



Executive summary of the public audit report

ENSURING PRESERVATION OF THE IMMOVABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MANORS

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

DEFINITIONS

‘Objects of cultural heritage’ means the single objects or the objects being part of a complex which are registered as immovable cultural property, i.e., structures or other immovable items which are present in land plots, parts of the plots, water and forest areas or parts thereof and which have valuable properties and, together with the territory assigned thereto, are or may be separate objects of rights *in rem*.

‘Immovable cultural heritage of manors’ means part of manor heritage, a physical whole unit of the manor of cultural value and public significance consisting of functional-territorial structural parts and/or its individual parts, fragments and/or elements that has survived until nowadays. It is the main component of the general manor heritage of Lithuania.

‘Manager’ means the owner or other holder of the management rights (beneficiary, lessee, etc.) of an object of cultural heritage and other immovable items situated in the territory or at the site of a single object or a complex object.

‘Cultural value’ means archaeological, anthropological, ethnological, mythological, memorial, religious, architectural, technical and technological, urban or other historical, artistic, or scientific value and significance.

‘Inventory of immovable cultural heritage’ means inventory, determination and registration of specific immovable cultural properties.

‘Heritage protection requirements’ means the conditions of the management, use and disposal of a protected object or site, the special conditions of the use of the land of a territory or of a protection zone laid down by laws and other legal acts for the protection of valuable properties.

‘Protection regulation’ means the document establishing heritage protection requirements for a specific immovable cultural heritage object, its territory, protection zone, or this type of objects.

‘Valuable property’ means a feature of an object or site of cultural heritage, part or element thereof which is of value from the ethnical, historical, esthetical or scientific point of view.

‘Monitoring’ means the periodic observation, recording of the condition of objects and sites of cultural heritage and changing thereof, the assessment, generalisation and forecasting of the influence destroying or damaging the valuable properties.

‘Upkeep’ means the operations which are regularly carried by managers and do not change the valuable properties of an object of cultural heritage and are not subject to a consent of an institution in charge of the protection of this object.

‘Maintenance’ means the operations carried out to protect cultural heritage: (applied) research, repairs, elimination of the threat of an accident, conservation, restoration, recreation, the planning and designing of these operations

‘Compensation’ means financial payment to the managers of the private property, immovable cultural heritage objects protected by the state that are open for the public for visiting, to cover the costs of maintenance works carried out following special technologies ensuring preservation of the authenticity and observing the established heritage protection requirements, as well as the costs of developing projects for these works and (applied) research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main mission of the state aiming at the preservation of its cultural heritage is to protect it and to transmit it to future generations as the guarantee for the survival of the national identity, an integral part of the landscape and the country's image-making tool, providing conditions for the people to get to know and use it. The heritage of manors is one of the oldest and most distinctive parts of the cultural heritage, with a wide range of composite cultural (architectural, historical, urban and otherwise) value.

The objective of the audit was to evaluate how efficiently the preservation of the manor heritage is organised.

The audit was conducted at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and Cultural Heritage Protection Department under the Ministry of Culture.

The audit addressed the following issues:

- is the preservation of the immovable cultural heritage of manors properly organised;
- is the immovable cultural heritage of manors properly preserved.

The audit covered the period 2005–2013. Data from earlier years was also used for analysing trends and changes.

There were 554 immovable heritage objects of manors listed in the Register of Cultural Properties as on 31 December 2012, 135 of which have been declared to be protected (cultural monuments and objects protected by the state).

The audit procedures were performed at:

- Ministry of Culture;
- Cultural Heritage Department under the Ministry of Culture and its seven (out of ten) territorial divisions, those of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Utena, and Telšiai;
- 129 manors: 23 cultural monuments, 79 manors protected by the state, and 27 ones listed in the Register.

After completing the audit procedures, the auditors found that authorisations had been issued for construction and maintenance works without observing legal provisions. The Cultural Heritage Department was informed in writing thereof.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings.

The Plan for Implementing the Recommendations is given in Annex 4.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The status of cultural heritage objects contained in the current Register of Cultural Properties and the set goals are not always in line with the real cultural value of the objects, because the objects were transferred to this Register from the old one without having carried out their valuation. Also, research was conducted and valuable properties were identified for a small

number of immovable cultural heritage objects, so the inventory of cultural properties is inaccurate and uninformative.

2. Not all immovable cultural heritage property objects have been recorded in the Real Property Register and neither this has been done in respect of all legal facts related to the protection of the immovable cultural heritage objects, so their managers may not be aware of the facts concerning their protection and thus may not ensure that the objects are properly protected.
3. Legal protection, including monitoring, is applied to a number of decayed cultural heritage objects listed on the Register of Cultural Properties which are of dubious value in terms of heritage protection, thus using material and human resources that could be allocated to the inspection of valuable objects.
4. The immovable cultural heritage of manors is funded without clear priorities, resources are usually allocated for eliminating the critical status of manors and for indispensable maintenance. Afterwards, however, manors are decaying without due funding.
5. The compensation mechanism to cover the maintenance costs is unattractive to managers, there is a shortage of general information on the availability of funding for maintenance from other governmental institutions and other support, so there are few managers willing to make use of the compensations, managers are not sufficiently encouraged to take care of cultural properties.
6. About 74 per cent of the immovable cultural heritage objects of manors do not have integral territories, so a manor has several managers, which makes it difficult to take joint decisions on maintenance works due to different interests and financial situations of the managers.
7. Protection regulations specifying what should be preserved and in what manner have not been drafted for 82 per cent of the immovable cultural heritage objects listed in the Register of Cultural Properties. Under the current procedure, certain protection documents (protection regulations) are issued only at the request of the managers of the cultural heritage objects and not to all managers as stipulated by the law, so conditions for adequate protection have not been provided.
8. There is a failure to regulate the evaluation of changes in the condition of immovable cultural heritage objects, to inspect all immovable cultural heritage objects of manors once in five years, to provide all necessary information in condition inspection statements, to monitor compliance with heritage protection requirements, which prevents evaluating the condition of cultural heritage objects and changes therein in a proper manner, timely detecting irregularities, and taking preventive measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Culture:

1. In order to ensure proper inventory and preservation of immovable cultural heritage objects of manors, priorities should be set determining valuable properties of the manors and allocating necessary funds.
2. In order to ensure adequate protection, maintenance, and use of immovable cultural properties and to avoid possible loss thereof:
 - 2.1. legislation on the issue of protection regulations should be amended and supplemented stipulating that such regulations are issued to all managers of such properties;

- 2.2. the compensation mechanism for completed maintenance works should be improved to make it more attractive to managers that carry out maintenance and upkeep of the cultural heritage;
- 2.3. a document should be prepared providing for how the evaluation of changes in the condition of cultural heritage objects should be carried out; also, the Ministry should ensure arrangement of training on motoring for the staff of the Cultural Heritage Department and municipalities who perform monitoring;
- 2.4. measures should be provided for to ensure conditions for the managers of the immovable cultural heritage of manors to preserve the integrity of the manor heritage objects.

Cultural Heritage Department under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. In order to ensure proper inventory and preservation of immovable cultural heritage objects of manors, the Department should determine valuable properties of the objects upon the establishment of appropriate time limits, develop protection regulations and issue them to the managers, giving priority to the objects declared to be protected, and to forward the revised legal facts related to the protection of immovable cultural heritage objects to the administrator of the Real Property Register for registration.
2. In order to ensure more effective monitoring of cultural heritage objects, the Department should collect data about decayed immovable cultural heritage objects of manors listed in the Register of Cultural Properties which are of dubious value in terms of heritage protection and forward this data to immovable cultural heritage assessment councils.