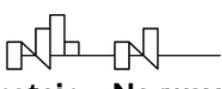


May 2025

Ex-post evaluation of the Implementation of the 2014-2021 European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants' Programmes

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants



Norway grants



The service contract is funded from the 2014-2021 European Economic Area and Norway Grants' Technical Assistance Funds, the services were commissioned by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania

AIM, TASKS AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The main **aim of the evaluation** was to assess the effectiveness and impact of the investments made under the 2014-2021 European Economic Area (EEA) and Norway Grants' programmes, in order to properly account for the use of their investments, to improve the use of the investments in the programme areas in the future and to inform the institutions concerned, as well as the public.

To achieve this aim, five **tasks of the evaluation** were set: (1) to assess the **effectiveness** of the programmes' investments; (2) to assess the **impact** of the programmes' investments; (3) to assess the **sustainability** of the programmes' investments; (4) to provide **findings and recommendations** for better use of the investments in the programme areas in the future; (5) to carry out a **case study** of the project "Improving Work Quality and Enhancing Competences of the Justice Chain to Protect Victims of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence" (No. LT06-3-VRM-TF-001), implemented under the programme "Justice and Home Affairs" (LT06), with particular emphasis on the use of body cameras for evidence collection.

The **scope of the evaluation** - 6 programmes (Health (LT03), Culture (LT04), Environment, Energy, Climate Change (LT05), Justice and Home Affairs (LT06), Business Development, Innovation and SMEs (LT07) and the Baltic Research Programme (LT08)).

APPROACH AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

During the evaluation a **theory-based evaluation approach** was applied, allowing to reconstruct the intervention logic of each programme and to assess their investments on the basis of three **evaluation criteria** - effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

The data for the evaluation **were collected** using analysis of documents, secondary sources, publicly available information, surveys of the programmes' project promoters and promoters of the projects financed from the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR) (86 respondents), and 24 semi-structured interviews with the representatives of the National Focal Point, Programme Operators, National Programme Partners, the FBR administrator and selected project promoters (43 respondents). **The data** collected were **analysed** using intervention logic analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, meta-analysis and expert evaluation. The evaluation also included a case study on the use of body cameras to respond to and prevent domestic violence.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

HEALTH (LT03)

The aim of the programme was to strengthen prevention and reduce health inequalities. To achieve this, projects were implemented in two areas: **strengthening community-based mental health services** and **improving the well-being of children and young people**. In total, **69 projects** were implemented, with a combined total of **EUR 15.74 million** from EEA Grants and State Budget (SB) funds (overall, 95% of the funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At both the project and programme levels, the achievement rate of two-thirds of the indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. Less than one-tenth of the indicators showed medium-level effectiveness, while in the case of another fifth of the indicators the data for their achievement had not yet been available as of Q2 2025 since these indicators measure the continuity of activities initiated during the projects in the post-project period. Higher-than-planned effectiveness is due to the **high demand for the newly developed services among the target group** in response to increased emotional support needs following the COVID-19 pandemic, the **positive dissemination of feedback within the target group**, the **lower-than-expected costs for goods and services**, and **additional funds** generated for the implementation of the project activities. The indicator values planned in the programme were not ambitious enough due to the **focus on medium capacity project promoters during the planning phase**. However, the interventions were implemented by more experienced project promoters who were able to meet and exceed the quantitative targets of the interventions. Lower-than-expected effectiveness was due to **difficulties in forecasting the demand for new services, challenges in securing the human resources needed to deliver services** as a result of part-time employment of municipal specialists, staff turnover and shortage of specialists, **changes in needs and relevance of indicators** during project implementation, **the use of indicators that were not suitable for measuring project achievements, delays in project launch or implementation**, and **challenges in implementing public procurement procedures**. The **adequacy of the funds** allocated to projects to achieve quality outputs and outcomes was considered **high** by the project promoters surveyed.

IMPACT. Investments in strengthening community-based mental health services **have directly benefited young people aged 14-29 facing psychological, behavioural or health challenges; families at social risk; adults with mild emotional difficulties; and children aged 11-17 with behavioural or emotional disorders and their families**. Based on the Youth-

