

Lithuania's International Partnerships: Strategic Guidelines for 2026–2030

Context

Situation in Lithuania

In recent years, Lithuania's development cooperation (DC) policy has undergone significant changes. **First**, intensive support for Ukraine has highlighted the importance of development cooperation and had a major impact on changing attitudes – it has become clear that targeted support can be a key factor for transformation. **Second**, in cooperation with the European Commission (EC) Reform and Investment Task Force and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an action plan has been prepared to strengthen the development cooperation ecosystem and capacities for international partnerships. **Third**, the evaluation of the Strategic Directions for Development Cooperation 2022-2025 carried out by the Government's Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA)¹ highlighted the challenges that have arisen and provided recommendations that were taken into account in the preparation of these strategic guidelines. It was also recognised that private sector participation can strengthen the impact of development cooperation by sharing knowledge and technology, investing and creating jobs, **thus increasing the need to involve business** in development cooperation activities.

Taking these factors into account, a new narrative for development cooperation has been formulated, emphasising mutually beneficial partnerships rather than one-sided aid. The National Progress Plan clearly established that development cooperation is an important part of the country's "**soft power**" – it increases Lithuania's influence and visibility in the world and creates long-term returns for Lithuania.

The global situation

The international environment poses many challenges. Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine continues, while the number of wars and conflicts in other regions is also growing, increasing instability. **Climate change** is progressing rapidly, causing increasingly frequent extreme weather events and shortages of important resources. **Global development cooperation trends are changing** – for example, the United States has reviewed its development assistance policy and closed its development cooperation agency USAID, while other donors are also reducing funding and changing policy directions. The 2030 deadline for the implementation of **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** is approaching, but many of the goals have not yet been achieved and are unlikely to be achieved in the remaining five years. In addition, there is a noticeable **decline in civic space** around the world, with increasing restrictions on non-governmental organisations and independent media.

In summary, the world is facing an increasing number of **multidimensional crises**, ranging from wars and pandemics to disasters caused by climate change. No country can overcome such challenges alone; reliable, long-term partnerships based on mutual benefit are essential. Upon becoming a member of the EU, Lithuania committed to providing development assistance, and in 2026–2030 it will fulfil this commitment by focusing its efforts on areas where it has the greatest expertise and can create the most value for both the international community and itself.

¹ [URM VB research DBSIS.pdf](#)

Strategic direction and essence of change

Taking into account the context, we aim to be more strategic in our development cooperation policy and to strengthen the long-term impact of our activities. These strategic guidelines envisage several fundamental **changes**:

- **From aid to mutually beneficial partnerships:** instead of the traditional donor-recipient approach, where aid is provided in one direction, we are moving towards equal partnerships. This means that both Lithuania and its partner countries learn from each other, strengthen their competencies together, implement innovations and create sustainable change. **Mutual benefits are created:** by investing in the future of other countries, Lithuania is also investing in its own long-term prosperity, as stronger partners contribute to common security and prosperity;
- **from geographical to sectoral priorities:** the strategic guidelines focus not on specific countries, but on thematic areas in which Lithuania has the most experience. Based on the experience of previous directions and the STRATA evaluation, Lithuania will focus its efforts on **five priority areas – strengthening democratic, social, digital, environmental and economic resilience** – in order to avoid the fragmentation of resources and ensure higher quality and impact of projects and programmes.

The geography of international partnerships is aligned with foreign policy objectives – Lithuania already has strong experience in the European Union's Eastern Neighbourhood region and has also expanded its activities in Africa. In 2023, the Indo-Pacific Strategy and its implementation plan, which also covers development cooperation activities, were approved. Lithuania will therefore focus on countries where:

- its diplomatic missions or secondary accreditations are present;
- Lithuania's involvement is particularly important to achieve foreign policy objectives;
- participants of Lithuania's development cooperation ecosystem have already established partnerships.

Ukraine remains a top priority for Lithuania – support is provided based on the guidelines for Lithuania's engagement in Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery². Lithuania consistently seeks to apply the knowledge and experience gained in Ukraine to other regions, as well as **to establish trilateral partnerships for development**, involving Ukraine as a country with unique experience in the areas of civic and institutional resilience, crisis management, food safety, countering disinformation, civil protection, demining, etc.

- **From short-term ad hoc projects to strategic long-term programmes:** activities will be focused on **3-5 year strategic programmes** (*flagship programmes*) with clear objectives and measurable results. Each programme will be reviewed periodically, assessing the progress achieved and taking into account changing circumstances and future trends. This will ensure the relevance of activities, enable a rapid response to changes and create conditions for a long-term impact.

² These guidelines are considered a separate country strategy, which is an integral part of the overall International Partnerships Strategic Guidelines.

