

VNR of the Republic of Lithuania

Main Messages, 2023



INCLUSIVE VNR PREPARATION

Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Republic of Lithuania is based on the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its SDGs since 2018. This VNR not only analyses our progress but is also aimed at further accelerating and strengthening implementation and cooperation activities in Lithuania, to achieve the SDGs on time.

Second VNR is the result of an inclusive and collective process. Aiming for an objective evaluation of institutional mechanisms and progress made, as well as for impartiality and indication of necessary way forward, the preparation process of Lithuania's VNR has involved many relevant actors from governmental institutions, municipalities, NGOs, youth, scientific institutions and business, who provided their input from the first VNR draft phase to its approval.

GLOBAL CONTEXT AND TIMING

Peace and security are essential conditions for sustainable development. Lithuania strongly condemns Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified military aggression, which is supported by Belarus, against Ukraine and considers it a violation of international law. Lithuania reiterates solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainian people and commits to provide economic, humanitarian, and social assistance as long as it is required.

Recent geopolitical context – the COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine and global energy crisis, have posed new challenges related to social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development in Lithuania. 2023 marks a halfway point for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and with all its challenges brings the possibility to objectively assess, reset and reinforce our commitment to full and timely implementation of all 17 SDGs.

NEW STRATEGIC BASIS

Important changes have been made in the strategic planning and management system of Lithuania that ensured SDG links with key strategic planning documents and scaled up the relevance of Agenda 2030 in the national regulatory and financial framework. In 2020 a new overarching strategic document – 2021-2030 National Progress Plan (NPP) – was approved.

The implementation of strategic goals of NPP must ensure holistic approach and harmony of social, economic and environmental aspects. To achieve that, the NPP has enshrined three horizontal principles: sustainable development, innovation (creativity) and equal opportunities for all, which aim to form and promote important values, desired changes in behaviour and attitude for the progress of society.

Even though new strategic system has contributed to better integration of SDGs into national policy decisions, giving higher importance to the implementation of SDGs in the political agenda, a more proactive approach is needed and strategic public communication about Agenda 2030 should be improved.

PORTAL FOR SDGs INDICATORS

New interactive SDGs indicators portal has been developed in Lithuania. Data on SDGs and their indicators is regularly updated and published openly for the public and institutions. It allows to effectively track and evaluate progress on specific SDGs and selected indicators.

SDGs: ON TRACK, BUT SOME CHALLENGES REMAIN

Agenda 2030 implementation assessment has revealed that country's progress could be divided into two phases: before the COVID-19 pandemic and during it. Since 2018, economic growth and positive trends for SDG indicators have been noted. COVID-19 has slowed down progress and contributed to challenges in reducing poverty, social segregation, income inequality, promoting employment, overburdened education and health services. These problems became even more relevant in 2021 with the influx of migrants at the Belarus borders with the EU and in 2022 with the illegal Russian military invasion of Ukraine, as well as the start of a global energy crisis.

Despite negative impacts of these emergencies, progress is visible for most of the SDGs in Lithuania. Lithuania made significant progress for poverty reduction (SDG 1), implemented structural reforms that contributed to better quality of education at all levels (SDG 4), encouraged transition to energy from renewable sources (SDG 7), along with growing GDP improved indicators for employment and salary increase (SDG 8), focused on sustainable and comprehensive urban planning (SDG 11), increased forestry and protected natural areas in the country (SDG 15).

However, in some cases, positive trends are short-term. Notably, sustainable and responsible economy (SDG 12), which is inseparable from circular and climate neutral approach, remains an important long-term challenge for the country.

Therefore, it is essential to constantly assess the added value of specific measures, update national SDG priorities, maintain political focus on sustainable development and strengthen interinstitutional, public and international cooperation.