

# **COUNTRY POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**

**Synthesis Report – Lithuania**



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## INTRODUCTION

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The Agency developed a Country Policy Development Support (CPDS) [repository](#) for Lithuania in the initial CPDS phase. The repository provided evidence of current legislation and policy, and implementation into practice, across 15 key inclusive education policy areas.

This document summarises the information in Lithuania's repository. This information synthesis will help to identify specific priorities and, in particular, two or three policy areas that Lithuania will commit to focus on. These priorities will be used as the basis for further monitoring and development in the stated policy areas.

The following sections present brief summaries of Lithuania's current situation in relation to the 15 policy areas. The summaries conclude with short evaluations of the overall level of implementation of each policy area, by indicating whether it:

- is to be initiated (planning is at an early stage/practice is yet to be started);
- requires development (implementation is partial or inconsistent across schools);
- embedded in policy and practice (policy and practice are established and sustainable).

The [Annex](#) shows the 15 policy areas and their indicated levels of implementation, providing a 'snapshot' of Lithuania's situation.



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# INFORMATION SYNTHESIS FOR LITHUANIA

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## 1. Legislation and policy

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There must be a clear concept of equitable high-quality inclusive education, agreed with stakeholders. This should inform a single legislative and policy framework for all learners, aligned with key international and European-level conventions and communications, as the basis for rights-based practice.

Lithuanian legislation contains a clear concept of equitable high-quality inclusive education for all learners which is in accordance with key international conventions. The country's education policy is rights-based and the [Law on Education](#) guarantees all learners will be educated, develop their skills and abilities and receive the help they need.

The [2021 Amendments](#) to the Law stipulate that all general education schools must accept all learners, regardless of their educational needs, from 1 September 2024. Public schools will therefore be unable to refuse to enrol learners with special educational needs (SEN) for 'objective reasons', e.g. due to an inability to provide psychological, special pedagogical or social pedagogical assistance or to adapt the educational environment. This provision will have a far reaching effect on Lithuania's education sector. It will introduce a centralised system to monitor enrolment in learners' nearest mainstream schools.

At the end of 2023, modifications to the Amendments were submitted to the Lithuanian parliament, the Seimas, to soften the provisions taking effect in 2024. As a result of discussions with stakeholders, a compromise was reached to also allow learners with severe SEN to be placed in a school within the same municipality but not the one nearest to their place of residence. Such a placement requires an assessment by a national-level institution. The use of this provision will be seen when the legislation comes into force.

Lithuania has adopted several other political, strategic and policy instruments in support of inclusive education. The [Agreement on the National Education Policy \(2021-2030\)](#), signed by the leaders of major Lithuanian political parties, commits to developing and implementing three inclusive education models in pilot municipalities and schools over two consecutive school years until 2026. Following an evaluation, the models will be expanded across Lithuania.

The [Education Development Programme](#) of the National Progress Plan 2021-2030 lists the main problems in education and describes their roots. These include unequal opportunities, insufficient use of educational technologies to increase education system efficiency and the quality of learning outcomes, and insufficiently developed educational support in schools.

In response to identified gaps, the [Preparation for inclusion in 2021-2024 Action Plan](#) aims to remove physical, informational and social barriers and ensure quality education for every learner, together with their peers in their nearest educational institution. There is a



shared understanding that, to properly account for learners' diverse needs, it is necessary to:

- expand the support system;
- admit more educational professionals and teaching assistants to schools;
- improve all teachers' qualification to enable them to work with learners with SEN;
- allocate adequate resources;
- adapt school environments for inclusive education.

**The new provisions of the Law on Education and other related legislation will significantly affect the education system's performance. The provisions will be fully implemented, monitored and evaluated from the 2024/2025 school year.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development and Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 2. Funding and resource allocation

Mechanisms exist to support the on-going development of inclusive school communities and enable them to increase their capacity to respond to diversity, support all learners and meet the full range of their diverse needs.

Education in Lithuania is primarily financed from the state budget, following a complex yet flexible funding formula. A significant part of this purposive state subsidy is directly allocated to schools. Municipalities receive a smaller part for further reallocation between schools to account for differences in teaching needs or learners' performance. Additional funding is also provided through various programmes and investment funds.

The funding system allows some flexibility for schools in resources allocation, but targeted allocations based on the number of learners or classes cannot be used for other purposes. On the other hand, municipalities as school founders have the autonomy to spend finances on school maintenance and infrastructure, according to their priorities.

