

NOVEMBER 4, 2024

EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ASYLUM, MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION FUND FOR 2014-2020

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION RESULTS



Lietuvos Respublikos
socialinės apsaugos
ir darbo ministerija



PMIF
Prieglobsčio, migracijos
ir integracijos fondas

BASIS OF THE EVALUATION

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION. The object of this evaluation is **the National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 2014-2020 (AMIF NP)**, whose interventions were implemented according to four specific objectives (SOs): 1 SO - **Common European Asylum System (CEAS)**, aimed at strengthening the reception and asylum systems for third-country nationals (TCNs), 2 SO - **Integration and Legal Migration**, aimed at supporting the integration processes of TCNs, 3 SO - **Return**, aimed at strengthening fair and effective return procedures for TCNs, 4 SO - **Solidarity**, aimed at strengthening solidarity and sharing responsibility among European Union Member States (EU MS) in receiving TCNs. Under the AMIF NP, **56 projects** were implemented, with **19.74 million Euros** allocated from EU and national budgets.

PURPOSE AND TASKS OF THE EVALUATION. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the achievement of the AMIF NP objectives, its impact and the future directions of AMIF investments, to ensure the effective implementation of AMIF investments for the 2021-2027 period. To achieve this goal, 9 evaluation tasks were set: (1) to assess the **effectiveness** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (2) to assess the **efficiency** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (3) to assess the **relevance** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (4) to assess the **coherence** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (5) to assess the **complementarity** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (6) to assess **the EU added value**; (7) to assess the **sustainability** of the AMIF 2014-2020 investments; (8) to assess **the simplification of administrative procedures** for AMIF 2014-2020 investments and **the reduction of administrative burden**; (9) to identify good practices and lessons learned from the 2014-2020 period and provide **recommendations** for the next programming period.

APPROACH AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION. The evaluation tasks were implemented using a **theory-based evaluation**, based on the analysis of the intervention logic. AMIF NP interventions were assessed according to the different **evaluation criteria** - relevance, coherence, complementarity, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and EU added value. **Data** for the evaluation were **collected** through the analysis of documents, secondary sources, monitoring data, statistical data, and publicly available information, surveys of AMIF NP project promoters and semi-structured interviews with the representatives of the project promoters, the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority. The **data** collected was **analysed** using intervention logic analysis, meta-analysis, and expert assessment.

FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

RELEVANCE

1 SO CEAS. Before the implementation of the AMIF NP, Lithuania's **asylum system had not encountered significant challenges**. Therefore, AMIF NP funds were directed towards **addressing deficiencies in the asylum system** at that time by improving reception conditions for migrants, especially vulnerable persons, enhancing the efficiency and quality of asylum procedures, etc. During the AMIF NP implementation period, **three migration crises** occurred, during which challenges in ensuring proper reception conditions for migrants were encountered. A portion of the AMIF NP funds was **mobilized to address the problems caused by the 2021 migration crisis** - purchasing of humanitarian packages, providing services in newly opened migrant accommodation facilities, temporary employment of additional staff, and improving newly established migrant accommodation infrastructure. This helped to respond to the emerging

challenges of limited infrastructure and human resources in the asylum system in the changed context. The **relevance** of the 1 SO interventions **to the context and its changes** was assessed as **high**.

2 SO INTEGRATION AND LEGAL MIGRATION. Before the implementation of the AMIF NP, the **public policy on the integration of foreigners** in Lithuania was **not sufficiently developed**, there was an **unfavourable public attitude towards** migrants. Hence, **Lithuania significantly lagged behind the EU average** in the area of integration of foreigners. TCNs trying to integrate into the country's society faced various challenges, mainly related to the difficulty finding housing and employment. In the area of service provision to TCNs, there was a lack of political will, financial resources, competencies, and inter-institutional cooperation among municipal administrations. AMIF NP funds were directed towards **addressing the aforementioned challenges** by improving TCN integration policy, increasing the visibility of TCNs in the society and their involvement in the communities, and financing comprehensive support for TCN integration. **As the number of TCNs arriving in Lithuania significantly increased** during the AMIF NP implementation period, additional funds from the 2 SO were allocated to providing different services to TCNs and enhancing municipal capacities in the field of TCN integration. This helped to meet the TCNs integration needs of increased importance in the changed context. The **relevance** of the 2 SO interventions **to the context and its changes** was assessed as **high**.

