

National Audit Office of Lithuania

Public Audit Report

Is the Programme of Museum Modernisation 2007-2015 Implemented Effectively

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Vilnius

Summary

Audit started 31 March 2011-03-31

Audit completed 16 January 2012

Full audit report in Lithuanian is available at the
National Audit Office website www.vkontrole.lt

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2007 approved the Programme of Museum Modernization 2007-2015 (Programme) with the purpose of raising public historical awareness having cardinally updated museum activities and providing them with proper conditions to accumulate, protect and promote heritage objects in the areas of history, literature, art, nature, science and technology to allow the public to acquire a more comprehensive knowledge of national cultural heritage and contribute to the development of their creativity.

The Programme aims at modernisation of museums assets, to restock museum collections with new items, to restore museum valuables, to actualise national cultural heritage with a help of modern aids and technologies and ensure possibility for the public to familiar with digital cultural heritage.

The Programme object is national, republican and municipality museums established as budgetary institutions.

The estimated funding for the implementation of Programme aims and objectives amounted to LTL 437.8 million. Different sources of funding are used for the Programme implementation including budget allocations, EU funding, etc. Municipalities are recommended to take part in this Programme and allocate their funds for this purpose. In 2007-2011 the Programme was allocated LTL 95.6 million or 22 per cent of the estimated overall amount for 2007-2015.

When developing the programme as well as implementing it public discussion was taking place concerning the lack of funding for maintenance of museum buildings, low salaries of museum staff, danger related to protection of museum items, outdated expositions, outdated management, inability of the state to maintain so many museums, decreasing number of museum visitors. In 2007-2010 overall number of museum visitors decreased by 12 per cent (about 388 visitors).

Audit procedures were conducted in the Ministry of Culture and 14 other entities (museums/their divisions). During the audit a questionnaire was sent out to 99 museums (national, republican, municipality and departmental), the answers were received from 93 of them. We also analysed experiences and best practices of the following foreign countries: Australia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

In order to evaluate if the Programme of Museum Modernization 2007-2015 is implemented effectively during this audit we analysed if:

- ▶ the Programme is developed as to ensure successful museum modernization;
- ▶ museums are provided with proper conditions to accumulate, store, restore, exhibit and protect cultural valuables;
- ▶ public creativity is sufficiently developed having cardinally updated museum activities.

Conclusions

1. The Programme is developed without having in place the strategy for museum development, its aims are not orientated towards concrete results, its evaluation criteria do not allow to evaluate the level of achievement of the Programme aims and objectives, the funding estimates do not cover the activities therefore there are no sufficient prerequisites for the effective implementation of the Programme;
2. Updating of museum assets without always following the funding priorities, valuables (exhibits) are acquired, stored, restored and conserved without having concrete priorities therefore proper conditions for accumulating, storing, restoring, exhibiting and protecting cultural valuables are not provide in the museums and there is a danger concerning protection of valuables;
3. Only 6 per cent of all the museum valuables (exhibits) are transferred to digital format, educational programmes are not implemented by all the museums, continuous development of qualification of museum staff is not ensured, museum evaluation is carried out too slowly, therefore public creativity is not sufficiently developed, museum activities are not updated.

Recommendations

For the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. To determine optimal network of museums, to establish quality requirements for museum buildings, expositions, management and services, qualification requirements for museum professionals (Conclusion 1).
2. To update the Programme following the requirements of Methodology for Strategic Planning as well as to annually update the Action Plan taking into consideration changes in the planned annual assignments (Conclusions 1, 2, and 3).
3. In order to protect museum valuables and use budget funding more efficiently on basis of the survey of status of Lithuanian museum collections to develop and approve the planning document determining sequence and implementers of restoration works (Conclusion 2).