friendly Health Care Services (YFHS) model, more than 30,000 young people aged 14-29 with psychological, behavioural or health problems received confidential, individualised, low-threshold support on sensitive health and social issues in nearly half (25 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. Nearly 1,100 people from families at social risk received comprehensive and coordinated crisis support, ranging from counselling and case management to temporary accommodation, provided at the "One-Stop" centres operating in two municipalities. These centres addressed previously unmet service needs by consolidating various forms of assistance in a single location, ensuring rapid response and reducing the emotional burden on beneficiaries. Close to 5,000 people experiencing mild emotional difficulties received individualised and confidential emotional well-being support in a quarter (15 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. The Well-being Advisers model enabled support for people with early symptoms of emotional distress who previously did not seek help due to stigma, long waiting times, or limited access to professionals. Children aged 11-17 with behavioural or emotional difficulties and their families received intensive behavioural support in their everyday environment through the implementation of the Multidimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) programme. Prior to this initiative, Lithuania lacked accessible, child-centred, and family-inclusive integrated interventions. Earlier solutions often focused on administrative or punitive measures. MDFT filled this gap as an evidence-based intervention that focuses not only on behavioural correction but also on addressing the traumatic experiences of children and young people and the environmental factors that contribute to them. Although MDFT teams operated directly in only three municipalities, the mobile nature of the model enabled services to be delivered in more than half (33 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. In total, services were provided to 118 families. Overall, investments in the expansion of the YFHS model, the establishment of "One-Stop" centres, the development and implementation of the Well-being Advisers model, and the implementation of the MDFT programme have significantly strengthened **community-based mental health services** by contributing to the **development of a trust-based, accessible and person-centred system, promoting early intervention, faster access to help, and informal, cooperative relationships between professionals and families in real-life settings.**

Investments in improving the well-being of children and young people **have directly benefited children and young people with developmental, emotional or behavioural difficulties, as well as those growing up in vulnerable environments, with a history of violence or trauma and delinquent behaviour; children and young people attending school and pre-school; parents of children of pre-school and school age; and pregnant women and mothers with children up to 2 years old, especially those with social risk factors.** Children and young people affected by developmental, emotional, or behavioural challenges, as well as those growing up in vulnerable environments having experienced violence or trauma, received tailored, evidence-based support in three-quarters (46 out of 60) of the country's municipalities, which contributed to their emotional stability, social integration, and better preparation for independent living. More than 400 school health offices were renovated in nearly half (28 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. Children and young people attending educational institutions benefited from improved health offices, which provided higher-quality healthcare services, preventive activities, and health literacy development. More than 1,200 parents of preschool and school-age children strengthened their positive parenting skills through participation in the Incredible Years programme in almost one-third (18 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. Clearly structured and evidence-based training programmes filled a previously existing gap in early, accessible, and non-pharmaceutical support. Nearly 300 pregnant women and mothers with children under 2 years old received ongoing, individualised, home-based support in a quarter (15 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. The Home Visitation Early Intervention model allowed to enhance their maternal skills and the ability to identify newborn health risks. The model filled a gap in the provision of early intervention for vulnerable families, especially in regions where access to needed health services is limited and women are often hesitant to seek help. Previously, support was largely limited to regular visits to family doctors or occasional postpartum consultations with health specialists. Overall, investments in the initiatives for vulnerable children and young people, the renovation of health offices in educational institutions, the implementation of the Incredible Years programme, and the development and implementation of the Home Visitation Early Intervention model have significantly **enhanced well-being of children and young people** by providing **early intervention, reducing the risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties, and strengthening the capacities of adults to recognise and address the needs of children.**

The **direct** benefits of the investments also extended to **professionals providing the services** - youth coordinators, MDFT therapists, specialists working at "One-Stop" centres, well-being advisers, professionals working with vulnerable children and young people, public health specialists working in schools and pre-schools, group leaders delivering positive parenting skills training, and family visitation specialists who provide positive parenting skills training. Specialised training, supervisions and a methodological support system helped these professionals increase their knowledge, enhance professional skills in applying innovative working methods, and develop interinstitutional cooperation skills.

SUSTAINABILITY. More than three-quarters of the projects have produced **infrastructural outputs**. The sustainability of **buildings** renovated and **equipment and materials** acquired using the programme's funds will be supported through contractual obligations. Most of these projects also produced sustainable non-infrastructural outputs. **A quarter of the projects did not produce infrastructural outputs**, however some of them encompassed development, adaptation or introduction of **methodological outputs**, based on which new services have been introduced and launched. The sustainability of most innovative services developed under the programme was ensured by integrating them into national-level strategic planning, the national legal framework and foreseeing financing from other sources.

CULTURE (LT04)

The aim of the programme was to strengthen social and economic development through cultural cooperation, cultural entrepreneurship and cultural heritage management. To achieve this, projects were implemented in three areas: **increasing access to culture, improving the management of cultural heritage** and **promoting cultural entrepreneurship**. In total, **16 projects** were implemented, with a combined total of **EUR 6.73 million** from EEA Grants and SB funds (overall, 91% of the total funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At the project level, the achievement of all programme indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. The data for only three of the indicators had not yet been available as of Q2 2025 since these indicators measure the continuity of activities initiated during the projects in the post-project period. The higher-than-planned effectiveness was often due to **higher-than-expected demand for cultural activities** (largely due to the increased public interest to participate in culture following the COVID-19 pandemic and the popularity of the specific cultural operators and cultural activities), and **lower-than-planned expenditure on the acquisition of goods or services**. In some projects, lower-than-planned effectiveness was attributed to **creative choices**, the **negative impact of the changed geopolitical situation** on the demand for project activities, the **peculiarities of the methodology used to calculate the indicator's value**, **inaccurate planning**, **challenges in implementing public procurement procedures**, **delays in the launch of the project or during its implementation**, and **inadequate performance of external service providers**. At the programme level, in the case of all but one indicator, the effectiveness was high. The differences between the values of the indicators planned in the programme and those achieved are mainly due to the **challenges in forecasting the nature and scope of the activities to be funded**, especially innovative ones, and the **size of the projects**, as well as to the **false assumptions made** during the planning process of the investments. The **adequacy of funds varied** among projects. In the project aimed at improving management of cultural heritage, there was not only enough funding, but it was also possible to purchase additional equipment with the existing financial resources. Projects aimed at promoting cultural entrepreneurship faced a shortage of funds due to price increases caused by inflation.