Special formulas are in place to provide more resources for learners with SEN and other vulnerable groups of learners, including those educated in national minority languages and migrants. Fund allocation aims to support capacity building to reduce barriers for learners vulnerable to exclusion, with different coefficients applied. Funds from the state budget are also allocated for education, meals and transport for children experiencing social risk in the compulsory pre-school education programme.

In 2019, a mixed funding method changed the financing of pre-primary, pre-school and general education in state, municipality and private schools. The funds cover basic educational costs. The formula is calculated for each school according to the number of hours / teaching costs needed to implement the education plan. To calculate the costs, the basic size of a group (maximum size) is set and the minimum possible number of learners in the group/class is indicated. In the calculation, the teacher's salary is adjusted according to their obtained qualification.



While teaching funds are allocated per class, other educational needs, such as teaching materials, are allocated per learner. Establishing a range between the minimum and maximum number of learners avoids the practice of artificially creating classes of only maximum size.

Municipalities receive funds to organise and manage the educational process and provide educational support to schools and in pedagogical psychological services. Municipalities also provide schools with maintenance funds which are used for service staff salaries and to cover operating costs.

The funding mechanisms are flexible enough to enable schools to build capacity to support all learners. However, there are several indications that support services are still insufficient. The Education Development Programme for 2021–2030 pointed to a low proportion of learners with SEN receiving educational assistance. To address the shortage, several measures were adopted and the overall funding was raised to reach the targets of 85% of learners with SEN receiving educational assistance by 2025 and 97% by 2030.

Providing educational assistance is an independent function of municipalities. While support specialist salaries are financed directly from the state budget, municipalities allocate the funds for school infrastructure, transport and teaching assistants. The spending analysis revealed that the funds used for educational assistance in schools constitute only one third of the allocation from the state budget.

A significant share of funding is provided by European Union (EU) funds. Their impact on educational accessibility and quality was assessed as ambiguous. On the one hand, investments in educational infrastructure, updating educational content and teacher training created conditions to improve education quality. On the other hand, EU funds cannot address systemic challenges related to teachers' workload, payment and motivation. Additional EU investments are required to improve educational support services provision, to fund the development of regional assistance and consultation centres, and to increase the availability of pre-school and full-day school services.

**Several measures to enhance inclusive education have only recently been implemented or their implementation is foreseen. As such, the area of funding and resource allocation to enhance inclusive education provision is considered as requiring development and monitoring.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** and **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

### 3. Governance

An effective plan is in place that sets out clear roles and responsibilities, opportunities for collaboration and levels of autonomy throughout all system levels and sectors.

The public governance system in Lithuania is largely decentralised, as is the education sector. Municipalities and schools have substantial autonomy to implement national education policies, while considering local specificities and needs. The municipality and the school represent the local level in education. The [Law on Education](#) and the [Law on Local Self-Government](#) specify their authority, roles and responsibilities.



The Government, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and other ministries participate in developing and implementing the national education policy. The Government prepares the education strategy and submits draft laws to the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas, for discussion and approval.

Lithuania's municipalities are responsible for implementing the national education policy and legal acts in their locality and for setting their long-term goals, strategies and action plans. Municipal councils and administrations are responsible for providing and managing pre-school, pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary education. Municipalities also organise non-formal education for both children and adults. Municipal institutions ensure enrolment in compulsory education, co-ordinate the provision of educational assistance, organise school transport and catering, and provide pre-school education and non-formal education for children and adults.

Municipal education councils promote society's participation in shaping and implementing education policies. These councils represent learners, teachers, parents, social partners and education providers. They analyse how municipalities implement national education policy and approve their long-term education goals.

The school founder (state, municipality or private entity) supervises school operations and activities. Ensuring quality of education is the joint responsibility of a school and its founder. The Law on Education specifies the school council as the highest self-governing body representing learners, teachers, parents and local community representatives. School councils have decision-making powers regarding all activities, funding and other issues as defined by the school's statutes. The school council evaluates the headteacher's annual activity report and submits its decision on the report to the institution implementing the school founder's rights and obligations.

Other school self-governing bodies include teachers', learners' and parents' councils which are established in all public schools. Private schools may have a different structure of self-governing bodies.

Measures are in place to monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the governance plan across the education system. The National Agency for Education is responsible for monitoring and organising national and international education research. It analyses results and challenges in the education system and submits conclusions and recommendations to the Ministry regarding education quality and effectiveness. The National Agency for Education produces annual reviews on education and administers the Education Management Information System.

