

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
2021 REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION PROGRAMME

Overview

The Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme (hereinafter – ‘the DCDPP’) is a component of Lithuania’s official development promotion (hereinafter – ‘ODP’) instrument, financed from the budget appropriations allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter – ‘MFA’). ODP is provided as assistance and humanitarian aid to developing countries and territories financed from state and municipal budgets. According to preliminary data of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Lithuania’s ODP amounted to EUR 70.47 million or 0.13% of gross national income (GNI) in 2021, to EUR 63.2 million or 0.13% of GNI in 2020, to EUR 60.45 million or 0.13% of GNI in 2019, to EUR 55 million or 0.12% of GNI in 2018, and to EUR 52.55 million or 0.13% of GNI in 2017, respectively. Lithuania is committed to achieving ODP of 0.33% of GNI by 2030, but this rate has remained one of the lowest in the EU in recent years due to static allocations, a rigid and inflexible legal framework not adapted to the international context of development cooperation, as well as the rapid growth of GNI up to 2021. It should be noted that Lithuania’s bilateral aid amounted to EUR 14.53 million, less than 21% of the total aid. Despite some difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 the MFA ensured a continuous and effective engagement of Lithuania in the policymaking and implementation of the development cooperation policy in international, EU and bilateral formats in line with its national interests, thus strengthening Lithuania’s image as a responsible and reliable donor. The Lithuanian development cooperation policy has been in line with national foreign policy priorities, with a focus on the Eastern Partnership countries, in particular Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Belarus. The implementation of emergency humanitarian aid measures continued to be in the centre of attention.

Considerable attention was given to increasing the engagement of public and municipal authorities, NGOs, and businesses in development cooperation activities, as well as to publicity of these activities aimed at securing the broadest possible public support.

The role of the Central Project Management Agency (hereinafter – ‘CPMA’) was further strengthened, by making better use of the opportunities offered by membership of the EU network of development cooperation agencies.

To increase the effectiveness of development cooperation policy, a systemic reform of the development cooperation policy was completed to a significant extent, based on the adoption of the Law on the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and the implementing legislation, to create the conditions for and enable the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative changes in the development cooperation policy.

EU and global policymaking in development cooperation

In 2021, the MFA continued its full engagement in the policymaking and implementation of the EU and global development cooperation and humanitarian aid, supported international efforts aimed at global poverty reduction, long-term sustainable development in developing countries, and made a significant contribution to international efforts addressing the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and offering an immediate response to urgent humanitarian crises.

International response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been at the heart of all international public discourse formats. At the EU level, the coordination of the EU Team Europe joint response was in the focus of attention during meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Council, the Directors-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, as well as of the EU Council Working

Groups and the European Commission Committees, with the participation of representatives of the Member States in charge of development cooperation.

Negotiations on the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) were finalised in 2021. Lithuania made a great deal of effort seeking to include into the NDICI the key provisions on compliance with nuclear safety standards in partner countries.

Considerable attention was devoted to the EU's relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States after 2020, following the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement. After the failure to conclude the negotiations on time and the delays along the way, transitional measures were adopted twice, extending the validity of the Cotonou provisions until the end of November 2021. Based on the political agreement reached at the end of 2020, the new agreement was signed on 15 April 2021. Throughout the negotiations, Lithuania consistently advocated in favour of inclusion into the new Agreement of the procedures for smooth return and readmission of ACP nationals.

In the area of humanitarian aid, the aim was to maintain the focus on the key principle of humanitarian aid, i.e., to deliver aid where it is needed most.