IMPACT. The **direct benefits** of the programme's investments in increasing access to culture **have been felt by the representatives of culture and education sectors** and the **population of the country's periphery**. The cultural operators that implemented projects were provided an opportunity to receive funding for developing creative or cultural activities, to broaden their audience and raise the profile of their organisation in the country, and to establish and maintain cultural partnerships with donor countries. The representatives of culture and education sectors in specific areas were provided a chance to build their competences. Residents of areas distant from district centres have been provided an increased access to professional cultural content, while children and youth living in the peripheries have been given better opportunities to participate in cultural education. The activities of the programme were carried out in more than four-fifths (51 out of 60) of the country's municipalities, involving more than 69,000 people in events, more than 30,000 people in cultural education activities, and more than 43,000 children and young people in various activities and events. The wide geographical coverage and the sufficiently large size of the target groups reached by the project activities resulted in a **tangible contribution of the interventions to increasing access to culture and cultural education in the regions during the implementation period of the projects**. This, in turn, has **contributed to reducing cultural exclusion and increasing social inclusion through culture**. However, the ability to ensure sufficient access to culture and cultural education in the long term will depend on political will, the implementation of continuous policy measures and cooperation between the culture and education sectors.

Investments in improving the management of cultural heritage **have directly benefited public institutions implementing policies for the protection of cultural heritage**, as well as **managers and owners of cultural heritage sites**. The interventions enabled the institutions to pool the technical capacity and human capital needed for more effective protection of cultural heritage, and to share responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage sites with their managers and owners. The latter were provided an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of cultural heritage management, which can help better preserve cultural heritage sites and reduce the costs of their management in the future. The preventive maintenance model will also have **direct and indirect benefits** for the **public** by raising awareness and knowledge in the field of cultural heritage conservation, improving the overall condition of the country's cultural heritage and reducing the financial burden of the management of cultural heritage sites on taxpayers. Preventive maintenance activities financed by the programme covered 200 cultural heritage sites located in three quarters (45 out of 60) of the country's municipalities, and a further 350 cultural heritage sites will be subject to preventive maintenance within 5 years after the end of the project. The wide geographical coverage of the interventions and their complexity **have contributed to strengthening knowledge on cultural heritage management**. The application of the innovative model has led to significant changes in approach towards management of cultural heritage and **will therefore contribute to saving public resources and strengthening economic development of the country**.

The **direct benefits** of the programme's investments in promoting cultural entrepreneurship will be reaped by the **representatives of creative placemaking networks** that implemented the projects. Local creators, businesses and other organisations have been provided an opportunity to establish valuable local partnerships, use local resources for their activities and generate income. The active involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the upgrading of cultural sites will

help reduce the financial burden on local authorities of maintaining the infrastructure. The communities will benefit from the opportunity to participate in decision-making regarding the development of their living area, the upgraded cultural sites and the increased diversity of cultural services. The **indirect** benefits of the interventions will be reaped by **the inhabitants of specific areas**. The activities of the programme have been carried out in one-tenth (6 out of 60) of the country's municipalities, where 31 new cultural services have been developed. Although the geographical coverage of the interventions is rather narrow, the innovative application of the creative placemaking model **has promoted cultural entrepreneurship in specific areas and has created the conditions for strengthening their social and economic development**.

The **greatest added value** of the programme's investments lies in the introduction of **innovative policy implementation models** - preventive maintenance of cultural heritage and creative placemaking - in the country.