Operating Principles

In establishing international partnerships, Lithuania is guided by its international commitments and established good practices: the Sustainable Development Goals, the principles of aid effectiveness – including developing countries' ownership of their development priorities, a focus on results, inclusiveness and transparency, and mutual accountability – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Taking these commitments into account, the key operating principles that underpin all initiatives have been formulated as follows:

- **synergy between partner countries' needs and Lithuania's added value** – we operate where it is most needed and where we have something to offer in terms of experience, expertise, competence and/or (political) commitment;
- **specialisation and scalability** – we direct resources and effort toward activities with potential for continuity, repeatability, and expansion. Priority is given to initiatives that can grow, attract international funding and partners, and align with the principle of positive impact investing. By scaling our activities, we aim to achieve greater impact – both for partner countries and for Lithuania – strengthening soft power and international influence;
- **empowerment and co-creation** – we prioritise programmes and projects that provide the tools, skills, knowledge, and resources necessary for the long-term and sustainable development of the country, communities, and individuals. Solutions are developed jointly with partners, and we encourage cooperation among Lithuanian and partner-country institutions, civil society, businesses, and academic communities in designing and implementing projects and programmes.
- **synergy between multilateral and bilateral activities** – we encourage Lithuanian institutions and organisations to participate in EU and other international programmes, and we purposefully link bilateral support with international instruments. Multilateral support is allocated where it aligns with Lithuania's capacity to contribute and enhances the country's visibility internationally. We seek to ensure a balanced representation of the interests of Lithuania and its partner countries in international organisations.
- **balanced coordination of urgent needs with a long-term vision for sustainable development** – we act flexibly, rationally, and respond quickly to changing circumstances, while ensuring that short-term initiatives contribute to the foundations of sustainable economic and social development.

In summary, Lithuania's international partnerships:

- are grounded in **equality and co-creation** – solutions are developed jointly with our partners;
- aim for **scalability and impact** – we focus on what we do best;
- ensure **transparency and accountability** – we set clear goals and measure results;
- combine **rapid response with long-term development** – we work today with tomorrow in mind.

Vision 2030 and theory of change

Vision 2030

Lithuania plans its international partnerships within the framework of a long-term vision. **The national progress strategy *Lithuania 2050*** defines the country as **a resilient state and a constructive and influential actor in global politics**. It emphasises that development cooperation policy is an integral part of Lithuania's foreign and security policy. Guided by these provisions, Lithuania will shift from one-sided donor-driven assistance to **equal partnerships** in 2026–2030, strengthening the resilience of partner countries (and Lithuania itself) and creating mutual benefits for our societies.

The main narrative – strengthening resilience

In today's world, development is inseparable from security, and the strongest link between the two is **resilience – a core value shared** by partner countries and Lithuania. We recognise that we are all vulnerable and that we, too, can learn from the challenges faced by our partners. For this reason, we place particular emphasis on **mutual partnerships**, where each side contributes and grows stronger together.

The foundation of resilience is free, safe, active citizens who are able to care for themselves and their communities. We aim to create conditions and develop skills that enable people to be active, initiative-driven and civically engaged – so that every free, safe and active individual can contribute to shaping the future of their country. Therefore, **our goal is to strengthen resilience through people, communities and societies**, where civic engagement, security and active participation form a solid foundation for long-term partnership and shared growth.

Vision 2030 – by 2030, Lithuania's international partnerships contribute to building a free, resilient, and prosperous world. Partner countries (including Lithuania) become more resilient to shocks, more self-reliant, and better integrated into the global economy and political structures. Lithuania's contribution helps strengthen their capacity to absorb the effects of crises, adapt to change, and transform governance and economic systems toward sustainable development.

Theory of Change

These strategic guidelines are grounded in **the theory of change**, which holds that investing in certain key areas and adhering to the principle of partnership can generate long-term positive transformation.

How it works? Lithuania's investments – financial support, expert knowledge, technology transfer, infrastructure development – will be channelled into specific programmes in each priority sector. These programmes will produce tangible results: specialists will be trained, essential reforms will be implemented, infrastructure will be created or upgraded, and local institutions will be strengthened. Over time, these results will lead to broader national-level change: the capacities of partner-country institutions and communities will grow, the quality of public services will improve, and economic and social resilience will increase. Ultimately, this will support the implementation of a shared vision relevant to both partner countries and Lithuania: as partner countries become stronger, Lithuania's own resilience, security and prosperity also increase. In this way, investments in others become joint investments – we help build a world in which we ourselves can live more safely and thrive.

