OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT

ACTION PLAN FOR LITHUANIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE "OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP": SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Self - Assessment Report on the implementation of the Action Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The Lithuanian Government is committed to the principles of transparency, effectiveness and accountability. The Open Government Partnership initiative offered a perfect opportunity for Lithuania to share its experience with other countries and spread the progressive ideas of better governance to the rest of the world.

The Action Plan declares country's intentions to develop Open Government initiatives, identifies country's efforts to ensure the transparency and openness of public administration processes and sets out main measures to which the country commits itself during the implementation of the Plan.

Areas of implementation of Open Government initiatives

On 7 February 2012, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Programme for the Improvement of Public Administration 2012-2020. By adopting the Programme, the Government set a goal of ensuring the openness of public administration processes and encouraging active public involvement, and laid down specific objectives for its implementation, thus aiming at the improvement of the accessibility of public information, increased availability of e-services provided to the public, promotion of public involvement in the legislative process, and public involvement in the enhancement of the quality of the services provided.

The said objectives of the Programme correspond to the goals set by the international initiative "Open Government Partnership" and to the declared principles of the Open Government: openness, public participation, accountability and application of innovations. With that in view, we intend to develop open Government initiatives pursuant to the Programme's provisions and other national strategic documents aimed at increasing openness and transparency of public administration.

For the purpose of the implementation of this Plan, Lithuania undertook to carry out the following open-Government initiatives:

i) **Increase of the accessibility of the information held by public administration authorities.** First of all, to enable the public access to all the information related to the public interest that is held by public administration authorities, the volume of withheld information and the reasons for it will be established, information shortages experienced by the public will be identified and the acceptable manner and form of obtaining it will be determined. Efforts will be made to provide the public with information that has been summarised and systemised with regard to the content. This information will be made available for the public in the most acceptable and user-friendly manner and form.

ii) **Centralised publishing of information on Government activities.** Information on the implementation of the Government priorities / Government Programme provisions and the performance of assigned functions by public administration authorities will be published centrally following the uniform policy for information provision to the public.

iii) **More extensive public consultations.** The main principles and the most efficient methods for public consultation will be established. To ensure the efficiency of consultations with the public, the outcomes of such consultations will be summarised and made public. Consultations employ the latest technological advancements, so that the public could access all information on ongoing consultations in a single place.

iv) **Promotion of public participation in public administration processes.** All the persons concerned will be provided with an opportunity to present, in the form acceptable to them, their opinions on all draft legislative acts and to become familiarised publicly with the evaluation of the submitted observations and proposals. Technical programme measures for involving the public in the legislative processes will be created. To make petitions a more attractive instrument of public participation in the legislative process, exercise of the right of petition will be facilitated by removing the excess procedures for exercising this right. New instruments for the participation of residents and local communities in decision-making on public affairs will be implemented.

v) **Increasing the accessibility of services provided to the public.** An inventory of all the administrative and public services administered and supplied by public administration authorities will be made, a list/catalogue of the descriptions of these services will be compiled and indicators for the monitoring and analysis of the said services will be created. The number of electronic services provided by public administration authorities will be increased with the help of existing and currently developed common-use solutions of information and communication technologies. In addition, solutions for the adaptation of

the certificates contained by the personal identity card for use in e-banking, e-health, e-business and e-university will be developed and tested. In order to create better conditions for the public to receive electronic services and take a more active part in the adoption of the decisions important to it, the infrastructure of electronic mail will be developed and its use promoted.

vi) **Promotion of public participation in the process for the improvement of service provision.** The quality of the services provided by public administration authorities will be assessed, the public needs with regard to the quality of the services provided to them will be determined, the abilities of the public to use electronic services will be developed, and public awareness of new technologies and electronic services will be raised.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLAN

Below there is detailed information about each activity across key areas and fields of activity under the Action Plan.