There are opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration between stakeholders at every level of the education system. The Law on Education specifies the responsibilities of the individual ministries, other public institutions and governmental agencies. Standard procedures are in place for drafting and negotiating new legislation and effective education management involving social partners and the public.

The legislative process may take considerable time but is fairly efficient. This is mainly due to good connections between the Ministry and relevant stakeholders, municipalities and schools. According to the [National Network of Education NGOs](#) and some international organisations (OECD), there is a further need to 'open up' the education system and





involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in modelling and providing various public services, including in education.

**Evidence suggests that governance of the Lithuanian education system is well established, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities at every level and with meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders across different sectors.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 4. Quality assurance and accountability

There is a comprehensive quality assurance and accountability framework for monitoring, review and evaluation that supports high-quality provision for all learners, with a focus on equitable opportunities for those at risk of marginalisation or exclusion.

Education system performance and results are monitored and evaluated continuously at all levels and are based on comprehensive data collections. Data gathered at the municipal level mirrors the structure of the national data. The education provider and the institution implementing the rights and obligations of the owner (school founder) are responsible for education quality.

Municipal education bodies monitor the provision of:

- general education for children, young people and adults;
- education of learners with special needs;
- pre-primary and non-formal education;
- educational assistance;
- youth engagement.

They also monitor the implementation of children's minimum care measures.

Municipalities have access to detailed data about their schools, to allow them to adopt evidence-based local education strategies.

Schools regularly carry out self-assessment based on the approved [methodology](#) for self-assessment. By annually submitting aggregated self-evaluation data to the National Education Agency, schools contribute to implementing the goals and performance indicators of the [Education Development Programme](#) of the National Progress Plan 2021-2030. In addition, headteachers submit an annual activity report to the school community and the school council for consideration.

External evaluation is carried out periodically, usually every seven years, and can be general or thematic. Evaluation is based on 25 indicators covering 4 areas of school performance – results, learner experiences, educational environment, and leadership and management. The National Agency for Education organises external evaluation, which consists of a formative assessment based on the school's self-evaluation. After the evaluation, schools inform learners and parents about the findings. External consultants, such as experienced teachers and specialists, can be invited to help schools improve the identified areas.



In 2021, the National Agency for Education carried out the first external evaluation of inclusive education in 30 selected schools. The findings pointed to the need to improve teachers' skills in creating inclusive educational environments, to increase support to learners, and to strengthen collaboration between teachers and support staff.

The National Audit Office of Lithuania conducted a [comprehensive audit](#) of the education system in relation to learning outcomes, achievement gaps and social exclusion. Based on the findings, the Office recommended:

- ensuring children from families at risk are obliged to attend pre-schools;
- allocating additional funds for learners with lower performance;
- organising continuous professional development (CPD) training for teachers;
- implementing new curricula and career guidance programmes.

**Evidence suggests that structures and processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provision and equitable opportunities for all learners. The quality assurance and accountability frameworks are embedded in policy and practice at all levels.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 5. Learning opportunities for all education professionals

There is a continuum of teacher professional learning – initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development for teachers and teacher educators – that develops areas of competence in all teachers regarding assessment and needs identification, curriculum planning (universal design), inclusive pedagogy, engagement with and in research, and use of evidence.

In 2012, the [Teachers' Professional Development Concept](#) was approved. The Concept specifies that teachers can accumulate funds for their CPD for several years. Various stakeholders prepared a [Teacher Training Model](#), which was approved in 2017 and its revised version implemented in 2024. The model describes teacher education as a continuum, which begins with initial teacher education and encompasses induction for beginning teachers and regular CPD activities. To fully implement and evaluate the model, further legislative changes are currently being prepared.

There is a complex selection process for pedagogical studies in Lithuania, including an assessment of the candidate's learning achievements, motivation, personal qualities and values. All pedagogical study programmes include an inclusive education element.

The Programme for Qualification Improvement Courses in Special Pedagogy and Special Psychology ensures that every teacher working in pre-school or primary school or as a subject, vocational or informal education teacher must complete at least 60 hours of training within one year of starting to teach. Study programmes are in line with the principles of inclusive education. In addition, three national in-service training programmes on inclusive education have been approved. Teacher training centres at universities provide these programmes, which teachers are recommended to complete.