Lithuania intensified its involvement in activities of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), where it has held an observer's status since 2013, and started preparatory work towards membership of the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

Funds and activities

EUR 3,978.33 thousand was allocated and used for the financing of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme from the state budget appropriations of the Republic of Lithuania allocated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

| Purpose | Funds, in thousand EUR |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Voluntary contributions to multilateral funds | 1,422.42 |
| Projects | 1,111.01 |
| Humanitarian aid | 1,350.00 |
| Participation in activities of the EU, UN and other international organisations and programme monitoring | 4.72 (postings) |
| Other development cooperation activities (project administration, events, exhibitions, printed materials, services, etc.) | 90.18 |
| Total DCDPP | 3,978.33 |

Multilateral development assistance

As part of its international commitments, MFA contributed to international efforts aimed at poverty reduction, building resilience of beneficiary countries and the most vulnerable groups of population, and promotion of democratic values, by providing multilateral development assistance through mandatory and voluntary contributions and contributions to foundations and international

organisations involved in or coordinating development cooperation activities. In 2021, Lithuania allocated **EUR 1,422.42 thousand** for voluntary contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strategic Action Plan Measure Strengthening Lithuania's Participation in the Implementation of Activities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Partner Countries.

| Voluntary contributions | Funds, in thousand EUR |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Funds allocated to be provided as aid under SIDA programme for the implementation of EHU objective | 200 |
| To SIDA Centre for Law and Democracy | 50 |
| Support to the Democracy Fund | 300 |
| To the National Democratic Institute | 247.42 |
| To the European Endowment for Democracy | 150 |
| To the OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme | 30 |
| To the European Endowment for Democracy, the international accountability platform to support Belarus | 50 |
| To the OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine | 30 |
| To BYSOL Charity and Support Foundation | 100 |
| To the WTO Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund | 30 |
| To the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights | 30 |
| To the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund | 20 |
| To the Asia–Europe Foundation | 20 |
| To the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) | 20 |
| To the UNESCO Initiative for Restoration of Mosul | 45 |
| To the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine | 15 |
| To the Anna Lindh Foundation | 15 |
| To the UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication | 10 |
| To the UN Women: the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment | 10 |
| To the Foundation of the European Union and Communities of Latin American and Caribbean States | 10 |
| To the EU Trust Fund for Columbia | 20 |

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|--|-----------------|
| To the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (for activities in Georgia) | 20 |
| In total: | 1,422.42 |

Humanitarian aid

In 2021, Lithuania allocated **EUR 1,350 thousand** for humanitarian aid from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strategic Action Plan measure titled Strengthening Lithuania's Participation in the Implementation of Activities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Partner Countries.

| Humanitarian aid from the DCDP programme funds | Funds, in thousand EUR |
|--|-------------------------------|
| To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for humanitarian aid to people of Syria | 50 |
| To the United Nations Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) for humanitarian aid to Yemen | 100 |
| To the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a voluntary contribution | 100 |
| To the United Nations Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF), for humanitarian aid to Ukraine | 100 |
| To the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), a voluntary contribution | 100 |
| To the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), for humanitarian aid to Venezuelan refugees | 50 |
| To the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan people | 100 |
| To the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), for humanitarian aid to Ukraine | 100 |
| To the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), for humanitarian aid to people in Afghanistan | 100 |
| To the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), a voluntary contribution for 2022 activities | 100 |
| To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), voluntary contribution for 2022 activities | 100 |
| To the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), for humanitarian aid to Ethiopia | 100 |
| To the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), voluntary contribution | 100 |
| To the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), voluntary contribution | 50 |
| To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for humanitarian aid to Mali | 100 |
| In total: | 1,350 |

Bilateral development assistance

In 2021, 63 development cooperation projects (57 bilateral, 2 regional, and 4 public awareness) were implemented from the DCDP programme for a value exceeding EUR 1 million. The pandemic caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the deterioration of the political situation in Belarus inevitably had an impact on the implementation of the projects, with some of the planned activities not being implemented.

In line with the development cooperation policy directions for 2019-2021 set out in the Inter-Institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation, priority was given to the EU's Eastern Partnership countries: Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan. The attention was focused on bilateral projects supporting the implementation of the Association Agreements with the EU for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, as well as projects in the areas of strengthening civil society, fight against disinformation, environment and climate change, promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, etc.