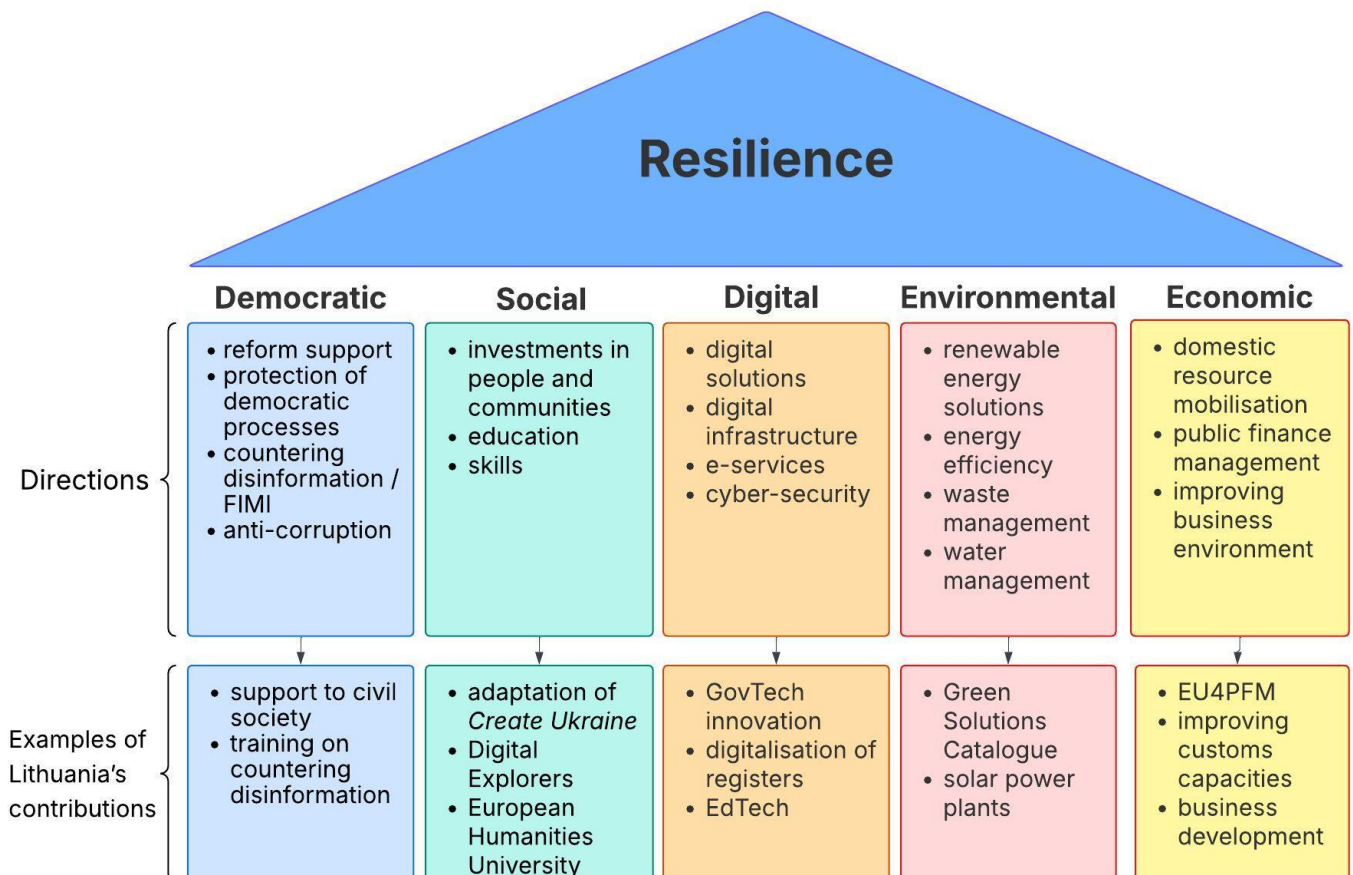
The concept of resilience

According to the OECD definition, **resilience is the ability of households, communities, and countries to absorb shocks, recover from them and adapt to long-term challenges, changes, and uncertainty.** In simpler terms, it is the ability to respond effectively to crises, to recover, and to learn to function under new conditions. Resilience is strengthened through three types of capacity: **absorption capacity** (preparing for potential shocks, mitigating their impact, and maintaining essential functions during a crisis), **adaptive capacity** (adjusting to changing circumstances so the system can continue to function without major losses), and **transformative capacity** (fundamentally restructuring the system, when necessary, so that even major shocks no longer disrupt its operations).

By strengthening the democratic, social, digital, environmental and economic resilience of partner countries, Lithuania seeks to help its partners **better withstand shocks, adapt more quickly to change, and grow sustainably.** Over time, this contributes to a safer and more resilient environment for everyone – our partners and ourselves.