Teachers' conditions of service entitle them to CPD. School founders ensure that teachers and other staff receive remuneration for their CPD for at least five days per school year. In the school basket there are funds allocated specifically for in-service training. The Ministry plans funds for teachers' professional development. Participation in CPD is important for teachers and is a necessary pre-condition for a teacher to acquire a higher or retain the same qualification category. A higher qualification leads to a higher salary. The number of teachers participating in CPD is not available.

The priority areas for CPD are approved every three years. Institutions providing CPD include methodological centres at schools, municipal teacher education centres and accredited providers at higher education institutions. Other institutions, such as non-governmental organisations and agencies of the Ministry, can also arrange CPD. CPD consultants, who are experienced teachers and headteachers, can also help schools develop a professional development plan. The National Agency for Education co-ordinates these consultants, who also conduct internal evaluations in schools.

Teacher assistants are not considered as pedagogical employees, and they participate in specific training courses. They can apply for other professional development programmes, although not many courses are currently available to them.

Teachers have some opportunities to engage in education research at schools established by universities, which serve as 'laboratories' for innovations.

**There is an established continuum of teacher professional development in Lithuania which is reflected in the legislation, funding and the provision of various educational programmes. Full implementation of the revised teacher training model is underway, and its monitoring and evaluation may require further development.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 6. Curriculum framework

There is a single curriculum framework that is sufficiently flexible to provide relevant opportunities for all learners, and an assessment framework that recognises and validates attainment and wider achievement.

The [Guidelines for Updating the General Curriculum Framework](#) facilitated the development of the new [National Curriculum](#), which increased flexibility in educational content to address the needs of different learners. The new curriculum determines four levels of achievement for every two school years.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education approved 44 redesigned curricula for various subjects, which were implemented in the 2023/2024 school year. Evaluation of their implementation will be available in 2025.

The redesigned curricula do not focus solely on the acquisition of knowledge but aim to develop a variety of skills in learners. Formative assessment is encouraged to enable individual progress. The competence models, descriptions of achievement levels and related assessment frameworks are aligned. There are also standardised, low-stake tests conducted every second year in Lithuanian and maths. From 2025 onwards, basic school



exams in the tenth grade will be obligatory to allow learners to enter upper-secondary education.

According to the [Law on Education](#), general curricula and vocational training programmes can be adapted to learners with SEN, who can complete formal education programmes within a shorter or longer period of time. Learners with SEN can obtain the same qualification upon completing the education programme if they achieve at least satisfactory level.

Schools follow the [Recommendations](#) on adapting general curricula to learners with SEN. The Recommendations advise on appropriate teaching plans and methods, educational content and assessing learners' achievement. The first assessment of the application and impact of the Recommendations will be available at the end of the 2024/2025 school year.

According to the [Agreement on the National Education Policy \(2021-2030\)](#), a single quality standard for general education will be developed and accessible to all children by 2024.

**A single national curriculum framework is in place in Lithuania, and redesigned flexible subject curricula have recently been implemented in schools. Single quality standards are yet to be developed. Applying recommended adjustments to the curricula to account for the diverse needs of learners needs to be evaluated.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 7. Collaboration and communication

Structures and processes are in place to enable collaboration and effective communication at all levels – between ministries, regional- and local-level decision-makers and between services, sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including non-governmental organisations and schools.

There is a high level of collaboration and communication at all levels of the education system and across sectors. The processes are structured and involve relevant stakeholders.

At the national level, the Ministry of Education and government agencies create working groups for preparing legal acts and policy documents which regulate the education system and school activities. The legislation stipulates several shared responsibilities where the Ministry of Education collaborates with other ministries, e.g. in data collection, ensuring accessibility, providing social assistance and healthcare, material provision and other areas.

At the local level, municipalities are responsible for co-ordinating educational assistance, social and healthcare services to learners up to 18 years old (21 for learners with severe SEN) and to their parents or guardians. Education councils are established in each municipality. There is also an appointed civil servant in the municipal administration who co-ordinates inter-institutional co-operation.

Child Welfare Commissions are another example of cross-sectoral collaboration. These are permanent bodies at municipal and school levels, which are tasked with assessing learners' educational needs and the provision of support.



At the school level, headteachers monitor and assess teaching practice. External consultants can be invited to observe teaching in the classroom and provide guidance to teachers. They prepare reports with suggestions, highlighting positive aspects and areas for improvement.

School councils assess annual school activity reports. School councils are the highest self-governing bodies representing learners, teachers, parents and local community representatives. Other school self-governing bodies include teachers', learners' and parents' councils, which are established in all public schools.