SUSTAINABILITY. Almost **two-thirds** of the projects have produced **infrastructural outputs** whose sustainability will be ensured through contractual obligations, their integration into the organizational structure of the institutions and the involvement of municipal administrations. A smaller portion of the projects aimed at increasing access to culture involved investments in **equipment** necessary for the development and presentation of various cultural products. Contractual obligations will provide the basis for ensuring the availability of these cultural products in the future. The sustainability of a **cultural product** developed in one project will be additionally ensured by its inclusion in the Cultural Passport Programme. However, most of the projects aimed at increasing access to culture **did not result in sustainable products or produced only sustainable non-infrastructural outputs**. Therefore, the continuity of these interventions' benefits will depend on the initiative of the implementing organisations and their future funding opportunities.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE (LT05)

The aim of the programme was to improve the environmental status in ecosystems and reduce the adverse effects of pollution and other human activities. To achieve this, projects were implemented in five areas: **enhancing capacity to manage environmental status in ecosystems, strengthening the nuclear decommissioning system, improving energy efficiency, strengthening municipal capacity for climate change adaptation planning, and strengthening early warning nuclear emergency system**. In total, **7 projects** were implemented, with a combined funding of **EUR 9.78 million** from the Norway Grants and the SB (overall, 76% of the funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At both the project and programme levels, the achievement rate of almost all programme indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. Higher-than-planned effectiveness is due to the **ability to carry out more than planned research activities** during the implementation of the projects (due to technical capacity of the equipment acquired, favourable natural conditions, sufficient time and financial resources) and the **greater-than-expected number of municipalities involved** in the interventions. The medium-level effectiveness of one output indicator was due to the **delayed project implementation, challenges in cooperating with municipalities, and protracted public procurement process**. The **adequacy of funds varied** among projects. During the implementation of one project, a significant portion of its allocated funds was saved and redirected towards the implementation of the programme's largest project. However, due to an insufficiently smooth implementation process, the efficiency of fund utilisation in the latter project was limited.

IMPACT. Programme's investments in enhancing capacity to manage environmental status in ecosystems **have directly benefited the public authorities responsible for developing and implementing environmental policy**, enabling them to significantly expand the area and frequency of water monitoring, systematically monitor and assess marine litter, and properly identify and classify waste. Investments **indirectly benefited representatives of the agriculture and fisheries, and waste management sectors**, as well as the **public** through their contribution in assessing soil quality parameters, monitoring the state of fish ecosystems, improving waste identification, and increasing public access to information on recreational areas near water bodies. The investments created the conditions for applying more effective measures to improve the status of water bodies, reduce and prevent marine pollution, and lower the risk of hazardous waste being misclassified as non-hazardous. In turn, this has **contributed to enhancing capacity of responsible authorities to manage environmental status in ecosystems**. To ensure the programme's input in improving the environmental condition of ecosystems and reducing the negative impacts of pollution and other human activities, it is important to ensure the sustainability of the methodological tools developed.

Investments in strengthening the nuclear decommissioning system **have directly benefited the public institutions responsible for the nuclear decommissioning processes**, enabling their specialists to acquire best practices in the safe and efficient decommissioning of nuclear power plants as well as to strengthen the knowledge and competences needed for their daily work, and providing the means to continue the implementation of the nuclear decommissioning project. The interventions laid the foundation for initiating the installation of the deep geological repository, thus will allow to improve the conditions for radioactive waste management and ensure the compliance with stricter requirements for handling nuclear waste. The investments **have**

facilitated the smooth implementation of the national nuclear decommissioning policy and will contribute to reducing the negative impacts of human activities on environment through proper radioactive waste management in the future.

Investments in improving energy efficiency **have directly benefited the public authorities responsible for planning and implementing energy policy**, as the tools developed allowed to reduce their administrative burden, supported the achievement of national energy efficiency targets and the implementation of legislative requirements, and enabled more efficient planning of energy production, supply, and the development of the use of renewable energy resources across the country. The availability of consolidated data on energy infrastructure, electricity and heat generation capacities in municipalities **will also directly benefit municipalities** planning local energy infrastructure development, as well as **industrial or business subjects** planning their economic activities and growth. The interventions **will contribute to energy efficiency improvements only indirectly**, provided that the information in the database developed is regularly updated and actively used in energy policy planning.

Investments in strengthening municipal capacity for climate change adaptation planning **have directly benefited municipal administrations**, enabling their staff to enhance professional competences and raise awareness in the field of climate change adaptation, take specific actions to address the issues caused by climate change and plan municipal funds for the emergency management more effectively. The interventions marked an **important step forward in implementing the National Climate Change Management Agenda**. They **allowed to strengthen municipalities' capacities** to plan adaptation to climate change and in the long term **may indirectly contribute to improving the environmental status of ecosystems**. However, they only covered just over one-tenth (8 out of 60) of the country's municipalities. To ensure the successful implementation of the climate change adaptation policy, it is essential to involve all municipalities in the preparation of local climate change adaptation plans.

Investments in strengthening early warning nuclear emergency system **has directly benefited state and municipal authorities implementing civil protection policy**, as well as the **country's population**. It enabled the authorities to improve their skills in coordinating actions, informing and protecting the public during emergencies, and preparing to respond to possible accidents at the Astravus Nuclear Power Plant. The sirens installed can be widely used for alerting the population about various hazards. The expanded siren network has provided an opportunity to increase the share of the population informed during the emergencies. Civil protection exercises have enhanced the practical emergency preparedness of both institutions and the public, while public education and training activities will contribute to raising public awareness. The interventions **have strengthened the early warning nuclear emergency system** and by improving preparedness for potential nuclear incidents **have helped lay the groundwork for mitigating the negative impacts of human activities**. However, for its effective functioning at the national level, it is essential to achieve even siren network coverage across the entire country. Further modernisation and expansion of the siren network is planned to be carried out using funding from other sources.

