIS procurement No. 586266. Contract value – EUR 96,790.00 (inc. VAT).
* 1 public procurement related to the costs incurred under the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 auditing, i.e.:
* Programmes management, bilateral initiatives and TA costs auditing services. There were concluded 2 preliminary contracts: LLC Audit&Accounting, contract No. 2022/4-2-32 concluded on 15 September 2022 and LLC UAB Audito profesinė bendrija, contract No. 2022/4-2-31 concluded on 15 September 2022. CVPIS procurement No. 609381. Contracts value – EUR 75.000 (inc. VAT).

### Staffing

|  |
| --- |
| **National Focal Point** |
| Rūta Dapkutė–Stankevičienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 3 | NO |
| Rūta Dapkutė–Stankevičienė(from 1 January 2022 to 28 February 2022 ) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 3 | NO |
| Rūta Dapkutė–Stankevičienė(from 1 April 2022 to 19 June 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Chief Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 9 | NO |
| Paulius Baniūnas(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 3 | NO |
| Paulius Baniūnas(from 1 January 2022 to 19 June 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 3 | NO |
| Paulius Baniūnas(from 20 June 2022 to 1 September 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Director | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 8 | NO |
| Paulius Baniūnas(since 2 September 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR financial support administration | 3 | NO |
| Kotryna Tamoševičienė(since 20 Spetember 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Director | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR programme administration, maintenance of the MCS | 8 | NO |
| Vaida Žukauskaitė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR technical assistance administration, maintenance of the MCS | 10 | NO |
| Irma Patapienė(since 1 March 2022) | MoF, Investment Department Senior Advisor | Control and maintenance of effective EEE/NOR programme administration, maintenance of the MCS | 3 | NO |
| Rima Martinėnienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Head | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Health”, “Culture” & “Justice” and “Internal Affairs” | 9 | NO |
| Rima Martinėnienė(from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Head | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Health”, “Culture” & “Justice” and “Internal Affairs” | 9 | NO |
| Rima Martinėnienė(since 1 April 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Head | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Health”, “Culture” & “Justice” and “Internal Affairs” | 10 | NO |
| Banga Vaitkutė (since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Advisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Health”. | 10 | NO |
| Andrius Jautakis(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Advisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Justice” and “Internal Affairs”; a contact person for the programmes “Social Dialogue – Decent Work” and “Civil Society”; expert for eligibility of expenditure and project durability issues; a coordinator for investment approach | 60 | NO |
| Andrius Jautakis(from 1 January 2022 to 13 February 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Advisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Justice” and “Internal Affairs”; a contact person for the programmes “Social Dialogue – Decent Work” and “Civil Society”; expert for eligibility of expenditure and project durability issues; a coordinator for investment approach | 60 | NO |
| Vilija Šemetienė(since 1 March 2022) | MoF, Social Investment Division Advisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Justice” and “Internal Affairs”; a contact person for the programmes “Social Dialogue – Decent Work” and “Civil Society”; expert for eligibility of expenditure and project durability issues; a coordinator for investment approach | 60 | NO |
| Giedrė Neverienė(from1 January 2022 to 15 March 2023) | MoF, Social Investment Division Chief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Culture” | 10 | NO |
| Eglė Mikučionienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionHead | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs”, “Research and Environment, Energy, Climate Change”, “Baltic Research Programme”. | 3 | NO |
| Eglė Mikučionienė(from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionHead | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs”, “Research and Environment, Energy, Climate Change”, “Baltic Research Programme”. | 3 | NO |
| Eglė Mikučionienė(since 1 April 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionHead | Proper & timely preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs”, “Research and Environment, Energy, Climate Change”, “Baltic Research Programme”. | 3 | NO |
| Roma Narečionienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionAdvisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programmes “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs”, “Baltic Research Programme”. | 3 | NO |