Sectoral priorities

Taking into account its experience, national interests, and the needs of its partner countries, Lithuania has identified **sectoral priorities** that will guide the development and strengthening of international partnerships in 2026–2030. Each priority area contributes to enhancing the resilience of partner countries by directly or indirectly increasing their ability to withstand crises and pursue sustainable development.



1. Democratic resilience

Lithuania bases its international partnerships on a rules-based international order and a solid foundation of values: respect for human rights, the rule of law, and government accountability. Under this priority, we focus our support on institutional transparency and accountability, fair elections, anti-corruption efforts, the capacity of civil society and independent media, and resilience to disinformation.

For small countries, a rules-based international order is an existential condition for security and prosperity. It limits power politics, provides predictable rules for trade and investment, ensures equal rights in decision-making, and offers non-coercive mechanisms for dispute resolution. Accordingly, Lithuania's foreign policy is grounded in a consistent commitment to strengthening the rules-based international order and expanding the space for democratic values. The resilience of Lithuania and the EU is inseparable from the strengthening of democratic partners and civil society around the world.

Lithuania's experience informing the identification of priority areas:

- **Support for democracy, institution building and the implementation of reforms has been one of the most important areas of Lithuania's development cooperation** for more than 20 years. During this period, more than 800 projects in this field have been carried out worldwide, mainly in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood countries.
- **Lithuania is one of the most active participants in the EU's TAIEX and TWINNING programmes.** Between 2004 and 2025, Lithuanian institutions – either individually or in consortia with partners from other EU member states – won **148 EU TWINNING projects.**
- With **more than 20 years of experience in countering disinformation and related threats**, Lithuania shares its expertise and practical solutions with partner countries, having implemented **more than 30** development cooperation projects in this area. Since 2024, Lithuania, together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has been organising international seminars aimed at strengthening resilience to foreign information manipulation and interference.

Proposed areas of action for 2026-2030³:

- In the area of democratic resilience, Lithuania will continue to strengthen **institutional cooperation, particularly by supporting the implementation of structural reforms** – we will reinforce partner-country institutions through the EU's TWINNING and TAIEX programmes as well as through bilateral expert exchanges.
- **We will actively contribute to the implementation of the European Democracy Shield initiative**, expand training on resilience to foreign information manipulation and interference, and share our experience in coordinating crisis response.
- **We will continue and expand anti-corruption initiatives**, projects and programmes that support the implementation of transparency measures.
- We will seek to launch new initiatives, such as **the Young Leaders Academy**, which would bring together and train young leaders from the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and other regions.

³ The list of activities serves a preliminary guideline for action and is not exhaustive.

2. Social resilience

Building social resilience means investing in people and communities by strengthening social relations based on solidarity, trust and cooperation. It enables individuals to cope with and adapt to socio-economic changes. In this context, investment in inclusive education and skills development becomes a key factor in fostering social resilience, reducing inequality, promoting civic participation, and creating long-term social well-being. Inclusive education provides opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills that reinforce trust, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility, enabling people to contribute meaningfully to their country's development.

Lithuania will support partner countries' education systems, with particular attention to high-quality, safe and inclusive education. Investments will focus on infrastructure, vocational training, youth skills development, and initiatives that reduce social inequality and promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups. We will also promote exchange programmes, scholarships, lifelong learning, and contribute to training and recruiting young professionals in the public sector.

Lithuania's experience informing the identification of priority areas:

- **Lithuania has accumulated extensive experience in implementing education and skills-development projects**, ranging from Afghanistan (2006–2013) and Iraq (since 2018) to comprehensive involvement in rebuilding Ukraine's education sector (since 2015). These initiatives include infrastructure development, system improvements, and efforts to enhance learning outcomes.
- **The European Humanities University (EHU)**, which relocated from Minsk to Vilnius in 2004, not only provides high-quality education to students from Belarus and the wider region but has also become an important centre for civic engagement, critical thinking and cultural development. Lithuania, together with the European Commission and Sweden, provides financial support to EHU and participates in its governance.
- Through the implementation of **the EU4Youth programme** (€15.12 million) across all Eastern Neighbourhood countries, the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA) has gained substantial experience in promoting youth employment and skills development.
- **Digital skills initiatives** such as *Digital Explorers* and *Women Go Tech* represent strong examples of good practice that respond to the needs of the modern labour market and have a meaningful impact on people's career choices and lives.

