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NEW STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES OF THE MARTYNAS MAZVYDAS NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LITHUANIA

Summary

M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania makes a new step towards the long-term preservation of the cultural heritage of the country by designing an integrated virtual library. This project will not be limited only to libraries but archival and museum documents will be digitized as well.

15 archives, 16 museums and over 60 Lithuanian research and public libraries will join the implementation of the project. Project results – 11 million pages of digitized documents – will be easily available to Lithuanian users after the development of LIBIS infrastructure and implementation of modern technologies.

Introduction

By the Resolution No. 27 of 12 January 1992 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania “On the Transfer of the Functions of the Founder of Lithuanian Book Chamber and Extension of the Functions of M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania” the function of the preservation of the published cultural and scientific heritage of the country was granted to M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (NLL).

This Resolution answers the recommendations of UNESCO, CDNL and CENL on the functions of national libraries in pursuance of the preservation of enduring published cultural heritage.

Following the Resolution of Lithuanian Government and recommendations of international organizations NLL completely reorganized the long-term preservation of the published cultural and scientific heritage of the country by creating improved conditions for the preservation of this heritage in the new premises.

M. Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania performs the following primary functions:

- Registration, bibliographic control and dissemination in the country and worldwide of information on the published cultural heritage and scientific resources;
- Long-term preservation of the published cultural heritage and scientific resources.

Although the National Library performs a number of other functions related with the provision of information to users and scientific and methodical activities the above-mentioned functions of preservation of cultural heritage ensure the Library an exclusive status, responsibilities and obligations in preservation of Lithuanian published cultural heritage and its world-wide promotion.

Thus naturally the above-mentioned areas are the priorities of NLL activities. Performance of these functions is supported by Lithuanian Integrated Library System (abbreviated as LIBIS) that is already in place and functions effectively. LIBIS means a joint system consisting of 60 research and public libraries along with their branches as well as software used in all 60 libraries for the creation of joint databases.

LIBIS system consists of:

- 60 libraries, working in the unanimous network – consistent organizational-functional structure;
- Following bibliographic databases of collective use: Union Catalogue, National Bibliographic Data Bank, Authority Data Bank, Archive of Electronic Resources and Sub-System of Analytical Bibliography.

The two last-mentioned – Archive of Electronic Resources and Sub-System of Analytical Bibliography – is the result of few last years enabling the improved long-term preservation of electronic resources. The archive embraces already over 4,5 million electronic resources that will be preserved for the future generations. On the receipt this year of the financing of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania tasks of the larger scale will be carried out in order to open the accumulated archive of electronic resources to Lithuanian as well as foreign users.

With the implementation of the Sub-system of Analytical Bibliography and involvement of bibliographic description of articles from periodicals in 60 libraries from different regions of Lithuania better possibilities emerged to receive actual information from different daily newspapers and magazines for all Lithuanian users irrespectively of their location.

Attention of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and financial support of LT 2 million for LIBIS development allows accomplishing implementation of LIBIS software in 14 more municipal libraries this year that were off the previous programs. Besides, financing of the Government provides all county libraries with the possibility to update their technical basis by acquiring more powerful servers.

The future of LIBIS is associated with the creation of virtual or digital library aimed at ensuring:

- Digitization and long-term preservation of Lithuanian cultural heritage;
- Equal opportunities of access to information for all users in Lithuania;
- Improved access to full-text documents of Lithuanian cultural heritage and scientific resources to foreign users;

- Saving facilities and technical resources in preparation of bibliographic information and in digitization and provision of cultural heritage to users.

Main objectives of LIBIS virtual environment are represented in Chart 1.

