**Study on horizontal priority "Information Society"**

**„Ernst & Young Baltic” Ltd.**

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**Executive summary**

While the access to information systems and information and communication technology (hereinafter- ICT) skills are at good level, by using the European Union funding for projects that promote horizontal priority “Information society” (hereinafter - HP IS), the access to e-services as well as awareness of the benefits provided by the use of ICT could be significantly improved. In order to better define the scale and return of HP IS, this project evaluation provides an assessment of the current situation, the identification of risks and provide some suggestions and recommendations on the promotion of information society and improvement of the management and supervision of the HP IS.

The approach to the evaluation is based upon a comprehensive statistical summary of the relevant data as well as on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the gathered data. Data has been collected on projects with positive influence over the HP IS. The data collected include the project funding (allocated/paid), HP IS output indicators, project target audiences, regions and industries, as well as other criteria of the projects with positive impact on the horizontal priority. In addition, data was collected through interviews – in order to collect the best practice on the horizontal priority implementation and assess the achievement of the project objectives and the indented target audiences. Most of the data used for the evaluation are found in the appendices to the document.

Since there is little data gathered in a centralised way on the HP IS, the most important risks for the evaluation had been the lack of specific data and the low level of detail of the available data. Data was collected from centralised databases, annual reports submitted to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development as well as through interviews with the beneficiaries.

The data analysis has been based upon the introductory report submitted at the beginning of November. The methodology included in the introductory report has been also laid out in a condensed way in the section 2 of this document.

The main findings from the analysis have been summarised at the end of each section. However, the main conclusions made during the evaluation state that between 2007 and 2010 there has been a significant number of projects implemented in Latvia with a positive effect on HP IS. The activities within those projects have contributed towards all the pre-defined indicators of HP IS. Therefore it can be concluded that the HP IS has been implemented to a considerable level and the corresponding projects carried do contribute to the objectives of the HP IS.

However, analysis has shown that there are a number of restrictions to the implementation of HP IS. Section 6 of this report refers to those restrictions and gives suggestions for improvements. The most significant observations are related to the distribution of the projects with impact on HP IS – most of projects are concentrated in Riga region and most of financing is concentrated in just few projects. Other observations are related to the data inconsistencies about the HP IS indicators – caused by the different approach to the gathering of data on HP IS. In addition, observation has been made about insufficient understanding of the information society problems and the HP IS itself at the level of beneficiaries and the responsible institutions. The final section of the evaluation provides a summary of the main findings and some recommendations for the improvement of the HP IS management and control system.