1. The transparency of the activities of public administration authorities

i) **Increase of the accessibility of the information held by public administration authorities.**

- Efforts have been made towards systematic development of the State Information Resources Interoperability Platform (SIRIP), which is intended for data exchange between public administrations as they provide electronic services through e-Government Gateway (www.epaslaugos.lt). Currently, SIRIP services are used by 165 public administration authorities; the portal has 353 links to online services. The number of visitors has been on the rise: 1017 2013, 695 thousand in 2012.
- It should be noted that information about the legislation governing activities of ministries and other state institutions, as well as about their functions, planning documentation and their implementation as well as employees' salaries is publicly available. It is understandable, accessible to all members of the population, and is delivered free of charge. Individuals are provided with requested information following legislative requirements, personal content of the request and data availability at the institution. Information is delivered in a way acceptable to individuals: verbally, by e- mail, post, certificate or enabling access to a document or extract.

ii) **Centralised publishing of information on Government activities.**

- Legislative proposals developed by all public institutions are available to interested institutions and public at large through the Subsystem of the Legislative Information System of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Here, people can express their opinion and recommendations on draft legislation. Public institutions responsible for draft legislation must take into account these proposals and recommendations and adjust legislation accordingly or provide justified reasons for their refusal.

- In order to enable more rational budget spending and use of the existing state information resources, promote the development of information technology tools and their improvement on the basis of the feedback from service and information users, and to facilitate a more rapid development of electronic services, in 2012, legislation implementing the Law on Management of State Information Resources was drafted and approved.

2. Simplifying the existing and/or developing new (more acceptable to the public) procedures for public involvement in public administration

iii)   More extensive public consultations.

- A Law on Non-governmental Organizations, approved by the Government in July 2013, and which is currently being discussed in the Parliament, provides for a mechanism for NGO information and consultation with various organizations and institutions.
- NGOs are involved in Monitoring or Supervisory boards for the examination and decision-making on NGO funding from e.g., EEA NGO Fund, Lithuanian and Swiss Cooperation Fund, etc.
- The government has created the State Progress Council, which since 2011 has been coordinating Lithuania's long-term progress strategy Lithuania2030. Government authorities, business leaders, community groups and prominent public figures participated in the development of the strategy through wide cross-country consultations.
- The Commission of Coordination of Affairs of Non-governmental Organizations, which is headed by a Vice Minister of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and a Deputy Chairman – a representative of non-governmental organizations submits proposals to the Lithuanian Government regarding cooperation among state and municipal institutions and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the policy of the development of the NGO sector. Besides, the Commission considers and makes decisions regarding programme assessment, draft legislation, and various other questions. The Commission consists of 20 members, including 9 from government institutions, 1 from Lithuanian Association of Municipalities, and 10 from NGOs.
- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour and its individual departments and divisions in charge of specific public policy areas (child welfare, youth policy, family policy, NGOs and community politics, demographics and aging policy) have been in close cooperation with individual NGOs and their umbrella organizations.
- Several councils under the Ministry Social Security and Labour (Child Welfare Council, Youth Affairs Council, and Pensioner Affairs Council) ensure regular sharing of strategic policy-making, consultation among policy-makers and representatives of various groups of the society on various operational issues. A cooperation agreement between the Ministry and the Lithuanian Association of Local Community Organizations, among other things, allows a prompt exchange of views, advice and recommendations between both parties of the agreement, as well as a timely feedback with respect to planning, implementation and evaluation of community development programmes, and draft legislation.
- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has been a partner in seven NGO projects (from the total of 18), which are implemented following the Human Resources Development Operational Programme for 2007 to 2013 confirmed by the Ministry of Interior (Priority 4 "Fostering Administrative Competence and Increasing Efficiency of Public Administration", measure VP1-4.1-VRM-08-V "collaboration and partnership between the government and non-governmental sector").