| Agnė Navikienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth Division  Chief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Environment, Energy, Climate Change”  | 5 | NO |
| Agnė Navikienė(from 1 January 2022 to 31 October 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth Division  Chief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Environment, Energy, Climate Change”  | 5 | NO |
| Agnė Navikienė(since 1 November 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth Division  Advisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Environment, Energy, Climate Change”  | 3 | NO |
| Laura Sabulienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionChief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Business Development, Innovation and SMEs” | 5 | NO |
| Aurelija Sankauskė(from 19 April 2022 to 30 September 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth DivisionAdvisor | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Environment, Energy, Climate Change” | 5 | NO |
| Asta Davidonienė(since 1 March 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth Division Chief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Environment, Energy, Climate Change” | 5 | NO |
| Sigitas Miškinis(since 1 I January 2022) | MoF, Investment for Economic Growth Division Chief Specialist | Preparation, implementation and reporting on the programme “Baltic Research Programme”. | 5 | NO |
| Gražina Meiduvienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Head | Timely preparation of strategic report, monitoring implementation, NORIS, planning of payments   | 4 | NO |
| Gražina Meiduvienė(from 1 January 2022 to 2 August 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Head | Timely preparation of strategic report, monitoring implementation, NORIS, planning of payments   | 4 | NO |
| Akvilė Svirkė(since 2 August 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Head | Timely preparation of strategic report, monitoring implementation, NORIS, planning of payments   | 4 | NO |
| Daiva Navikienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Planning of payments | 5 | NO |
| Jūranda Savukynienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Advisor | Strategic report | 5 | NO |
| Aušra Ona Birvinskienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Chief Specialist | NORIS | 5 | NO |
| Aušra Ona Birvinskienė(from 1 January 2022 to 4 April 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Chief Specialist | NORIS | 5 | NO |
| Marija Jaskelevičienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Strategic report, annual meetings, monitoring implementation | 10 | NO |
| Marija Jaskelevičienė(from 1 January 2022 to 2 December 2022) | MoF, Investment Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Strategic report, annual meetings, monitoring implementation | 10 | NO |
| Julija Kvietkė(from 4 April 2022 to 27 November 2022) | MoF, Investment Policy Division Head | Control of proper & timely preparation & amendments to the MoU of the Implementation of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 and agreements of FBR and Programmes and administration of FBR. | 14 | NO |
| Matas Cancingeris(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Policy Division Chief Specialist | Preparation of & amendments to the MoU of the Implementation of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 and agreements of FBR and Programmes; Administration of and reporting on FBR | 70 | NO |
| Jolanta Vaičiūnienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Investment Policy Division Advisor | Control of proper & timely preparation & amendments to the MoU of the Implementation of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021 and agreements of FBR and Programmes and administration of FBR | 30 | NO |
| Božena Zaikovska – Tomkevičienė (since 1 March 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Head | Organisation of administrative functions of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms entrusted to the division | 8 | NO |
| Julija Maniuškina(from 1 January 2022 to 10 March 2023) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Gintarė Žydelienė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Strengthening the administrative capacity of staff | 5 | NO |
| Lina Balčiūnienė(from 1 January 2022 to 31 October 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Preparation of legislation regulating the administration of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms, preparation of explanations about their application; consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the  EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms; technical support of the working group for the creation of administrative processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms; participation in the development of NORIS. Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 40 | NO |
| Ieva Kiznevičiūtė(since 10 February 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 5 | NO |