The diplomatic missions of the Republic of Lithuania accredited in the partner countries contributed to the implementation of Lithuania's development cooperation policy: they administered 42 development cooperation projects, helped to identify the needs of beneficiary countries, were actively involved in the search for partners, and contributed to the coordination of donors' activities. Lithuania was also involved in the Team Europe initiatives, an instrument launched by the European Commission in 2020, which provides for the planning and implementation of development cooperation and humanitarian aid activities through joint efforts at all levels and ensuring effective coordination between the donor and beneficiary countries.

Ukraine. In response to Ukraine's needs, in 2021 Lithuania provided aid to Ukrainian citizens affected by the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, supported education reforms, contributed to improvement of mental health and rehabilitation services, and promoted women's autonomy and entrepreneurship. Lithuanian experts shared their experience in countering disinformation and propaganda, sustainable exports, and energy. In 2021, 15 bilateral and 1 regional project were implemented in Ukraine under the DCDP programme.

Projects aimed at support of educational institutions in Eastern Ukraine continued: distance upskilling and accreditation services for teachers were developed and expanded; school experts were trained in effective prevention of psychoactive substances; teachers in the regions were trained in innovative methods of how to integrate children with special educational needs.

The project Support for the installation of the school and improvement of the school environment of the 2nd school in Avdiivka, in Donetsk region of Ukraine, was completed in 2021. Classrooms of the Avdiivka school (biology, chemistry, mathematics, geography, physics, information science, primary education, history, and languages) were furnished with the latest specialised equipment and modern educational tools necessary for a proper educational and training process. The school was equipped with carpentry and sewing workshops in line with the principle of experiential learning. A catering complex for pupils was also set up in compliance with all hygiene requirements. A multi-purpose sports ground with playgrounds was built on the school premises, which is suitable for physical education classes, training sessions and team sports competitions for children and adults. The project aimed to create a modern educational centre with a comprehensive model of infrastructure, equipment, and organisation of the educational process, and to serve as a region-wide pilot project for the school reform in Ukraine and as a centre of excellence for educational experience.

In 2021, the HOPE Worldwide Charity Fund implemented the project Helping Hand for Ukraine: Psychosocial Support Programme, aimed at contributing to the improvement of mental health and rehabilitation services for children traumatised by the war in the Donetsk and Luhansk

regions of Ukraine. School psychologists, social workers and teachers were introduced to the psychosocial support training programme, children received psychosocial therapy.

In 2021, Lithuania continued to consistently assist victims of the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine (mainly women and children) to integrate into their host communities, to develop entrepreneurial and self-employment skills, and to maintain and strengthen the identity of the Crimean Tatars who fled the occupied territories, to empower forcibly displaced children to foster their national culture, and to preserve and deepen the knowledge of the Tatar language.

Lithuanian experts shared their experience on how to improve the export opportunities of small businesses in Eastern Ukraine to the EU by availing of the opportunities offered by clusters.

Contribution was also made to the modernisation and digitalisation of the district heating system. Ukrainian heat and electricity producers, biomass traders and manufacturers learnt how to digitalise and regulate heating and biomass trade and participated in a trial auction of Lithuanian biomass.

In 2021-2022, the Eastern Europe Studies Centre implemented the project Support to Independent Journalism in Ukrainian Regions. The aim of the project was to enhance professional competences of Ukrainian journalists, to strengthen communication and cooperation between Ukrainian media representatives and civil society organisations, and to contribute to the financial stability and independence of individual Ukrainian journalists.

Georgia. In 2021, the DCDP programme funded 8 bilateral projects focussing on environmental, climate change mitigation and sustainable environmental solutions. The projects were implemented through education, public engagement and transfer of EU good practices, promotion of small businesses in the post-pandemic period, promotion of political dialogue and democratisation in the context of the implementation of the Euro-Atlantic objectives of Georgia, and economic development.

A virtual shop was set up as a platform for social and small enterprises to sell their products and ensure their survival during and after the pandemic. Professional virtual business services were provided to start-ups and newly established social and other small enterprises through the continuously operating Virtual Business Incubator (VBI) platform.