SUSTAINABILITY. Over a quarter of the projects have produced **infrastructural outputs - equipment and tools** acquired and installed, whose sustainability will be ensured by contractual obligations, their integration into the ongoing activities of institutions and foreseeing funding from other sources. The continued use of **sustainable non-infrastructural outputs - methodological, analytical, IT outputs** - created in **all projects** will be ensured by their integration into the ongoing activities of institutions, strategic agenda or even the national legal framework, as well as by the status of their users. However, the sustainability of municipal climate change adaptation plans and updated emergency management plans will depend largely on the awareness and political will of municipalities.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS (LT06)

The aim of the programme was to strengthen the rule of law. To achieve this, projects were implemented in four areas: **improving the correctional service system, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the judiciary and prosecution service, improving the efficiency of law enforcement in the fight against crime, and strengthening the domestic and gender-based violence prevention and response system**. In total, **5 projects** were implemented, with a combined total of **EUR 35.75 million** from EEA and Norway Grants and SB (overall, 93% of the funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At the project level, the effectiveness of over four-fifths of the programme's indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. Higher-than-planned effectiveness is due to the **additional funds made available** during the implementation of the projects as a result of savings made during the implementation of the programme, the **high level of interest of inmates** to move to halfway houses, and the **interest of local communities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** to participate in the activities related to prevention of domestic violence, as well as to the **high utility of the purchased forensic investigation equipment and its application possibilities**. The lower-than-planned effectiveness is attributed to various external factors, such as the **limited involvement of municipalities** or the **peculiarities of the court work organization**. The achievement of the planned numbers of upgraded infrastructural objects or persons trained was hindered by **challenges in implementing public procurement procedures**, as well as **challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation**. In the case of the project aimed at improving the correctional service system, the achievement of the indicators was negatively affected by the **challenges**

in attracting and retaining staff. Finally, some of the monitoring indicators selected in the programme are more of an impact type. The **suitability of these indicators** for measuring the outcomes of interventions is **limited** due to the influence of external factors on their achievement.

IMPACT. The programme's investments in improving the efficiency of the judiciary and the prosecution service **will directly benefit court and prosecution staff**, including managers, judges and prosecutors, and **will indirectly benefit visitors of the courts and participants of the criminal proceedings.** Visitors of the courts will benefit from the refurbishment of the courts' public areas and the introduction of measures to improve access to the required premises and increase court security. Court staff will benefit directly both from the improved security due to the separation of court spaces and from the newly introduced judicial selection and evaluation model and the judicial applicants' information system, which will increase the efficiency and transparency of the judicial selection process. The benefits for the staff of the prosecution service will emerge from the development of methodological documents, the acquisition of working tools and the introduction of an information system, which will help them carry out their functions more efficiently and to speed up their work processes by digitising them. The participants in criminal proceedings will benefit from the new customer service standard developed by the Prosecutor's Office, which will create preconditions for improving the quality of services provided. Improved resource management, clearer process planning and refined methodologies are prerequisites for improving the working conditions of the judiciary and prosecution staff, while the training provided allowed to strengthen their competences. These **complex investments** in key institutions that ensure the rule of law will undoubtedly **contribute to strengthening the rule of law in Lithuania.**

The investments in improving the **correctional service system will directly benefit its staff - the employees of the Lithuanian Prison Service and the Lithuanian Probation Service**, as well as **the inmates**, and **will indirectly benefit the relatives of the inmates.** The improvement of staff vocational training conditions, the establishment of four new halfway houses and the expansion of the TOG units for the resocialisation of repeat offenders contribute to the implementation of the reform of the correctional service system in the country, by improving staff working conditions and facilitating the reintegration of inmates. The introduction of the Dynamic Security Model and the activities to strengthen the competences of staff will contribute to the formation of a different culture in the correctional service system, to better resocialisation conditions for inmates and to the attraction of new staff members to the system. Investments in the implementation of the e-services for inmates and the electronic monitoring centre for alternative sentences will contribute to better working conditions for the staff of the correctional service system and to a more efficient delivery of the system's services to inmates and their relatives. Bilateral cooperation initiatives have strengthened international cooperation, contributing to reducing stigmatised attitudes towards inmates and changing the culture of the existing and new staff members entering the system. Due to its significant contribution to **improving conditions of detention and alternative sentencing** and **introducing innovative working methods**, the programme's interventions have played **an important role in strengthening the rule of law in Lithuania.**

