

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

### **1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

**19 June 2018**

**Venue: Hotel Narutis, Pilies st. 24, Vilnius**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Agenda:**

1. Opening by the National Focal Point and the Donor States
2. Status of concept note developments
3. Status of National Implementation and management set-up
4. Establishment of the JCBF, work plan
5. Communication
6. Conclusions and closing remarks

#### **1. Opening by the National Focal Point (NFP) and the Donor States**

Mr. R. Dilba opened the Meeting by welcoming everybody to the 1st Annual Meeting to discuss progress of 2014-2021 EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms in Lithuania and noted that a first important step in the process – the signing event of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in the frame of the official visit of the HRH Crown Prince of Norway enhanced the visibility and awareness about donors contribution to Lithuania.

Ms. P.G. Holm welcomed the opportunity for the 1st Annual Meeting, also noted that the signing ceremony was very nice and that donors were now looking forward to progress towards preparation of programmes and bilateral initiatives under the new mechanisms.

#### **2. Status of concept note developments per programme**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented status and schedule of concept notes development, highlighted the NFP priority to develop high quality programmes on time with a view to be able to start with investments. She also thanked the FMO for advice and input to the process (presentation is attached). Mr. R. Dilba highlighted importance and an added value of stakeholders' consultations being organised at this stage of preparation of programmes.

Ms. P.G. Holm said that from the signature of the MoU there is a 6 month time for delivering concept notes, however she remarked the concept note quality was most important priority and invited all involved authorities to co-operate in order to prepare good quality programmes thus to ensure smoother implementation process. The donors expressed importance for the NFP to closely follow concept notes development process and stressed that it is important that the NFP provides support to the POs where relevant, in particular where there are numerous actors involved. She also highlighted good communication between the NFP and the FMO as utmost important factor.

#### **3. Status of National Implementation and Management set-up**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented the process and status of development of the National Management and Control System (MCS). The initial proposal for the Audit Authority is envisaged to be presented to the FMO soon. The aspiration of the NFP is to create simplified, flexible and well running system taking into account lessons learned (presentation is attached).

Mr. R. Dilba presented in more detail a set-up of the NFP and division of responsibilities (including responsible persons) of the Investment Department (ID) performing the NFP functions and coordinating EU, EEA and Norway Grants including other international contributions, if any. A new principle – sectoral management – is implemented in a new set-up of the NFP, meaning, that programmes are coordinated by sectors, not by the financing sources thus ensuring complementarity, synergies and sectoral knowledge. The main responsible coordinating person for the Grants is Director of the ID and his substitute – Deputy Director of the ID Ms. Raimonda Eidžiūnė (starting her position in late summer and to be presented in person later). Mr. R. Dilba assured that the new NFP team was dedicated for successful implementation of the Grants.

Ms. P.G. Holm noted that most of staff of the NFP was new to Grants thus it was important to give sufficient attention to the staff training to obtain knowledge about specifics of the Grants. Ms. P.G. Holm wondered how many persons would be working full time with Grants within the NFP. She informed that in other beneficiary countries with similar size of allocation there were 6 full-time persons working with the Grants at the NFP. As in Lithuanian NFP the tasks are divided among staff working with the other funds, the donors hope that this will not hamper efficient work due to workload with EU funds and that the NFP will remain responsive and reactive.

The donors expect that at least 2 senior employees are working full time with the Grants and would appreciate to know their contacts. The donors asked for information about how work would be organised as regards bilateral relations. The donors will carefully look into mentioned issues when analysing the description of the MCS. The donors asked the NFP to make a risk assessment of the functioning of the NFP (including bilateral objective), and include it in the 1<sup>st</sup> Strategic Report which is due for the next Annual Meeting.

Mr. R. Dilba explained that the logic behind the new set-up was not to divide between small functions per fund or per programme instead to ensure synergies and complementarity. The NFP is aware of challenges raised by the donors and is dedicated to allocated sufficient resources for Grants implementation; assigned people are participating in all events related to programmes' preparation, work priorities are not determined by size of the funds. For the biggest – JHA programme a full-time working person is assigned.

Ms. P.G. Holm enquired who within the NFP would co-ordinate bilateral cooperation for all programmes. Mr. R. Dilba explained that it would be Deputy Director of the ID.