Proposed areas of action for 2026-2030³ :

- We will draw on Lithuania's experience in implementing social resilience programmes **funded by the EU and other international donors**.
- The successful adaptation of the **Create Lithuania** programme in Ukraine through **Create Ukraine** has demonstrated the value of this initiative **in attracting talent from abroad and strengthening the public sector**. We will seek to apply this experience in other countries and regions, offering partners an effective tool for mobilising the potential of the diaspora and young professionals.
- We will work **to expand programmes such as Digital Explorers and Women Go Tech** to other countries, fostering professional and digital skills, supporting the internationalisation of labour markets, and encouraging women's participation in the technology sector.

3. Digital resilience

Digital technologies have enormous potential to strengthen the resilience of public authorities, businesses and society. Digitalisation increases efficiency and transparency and allows essential services to continue even during crisis. During the pandemic, for example, digital services such as e-health and distance learning helped maintain continuity and mitigate negative impacts. Digital resilience is therefore becoming critically important for modern states.

The impact of digitalisation is significant. By implementing e-solutions, countries can transform traditional processes: public administration becomes more efficient, bureaucratic barriers are reduced, and citizens gain easier access to services and opportunities to participate in decision-making. This strengthens systemic resilience – technology and automation make institutions more transparent and resistant to corruption, improve public access to information, and increase the economy’s capacity for innovation. In the long term, digitalisation provides partner countries with a transformational boost, enabling them to move more quickly toward a knowledge-based economy and bypass slower stages of growth.

Lithuania's experience informing the identification of priority areas:

- Lithuania is among the leaders in implementing **e-government services and developing digital infrastructure**, including broadband networks, data centres, and national registries. It has gained substantial experience in digitising registries and creating electronic health, tax, and court systems.
- Internationally recognised **GovTech solutions** – public service innovations, open data, e-signatures – enhance government efficiency and transparency. The GovTech Lab model encourages private sector involvement, particularly from start-ups, in developing smart solutions for the public sector.
- In the field of **cyber security**, Lithuanian institutions and businesses actively share their experience and support the development of practical solutions in partner countries. Projects have been implemented in the Indo-Pacific region as well as in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.
- Lithuanian experience is also Included in **the Team Europe initiative in Central Asia**, which aims to ensure access to and use of secure, satellite-based communications in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, with a particular focus on rural areas and vulnerable groups.

Proposed areas of action for 2026-2030³ :

- We will expand **the GovTech Lab experience** in partner countries by promoting cooperation, innovation, and public-sector modernisation.
- We will share our expertise with partners, helping to create and improve **e-government systems and national registers**, and will encourage partnerships in this area.
- We will continue working with partner countries **on cyber security**, including technological solutions, coordination processes, and training.

4. Environmental resilience

Climate change and environmental degradation are among the greatest challenges of this century, undermining the resilience of states. Millions of people are affected, and economies suffer enormous losses as extreme weather events intensify, sea levels rise, and droughts and floods become more frequent. Environmental problems such as air and water pollution and biodiversity loss harm public health and deplete natural resources, which in the long term can lead to social unrest and increased migration. No country is immune to these threats, making the strengthening of climate and environmental resilience a shared priority.

This area is closely linked to transformative capacity, as it supports the creation of a fundamentally new, more sustainable economic model capable of withstanding climate shocks. At the same time, it contributes to the implementation of global commitments such as the Paris Agreement: by strengthening the resilience of partner countries, we also help safeguard the planet for future generations.

Green transformation. Lithuania will prioritise partnerships that support the transition to a green economy. This includes developing clean energy (introducing renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power), strengthening energy independence, increasing energy efficiency (through the modernisation of buildings and industry), promoting sustainable agricultural practices (efficient water and soil use, cultivation of resilient species), improving waste management (recycling and waste reduction), and protecting biodiversity. These efforts will help partner countries reduce their vulnerability to climate shocks and build a more sustainable development model.

Lithuania's experience informing the identification of priority areas:

- Lithuania has gained experience through **the Climate Change Programme**, which finances renewable energy projects – mainly solar power plants – in partner countries.
- **A Green Innovation Catalogue** has been compiled, showcasing technologies and products for sustainable development created by Lithuanian companies and researchers.
- A development cooperation project has been implemented **in Kenya**, supporting **a mentoring programme for young companies in a climate-technology accelerator**, with a focus on renewable energy systems, efficient water use, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Proposed areas of action for 2026–2030³ :

- We will prioritise partnerships that support the transition to **a green economy**, including clean energy development, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, waste management, and biodiversity protection.
- We will seek **to participate in the EU's Global Gateway initiatives**, sharing Lithuania's expertise and helping partners develop and implement technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, modernise electricity grids, and integrate renewable sources, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- We will focus on **updating and applying the Green Innovation Catalogue** through a business partnership co-financing programme.