A colourful and attractive map presenting inbound and local tourism opportunities was developed, informing about service providers in the municipalities of Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki.

Internationally recognised capabilities for measuring the melting point of gallium ($29,7646^{\circ}\text{C}$) were developed in cooperation with the Georgian National Agency for Standards and Metrology. This temperature point is important for environmental measurements, food and health protection, and everyday research activities. Accurate and reliable measurements of the 27°C point contribute to a sustainable environment and provide reliable information for the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Enhanced and strengthened partnership between civil society and local government to promote waste management in the municipality of the Mtsckheta-Mtianeti Region. A communication strategy for municipalities and civil society was developed to effectively implement municipal waste management plans and to meet the obligations of Georgia under the EU Association Agreement. Sustainable waste management and recycling promoted in the Racha-Lechkhumi and Lower Svaneti region of Sakartvelo. Public raised its awareness on integrated waste management systems, local communities were encouraged to get involved in addressing local environmental problems.

Political dialogue and democratisation were promoted in the context of the Euro-Atlantic objectives of Georgia, with the aim of contributing to the consolidation of democratic development. Strategic discussions were held with leaders of political parties and representatives of youth branches of political parties in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Telavi, introducing them to the culture of political compromise, dialogue and negotiation, and their relevance for the country's interest. The aim was to use Lithuania's experience for the promotion of consensus-based policymaking in Georgia and competence building of young Georgian politicians.

A virtual platform www.saklit.eu was created to strengthen cooperation between agricultural enterprises in Suvalkija and the Georgian Racha Region. A database of Georgian and Lithuanian small business representatives (20 from each country) was made.

Moldova. In 2021, 5 bilateral projects were implemented aimed at strengthening civil society and transport safety.

Projects on historical memory, fight against disinformation and other contemporary threats were implemented to strengthen the resilience of Moldovan society and boost its ability to identify propaganda. The WatchDog.MD NGO produced and published 10 videos exposing strategic propaganda narratives and debunking falsehoods. To strengthen the culture of memory in Moldovan society, the State University of Moldova, in partnership with the NGO ProMemoria Institute of Social Memory, in an international photo-documentary exhibition presented the story of the children of the Gulag who were deported by the Soviet regime.

The Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration implemented a project for Moldovan maritime, civil aviation, road, and rail transport professionals. The project served as a knowledge transfer of the best Lithuanian practices and experiences in transposing EU legislation in the field of transport and provided recommendations on the proper implementation of the tasks set out in the EU-Moldova Association Agreement related to ensuring the safety and interoperability of all 4 modes of transport.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova on strengthening institutional capacity and governance in the Republic of Moldova was signed in December 2021, on the basis of which a project on strengthening the administrative and institutional capacity and governance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova will be implemented.

Belarus. In 2021, 8 bilateral projects were funded under the DCDP programme. The projects mainly focused on initiatives to support civil society, build its political activism and solidarity, and strengthen the European identity of Belarusians.

For the purpose of empowering and strengthening the community of independent Belarusian social and political scientists and experts, international scientific conferences and seminars were organised, analytical activities (on democracy, human rights, and future political scenarios in Belarus) were carried out, internships and bilateral visits were organised to exchange best practices and to help young scientists to acquire skills and practice. Belarusian scholars and experts were provided with a platform to act and speak in a democratic and professional environment.

The completed environmental project Understanding, Measuring and Reducing the CO₂ Footprint in Belarus raised awareness of the Belarusian youth on environmental protection and climate change. The environmental event was dedicated to exploring new and modern solutions to reduce emissions from organisations, communities, and citizens. Organisations were encouraged to act responsibly in their daily activities.

Historical and cultural heritage projects aimed to promote the European Heritage Label programme in Belarus and to create preconditions for the further integration of Belarus into the European cultural space. The project the Cultural Route of Francis Skorina (Polotsk-Vilnius section) contributed to the preservation and awareness of the tangible and intangible heritage associated with the personality of Francis Skorina.