A large part of co-operation and partnerships between different levels and stakeholders is not formalised. The Ministry usually consults draft legislation with associations of headteachers, teachers and municipalities, e.g. the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania which acts as a bridge between national and municipal governance levels.

**Evidence suggests there is a high level of collaboration across the education system in Lithuania, with meaningful involvement and participation of relevant stakeholders. While some structures and processes are regulated and formalised, a large part of collaboration takes places informally. This is in line with the highly decentralised model of educational governance in the country.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 8. Early childhood education and family support

There is a strategy to increase participation in quality inclusive early childhood education and support families experiencing disadvantage.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Lithuania includes pre-school and pre-primary education. The age range for pre-school education is 0–5 and it is not compulsory, except when a child's family is at social risk. Pre-school education is provided by pre-school institutions and general schools, freelance teachers and other state, municipal or non-state providers. Pre-school education is listed under non-formal education as there is no national curriculum, only guidelines for this level of education. Pre-school education is an autonomous municipal function.

Since 2016, pre-primary education in Lithuania is compulsory for all children in the last year before entering primary education. The measure is intended to help improve learners' academic achievement and social inclusion. The usual age for pre-primary education is six. Parents can opt to send their children to pre-primary education one year earlier, but not before five years of age.

Measures are in place to support families experiencing disadvantage to ensure their greater participation in ECEC. Compulsory pre-school education for children in families at social risk is the government's attempt to reduce inequalities. The child protection authorities determine whether a child lives in a family at risk, while municipalities are responsible for ensuring provision and attendance. Municipalities receive additional funding to enable provision free of charge, including meals and transportation.

Every child in Lithuania is entitled to at least 20 hours of ECEC services a week, which are funded by the state. ECEC providers finance additional time. Municipalities can determine



fees for education, meals or other services provided to children in ECEC. When children do not obtain placements in public kindergartens, some municipalities provide compensation for their enrolment in private ECEC settings.

There is about 90% enrolment in Lithuanian kindergartens. Participation in ECEC is generally lower in rural areas, which is a consequence of lower employment in comparison to urban areas. In rural areas more parents stay at home with their children.

A monitoring system is one of the issues raised at policy level in relation to the quality of ECEC services. In 2021, the [Methodology for self-assessment](#) of schools implementing pre-school education programmes and the [Methodology of external evaluation](#) were adopted. The methodologies are adjusted to kindergartens, but assessment questions are similar to those for higher education levels. There is no evidence on the results of monitoring the quality of ECEC provision at local and regional levels.

**ECEC provision in Lithuania is established and includes measures to increase enrolment of children at social risk in both pre-school and pre-primary education. While pre-primary education is compulsory for all children before enrolling at primary schools, accessibility and quality of pre-school provision may require further development.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** (see [Annex](#)).

## 9. Support for transitions

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There is a strategy to support all learners at times of transition between phases of education – and particularly as they move into adult life – through vocational education and training, further and higher education, independent living and employment.

Lithuania has three types of assistance at times of transition in education and to adult life: academic guidance, career guidance and psychological counselling.

Subject teachers or SEN specialists can provide academic guidance. Psychological counselling is provided to learners who experience personal and learning problems, in close co-operation with parents or guardians and teachers.

Career guidance is provided in all general education schools, vocational schools and career guidance centres. From 2023, career consultants work in every school. Schools have vocational information points which provide information from vocational consultants, vocational and general education teachers. In school-based vocational education and training tracks, career education is integrated into appropriate subjects, where specific transition skills are developed in co-operation with local employment offices, companies and youth services.

Municipalities organise and monitor career guidance services at the local level. The [Centre for Non-Formal Education](#) co-ordinates career guidance at the national level, develops methodology and evaluates the professional development needs of career counsellors. Evidence from the assessment of career guidance provision is not yet available. Funding for career guidance services comes from the state budget, European structural funds and funds from Active Labour Market Resources and the Youth Guarantee Initiative.



The [General Education Plan](#) foresees that, in grades 9–10, at least 100 lessons per year must be devoted to individualised teaching and to developing career management competencies. For learners with SEN, the number of lessons devoted to developing career competencies can be increased. Career guidance is not a separate subject in the curriculum and schools decide how to integrate it in their education plan.

Lithuania continues to develop a new career guidance model which will be compulsory for all learners from the first to the final grade in all schools. It is intended to meet one of the strategic aims in [The National Progress Plan \(2021-2030\)](#), according to which the share of learners in grades 5–12 receiving career guidance services should reach 100% in 2030, from 25% in 2018. The Ministry of Education has already adopted the qualification requirements for career specialists and is working to develop the related training programmes.