5. Economic resilience

Economic resilience, particularly the mobilisation of domestic resources, is essential for helping partner countries become less dependent on external support in the long term. Countries must be able to generate sufficient financial resources independently – through taxation, sustainable business growth, and foreign investment – and use them effectively to meet societal needs. A stronger tax system and effective institutions increase absorption capacity, while a diversified economy enables faster adaptation to change. Over time, this leads to more autonomous and financially stable development, forming the foundation for sustainable progress.

This priority area includes support for partner countries in improving their tax systems, strengthening budget planning and execution, and introducing transparent public investment management practices. It is important to combine practical elements – from a clear legal framework and effective tax administration to digital solutions that reduce the administrative burden and increase transparency. At the same time, institutional capacities, coordination mechanisms, and trust among citizens and investors must be reinforced, as only such a comprehensive system can ensure sustainable and resilient economic development.

Lithuania's experience informing the identification of priority areas:

- Lithuania has developed **an effective tax administration system** by transitioning to a market economy after regaining independence and subsequently modernising it. It has also developed solid experience in introducing transparency mechanisms across the public sector.
- The CPMA is implementing the EU programme **EU4PFM** (two-phase budget: €50 million), which supports improvements in budget management, tax administration, customs operations, and the public procurement system in Ukraine.
- Lithuanian experts have experience in **TAIEX** and **TWINNING** projects in the Western Balkans and Eastern Neighbourhood countries, advising on public finance reforms, including customs activities.

Proposed areas of activity for 2026–2030³ :

- We will help partner countries **strengthen their tax systems**, so they are fair, effective, and capable of generating sufficient revenue. We will seek to contribute to international initiatives in this field.
- We will promote **transparent budget planning and public investment management** to ensure efficient use of resources and preventing corruption.
- Together with our partners, we will work to strengthen **the resilience of local economies** by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, attracting investment, and expanding export opportunities. Particular attention will be given to the innovation ecosystem and entrepreneurship development, enabling **partner countries to diversify their economies and better withstand external shocks** such as sudden market changes.

Integrated approach

All five sectoral priorities described above are interlinked and together form an integrated strategy for strengthening resilience. Addressing these issues holistically increases overall impact. Investments in education, for example, reinforce digitalisation efforts, as educated populations adapt more easily to new technologies and use them more effectively. Green innovations create new business opportunities and enhance the sustainability of the wider economy. A strong financial system enables the state to allocate more resources to education, the green economy, and digitalisation. Lithuania will aim to ensure that its initiatives address these challenges in a comprehensive way, so that the overall outcome is greater than the sum of its parts.

Multilateral partnerships

Multilateral support is an important part of Lithuania's foreign policy and development cooperation. It **complements national initiatives** and **aligns with our priority areas**. Through participation in multilateral programmes, **Lithuania contributes to addressing global challenges**, including those where we may lack sufficient expertise or capacity but can play a meaningful role as part of broader international efforts.

Lithuania will actively participate in shaping multilateral development cooperation policy by contributing to the development of plans, strategies, and instruments within the European Union, the United Nations, and other international organisations and development banks. We will work to ensure that decisions taken at the international level reflect the needs of our region and partner countries, while also enabling Lithuania to gain valuable experience and strengthen its relationships with partners.

Voluntary contributions to international organisations – alongside mandatory membership fees and obligations – will be targeted and strategic. We will prioritise areas and programmes where long-term impact is expected and which align with the priorities set out in these strategic guidelines. Funding will be directed where it can have the greatest effect and where it provides Lithuania with practical opportunities to participate in project implementation.

In defending the rules-based international order, we will seek to ensure that our **financial contributions are allocated effectively and flexibly**, making appropriate use of both earmarked and unearmarked forms of support, taking into account the context and the capacity of organisations to deliver results.

Humanitarian aid

In addition to development cooperation, Lithuania places considerable emphasis on humanitarian aid provided in situations of extreme crisis or natural disaster. Our **goal is to save lives, reduce suffering, and help restore normal living conditions** for people affected by wars, conflicts, or disasters.

When a crisis occurs, Lithuania acts both at the national level and through international mechanisms, particularly those of the EU.

We use several forms of involvement: 1. **financial support** to victims through international mechanisms or organisations or directly to the affected country; 2. **deployment of international aid teams**. Lithuania specialises in search-and-rescue operations in collapsed structures, flood relief, communications, and technical support; 3. **material assistance**, including medical

supplies, food, tents, generators, and other essential items when needed. By acting quickly and effectively, we demonstrate solidarity and strengthen our reputation as a reliable partner. Decisions on the specific form of involvement are based on an assessment of the nature and scale of the crisis, the need for assistance, Lithuania's expertise in the relevant area or region, our available capacities, and the outcomes of international coordination.