#### **4. Establishment of the JCBF, work plan**

Ms. A. Nikšaitė presented a plan for establishment and 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the JCBF (presentation is attached).

Ms. P.G. Holm highlighted importance for the NFP to ensure active approach and leadership in reaching bilateral objective of the Grants. She stressed importance of involvement of the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian Embassy with solid contribution into preparations and decisions for the use of the bilateral funds. She stressed that the donors wish to see that the bilateral funds contribute significantly to the strengthening of bilateral relations in the areas that will be identified by the members of the JSCB and that the work plan will reflect such ambition.

The FMO will closely monitor implementation of this objective.

#### **5. Communication**

Ms. Ieva Aidietė presented the first steps for ensuring communication and visibility of the Grants in new period (presentation is attached).

Ms. P.G. Holm commented that donors expected that good communication work from former period would be continued and that the FMO was ready to provide support to the NFP, if needed. Within the 6 months of the MoU signature the donors expect to receive the Communication plan for the 2014-2021.

Ms. J. Trošt reminded that it was a practice that dates for events (annual meeting, opening and closing events for the Grants and any other more significant event for the Grants) are coordinated with donors well in advance and that such practice should continue. Therefore, it is expected that 2 months before, the FMO is consulted about possible dates. As for the JCBF meetings, the agenda should be coordinated with the FMO before sending invitations to the members and the dates should be coordinated with the members well in advance, too. Usually any document which will be addressed by the JCBF should be agreed between the FMO and the NFP in advance allowing the FMO to have an overview of the process and provide its views and comments, when necessary.

## **6. Conclusions and closing remarks**

Mr. R. Dilba summarised discussions and thanked the donors for raising issues He also accepted the FMO's country officer offer to meet with the NFP team and assured that the NFP will manage Grants in appropriate manner.

Ms. P.G. Holm thanked the NFP for organisation of the meeting.

### **Decisions:**

- The NFP will present the donors with proposal for the Audit Authority
- The NFP will explain in the description of the MCS the NFP internal set-up and how sufficient staff is ensured for fulfilment of functions according donors expectations, including bilateral objective
- The NFP will present a risk assessment of the functioning of the NFP in the 1<sup>st</sup> Strategic Report for the next Annual Meeting (including bilateral objective)
- The dates for major events (e. g. new period launching event) JCBF meetings are coordinated with donors well in advance, 2 months before
- The agendas for major events and JCBF meetings are coordinated with the FMO before sending out invitations

### **Participants**

#### **Donors:**

Ms. Pia Gjesme Holm, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway – head of the delegation

Mr. Tonnes Svanes, Senior Advisor, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign

H.E. Mr. Karsten Klepsvik, Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Vilnius

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

Ms. Tori Hoven, Head of the Programme Department, FMO

Ms. Jana Trošt, Senior Country Officer, FMO

#### **LT (Ministry of Finance):**

Mr. Ramūnas Dilba, Director, Investment Department (ID), Head of the NFP

Ms. Julija Kvietke, Acting Head, Investment Policy Division, ID, NFP

Ms. Audronė Nikšaitė, Advisor, Investment Policy Division, ID, NFP

Ms. Agne Vitkauskiene, Head, Quality Assurance Division, ID, NFP

Ms. Rasa Dokuzlar, Deputy Head, Social Investment Division, ID, NFP

Ms. Banga Vaitkutė, Senior Specialist, Social Investment Division, ID, NFP  
Ms. Laura Miškinytė Senior Specialist, Social Investment Division, ID, NFP  
Ms. Giedrė Neverienė Senior Specialist, Social Investment Division, ID, NFP  
Mr. Andrius Jautakis Senior Specialist, Social Investment Division, ID, NFP  
Ms. Irma Patapiene, Head, Investment for Economic Growth Division, ID, NFP  
Ms. Kristina Malevskienė, Head, Communication Division, NFP  
Ms. Ieva Aidietė, Senior Specialist, Communication Division, NFP  
Ms Ausra Baliukoniene, Director, Investment Expenditure Declaration Department (IEDD), CA. IRA  
Ms. Aušra Urniežė, Head, Investment Declaration Division, IEDD, CA  
Ms. Džilda Grybaitė, Senior Specialist, Refunds and Risky Expenditures Assessment Division, IEDD, IRA