- With a view to engaging residents and communities and promoting their voluntary and consistent participation in self-government, also seeking more efficient work of local authorities, in 2012, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour launched a Programme for Self-Government of Local Communities. The purpose of the Programme is to encourage local communities to take active part in decision-making related to the use of funds for meeting public needs of local communities. This Programme is aimed at consolidating civil society, reducing social exclusion and increasing the role of citizens in self-government. All sixty municipalities (551 elderships) have been involved in the implementation of the Programme by making decisions on fundable activities, via independently formed Local Community Councils. The Councils usually include representatives of local residents (seniūnaitis), community organizations, religious communities, other NGOs, municipality and other local government institutions. Local decisions are implemented by municipal (and/or neighbourhood) administrations.

iv) Promotion of public participation in public administration processes.

- As one of the best practice examples, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organizes community forums which enable exchanging views and feedback among various local actors and ministry's social partners on a variety of issues, in particular on issues critical for non-governmental organizations working on local and regional levels (e.g., cooperation between NGOs and local government institutions, service procurement by NGOs, social innovation and entrepreneurship aimed at benefiting local communities, etc.).
- There is a regular survey of the clients of territorial employment agencies with a view to finding out their opinion about the services provided. Individual recommendations, proposals or comments on institutional performance may be done in a written or electronic form. These proposals are examined by specifically appointed staff or a commission, and taken into account when making decisions for the improvement of performance of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Proposal makers are also notified about this.
- Involved in The State Social Insurance Fund Board's management, the Tripartite Council consists of representatives of employers, workers and the government, and deals with issues directly related with the legal status of workers, employers and their legal representatives, as regards the development of legal rules governing labour relations. The State Social Insurance Fund Board is also a part of the Lithuanian Tripartite Council, and it examines and makes decisions on social policy issues.
- To facilitate easier public participation in the public management processes, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour holds public consultations on its website as regards relevant legislative proposals.
- The Law of legislative framework was adopted in September 2012 and came into force on 1st January 2014. The registry of legislation, listing Lithuanian laws and regulations, is the main state register. It is the first and only freely available official Lithuanian source of laws in electronic space. All data in the registry is open to the public free of charge. The registry is funded from the State budget and other funds following relevant legislation.

3. Increase the online availability of all the services provided to the public by maximising the use of existing and new information and communication technologies

v) Increasing the accessibility of services provided to the public.

- Since 2011, the Ministry of Interior has carried out a project for building a centralized system for the delivery of public and administrative services through one-stop shop. This project involves listing all the public and administrative services with their profiles/descriptions. It also involves the development of a monitoring system for public and administrative services, as well as an online portal for collection and analysis of data on services, etc. The project is expected to be completed in 2014.
- With a view to consolidating data centres, data storage, and reducing the number of physical workstations through virtualization technologies, as well as bringing in IT management and IT service quality processes, i.e. efficient measures for effective development of public information infrastructure, an architecture model of the national information technology infrastructure was built in the of 2013.
- With a view to making an effective use of information and communication technologies, and creating user-friendly, easily accessible and useful electronic services for messaging and electronic document delivery to natural and legal persons, currently a project is being developed for the centralised system for the delivery of electronic messages and electronic documents to natural and legal persons, which has already produced a one-stop-shop for the delivery of electronic documents and electronic messages to natural and legal persons at the national level. The project is expected to integrate document management systems of more than 100 different institutions with built in delivery system.
- There have been a growing number of major public and administrative services brought online: from 81.5 per cent in 2011 to 87 per cent in 2012.
- Lithuania boasts of the e-government services delivered at the highest level of electronic maturity in the following fields: personal income declaration, job search, issuance of driving licenses, reporting to the police, registration of the place of residence, declaration of social contributions for employees, corporate tax declaration, value-added tax declaration, opening up a business, customs declarations, public procurement, etc.
- The 2012 data of the Statistics Lithuania show that e-government services were used by 37 per cent of Lithuania's population, which has increased by 7 per cent over the year, but is still insufficient to catch up with the EU average –44 per cent). On the other hand, a relatively high proportion of the population use e-government services not only for gaining information, but also for submitting it to different authorities, for example: completing online forms (this accounts for 29 per cent of the Lithuanian population, the EU average – 22 per cent).
- Lithuanian Labour Exchange provides public access to electronic services. Persons registered in employment offices are encouraged to use electronic services in search of a suitable job or when placing their CVs at the Labour exchange portal. Many of the electronic services are of the third or higher level of maturity (with reciprocal interaction between the client and information systems). Currently, almost 20 per cent of registered unemployed use the labour exchange services on the internet (when registering at the office, etc.).
- Electronic Service System for Policyholders (EDAS) allows insurers to electronically make and submit statements on social insurance as legally valid documents, as well as to apply for certificates and to receive information from the database of the State Social Insurance Fund Board. Electronic Service System for the Population (EGAS) is a system enabling public online state social insurance services.. Information system for the insured, beneficiaries and policyholders (ADIS), which is currently under development, will facilitate search for relevant VSD information, provide information about services and/or activities or due responsibilities.
- Lithuania, along with other 19 European Union countries has been involved in a large-scale pilot project STORK2 – *Secure iden**T**ity acr**O**ss bo**R**ders lin**K**ed* (www.eid-stork2.eu.),