Lithuania seeks closer integration into the European Union's humanitarian aid system. With the CPMA now accredited by **DG ECHO** (the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection), conditions are in place to implement larger-scale aid projects, expand expertise, and strengthen Lithuania's international visibility in this field.

Speed and efficiency are crucial in humanitarian action, so we will invest in strengthening rapid response capabilities and close coordination with partners in Lithuania and abroad (including NGOs) to ensure the most effective assistance possible. We will also deepen cooperation with NGOs and other established humanitarian actors that adhere to humanitarian principles and standards, in order to maximise impact.

Implementation mechanisms

Effective coordination, financing, and partner-engagement mechanisms are essential for implementing the strategic guidelines successfully. This section outlines **institutional roles**, the financing model, and the involvement of businesses and non-governmental organisations.

Coordination

The National Development Cooperation Commission (NDCC) is a strategic forum that brings together public, private, and non-governmental actors to ensure a **whole-of-society contribution** to global development. Its role is to maintain coherence in development cooperation policy and to set strategic directions, priorities, and activities so that the initiatives of different ecosystem participants complement rather than duplicate or compete with one another. The strategic function enables more efficient use of resources and greater impact.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for shaping development cooperation policy and coordinating day-to-day activities. It ensures that the implementation of the strategic guidelines aligns with overall foreign policy, oversees the execution of projects and programmes, and represents Lithuania in international development cooperation formats.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) coordinates the implementation of development cooperation policy with international financial institutions and plans the state budget for contributions to these institutions, including part of Lithuania's contributions to the EU budget.

The Lithuanian International Partnership Centre⁴, a division of the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA), serves as Lithuania's development cooperation agency. It administers and/or implements projects and programmes funded by Lithuania and international donors, organises calls for proposals, supervises project and programme implementation, conducts public procurement, and ensures compliance with quality standards.

ILTE is a state-owned financial institution whose main objectives are to provide financial services and to implement and administer financial and other business-financing instruments.

⁴ This name will be assigned once the process of establishing the CPMA division is completed in early 2026.

Sectoral ministries and institutions contribute according to their areas of competence: they provide expert knowledge, delegate specialists to international projects, and help identify partner-country needs in specific sectors.

It is important that not only the institutions listed above, but also **municipalities, non-governmental and civil society organisations (NGOs), and businesses** actively participate in implementing the strategic guidelines.

The MFA and the CPMA will apply a **"one-stop shop" approach** for businesses and NGOs. They will advise interested companies and organisations on participation in development cooperation, help them understand administrative requirements and financing conditions, and provide guidance on finding partners or opportunities to apply for international funding. This mechanism will make it easier for private and non-governmental actors to engage in development cooperation, reduce administrative barriers, and ensure access to the information and support needed for effective cooperation. This will ensure that implementation of the strategic guidelines is inclusive and that all stakeholders can contribute according to their strengths.

Funding model

Sustainable and flexible financing is essential to achieve the objectives of the strategic guidelines. In implementing these guidelines, Lithuania will seek to combine national and international funding with private-sector financing. The core principle is that national funding is typically allocated to the initial stages of a project and is intended to prepare the project or programme for larger-scale international funding or for co-financing opportunities offered by international donors. Lithuania will also make full use of **EU institutional cooperation formats** – TAIEX and TWINNING – and encourage active participation by Lithuanian public-sector institutions and experts in these EU-funded initiatives.

The Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Fund is the main instrument for mobilising Lithuania's development cooperation financing.

A variety of financing modalities will be used in project and programme implementation, adapted to specific circumstances: direct financing, competitive funding, and projects financed through embassies.

Involvement of business

The private sector is a powerful driver of development cooperation: it brings investment, technology, and job creation, helping to ensure long-term impact in partner countries. One of the strategic objectives is therefore **to increase the involvement of Lithuanian and partner-country businesses** in international partnerships.

We will encourage business participation through a dedicated **business partnership programme** financed by the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Fund. This programme would provide **partial-financing grants** at different stages – covering costs such as business partner searches, market analysis, feasibility studies, preparation of business plans in the partner countries, as well as supporting pilot projects. For example, an innovative Lithuanian company wishing to test its solution in an African or Asian country could receive partial support for the initial pilot phase. The aim is to help Lithuanian companies enter new markets, build partnerships, and adapt their products or services to local needs.

In this way, businesses will be better positioned to access **larger financial instruments: once a business idea is proven**, it can seek funding from international development institutions (e.g., obtain a concessional loan, guarantee, or capital investment).

We will also encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the implementation of infrastructure and service projects in partner countries, particularly within the framework of the EU's Global Gateway strategy. It is important to shift the perception that development cooperation is merely charity. It is a mutually beneficial opportunity – by investing in rapidly growing developing countries, businesses can diversify their markets, discover new avenues for expansion, and at the same time contribute to addressing social and economic challenges.