Investments in strengthening the system of domestic violence prevention **will directly benefit the justice chain members - police officers, the judiciary and prosecutors** - and **indirectly benefit victims of domestic violence.** Body-worn cameras reduce the administrative burden on police officers, contribute to their safety and enable them to better justify their actions. Body camera footage is also particularly useful for prosecutors and judges, as it brings more objectivity and transparency to the criminal process. Indirectly, victims of domestic violence benefit as well, since video evidence increases the likelihood that a judge will uphold a police officer's decision to issue protection order against a potential perpetrator. The sharing and use of video footage strengthens interinstitutional cooperation in the fight against domestic violence. The use of a risk management information system in the police work automates its processes and makes domestic violence prevention activities more efficient, thus creating benefits both for police officers and victims of domestic violence. Joint training for the justice chain members has contributed to increased awareness of domestic violence among different stakeholders. This will create the conditions for better safeguarding the interests of victims of domestic violence and for a more coherent implementation of the domestic violence prevention policy. Increased awareness and enhanced competences in the field of domestic violence among the justice chain members and various stakeholders, as well as a strengthened domestic violence prevention and response system, contribute to **the reduction of victim stigmatization and better provision of assistance**, and **will therefore contribute to strengthening the rule of law in Lithuania.**

Investments in improving the efficiency of law enforcement in the fight against crime **will directly benefit forensic investigators and law enforcement officials** and **indirectly benefit Norway.** The software, technical and laboratory equipment acquired is effectively and extensively used in the work of the Lithuanian Criminal Police, thus contributing to increasing the efficiency and quality of criminal investigation and the professional competences of the staff. Various training events, operational briefings abroad and expert meetings with partners from Norway have provided opportunities for forensic investigators and law enforcement officers to establish new partnerships and strengthen their professional competences and skills. The project will also indirectly benefit Norway in the future by limiting the activities of Lithuanian criminal groups there. The EEA and Norway Grants' investments **complement and support the technical capacities, as well as specialist skills of Lithuanian law enforcement authorities in the fight against crime** and therefore **contributes to strengthening the rule of law in Lithuania.**

SUSTAINABILITY. All projects have produced **sustainable infrastructural and non-infrastructural outputs** with a high potential for continued use. The sustainability of the **buildings** upgraded and **equipment** acquired using the programme's funds will be ensured by contractual obligations and their integration into the organizational structure of the institutions. The continued use of **methodological documents** will be ensured by their integration into the organizational structure of the institutions and the national legal framework. It should be noted that at least some of the outputs developed in all projects **are already being used**.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND SMEs (LT07)

The aim of the programme is to promote the creation of higher added value and sustainable economic growth. To achieve this, projects were implemented in two areas: the **development of new products or technologies at market level** and the **introduction of new products or technologies at enterprise level**. In total, **26 projects** were implemented with a combined total of **EUR 13.31 million** from the Norway Grants and SB funds (almost 93% of the total funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At the project level, the achievement of all programme indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. For several projects, lower-than-expected effectiveness was due to **challenges in implementing public procurement procedures, changes in market conditions** and **inaccurate planning**. At the programme level, the effectiveness was high in the case of up to half of the indicators, medium - in the case of a quarter of the indicators, low - in the case of one-fifth of the indicators, while the data on the achievement of one-tenth of the indicators had not been available as of Q2 2025 since these indicators measure the outcomes of the projects in the post-project period. The differences between the values of the indicators planned in the programme and those achieved are mainly due to the **challenges in forecasting the demand for business support in specific areas at the time of calls for proposals**. The planned total number of projects to be funded was too ambitious considering the financial volume of the programme. During the implementation of the programme, the support for development and introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) innovations was more in demand among businesses compared to development and introduction of green industry innovations. This is attributed to **the strong position of the country's ICT sector, the lower costs of developing and introducing ICT products** and the **lack of awareness among enterprises of the importance of greening their businesses**. The values of two indicators were not fully achieved due to the **optional inclusion of these indicators in the project monitoring system**. Although the project promoters surveyed rated the **adequacy of the funds** allocated to the projects as **above average**, the successful implementation of the projects was ensured by the **significant own financial contribution of the project promoters**, both in the pre-project period and during the project implementation.

IMPACT. The programme's investments in the development of market-level innovations **will directly benefit 15 enterprises that have carried out research and experimental development (R&D) activities** using the project funds and developed at market level new products or technologies to a high technological readiness level (TRL). These enterprises have been given the opportunity to sustain and expand their innovative activities, increase their competitive advantage, expand their markets and export geography and, in some cases, create high-skilled jobs. This **should contribute to improving the competitiveness of the beneficiary enterprises** on the condition of the successful and timely market uptake of the new products or technologies developed. Given the contractual obligations of the project promoters and the significant own financial contribution, this assumption is likely to be fulfilled. The broad applicability of the innovations developed will result in **indirect benefits** of the investments for potential users of the new products or technologies, such as **industrial or business subjects** engaging in various economic activities, **public or non-governmental actors** and the **public**. Despite the positive impact of the investments on the competitiveness of enterprises, the **financial and target group coverage** of the interventions is **too small** for **the investments to make a significant contribution to higher added value and sustainable economic growth in the country**. In addition to the limited financial scope of the programme, the late launch of the programme and the limited visibility of the agency managing the programme's investments at the time have hindered the funding of more R&D projects.

