



NORVEGIJOS PARAMA LIETUVAI:  
partnerystė vertybėms  
kurti ir išsaugoti

## **Municipal Authorities' focus on improving public service quality processes**

The main focus of the project “Development of the Capacities of Local Authority Employees in the Field of Management and Efficiency of Public Services Processes” is to strengthen the cooperation among Lithuanian and Norwegian partners in the area of public services management. Another goal is to enhance the local public services efficiency, promote higher transparency of administration of local authorities' activities. The project has started in 2015 September under the financial assistance of the 2009-2014 Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme LT10 “Capacity-Building and Institutional Cooperation between Beneficiary State and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities” (co-financed by the Republic of Lithuania and the 2009-2014 Norwegian financial mechanism and instructions for completion). The principal coordinator of the cooperation project is Lithuanian Regional Research Institute and several Lithuanian municipalities' administrations, including Kaunas city, Kaunas district, Ukmergė, Jonava, Tauragė and Šilalė municipalities. Hordaland County Council, Department of Regional Development (Hordaland Fylkeskommune) and Western Norway Research Institute (Vestlandsforskning) represent the Norwegian partnership.

The idea of the project is based on few main ideas. The first argument is the need to assess the current situation and improve public administration processes in Lithuania. The development of capacities in the areas of public service quality management is based on the theoretical principles of evidence-based governance, the essence of which is the adoption and application of managerial decisions and organisational practices based on collected performance assessment evidence and indicators. This concept is applied on different levels of organisational process evaluation and decision-making including the stages of administration, strategic planning, initiation, implementation, approval, assessment and correction of different activities. The second argument relies on the need to improve the accessibility to municipal public services, which are facing the challenges of service complexity, to adjust different interests from the variety of target groups.

These issues are addressed through implementation of various Project activities. The first part of the project activities will involve training sessions for the local authorities' institutions and public institution specialists, mainly focusing on the areas of public service management processes and performance indicators. Another important part of the activities is related to the cooperation and adoption of best practices from Norwegian partners, including experience from state authorities, municipal and regional governmental administrations level as well as social partners. Important part of these project activities included the visit of 40 specialists to Norwegian institutions from Lithuanian municipal partners such as Kaunas city, Kaunas district, Ukmergė, Jonava, Tauragė and Šilalė municipalities. The main focus of the visit to the counties of Sogn&Fjordane and Hordaland was the promotion of know-how exchange activities. The main objectives of the visit included

exchanging experiences in the field of good governance principles in public administration institutions, exchange of experience in strategic planning, healthcare, public services management, quality implementation, and prevention of corruption. The schedule of the visit enabled an increase of knowledge on local governance processes, strategic planning, sustainable regional development, corruption prevention and e-health care system, but also enacted further cooperation plans between Lithuanian and Norwegian partners and municipalities.

The third part of project activities develops the pack of recommendations for ensuring the efficiency and quality of public service processes on municipal level. In addition, the Lithuanian Regional Research Institute experts prepare the strategic recommendations on the availability and quality of health care treatment services on local government level. The partners of the project expect to have a positive impact on efficiency and quality of local public services provided by local authorities and local public institutions. Another expected outcome influences residents of target municipalities who will benefit from the improved quality of public services in general. The joint activities will serve as a positive example for other municipalities and public service institutions which might contribute positively to the strengthening the interorganizational cooperation among Lithuanian and Norwegian partners.

To summarize the project results and discuss the best practices the scientific-practical conference "Regional development 2017" will be organized in March, 2017. Practitioners from different fields, experts from public institutions, academicians and politicians from the Lithuanian and Norway national and local authorities will be invited to join the conference agenda to discuss the different issues of local governance.