**Evidence suggests there is on-going development of strategies and measures to support learner transitions at various stages of their education. A new model of compulsory career guidance is being established. As such, the whole area is considered under development.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** (see [Annex](#)).

## 10. Co-operation between school-level stakeholders

Structures and processes are in place to facilitate co-operation between stakeholders in schools, families and local communities. Strategies are in place to ensure that all stakeholders support inclusive school development and enhance learner progress.

The Lithuanian [Law on Education](#) anchors participation of school community members in education management. Various authorities and stakeholders set up and run bodies and associations and form alliances that fulfil tasks in education, social and health care, culture and other areas, as set out by their statutes.

Municipal education councils include representation from teachers, learners, parents, social partners, education providers and their associations. The councils analyse how their municipality implements national education policy, approve long-term education goals and propose strategies to reach these goals. They decide on annual school activity plans and their financing. Evidence on how municipal education councils participate in the education management is not collected at the national level.

School councils are schools' highest self-governing bodies and include teachers, parents, learners and representatives of the local communities. School councils help achieve the schools' strategic goals and fulfil their missions. The councils can propose actions, but the decisions are made by the headteachers and school management. The school council approves the school's annual plan.

Guidance is in place to ensure school co-operate with families and communities through a range of actions. The [Description of the activities of teachers for the school community](#) describes a range of activities which are considered a part of the teachers' workload and are included in their salary. Some of them are obligatory, including consultations with parents. Others are optional and can contribute to building positive school climate or



ensuring safety through various activities. Contribution to school administration is also included. The legislation determines a portion of teachers' workload is dedicated to school community activities. It varies at different educational levels and is flexible, accounting for the subjects taught by individual teachers.

**Co-operation between school-level stakeholders is institutionally well established in Lithuania and involvement in school community activities is an integral part of teachers' work. There is no monitoring mechanism in place or coherent evidence available at the national level to assess the quality and variations in operation of the municipal and school self-governing bodies. This may be considered as an area for development in relation to improving inclusive education provision.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** and **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 11. Data and information collection

A system is in place for data and information collection that provides feedback to inform on-going improvement across the whole system and supports decision-makers at all levels to identify 'signals' that indicate the need for urgent action regarding schools needing additional support.

National Agency for Education manages the system in which all learners are registered. The register provides information for effective education system management at national and local levels. Schools place their performance and expenditure reports on their respective webpages and are held accountable to school and local communities in their annual accounting meeting.

Since 2010, the register collects data on learners' special needs and disabilities. Since 2019, data on disability, type of received support and allocated resources are also received from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and all municipalities.

All data is collected in the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Every year the State of Education overviews are developed, based on the data. The overviews present the overall condition of education in the country according to the national monitoring indicators, along with information on each municipality. This makes it possible to assess the municipal and school performance in comparison to the national average.

Each school in Lithuania has access to its own aggregated scorecard, which is compiled from data provided to various registers. If the key indicators are significantly different to the national average, the school may be included in the risk assessment. The risk assessment analyses the school results, educational support provided and educational process. It also scrutinises leadership and management to provide contextual information. The National Agency for Education monitors and periodically re-evaluates the performance indicators. After the risk assessment, schools can apply for additional funds to implement measures aimed at improving their performance.

A large part of the aggregated data is publicly available. Access to the databases is authorised by the National Agency for Education. There is substantial evidence that collected data is used as a base for developing educational policies and decision-making at





the national level. Lithuania also regularly participates in the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education data collections, which enables comparisons of key indicators with other countries. Lithuania provides also data on children/learners who are out of education.

**In Lithuania, there is a comprehensive educational data collection in place. Besides contributing to the analyses of the education system at the national level, it also enables closer scrutiny of individual schools' performance. The system of data collection includes indicators and mechanisms to conduct risk assessments and identify areas for improvement and actions requiring additional support.**

Level of implementation – **Embedded in policy and practice** (see [Annex](#)).

## 12. Transforming specialist provision

There is a strategy to transform specialist provision to support all learners and increase the capacity of mainstream schools, detailing cross-sectoral working and professional development for all staff.

SEN is broadly applied in Lithuania and includes learners with disabilities, learning and behavioural disorders, migrants, socially disadvantaged and gifted learners. The [Procedure for Assessing Learners with SEN and Assigning their Special Education](#) specifies the criteria approved by the Ministers of Education, Health and Social Security and Labour.