which aims to develop and test solutions for identification of legal persons across the borders in e-banking, e-health, e-business and e-university. Lithuania is currently involved in e-university and e-business projects. It should also be noted that Lithuanian eID cards can be identified in 10 countries' portals of e-services, as well as in European Commission's secure identification system ECAS – https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/peps/sp-request.

vi) Promotion of public participation in the process for the improvement of service provision.

- Since 2001, a survey commissioned by the European Commission was carried out to assess electronic public and administrative services provided in the European Union and candidate countries. The survey is conducted on the basis of e-government and its evaluation policies, adopted in 2009 Conference of the European Union Ministers responsible for e-government guidelines. The 2013 survey has found that Lithuania is ahead of the EU countries in most fields: the total usage rate of electronic services in Lithuania makes 49 per cent (to compare with 46 per cent average in EU27 +), electronic service efficiency is 45 per cent (to compare with 40 per cent average in EU27 +), and others. More detailed information on the survey is available at the Ministry of Interior website http://www.vrm.lt/go.php/lit/E-valdzia/1004.
- Better public services increase public integrity. The following electronic services have been introduced: Electronic Service System for Policyholders (EDAS), Electronic Service System for the Population (EGAS), Electronic Management System of Certificates (EPTS). The State Social Insurance Fund Board customers are served through a single contact number 1883, and information system for the insured, beneficiaries and policyholders (ADIS) is currently under development. These public services are used by insurers and the insured. They are intended for a fast, uniform and higher quality service for the customer. The State Social Insurance Fund Board website provides for a possibility of commenting the services and getting information about services available, it also provides access to the above mentioned systems. The State Social Insurance Fund Board has concluded about 300 contracts for data exchange with other institutions.
- To provide public access not only to public sector information, but also to electronic services, many services of public relevance have been brought online. Thanks to the project Development of Information System of Electronic Social Assistance Services for Families (SPIS), the population can, from autumn 2013, submit to the municipality electronically 26 types of social support requests. Licensing of social care agencies is conducted via Electronic Tool for Social Care Licensing (http://sglis.sppd.lt:8090), which is a project implemented by the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, with a view to smoother and faster delivery of the service.
- To make relevant legal information public, press releases and interviews with specialists are posted. Furthermore, in 2013, banners were placed in various sites for the public to find relevant information, e.g. a retirement calculator, helping to decide on the pension scheme (www.pensijuskaiciuokle.lt). Websites administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour: www.socialiniszemelapis.lt http://vitrinos.spis.lt:8080/ contain a variety of social indicators, statistics by municipality, and provide for a possibility of making individual statistical breakdowns.
- The public has a chance to participate in The State Social Insurance Fund Board corruption prevention system. Individuals can provide reports on the alleged corruption of civil servants and employees of fund administrating bodies: by e-mail (antikorupcija@sodra.lt);

or in a special reporting column of the web site of the Fund Board, or by anonymous call; or by dropping anonymous reports in the mailbox of all the Fund administrating offices.