| Danutė Žekonienė(until 8 June 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division  | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Danutė Žekonienė(from 8 June 2022 to 1 January 2023) |  MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Danutė Žekonienė (since 2 January 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Roberta Vološenkovienė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Roberta Vološenkovienė(from 1 January 2022 to 17 March 2022) | MoF, Quality Assurance Division Chief Specialist | Consulting, preparation of explanations related to the administration processes of the EEA/NOR Financial Mechanisms | 10 | NO |
| Rasa Baltronaitė(until 1 January 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Head | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, communication and information, budgeting technical assistance, risk management plan, programme agreements | 18 | NO |
| Rasa Baltronaitė(from 1 January 2022  to 30 June 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Head | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, communication and information, budgeting technical assistance, risk management plan, programme agreements | 18 | NO |
| Rasa Baltronaitė(since 1 July 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Head | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, communication and information, budgeting technical assistance, risk management plan, programme agreements | 20 | NO |
| Ilma Skukauskaitė(from 1 January 2022 to 5 March 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Advisor | Communication and information | 25 | NO |
| Ilma Skukauskaitė(since 6 March 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Chief specialist | Communication and information | 36 | NO |
| Milda Kaminskaitė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Advisor | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, changing MCS description | 10 | NO |
| Dovilė Katinienė(since 3 January 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Chief Specialist | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, changing MCS description | 35 | NO |
| Edita Petrauskaitė(since 1 January 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Chief Specialist | Communication and information, budgeting technical assistance | 50 | NO |
| Eglė Kulikauskienė(since 15 March 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Chief Specialist | Coordinating work on the description of the MCS, changing MCS description | 25 | NO |
| Akvilė Juodienė(since 7 March 2022) | MoF, Management and Control Systems Maintenance Division Advisor | Communication and information | 25 | NO |
| Arūnas Malinovskis | MoF, Communication Division Head | Communication and information | 10 | NO |
| Jovita Valeikaite - La Fererra | MoF, Communication Division Chief Specialist | Communication and information | 25 | NO |
| Nerijus Gedeika | MoF, Communication Division Chief Specialist | Communication and information | 10 | NO |
| Irmantas Mikulėnas(until 30 November 2022) | MoFFiscal Policy Department Director | Evaluation | 1 | NO |
| Živilė Turevičienė(since 1 December 2023) | Public Investment and Project Evaluation Division HeadAdvisor | Evaluation | 1 | NO |
| Justina Žvirblytė (until 30 November 2022) | MoF,Fiscal Policy Department, Economic Analysis and Evaluation DivisionChief Specialist | Evaluation | 1 | NO |
| Justina Žvirblytė(since 1 December 2023) | Public Investment and Project Evaluation Division Chief Specialist | Evaluation | 1 | NO |
| Brigita Šidlauskaitė-Riazanova | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Head | Organization and coordination of activities of the division related to the performance of the PA functions | 1 | NO |
| Jolanta Puodžiūnienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Advisor | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions | 1 | NO |
| Živilė Grigienė(until 2022-04-01)  | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Advisor | National legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the PA functions | 1 | NO |
| Vilma Jankaitienė (since 2022-10-01) | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Advisor | National legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the PA functions | 1 | NO |
| Jurgita Subačienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions: payment of funds and other assigned functions. | 0,2 | NO |
| Vaida Matiliūnienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions: payment of funds and other assigned functions. | 0,1 | NO |
| Deivydas Černiauskas | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions: payment of funds and other assigned functions. | 0,1 | NO |
| Laima Mikulėnienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Financing and Analysis Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions: payment of funds and other assigned functions | 0,3 | NO |
| Agna Balcevič | MoF, State Treasury Department, Treasury Accounting and Reporting Division Head | MoF, State Treasury Department, | 2 | NO |
| Gerda Voisiatienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Treasury Accounting and Reporting Division Advisor | MoF, State Treasury Department, | 2 | NO |
| Lina Stuglienė | MoF, State Treasury Department, Treasury Accounting and Reporting Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the PA functions: accounting of funds and other assigned functions. | 8 | NO |