The programme's investments in the introduction of innovations at enterprise level **will directly benefit 10 enterprises that have acquired and installed innovative equipment** using project funds. These enterprises were given the opportunity to increase their production capacity, improve the quality of their products and better meet market expectations, and expand their product range, thus increasing production volumes, resulting in more competitive product prices, increased competitive advantage and expanding markets. This should **contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the beneficiary enterprises**, with the key prerequisite - the sustainability of the investments - being ensured through the contractual obligations of the project promoters. However, **due to the small financial and target group coverage of the interventions, the contribution of the investments to higher added value and sustainable economic growth in the country is limited**. Due to the lack of awareness among Lithuanian enterprises of the importance of greening their businesses, more attention during project implementation was given to introducing ICT innovations.

The Norway Grants **has complemented** investments from other funding sources of the same programming period in **achieving objectives of EU importance** - boosting R&D performance in the private sector, greening business and increasing the digital intensity of enterprises. **The greatest added value** of the programme's investments is related to **bilateral cooperation** between Lithuanian and Norwegian business entities, since international business partnerships were only occasionally realized through investments of other funding sources. New business partnerships established have created **mutual benefits** and **contributed to increasing the integration of Lithuania's enterprises into international value chains**.

SUSTAINABILITY. Most of the projects have produced **sustainable non-infrastructure outputs** - R&D products and analytical products. The sustainability of the **R&D products** will be ensured through contractual obligations, high TRL of the products or technologies developed, a significant own financial contribution of the project promoters to their development and continued cooperation with project partners from donor countries. Sustainability of **analytical products** will be ensured by the high TRL of the products or technologies developed. **Up to half** of the projects encompassed **infrastructure outputs** in the form of acquired and installed **equipment**, which will be sustained through contractual obligations and by the income generated using this equipment.

BALTIC RESEARCH PROGRAMME (LT08)

The aim of the joint Baltic Research Programme (encompassing Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) was to promote the development of research-based knowledge. To achieve this, it has funded **scientific research** carried out jointly by Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian researchers with partners from donor or other countries. Under the Lithuania-administered part of the programme, **12 projects** were implemented with a combined total of **EUR 11.14 million** from EEA Grants and SB funds (overall, 98% of the total funds allocated to the projects were utilised).

EFFECTIVENESS. At the project level, the achievement of all monitoring indicators was **high**, reflecting the high level of outputs and outcomes of the required quality created and a generally successful implementation of the programme's investments. At the programme level, high effectiveness is observed for over one-third of the indicators, medium effectiveness for around one-tenth, and low effectiveness for another one-tenth, while the data on the achievement of over one-third of the indicators had not been available as of Q2 2025. The differences between the planned and actual values of the indicators in the programme were mainly due to **inaccurate planning**. The higher-than-planned effectiveness was due to **specific project requirements, peculiarities of the methodologies for calculating indicator values and changes in project teams**. The lower-than-planned effectiveness was determined by the **total number of projects funded** and the **specificities of the projects selected for funding**. **The adequacy of the funds** allocated to projects to achieve quality outputs and outcomes was considered **high** by the project promoters surveyed.

IMPACT. The programme's investments **have directly benefited Baltic researchers from the project promoters and the project partners' research and study institutions**, who have been given a unique opportunity to pool their scientific capacities for joint research, to develop competences in leading international research consortia and to strengthen scientific competences. The unique format and implementation outcomes of the programme contributed to raising the profile of Lithuanian research and study institutions and the scientific potential of the Baltic region in the international arena. The programme has filled a niche in research funding in Lithuania that emerged between the investments of the European Structural and Investment Funds programming periods, but its **greatest added value** lies in the **international cooperation**. The programme's investments have led to increased scientific cooperation between the Baltic States and the establishment of sustainable scientific partnerships with both other Baltic States and donor countries, including personal contacts between researchers. The international cooperation and jointly produced research outputs developed during the programme **have contributed to increasing the international research productivity of the Baltic States**. Given the strengthened potential for conducting international research and the significance of the research outcomes, the programme's investments **contributed to the development of research-based knowledge** in the Nordic-Baltic region. The programme's investments **have also directly benefited the research councils of Lithuania and the other Baltic States**, which maintained sustainable cooperation at administrative level. The **indirect benefits** of the interventions will be reaped in the medium to long term by the potential users of the research outcomes of the projects, such as **representatives of the energy and food industries, agriculture, education, policy makers and the public**.