The MFA continued its cooperation with the Vilnius-based representations of international organisations supporting democratic processes in Belarus (Freedom House, Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, public institution the National Democratic Institute, etc.).

In 2021, the Vilnius-based European Humanities University (EHU) continued to be supported. The EHU received annual financial support (€200,000), as well as free visas for students

and lecturers along with premises in the Old Town of Vilnius. In addition to providing high quality education for EHU students, the EHU develops youth leadership skills, critical thinking, and active citizenship. These activities contribute to building a free and civil Belarusian society. More than 70 members of the EHU community have been detained in Belarus in the aftermath of the 2020 protests. Today, 3 EHU alumni and 2 students are recognised as political prisoners in Belarus. Since its foundation in 1992, 3,764 students graduated from EHU, including 2,693 students who have graduated in Vilnius since 2007. During the 2021-2022 academic year, 811 students studied at EHU. The university receives support from three key donors: the European Commission, Sweden, and Lithuania.

Armenia. In 2021, active cooperation with public authorities and non-governmental organisations continued. 8 bilateral projects were implemented, contributing to improvements in transport safety, protection of environment and combating climate change, development of economic and social activity in rural areas and strengthening resistance to disinformation.

Cooperation between Lithuanian and Armenian transport safety authorities continued. 17 Armenian civil aviation, 14 road transport safety and 4 rail transport specialists received training.

Waste collection and tree planting campaigns were organised in 7 communities involving the participation of almost 500 people, 300 bags of waste were collected, 2,200 seedlings were planted and 800 were left for replanting.

Waste sorting projects are very relevant in Armenia, which is only making its first steps in this direction. During the project the latest EU requirements were introduced, the Lithuanian experience in waste management was shared (from rubbish dumps to modern waste management), Lithuanian experience in the development of a deposit refund system for beverage containers was presented and the needs of Armenia were discussed. A model was developed for the introduction of a deposit refund system in Armenia, drawing on the Lithuanian experience.

Capacities of civil society organisations were strengthened in the fight against disinformation, fact-checking activities were implemented, and critical thinking and literacy of media representatives was developed in 10 regions of Armenia. A section of a virtual media literacy course on Combating Disinformation was developed to equip people with the necessary skills and tools to identify falsehoods. A campaign was organised to widely explain misleading and false narratives in media and social communication.

25 women (15 from the Martuni community and 10 from Nagorno-Karabakh) received training in four vocational modules: business planning and starting-up a business, English language, computer skills, and tailoring. 24 women from the Lori region, including those from Nagorno-Karabakh, gained professional skills in beauty services, and 2 winners of the project will run a new beauty parlour in the village of Debet.

Azerbaijan. 1 bilateral project implemented. Children were taught a responsible approach towards nature and the environment; environmental issues were integrated into the general education system. Ecology and environmental knowledge were conveyed in a children-friendly and inclusive way. An online curriculum was developed to promote recycling and the replacement of plastic bags with more environmentally friendly solutions; a summer school was organised to teach about environmental protection, climate change, efficient use of water resources, and biodiversity conservation.

In the EU Eastern Partnership countries, 1 regional project was implemented to strengthen democracy and civil society and to develop relations with the EU by consolidating the dissemination of independent information through interactive tools.

123 articles and 34 video reports in Russian on political, social, and economic issues in the Eastern Partnership countries were prepared and released along with 39 articles denouncing aggressive disinformation by third countries and introducing Western countries' tools to combat the spread of fake news.

The Central Project Management Agency implemented the EC's indirect management programme in the Eastern Partnership countries EU4Youth (2021-2025), aimed at providing support to active participation and visibility of young people in society, the economy and politics by encouraging them to develop their leadership, entrepreneurial and other skills, while fostering the creation of a green economy and building digital literacy. The programme was supported from the funds of the DCDP programme.

In countries of origin and transit of migration, as well as in other OECD beneficiary countries, 12 development cooperation projects were funded by the DCDPP: 3 projects each in Mongolia and Palestine, 2 projects each in Turkey, India, Bhutan, and 1 project each in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Ivory Coast, Iraq, and the RSA. These projects promoted youth entrepreneurship, women's socio-economic empowerment, capacity building in education, digital and financial technologies (the fintech) and agriculture.