| Lina Janionytė | CPMA, Lithuanian and Multilateral Programmes Division Head | NORIS (administrator, help manager), national legislation, FBR (acting as the Fund administrator) | 41 | YES |
| Neringa Janušienė | CPMA, Lithuanian and Multilateral Programmes Division Senior Project Manager | NORIS (functional administrator, help manager), FBR (acting as the Fund administrator) | 100 | YES |
| Gediminas Gasperas | CPMA, Lithuanian and Multilateral Programmes Division NORIS Expert | NORIS (development, maintenance) | 30 | YES |
| Mindaugas Laurynaitis | CPMA, Lithuanian and Multilateral Programmes Division NORIS Project Manager | NORIS (system administrator) | 30 | YES |
|  Vaidas Prascienius | CPMA, International Assistance Finance Division Senior Financier | NORIS (administrator, help manager) | 7 | YES |
| Justas Šakočius | CPMA, Law and Quality Control Division Senior Lawyer | FBR (acting as the Fund administrator, legal issues) | 2 | YES |
| Toma Kirstukienė  | CPMA, Financial Management and Accounting Division Financier | FBR (acting as the Fund administrator, declaration of expenditure to the auditing service provider) | 5 | YES |
| Vilma Vaičeliūnė (until May 2022) | CPMA, Financial Management and Accounting Division | FBR (acting as the Fund administrator, declaration of expenditure to the auditing service provider) | 9 | YES |
| Daiva Grigorjeva(until January 2023) | CPMA, Law and Quality Control Division Process Analyst | FBR (acting as the Fund administrator, financial issues) | 5 | YES |
| **Certifying Authority** |
| Aušra Baliukonienė | MoF, Investment Expenditure Declaration DepartmentDirector | Organization and coordination of activities of the department related to the performance of the CA functions | 5 | NO |
| Aušra Urniežė | MoF, Expenditure Declaration DivisionHead | Organization and coordination of activities of the division related to the performance of the CA functions | 17 | NO |
| Aurelija Naudžiūnienė | MoF, Expenditure Declaration Division Advisor | Coordination of activities of the division related to expenditure eligibility, forecast and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 20 | NO |
| Donatas Skara | MoF, Expenditure Declaration Division Advisor | NORIS, national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 20 | NO |
| Danguolė Diana Banienė | MoF, Expenditure Declaration Division Chief Specialist | National legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 20 | NO |
| Marius Elzbutas | MoF, Expenditure Declaration Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the CA functions, forecast | 20 | NO |
| Vaida Patkamarienė | MoF, Expenditure Declaration Division Chief Specialist | Functions related to the performance of the CA functions, forecast | 20 | NO |
| Natalija Ranceva  | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Head | Organization and coordination of activities of the division related to the CA functions | 3 | NO |
| Edita Najulienė  | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Advisor | NORIS national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 3 | NO |
| Jurgita Vileitienė | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Chief Specialist | NORIS national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 8 | NO |
| Odeta Vaitkuvienė | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Chief Specialist | National legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the CA functions | 7 | NO |
| **Audit Authority** |
| Rolandas Pauža | MoF, Centralised Internal Audit Division Head | Control and coordination of the AA functions  | 11 | NO |
| Rasa Mockuvienė(until 3 November 2022) | MoF, Centralised Internal Audit Division Advisor | Audits described in Articles 5.5 and 5.7 of the Regulations, preparation of the audit strategy, annual and final audit reports, closure declaration and other AA functions  | 83 | NO |
| Jurgita Kvetkauskaitė(since 23 January 2023) | MoF, Centralised Internal Audit Division Chief Specialist | Audits described in Articles 5.5 and 5.7 of the Regulations and other AA functions  | 83 | NO |
| **Irregularities Authority** |
| Aušra Baliukonienė | MoF, Investment Expenditure Declaration Department  Director | Organization and coordination of activities of the department related to the performance of the IrRA functions | 1 | NO |
| Natalija Ranceva  | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Head | Organization and coordination of activities of the division related to the IrRA functions | 2 | NO |
| Edita Najulienė | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division Advisor | NORIS national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the IrRA functions | 2 | NO |
| Jurgita Vileitienė | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division  Chief Specialist | NORIS national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the IrRA functions | 7 | NO |
| Odeta Vaitkuvienė | MoF, Recoveries and Expenditure at Risk Assessment Division  Chief Specialist | NORIS national legislation and other tasks related to the performance of the IrRA functions | 8 | NO |