The assessment procedure involves a multi-disciplinary team – Child Welfare Commissions – which operate as a permanent body at municipality and school level. The Commissions conduct initial assessments of learners' educational needs. These assessments can be initiated by teachers, educational support specialists or parents. Further assessment is conducted by the pedagogical-psychological service, where necessary, which can allocate special education provision. If allocated, the service does not specify where the special education will be provided, and the parents decide where to enrol their child.

According to the current legislation, only learners with severe SEN can be enrolled in special schools and most learners with SEN are educated in mainstream schools. Child Welfare Commissions periodically re-assess learners with SEN. If they make sufficient progress, the Commissions recommend their transfer from special to mainstream school.

In recent years, several strategies and measures have been adopted to increase and transform specialist provision in mainstream schools. [Recommendations for adapting updated general curricula for learners with SEN](#) and [Guidelines for implementing inclusion in schools](#) have been available to teachers and schools since 2022. They aim to help schools review their policy, encourage self-evaluation of the available human and material resources and educational practices, and analyse and improve the school's inclusion processes. They also provide practical guidance on adapting general curricula for various types of learners with SEN. As both the Recommendations and Guidelines are related to implementing the renewed curricula, no evidence of their application in practice is available yet.

Many schools, especially in small municipalities and rural areas, lack specialist personnel, particularly psychologists and special pedagogues. This limits the provision of adequate



educational assistance to learners with SEN. Several measures to increase specialist provision were adopted, including possible re-qualification of teachers and allowing specialists to work part-time in more schools. To support higher enrolment in special education programmes at universities, students receive scholarships with a commitment to work in schools after graduation.

Insufficient educational services in schools will be partially compensated by the newly established teams of educational support specialists working at nine Regional Assistance and Consultation Centres. The Centres are co-ordinated by the National Centre for Inclusion in Education, which develops and disseminates new teaching and assessment methodologies. Additional funding was also provided to schools to create teaching assistant positions. These positions almost doubled in number between 2022 and 2024.

New standards for providing specialist services in schools were adopted in 2024 after years of consultations with relevant stakeholders. The main reason for their adoption is to harmonise different structures and organisations that provide services and to respond to the lack of specialists in schools.

Subject teachers generally lack competences and experience difficulties in educating learners with SEN. Currently, all university teacher training programmes include a compulsory course on education for learners with SEN. In addition, three new CPD programmes on inclusive education for in-service teachers were launched in 2023.

Low accessibility of most public schools has been addressed by significant investments in school infrastructure. Teaching aids and transport for learners with disabilities to and from schools were also provided. In 2020, a memorandum was signed on adapting educational and healthcare institutions for persons with disabilities. The memorandum aims to ensure that municipalities commit to adapting at least one public school for learners with disabilities every year. The city of Kaunas implemented a project to pilot an innovative model for providing integrated education, social and healthcare services to children of all ages with the support of multi-disciplinary teams. The project is replicable in other municipalities and schools. Activities of this kind are included in the upcoming national project, starting in 2024.

**Specialist provision in Lithuania is undergoing thorough institutional and methodological changes which are characterised by a general shift from special to inclusive education provision within mainstream schools. Several challenges have been identified and addressed on the way. The whole area is under development and requires monitoring and evaluation.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** (see [Annex](#)).



### 13. Inclusive school leadership

There are strategies in place to develop and support school leaders who work with others to create an inclusive and equitable school ethos with strong relationships, high expectations, proactive and preventative approaches, flexible organisation and a continuum of support to intervene when learners are at risk of failure and exclusion.

In Lithuania, headteachers of public schools are selected through an open recruitment process. Successful candidates are appointed for a five-year term and there is no limit on applying for more terms in office.

According to the OECD school autonomy index, Lithuanian headteachers enjoy high autonomy in managing their schools. They can influence developments in education policy and practice by setting goals in the annual work plans which are approved by the School Councils. Headteachers are accountable for the achievement of the goals set, and they also undergo annual performance evaluation conducted by the school founder.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring quality and equity of education, providing additional support for learners, and creating adequate working conditions for all employees. They appoint teachers and oversee the process of curriculum adaptation to local specifics. Headteachers are also responsible for providing in-service training for teachers and specialists. They plan and allocate resources for CPD and to purchase textbooks, teaching materials and technical equipment from the school budget. They can also apply for personal assistants for learners with SEN.