SUSTAINABILITY. All projects of the programme have produced **sustainable non-infrastructure outputs** in the form of R&D reports, scientific publications and scientific consortia. The continued use of the **R&D reports** will depend on the capacity of the research and study institutions that produced them to continue the R&D activities they have started using other funding sources, although the extensive research partnerships and the high potential for practical applications of some of the outcomes will increase the potential for the sustainability of these outputs. The further use of **scientific publications** will be ensured by involving project partners from donor countries in their preparation and by publishing them in peer-reviewed and widely cited scientific journals. The sustainability of **research consortia** will depend on the initiative of the research and study institutions forming them and on the sufficient availability of relevant calls for proposals for research funding. The continued use of **R&D**

products developed in two projects will be ensured by their high TRL and registered applications for intellectual property protection.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

To ensure the continuity and expansion of the benefits generated by the 2014-2021 EEA and Norway Grants' investments, and to address the remaining needs, in the future it is **recommended to invest in the following areas**:

HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION:

- Expansion of the **YFHS model** in the rest of the country's municipalities.
- Development of community-based support **measures for children facing complex difficulties** (including those with behavioural disorders, particularly related to the use of psychoactive substances, aggression, or sexualized behaviour; those who have experienced violence, including non-traditional forms; and those with developmental, behavioural, or emotional disorders).
- Expansion of "**One-Stop**" **centres** in the rest of the country's municipalities.
- Development or adaptation of practice-based **training programmes for educators** aimed at strengthening their abilities to address the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the educational environment.
- Adaptation of the **infrastructure of health care institutions** for provision of services during emergencies.
- Strengthening of the **emergency preparedness** of the **staff** in health care institutions.

CULTURE:

- Dissemination of initiatives based on the innovative **creative placemaking model** throughout Lithuania.
- Development of plans and measures to **protect cultural goods** during emergencies.
- Implementation of measures for raising **civic awareness** during emergencies.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CIVIL PROTECTION:

- Preparation of **climate change adaptation plans** for the rest of the country's municipalities.
- Implementation of cross-sectoral initiatives for **strengthening emergency preparedness**, including public psychological resilience-building measures and regular large-scale civil protection exercises involving governmental, non-governmental, private sector actors, and the public.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS:

- Further investments in improving the Lithuanian judicial system, prioritizing **interventions that create long-term benefits** for increasing judicial **independence** and enhancing **work efficiency**.
- Expansion of the **digital infrastructure** of the Prosecutor's Office and implementation of regular **capacity-building activities** for staff to ensure the practical and continuous application of developed methodologies.
- Further modernisation of the **correctional service system's infrastructure**, supporting the transition from dormitory-type to cell-type facilities.
- Further expansion of the **halfway houses network** in the country.
- Development of **infrastructure** required for the functioning of **TOG units** in the rest of the country's penitentiary institutions.
- Extension of the **dynamic security model** to the rest of the country's penitentiary institutions.
- More active **involvement of NGOs** in the provision of services to convicted and detained persons.

BUSINESS AND INNOVATION:

- Measures providing **information and raising awareness** about the benefits of greening business.
- Introduction of **advanced technologies**, including cloud services and artificial intelligence, in businesses.
- **Acceleration of the decarbonisation** of energy-intensive industries, including supporting the development and introduction of clean technologies.
- Strengthening of the **defence industry**, including supporting development of dual-use R&D products.

SCIENCE:

- Implementation of joint scientific research among the **Baltic States**.
- R&D activities in the fields of **civil protection and defence**, including the development of dual-use R&D products.

To improve the implementation and management of future investments under the EEA and Norway Grants, it is **recommended** to:

- Ensure a **faster launch of investments** by prioritising calls in the areas that are considered strategically most important, setting and publicly disclosing the schedules of these calls for proposals in advance, and avoiding overlap with calls for proposals for other funding sources.
- Introduce a requirement for large infrastructure project promoters to **prepare the necessary documents for infrastructure development or renovation works in advance**, ensuring the smooth progress of such projects.
- Introduce a requirement for key service providers to be **employed full-time**, contributing to ensuring uniform standards of service provision across municipalities.
- Determine the **number of professionals providing services** based on relevant local demographic indicators, thus ensuring a more accurate allocation of human resources and more balanced access to services across different localities.
- Encourage **cooperation between neighbouring municipalities** in service provision, ensuring continuity of services for target groups and allowing for flexible responses to temporary human resource shortages.
- Encourage the **mobile provision of services**, where feasible and appropriate, and provide the necessary conditions and resources to support it.
- Ensure **collaboration between new and experienced service providers**, enabling the transfer of experience in managing and practical implementation of projects.
- Plan for the **impact evaluation** of newly developed services in advance, allowing evidence-based reporting on the success of the interventions to the policymakers.
- Introduce measures to ensure the **sustainability of the knowledge and skills** acquired during the project implementation in the event of staff turnover in the project-promoting institutions.
- Determine the **appropriate indicators and their definitions**, avoiding the use of impact-type indicators to measure the outcomes of interventions and choosing indicator definitions that clearly reflect the content of the interventions.
- Include outcome **indicators** measuring the level of **trust and satisfaction among project promoters and national partners** in projects where partnerships are prioritized at the national level.