More than 700 Indian women received basic-level training in financial literacy - accounting and management of personal finances, investment, and insurance.

Academic ties between Lithuania and Bhutan were strengthened by providing an opportunity for a student of the Royal University of Bhutan to study at Vilnius University in a PhD programme in ethnology. Opportunities for cooperation between Lithuanian and Bhutanese financial institutions were created, Lithuanian best practices in fintech were shared.

Good practices with Sri Lankan financial institutions in building a fintech ecosystem were shared. A foundation for further cooperation and business development between Lithuanian and Sri Lankan financial institutions was laid.

Participation of Mongolian women and girls in high-tech business was strengthened. Mongolian women facing social exclusion were encouraged to participate in local government elections and voice their opinions, and to fight gender stereotypes in social media.

In Vietnam, women and girls were trained to set up and run their own digital businesses.

In the Ivory Coast, a gender equality and women's empowerment project Creating innovative women's businesses through aquaponics technology was implemented. The project provided practical training in 4 aquaponics management modules to 80 women who will work in 5 newly installed aquaponics facilities.

In the framework of the educational project Middle East Science Programme, 15 students from Iraq were awarded scholarships to study at Klaipėda LCC International University. This project was designed to support Iraqis who, due to difficult conditions, have no access to education in their home country.

The RSA project provided 2,314 young people from the poorest communities with free access to the African Tikkun Digital Library and other world-class academic and public resources. Their digital skills were improved, giving them a competitive edge in the labour market.

Women's rights and equal opportunities

Contributing to the development of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in partner countries is one of Lithuania's development cooperation objectives. In 2021, the DCDP programme implemented 13 projects in 8 countries to strengthen the capacity of organisations working in the area of gender equality, and to increase women's social and economic empowerment.

In Armenia, the support aimed to provide quality education for women in rural areas. A project of the Martuni Women's Community Council was funded, targeting women who had fled Nagorno-Karabakh and experienced domestic violence.

In Ukraine, two projects were developed to train internally displaced women in the basics of entrepreneurship and to promote the social reintegration and economic empowerment of women affected by the occupation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

In the Ivory Coast, women were trained in the development of innovative businesses using aquaponics technologies. The women were provided with the knowledge and skills needed to set up such businesses and were provided with the necessary infrastructure.

Projects were also implemented by the Palestinian Centre for Communication and Development Strategies to encourage Palestinian women who are small business owners aged 18-35 in Hebron, as well as women living in refugee camps, to create a sustainable livelihood for themselves through digital marketing.

In Mongolia, 3 projects were carried out to encourage marginalised women to participate in local elections and to make their voices heard, to combat gender stereotypes in social media and to strengthen women's participation in Mongolian high-tech business.

In Vietnam, a project was funded to train women and girls on how to create and develop their own digital businesses.

In India, projects were implemented aimed at increasing women's financial literacy and reducing gender inequalities in household finance.

In Turkey, a project was developed in Alanya to promote women's managerial skills and entrepreneurship.

Through its development cooperation and humanitarian aid Lithuania contributed to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and peace and security. In 2021, a voluntary contribution of EUR 20,000 was made to the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, as well as a EUR 10,000 contribution to UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Lithuania actively participated in the discussions on the EU's Joint Communication – A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (GAP III), presented on 25 November 2020, which continues the work on gender equality started in 2010. The GAP III Action Plan aims to ensure that by 2025, 85% of all new EU external actions contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, and that at least one action in each partner country is dedicated exclusively to gender equality.

EU Twinning and TAIEX programmes

In 2021, Lithuania continued its successful participation in the EU Twinning Programme, providing expert support to the beneficiary countries (the EC-funded EU Twinning Programme supports cooperation between counterpart institutions from different countries): 42 calls for project proposals were launched under the EU Twinning Programme, 9 project proposals were submitted by Lithuanian institutions individually or in consortia with other EU Member States, and 6 projects were awarded funding for a total value of EUR 9.6 million.