Headteachers have the power to intervene when learners are at risk of failure or exclusion. They can request that the Child Welfare Commission and municipal social services provide guidance and support. There is also a monitoring system for learners not attending school. It is the school management's responsibility to find these learners and bring them back to school.

Several initiatives and projects focusing on developing school leadership have recently been implemented in Lithuania. With the support of the EU's Structural Reform Support Programme, [new measures](#) were proposed to develop a comprehensive system of support for school leaders based on identified needs. These include introducing specific professional development formats, such as mentoring and school-based coaching, creating professional networks and strengthening the role of universities in professional development. A master's-level qualification programme on school leadership was developed and is provided for free at a private higher education institution.

The [Good School Concept](#) was introduced to empower school management and strengthen the participation of all stakeholders. The main principle of the concept is that school is for everyone and should therefore adapt to the needs of learners and help them achieve the best of their potential. The Ministry promotes the idea that every school in Lithuania should be a Good School.

**Developing inclusive school leadership in Lithuania is supported through various measures, projects and initiatives. Headteachers have significant autonomy in the overall management of their schools and self-governing bodies hold them accountable**



for achieving the set goals. The participation of relevant stakeholders in schools' operation and decision-making processes may require further development.

Level of implementation – **Requires development** (see [Annex](#)).

## 14. Learner voices

A guidance framework is in place to develop learning and teaching environments where learners' voices are heard and included in decision-making processes and learners' rights are fulfilled through personalised approaches to learning and support.

In Lithuanian public schools, Pupils'/Students' Councils are established along with other self-governing bodies (Teachers' Council, Parents' Council). There is no evidence collected at the national level to assess their performance.

The [Lithuanian School Student Union](#) (LMS) represents learners at the national level. Its representatives collaborate with various governmental and non-governmental institutions. LMS develops guidelines for school Students' Councils. It has actively contributed to discussions in various working groups, including on the updated curriculum and the organisation of school leaving exams.

**While there are structures in place to collect learner voices in developing and implementing national education policies, there is insufficient evidence to assess the needs, functioning and achievements of student bodies or other representations of learners at school and municipal levels.**

Level of implementation – **Requires development** (see [Annex](#)).

## 15. Resilience within the education system

Policy and practice have developed in response to unforeseen events to build resilience within the education system.

At the European level, countries implemented several emergency measures in education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Lithuania, the existing measures to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (free meals, digital technologies) were enhanced and provided on a larger scale. Additional specialist support was provided for learners with SEN.

There is some evidence that the pandemic had an impact on learners' emotional health and well-being. There is no evidence available of the impact of school lockdowns on the learner performance, nor on the increase in education gaps in Lithuania.

**There is no evidence of long-term strategies to address unforeseen events and to mitigate their impact on the education system, schools and learners.**

Level of implementation – **To be initiated** (see [Annex](#)).



## ANNEX

Table 1 shows the level of implementation of policy areas in Lithuania. There are three levels of implementation:

- **To be initiated** – Planning is at an early stage/yet to be started
- **Requires development** – Implementation is partial or inconsistent across schools
- **Embedded in policy and practice** – Established and sustainable.

However, some countries' policy areas are between levels of implementation. In these cases, the table indicates more than one level of implementation for the policy area.

**Table 1. Policy areas and their levels of implementation in Lithuania**

| Policy area   | To be initiated | Requires development | Embedded in policy and practice |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Legislation and policy                                 | –               | Requires development | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 2. Funding and resource allocation                        | –               | Requires development | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 3. Governance   | –               | –                    | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 4. Quality assurance and accountability                   | –               | –                    | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 5. Learning opportunities for all education professionals | –               | –                    | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 6. Curriculum framework                                   | –               | –                    | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 7. Collaboration and communication                        | –               | –                    | Embedded in policy and practice |
| 8. Early childhood education and family support           | –               | Requires development | –                               |
| 9. Support for transitions                                | –               | Requires development | –                               |
| 10. Co-operation between school-level stakeholders        | –               | Requires development | Embedded in policy and practice |



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| <b>Policy area</b>                         | <b>To be initiated</b> | <b>Requires development</b> | <b>Embedded in policy and practice</b> |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 11. Data and information collection        | –                      | –                           | Embedded in policy and practice        |
| 12. Transforming specialist provision      | –                      | Requires development        | –                                      |
| 13. Inclusive school leadership            | –                      | Requires development        | –                                      |
| 14. Learner voices                         | –                      | Requires development        | –                                      |
| 15. Resilience within the education system | To be initiated        | –                           | –                                      |