The Republic of Lithuania and the Swiss Confederation have signed project agreements to improve the healthcare of pregnant, delivering women and newborns in Lithuania. Among the subjects of these agreements – one of the first medical institutions in Lithuania – the Pranas Mažylis Maternity Hospital in Kaunas.

The Pranas Mažylis Maternity Hospital is participating in two programmes financed by the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. The hospital will receive the latest equipment, and its heating, power-supply, ventilation and conditioning systems will be modernised.

A total of €352,360 has been allocated (including technical-project preparation and management costs) to implement the project, which is financed under the first programme – Introduction of energy efficient technologies in to Lithuanian hospitals that provide services.
to pregnant, delivering women and newborns. Using these funds, the Pranas Mažylis Maternity Hospital – a subsidiary of public institution the Kaunas Clinical Hospital – had its ventilation and conditioning systems modernised and solar collectors installed in 2014. This year’s plans are to modernise the boiler rooms and external hot-water supply systems, as well as the internal heating and power-supply systems.

**Innovations**

The maternity hospital’s large surgery and utility facilities were equipped with electronic valves, and filters were replaced to ensure better airflow regulation on the premises. The pregnant-women’s pool was equipped with a humidity-collector system and the pipes were insulated. The newborns section was equipped with an air conditioner and the air heater was replaced in the ventilation unit.

The conditions for kinesitherapeutic activities around the pools for pregnant women and newborns have improved, as well as working conditions for staff.

**Modernisation will enable savings**

A total of €132,237 has been allocated for the modernisation of heating points, external water-supply systems and the internal heating system, and €96,221 for the modernisation of the power-supply system. Implementation of the heating-modernisation project will result in the usage of 40% less gas at the maternity hospital (a saving of €5,792 per year).

Implementation of the power-supply-modernisation project will result in the usage of 60% less electricity (a saving of €11,583 per year).

**The latest equipment is already bought**

During the implementation of the second programme – Improvement of perinatal and neonatal health care services in Lithuania – medical equipment worth €148,417 was bought for the Pranas Mažylis Maternity Hospital in 2013, including a couple of vital-signs monitors for newborns, a portable ultrasound device, three cardiographs and a hearing-testing device for newborns.

This equipment will facilitate the work of doctors, while pregnant women will receive quality services, timely diagnostics and effective treatment.

Remote participation in court is now possible

Now, you don’t have to go to court for a hearing: the ability to follow processes and give evidence is possible from any location by using special videoconferencing equipment.

Claimants, defendants, victims, witnesses and other parties in a civil, administrative or penal process who live in Lithuania or abroad may participate in a remote court session. Such
participants can watch the session on a TV screen live, and ask and answer questions. They will also be seen by the other participants.

Remote court sessions can be organised in all Lithuanian courts. Stationary or mobile videoconferencing equipment is used, with the possibility of delivering it to the desired location.

This feature is promoted in order to expand the array and usage of electronic services and stimulate development of the knowledge society in Lithuania.

Remote sessions will also improve the safety of parties with special needs. In certain cases, witnesses and victims won’t have to talk to defendants, with their questioning conducted remotely. Defendants and convicts will be interrogated remotely instead of being taken to court, this will serve for saving time and money. Videoconferences can also be used to question people who, for various reasons, can’t come to court – such as those living abroad, the disabled, and people with certain diseases and psychological issues that hinder their ability to cooperate in court. The National Courts Administration created this system by implementing the project Creation and implementation of the video transmission, recording and storage system in courts in cooperation with the Prison Department under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania and the Prosecutor General’s Office. The project’s aim was to create a system which would allow remote court sessions, with recording and electronic-storage capabilities. This feature is promoted in order to expand the array and usage of electronic services and stimulate development of the knowledge society in Lithuania.

During the project’s implementation, 18 courts, 13 imprisonment institutions and 2 prosecutor’s offices have been equipped with special devices and software for remote court sessions, and the central part of the system has been installed at the National Courts Administration. The total value of the project is €1,524,685, with 85% of this donated by Switzerland and 15% allocated from Lithuania’s state budget.

A tender for computer hardware is planned in the first half of 2015, and 296 judges and their assistants should be equipped with computer hardware file usage/work with records to encourage them to organise remote court sessions more frequently, expedite hearings, save resources and ensure that the rights of court participants are exercised properly.

Research projects conducted by Lithuanian and Swiss scientists are underway, with financing from the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Vilnius University, Kaunas University of Technology and foreign scientists are currently conducting research in the fields of environmental protection, technology, and natural and health sciences. Implementation of these projects is in its halfway, so the potential future benefit to Lithuania and the world can be seen.

Two years ago, Lithuanian scientists submitted applications for research funding under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme project Research and development. A total of 11 projects were selected and more than €7.3 million were allocated to them. The average amount of financial grant per project is €666,052 and the average duration is 40 months.

Scientists from Vilnius University’s Faculty of Medicine and the University of Lausanne – one of the oldest and most famous universities in Switzerland – are implementing the project Unique genome rearrangement in the case of inherent nervous system development.
disorders: origins, genome mechanisms, functional and clinical consequences. In order to understand the nature of intellectual disability and find methods of treatment, Lithuanian scientists and their Swiss colleagues are looking for new ways to analyse these disorders.

Progress has been made in determining the causes of intellectual disability in the last decade, but diagnosing it is difficult because of different genetic defects that often occur in clinically indistinguishable cases. When using routine genetic testing, the cause of this disability remains unknown in 50% of cases.

This project focuses on the etiology and pathophysiology of intellectual disability. The study’s results should help reveal new causes of this disorder and improve genetic diagnostics in Lithuania. Researchers will gain experience in the fields of molecular cytogenetics, genetics, functional genomics and bioinformatics.

The project is innovative first and foremost because of the type of genetic testing being conducted, with the latest technology used to identify the genes responsible for intellectual disability. Gene expression and transgenic animal models will also be analysed. This is a long-awaited step into functional genomics.

Other projects (among the 11 financed):
Research and technological development of evidence-based innovative non-invasive diagnostics and monitoring solutions for neurological patients and patients with brain trauma; Climate change in peatbogs: Holocene traces and current trends, influence on biodiversity and carbon deposits in peat; Swiss-Lithuanian ferroelectrics: controlled internal fields for energy collection/medical diagnostics/application in microelectronics; Single-cell microchip platform for detecting metabolites and integral analysis.

According to Dr. Aistė Vilkanauskytė, project manager for the programme “Research and development” financed under the Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme, these projects not only strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation in the field of research and development, expand knowledge in selected research areas and promote inter-institutional cooperation, but also contribute to advances in environmental, natural and health sciences.

Results from the implementation of all projects will be available in 2016.
Programme: Research and development

Lithuanian-Swiss Cooperation Programme project map

Project: Introducing energy efficient technologies to the Pranas Mažylis Maternity Hospital, which provides services to pregnant, delivering women and newborns

Project: Creation and implementation of the system for video transaction, recording and storage in courts

Swiss contribution – for real and targeted works