Involvement of non-governmental organisations and civil society

Non-governmental organisations are long-standing partners in development cooperation projects and programmes. They bring unique expertise, work directly with local communities, respond quickly to emerging needs, and often introduce innovative solutions. These strategic guidelines therefore aim to create more favourable conditions for even stronger NGO involvement in international partnerships.

Financing of NGO projects will become more flexible, and administrative burden will be reduced. Regular consultations and surveys will help assess needs and results. We will seek to ensure that NGOs can participate in a targeted way in the priority areas where they have strongest expertise. A **reimbursable grant mechanism** will also be introduced to address the long-standing challenge of insufficient working capital, which has prevented Lithuanian NGOs from taking part in large international projects, such as European Commission calls.

The MFA and CPMA will apply a **"one-stop shop" approach** for the NGOs. Organisations will be able to receive comprehensive support – information on opportunities, partner search, administrative guidance, and networking tools. State institutions will act as reliable partners rather than merely financiers, reflecting our shared goal of sustainable development and meaningful impact.

A **platform for qualified applicants** will also be established – a list of officially accredited NGOs that meet the criteria related to reputation, transparency, experience, and scope of activities. In urgent situations or for specific tasks, funding may be allocated directly to these organisations, enabling faster support, especially during crisis, and contributing to the strengthening of NGO capacities. The platform will allow NGOs to implement long-term, high-impact programmes, while competitive funding will remain available for other organisations seeking to engage in international partnerships and eventually join the platform.

NGOs are viewed not only as funding recipients, but **as equal partners in shaping and implementing international partnership policy**. Their expertise, networks, flexibility, and innovative approaches can support state institutions in strengthening international partnerships and Lithuania's soft power, as well as assist businesses entering the rapidly growing markets of partner countries. To ensure full inclusion, NGOs will participate in regular consultations, event planning, and other initiatives, applying the principle of co-creation.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring and evaluation will be guided by three **criteria** recommended by the OECD Development Cooperation Committee: **effectiveness** (whether the intended objectives been

achieved), **efficiency** (whether resources being used optimally to achieve maximum results), and **impact** (whether long-term positive change is being generated). Each project or programme will be required to define specific measurable objectives and indicators in advance, aligned with these criteria. Each application will also be assessed through **the lens of resilience-building**, making it essential to clearly justify how planned activities contribute to a specific sectoral priority.

For each sectoral priority, a set of **higher-level impact indicators**⁵ will be established to reflect the strategic objective in that area. These indicators will not be achieved solely through Lithuania's contribution, but they will signal the broader direction to which Lithuania aims to contribute.

An accountability mechanism will ensure regular oversight. Each year, NDCC meetings will review the implementation of the strategic guidelines, discussing achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. **An interim evaluation** by independent experts will take place in 2028, followed by **a final evaluation** in 2031 to ensure objective feedback.

In implementing these strategic guidelines, Lithuania commits to acting professionally, transparently, and consistently. Progress will be assessed continuously, drawing lessons from experience and adjusting actions where necessary. The success of international partnerships will be measured not only through statistical indicators but also through **tangible improvements in people's lives**.

By 2030, Lithuania aims for its contribution to global development to be clearly visible: partner countries will be more resilient and prosperous, and Lithuania will be recognised as a reliable partner whose soft power strengthens shared prosperity and security.

We are creating a future in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute, and international cooperation helps build a safer and better world – for Lithuania and for all.

⁵ Preliminary impact indicators, which will be refined according to the nature of the projects and programmes implemented under the Strategic Guidelines:

Number of mutually beneficial partnerships – number of international partnerships established through projects and programmes; results of partner surveys (satisfaction with cooperation, level of trust);

Mobilised support from other donors compared to the Lithuanian contribution (percentage);

Resilience indices of partner countries – recorded improvements in indicators reflecting economic, social and/or democratic/institutional resilience);

Democratic resilience – increase in civil society freedom indices in priority countries.

Education and skills development – number of trained specialists, improvements in the quality and accessibility of public services (e.g. education, health);

Digitalisation – creation of new e-services, increasing use of these services; improvement in partner countries' ranking in the UN e-Government Index;

Environmental protection – successful implementation of environmental reforms in partner countries; reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (where measurable); installed renewable energy capacity (MW).

Financial independence – successful implementation of public finance management reforms; growth in tax revenue as a share of GDP in partner countries.

Partnership with business and NGOs - satisfaction of business and NGOs with their involvement in Lithuania's international partnerships (surveys), number of international partners engaged by businesses and NGOs, number of pilot innovations initiated by businesses and NGOs.