- With a view to improving public services, their quality, customer service and information, the State Social Insurance Fund has been involved in the various projects, funded by EU Structural Funds. In The project Development and Implementation of Electronic System for Serving the Population, carried out in 2008-2011, brought state social insurance services online. The project Introduction of Quality Management System Meeting Standard Requirements of LST EN ISO 9001:2001 across State Social Insurance Fund Administration offices, carried out in 2010-2012, provided for a roll-out of a widely recognized quality management system meeting international standard, which ensures high quality of public services. In 2013, a Project has started on the development and implementation of interactive electronic service system for the information and consultations of the insured, beneficiaries and insurers, which is expected to build personalized interactive electronic consulting services for insurers, beneficiaries and the insured.

4. The most novel and innovative activities implementing the principles of open government

- The Government's Office has recently installed an information system for electronic signing of Government decisions (ELPAS), which has been successfully running for almost a year. This system is designed for electronic signing of Government acts, resolutions, decisions, and Prime Minister's decrees, as well as for their registration, and placement in the Official Journal, also for sending draft legislation to the national Parliament and President's Chancellery. All users (including Prime Minister, ministers, vice-ministers, chancellors, and ordinary civil servants) have electronic certificates provided by our Citizen Registry in the form of SmartCards. This helps to be more efficient in terms of time and human resources, and ensures promptness and security in the delivery of the mentioned documents to relevant institutions. It should be also pointed out the qualified TimeStamp functionality based on UTC(LT) (Universal Time Clock) generation for long-term validity of certificates confirmation and automatized transmission of signed legal acts to the national archives (the first ever in the world state archive of electronic documents EAIS) for permanent storage. The ELPAS is based on qualified electronic signature infrastructure and national electronic documents platform ADOC.
- In June 2013, a new system for selection of civil servants was introduced. It involves two phases:

Phase I: the Department of Civil Service makes screening for general skills, and leadership skills during an interview with recruitment specialists/ psychologists, when applying for managerial positions Phase II: interview at the organisation holding a vacancy. The best applicant is selected during an interview.

With a view to implementing a new public service recruitment system, a Civil Service Information System Selection Module was developed, and the Lithuanian citizens applying for a job in civil service, may provide documents to institutions, file for generic skills test or check leadership skills on a web site www.testavimas.vtd.lt or Electronic Government Portal www.epaslaugos.lt, with their ID card or through electronic banking. The results of the generic skills test are made available online. The results of a test can also be seen in an individual profile made on the website www.testavimas.vtd.lt.

All public administration institutions use the Selection Module for communication with the applicant, i.e., they receive documents of the applicant, which may be asked to be specified, they

see test results, notify of the competition date, time and venue. The organisation arranging a competition can see the results of the generic skills test, management aptitude, foreign language proficiency in the Selection Module, which enables them to make a decision regarding further participation in the competition.

The Selection Module enables the Department of Civil Service to manage the civil service recruitment process in terms of posting the dates, times and venues for generic skills tests, as well as testing applicants online across Lithuania, thus ensuring control over the selection of civil servants.

SUMMARY

Lithuania is committed to implementing the principles of Open Government Partnership and continues to pursue the originally set objective of drawing the attention of the government and the society to the quality of governance, learning from other countries' experience and sharing Lithuania's experience with other partnering countries.

The biggest challenge faced while implementing the open Government initiatives under the Action Plan, was related to the development of a more open culture of governance, which presumes high expectations on the part of the society towards the political elite and civil servants. The support of the political elite is an additional resource for a more effective fulfilment of the set commitments. Also, a broader involvement of civic society should be ensured in identifying the objectives of the future Action Plan, and civic society should play a considerable role in implementing open Government activities.

In the future Lithuania expects that the implementation of open Government initiatives will increase the transparency and responsibility of public administration.