## Annex E: Communication summary

### 1. Best projects

The information about communication is described in Chapter 2.

### 2. Visibility of the Grants and the Donors

The informal joint communication working group, which consists of the representatives of the NFP, POs and a representative from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, continue to communicate remotely on topical communication issues. The aim is to emphasise the importance of mutual cooperation and to seek joint planning of communication activities and inter-institutional cooperation. It was agreed that the following key elements of the Communication Strategy: the EEA and Norwegian financial mechanisms logos, the clarification and targeting of the slogan and the general objectives must be respected. All those, who are involved in the publicity of the EEA and Norwegian financial mechanisms 2014–2021 in Lithuania, are guided by the Communication Strategy. All programmes should contribute to at least one of the following themes: sustainability, inclusion, competitiveness or good governance. In addition, all programmes should include a bilateral cooperation dimension.
During the 12- month period (1 March 2022- 23 February 2023), a website received over 17 000 visitors, who spent on average 1.99 minutes on each session. A bounce rate – 57.03 %. More than 17 000 people used a website as a new website user, so it means – for the first time. As we see, we have 17.3 % visitors, who are returning back to use the portal more times. In 2022, 33 news articles were published on a portal.
 
    During the Lithuanian media monitoring period (January – December 2022), the flow of positive information about the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms has grown steadily. 60.3% of all the mentions were composed of references to the EEA and Norwegian financial mechanisms 687 messages (2021 – 470). During the analysis period, the Internet and RTV of 791 Lithuanian press news agencies analysed notifications referring to the Grants. In 2022, as compared to 2021, there was an increase of as much as 18% in the amount of information (from 670 relevant reports to 791). These announcements reached the largest audience - 194 million contacts. The reports were analysed using quantitative and qualitative parameters.
**Mentions by media type**As in the previous year, communication on objects of analysis was the most active on online portals and regional publications. The topical category on the EEA and Norwegian financial mechanisms generated 185.2 million contacts on online portals (132.8 million contacts in 2021). The second-largest audience in online media was generated by Active Citizens Fund, followed by mentions of the Culture programme, which grew its audience on the web portals almost 4 times.
During the period under review, the flow of positive information increased as compared to the previous year, with as many as 402 positive mentions of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms (159 last year) and 279 neutral mentions. In regard to the programmes analysed, the Programme “Culture” was mentioned most.
When reviewing the regions, most of the information was published in one of the largest regions of Lithuania - Kaunas, in a second place - Šiauliai and then follows Vilnius.
Looking at the distribution of the reached audience in the regions, it can be seen that the most active in all regions were the announcements of Active Citizens Fund programmes (mostly 2.6 million contacts were in Šiauliai regional media), as well as the Programmes “Culture” (1.9 million contacts).
In 2022, 56 % of the reports were articles prepared on the basis of press releases. 31% of the articles were initiated by the media and the remaining 14 % were marked as outsourced.
**Public Survey**In February 2022, a survey of the population of Lithuania on the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms was performed (1015 respondents). The goal was to find out the awareness of the country's population about the Financial Mechanisms and the evaluation of the distribution, use and benefits of their funds for Lithuania.
Awareness of Financial Mechanisms reaches 42%. When assessing which areas of projects should be financed by Financial Mechanisms in order to give the greatest benefit to Lithuania, the most common projects are environment, energy and climate change prevention projects (50%). In the second place - business support and innovation projects (49%), in the third place - research projects (42%). Health (39%) and support for the poor (26%) projects continue to be in line.
The transparency of the distribution of funds under the Financial Mechanisms is assessed on a scale of 6.6 points to 10 points, where 1 means that the distribution of funds is completely non-transparent and 10 means that it is completely transparent. Respondents say that the Grants are used to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen cooperation with donor states (the Kingdom of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) (43%). 38% of the respondents believe that funds for Financial Mechanisms are provided by non-EU countries and 36% of the respondents - that the following areas are financed in Lithuania through Financial Mechanisms: health, social dialogue, business development, research, civil society, justice, culture, environment and energy, and BRs.
**The main communication activity in 2022 and plans for 2023
Facebook.** In 2022, 47 posts were posted on a Facebook channel “Norvegija, Islandija ir Lichtenšteinas Lietuvai”.
**Communication campaign: 10 game series on the radio.** Each week on the radio (June 27 – August 23), listeners were asked questions about Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. Listeners of the radio station had the opportunity not only to learn more facts about Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, but also to win a prize - a flight by a hot air balloon. The communication campaign was heard by 537 000 people.
**2023.**1) We are planning content project on social media in video format.
2) Advertising in social networks: Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. In January 2023, 30-month contract was signed for concept creation and implementation services in social networks (240 posts/45 GIF/10 videos in 30 months).
3) Communication seminar for PP and agencies.
4) Visit of the Lithuanian journalists to one of the Donor State.
5) Events in the regions.

### 3. Media coverage

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### 4. Website and social media

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| **Link to the National Focal Point’s (EEA and Norway Grants) webpage** | **Total number of page views in the reporting year** |
| <https://www.eeagrants.lt/> | 17000 |
|  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Link or account handle | Number of posts published in the reporting year | Number of followers |
| Facebook | [https://www.facebook.com/EEEirNorvegi...](https://www.facebook.com/EEEirNorvegijosparama/) | 47 | 691 |

### 5. Visuals

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