

Development Cooperation Strategy for Africa 2022–2025

Africa Situation Analysis

Africa is the world's youngest and fastest growing continent. The politically and socially unstable continent is still the scene of many military conflicts requiring the attention of the international community. Africa related issues traditionally account for around 80 % of the United Nations (UN) Security Council's agenda. According to the UN, Africa's population could increase from 1.5 billion to 4.4 billion by the end of the century. This will undoubtedly lead to major demographic challenges in terms of economic development, job creation, especially for young people, migration, opportunities for socially vulnerable groups such as women and girls, and the radicalisation of society.

EU-Africa cooperation

Cooperation with Africa is one of the European Union's (EU) most important areas of foreign policy and development cooperation, and requires the most human and financial resources. Strengthening Africa–EU relations is a pressing challenge for both the EU and the African Union. The EU's cooperation with Africa is guided by the Joint Africa–EU Strategy adopted in 2007, the second African Union–EU summit that was held in Lisbon. The EU–Africa Strategy is currently under review and is due to be significantly updated in February 2022. In March 2020, the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented a joint communication “Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa”. It proposes to develop partnerships in the following five areas of global importance:

- transition to a green economy and energy access;
- digital transformation;
- sustainable growth and jobs;
- peace, security and governance;
- migration and mobility.

Directions for EU development cooperation in Africa

In the most recent 5th African Union–EU Summit held in Abidjan in 2017, a joint declaration on “Investing in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”, underlining the deep political and economic links between Africa and the EU, was announced. In addition, policy priority areas were identified, with a focus on youth, through four common priority areas:

- 1) strengthening resilience, peace, security and good governance;
- 2) mobilizing investments for African structural sustainable transformation;
- 3) investing in people through education, science, technology and skills development;
- 4) migration and mobility.

In 2018, the European Commission announced a new Africa–Europe Alliance, aimed at creating sustainable investment, jobs and developing trade and economic relations between the two continents. The proposed priorities were as follows:

- promoting strategic investment and job creation;
- investment in education and vocational skills;
- improving the business environment and investment climate;
- exploiting opportunities for economic integration and trade.

The NDICI-GE envisages more than EUR 30 billion for the African continent in the 2021–2027 financial perspective. The EU Trust Fund for Africa also has EUR 5 billion, which it has traditionally allocated to projects that stop the flow of illegal migration from Africa.

Needs of the countries on the African continent

The main challenges in the region are as follows: strengthening democracy, ensuring the rule of law and human rights, empowering women, developing social and health services, ensuring education, reducing poverty and exclusion, promoting sustainable economic development, digitisation, job creation, and tackling climate change.

Potential niches for Lithuania's contribution (partnership): needs of the partner country or society, activities of other donors and opportunities for engagement of the Lithuanian public sector, NGOs and business

The Strategy will be implemented between 2022 and 2025 through the funding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' development cooperation policy, of which at least 10 % per year would be dedicated to bilateral aid to Africa.

Focusing on the EU's development cooperation guidelines and programmes, it will be sought to pursue targeted activities that respond to the needs of the region, with a focus on Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Mali:

- digitisation (development of financial technology and banking, expansion of civil registration, common space for registers of legal persons, etc.). Africa is experiencing a rapid penetration of 21st century technologies, creating significant opportunities for the continent to carve out new niches in the global economic system;
- Job creation for young people is a particularly sensitive issue for Africa due to its high demographic growth. Women and girls are the most vulnerable social group, often in need of financial support to acquire the vocational skills and competences to compete on an equal footing in the labour market;
- the fight against illegal migration, now directly involving EU partner countries and Lithuania.

Content and objectives of Lithuania's development cooperation activities in Africa

Lithuania's development cooperation policy in Africa has so far been sporadic and its funding fragmented. The aim of the projects implemented under the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion (DCDP) programme was to improve the socio-economic situation of people living in African regions and to implement measures to encourage potential migrants to stay in their home countries.

In 2017–2019, the projects were implemented in Mali (2), Nigeria (2) and Côte d'Ivoire (1). Embassies of the Republic of Lithuania accredited to African countries contribute to the development of development cooperation: in 2017 and 2019, the Embassy in the Republic of South Africa implemented projects in the field of anti-corruption education, and the Embassy in the Republic of Belgium in the field of agriculture in the People's Republic of Algeria in 2018–2019.

A total of EUR 61,000 was allocated for projects in Africa in 2019 under the DCDP programme. Two bilateral solar projects in Mali (EUR 400,000) and Nigeria (EUR 200,000) were also implemented in 2019–2020 under the Climate Change Programme (Environment Project Management Agency).

Lithuania's development cooperation policies in the partner countries for 2022–2025 (up to 3 directions)

Lithuania's strategic objectives for development cooperation are based on Africa's needs, the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the EU's Neighbourhood Policy priorities.

The strategic directions are as follows: 1) the introduction of digital technologies to accelerate the economic and social development of the African continent; 2) the creation of jobs for young people and vocational training for women and girls; 3) the elimination of the obstacles to illegal migration.

The key principles are: 1) co-creation and promotion of partnerships between Lithuania and African partners; 2) development of mutually beneficial models of cooperation; 3) active use of existing development cooperation instruments, development of experts capable of participating in large international projects (especially in the EU).

The sectoral priorities under Lithuania's Development Cooperation Strategy for Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Mali are as follows:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DIGITISATION

Objective: To continue and develop the acceleration of the African continent's transition to modern digital solutions, fostering the social progress of African societies.

Activities: 1) to offer digital solutions to commercial and public sector institutions; 2) to introduce and implement innovations in financial technology, information and telecommunications; 3) to provide e-registers, e-government databases, elector lists and promotion of digital technologies in elections. 4) to strengthen strategic communication, publicize and present Lithuania's development cooperation to institutions, non-governmental sector and international partners in the aforementioned African countries in order to increase visibility and develop bilateral relations; 5) to contribute to and actively participate in the activities of international organisations and donor countries active in the field of digitisation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: JOB CREATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Objective: To support development aid projects that create jobs for young people in Africa after implementation, and to contribute to vocational education for women and girls. It is also sought to promote digital education for young Africans in order to increase their competitiveness in the labour market and to put them on an equal footing with people from other continents or countries.

Activities: 1) to support the employability of Africa's young people, especially in the field of digital technologies; 2) to invest in promoting young African talents with high potential; 3) to promote vocational education for women and girls, especially in the field of information technologies; 4) to strengthen Lithuania's visibility and influence in the region through value-added development cooperation projects, especially those related to digital solutions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: ELIMINATION OF THE PRECONDITIONS FOR ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Objective: To support projects with the ultimate aim of reducing illegal migration flows to Lithuania and the EU.

Activities: 1) to contribute to projects to stop migration in Africa itself; 2) to encourage Lithuanian institutions and NGOs to apply for project funding under EU Twinning, Trust Fund for Africa, NDICI

and other instruments financed by other EU and international donors; 3) to support projects for managing migration processes with high added economic value, especially in the field of digitisation.