In total, Lithuania won 125 EU Twinning projects between 2004 and 2021. In terms of the number of projects won in 2021, Lithuania is among the most successful EU countries, together with Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and Poland. 3 projects were awarded funding in the Eastern Partnership countries (Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Georgia). Another 2 project were awarded funding in Serbia and 1 project – in North Macedonia. Of the projects awarded funding in 2021, Lithuania is leading 3 projects (Serbia, North Macedonia, Azerbaijan) as a senior partner in the consortium of countries, and in 3 others (Moldova, Georgia, Serbia) it is a junior partner. In its projects Lithuania partnered with Poland, France, Romania, Slovenia, and the Netherlands. This year, the project proposals drafted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Paying Agency, the National Blood Centre, the State Medicines Control Agency, the National Transplant Bureau under the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Special Investigation Service, the Supreme Court of Lithuania, the

Prosecutor General's Office, the Financial Crime Investigation Service, the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau, the State Tax Inspectorate, the Bank of Lithuania, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, and the CPMA were awarded funding under the Twinning programme.

In 2021, Lithuanian experts participated in 58 TAIEX events (seminars, workshops, fact-finding missions) mainly in Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, and Kosovo. 9 TAIEX events took place in Lithuania. The main areas where Lithuanian experts have shared their expertise are digitisation, connectivity, environment, rule of law, migration and security, sustainable economy. As of 2021, more than 100 experts from various Lithuanian institutions are registered in the TAIEX database of experts.

Public awareness raising

The Eurobarometer's public opinion survey published in December 2020 showed a moderate increase in public support for aid to developing countries. 88% of Lithuanian respondents think it is important to help people in developing countries, but only 42% of Lithuanians think it should be a priority for their government.

The MFA continued consistently its activities aimed at public awareness raising of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the importance and benefits of development cooperation. In 2021, a new Lithuanian development cooperation logo was designed and presented to the Lithuanian public. It was developed in line with the recommendations of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the development of visual identities. At the end of the year, the process of developing a new development cooperation website was launched.

Cooperation was established with Professor Kazimieras Staniškis of Kaunas University of Technology, who was one of the 15 members of the United Nations sustainable development independent group of experts who prepared and presented the Global Sustainable Development Report to the United Nations General Assembly.

Lithuanian NGOs implemented 4 public education and awareness raising projects.

For the fifteenth year, the MFA contributed to the organisation of the international human rights documentary film festival Uncomfortable Cinema. The festival featured a rich programme of documentary films, meetings with filmmakers, discussions with film protagonists, human rights activists and scholars. One of the most important guests of the festival was O. Sentsov, winner of the Sakharov Prize and a prominent Ukrainian human rights defender.

The Africa is not a Country competition for young journalists was organised to raise public support for development cooperation policies and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The public entity Global Citizens Academy organised a summer camp for young people, distance learning sessions, a virtual 'escape room', interactive talks and intellectual challenges for seniors on the importance of global justice, access to education for children and young people, climate change and other challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the quality of life for future generations.

The Development Cooperation Information Days, the #DVT2030 publicity campaign, capacity-building training for NGO representatives, and a comparative survey of the population's views on development cooperation and the SDGs were organised as part of the #Agenda2030 project.

In 2021, the MFA worked purposefully with economic and social stakeholders (businesses, NGOs, academia, and researchers) to raise awareness about the importance of development cooperation and the opportunities to engage in the practical implementation of this policy.

Improving the effectiveness of the development cooperation policy

On 15 December 2020, following the adoption by the Seimas of amendments to the Law on the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, which introduced major qualitative changes, the 2021 was focused on the development of the implementing rules and regulations. On 15 December

2021, a Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the approval of the Regulations on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and the institutional composition of the Governing Board of the Fund for the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid was adopted. The [Strategic Directions for Development Cooperation for 2022-2025](#) were approved by Order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of 27 December 2021.