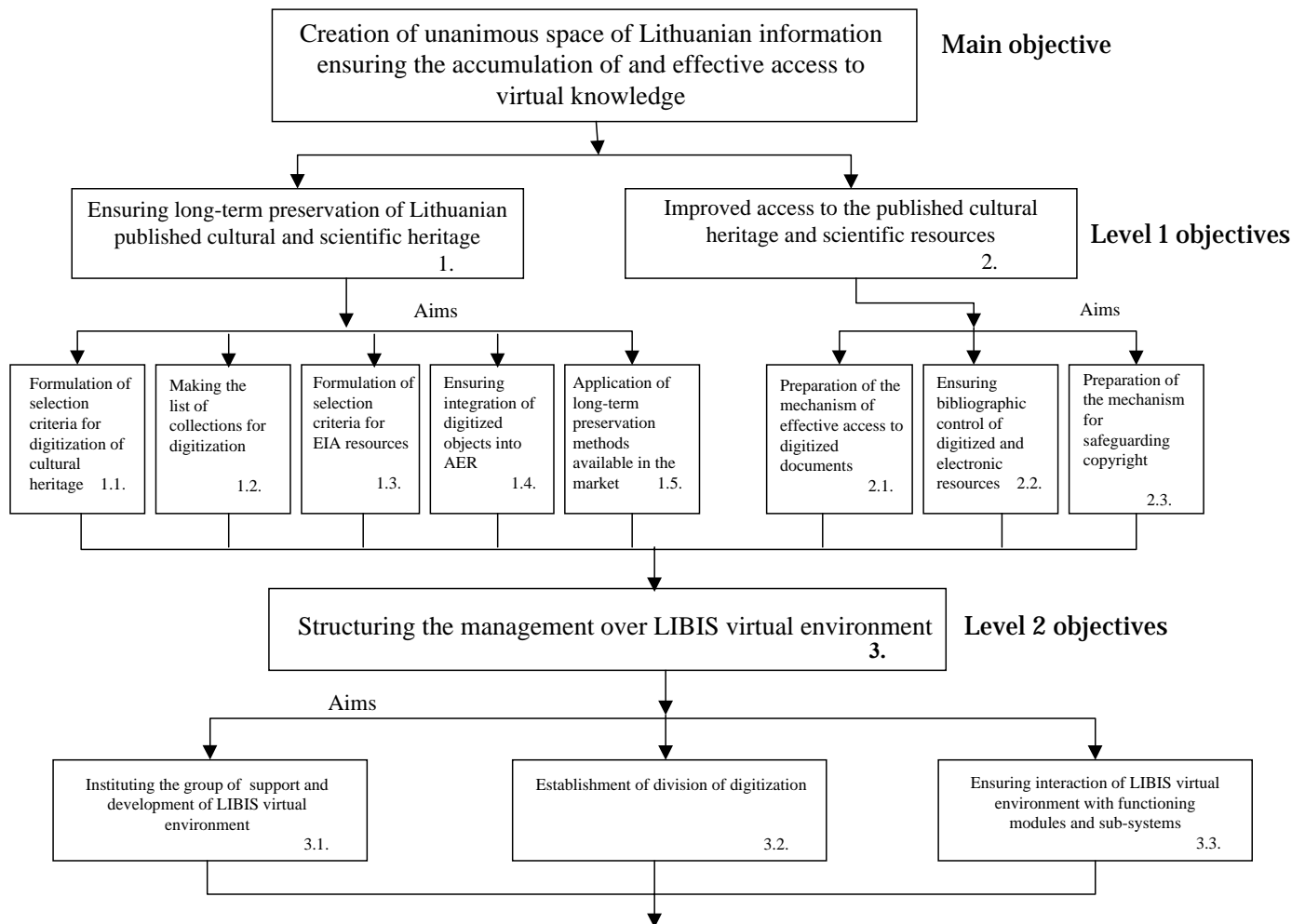


Chart 1. Objectives and aims of LIBIS virtual environment

While structuring the vision of virtual library employees of NLL drafted the project, including:

- The methodology of virtual environment integrating the most advanced experience in this field as well as requirements for this type of systems and technical standards;
- Proposals on the strategy of digitization of Lithuanian cultural heritage, involving archives and museums into creation of LIBIS virtual environment;

- Organizational-functional structure of LIBIS virtual environment and its connection to functioning LIBIS sub-systems and modules;
- Technical and software requirements for LIBIS virtual environment;
- Selection criteria for digitization of cultural heritage and lists of documents based on these criteria;
- Requirements for metadata of full-text documents and long-term preservation of documents;
- Terms and conditions for safeguarding copyright and related rights.

Preparation of the project “LIBIS virtual environment” demonstrated that its realization requires huge financial resources that are not available in our country at the time being. On the other hand, the new great opportunity to receive funding is emerging right now – European Structural Funds.

As we already had the vision of virtual library and specific requirements for implementation of that vision we submitted an application to receive EU funding with the total project budget of EUR 4 million.

Application of NLL was among 8 successful institutions who received PHARE funding for project preparation. At the time being 5 Lithuanian experts and project management group consisting of NLL employees appointed by the Order of the Director of NLL are working on the project “Virtual Integrated Library Information System”. PHARE financing provided more realistic opportunities to draft the project and to embody the idea of creation of virtual library.

Our previous work on LIBIS virtual environment project helps us to supply material for the project and data to experts working on the project in a shorter time. Many of the results of the previous project are used successfully in the present projecting stage.

The most important moment is that work on the previous project of the creation of LIBIS virtual environment enabled us to understand the integrity of the national cultural heritage. Thus the new project will not be limited to the published cultural heritage, but will include other parts of it as well by involvement of archives and museums into the project under preparation. 15 archives, 16 museums and over 60 Lithuanian research and public libraries will join the implementation of the project.

Thus the new project is aimed at joining main parts of cultural heritage of the country into a unanimous whole of digitized and electronically published objects, i. e. virtual integrated library information system, and to consolidate the efforts of the main institutions responsible for the cultural heritage in their principal objective of long-term preservation of the heritage.

Project results – 11 million pages of digitized documents – will be easily available to Lithuanian users after the development of LIBIS infrastructure and implementation of modern technologies.