3 SO RETURN. The issue of returning TCNs has always been relevant to Lithuania as a Schengen border member and a transit country, hence **the continuation of the return policy initiated in the previous periods** was planned for the 2014-2020. Additional attention in the political agenda at the time was given to encouraging the voluntary return of TCNs and improving the accommodation conditions for TCNs being returned. Accordingly, AMIF NP funds were directed towards organizing assistance for TCNs' voluntary return, reintegration and enforced return, improving accommodation infrastructure of TCNs being returned, funding various services for TCNs being returned, etc. The **COVID-19** limited the possibilities for TCNs' returns and led to relatively longer detention of TCNs being returned. Additional AMIF NP funds were allocated to improving of the living conditions and quality of life of the detained TCNs. The **relevance** of the 3 SO interventions **in the context and its changes** was assessed as **high**.

4 SO SOLIDARITY. Before the 2014-2020 programming period, **the issue of relocating TCNs was not relevant** to Lithuania, and thus it was **not initially included in the AMIF NP**. At the beginning of the AMIF NP implementation, in the context of the EU **migration crisis**, the goal of showing solidarity with other EU MS by accepting a portion of the migrants was incorporated into Lithuania's political agenda. This was addressed by allocating EU funds for the relocation of TCNs under 4 SO *Solidarity*. However, with changes in the quantitative goals of TCN to be relocated at both the EU and national levels, the AMIF NP funds allocated for this objective were redistributed, directing some of them to other SOs. The AMIF NP responded to the key changes in the context of TCN relocation, thus the **relevance** of the 4 SO interventions **in the context and its changes** was assessed as **high**.

COHERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Both the **EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2020** and the AMIF NP funds were used to finance interventions aimed at **facilitating the integration of TCNs into the Lithuanian labour market**. The investments from these funding sources **did not overlap** because they covered **different stages of integration into the labour market**. Investments from the EEA and Norway Grants were directed towards the supply side of integration (creating legal and technical preconditions for

TCN integration into the labour market), while AMIF NP interventions targeted the demand side (providing information, knowledge, and skills necessary for TCNs integrating into the labour market).

Both the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)** and the AMIF NP funds financed **support in the form of food products and hygiene items**. The investments from these funding sources **did not overlap** because they **targeted different groups** and focused on **different stages of the migration process**. In the case of FEAD funding, TCNs were one of the possible groups to be supported, whereas in the case of AMIF NP, they were the primary target group. The support provided through AMIF NP funds mainly covered primary humanitarian aid to migrants during the processing of asylum applications or while waiting to be returned, and assistance for foreigners granted asylum in the initial stage of their integration. In contrast, FEAD support was primarily accessible to migrants who encountered financial difficulties during the secondary stage of integration.

Both the **2014-2020 European Social Fund (ESF)** and the AMIF NP funds financed interventions in the areas of **social integration of TCNs, integration into the labour market, and the provision of primary assistance**. The investments from these funding sources **did not overlap** due to their **different target groups**. In the case of ESF investments under the Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' Investments in 2014-2020 (OP) Priority Axis 7, TCNs were just one of many possible target groups, while in the case of AMIF NP, they were the primary target group. ESF investments under Priority Axis 8 of the OP primarily focused on the Ukrainian target group, which received little attention within AMIF NP.

Funds from the AMIF NP, the **2014-2020 Internal Security Fund (ISF)**, and the **2014-2020 European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)** were invested in enhancing the institutional **capacities of the State Border Guard Service (SBGS)** through infrastructure renewal and expansion, and the strengthening of specialist competencies. The investments from the ISF and AMIF NP **did not overlap**, as they were associated with **different functions of the SBGS**. ISF funds were used to strengthen the SBGS infrastructural and technical capacities and the skills of specialists, necessary for performing the institution's primary function - border protection. AMIF NP interventions were more related to other SBGS functions - ensuring the legality of foreigners' presence in the country at different stages of the migration process. These funding sources **complemented** each other, contributing comprehensively to the strengthening of SBGS institutional capacities needed for performing different functions. Investments from the ENPI and AMIF NP in the infrastructure of the Foreigners' Registration Centre (FRC), aimed at accommodating the same target groups, **did not overlap**. They were **necessary to ensure a uniform standard of living for migrants** in different FRC buildings. Interventions of these funding sources **complemented** each other, comprehensively contributing to solving problems in the migrant reception and accommodation system and improving conditions for providing various services to migrants and addressing the needs of vulnerable migrant groups.

To ensure the coherence and complementarity of AMIF NP interventions with interventions financed by other funding sources, both formal and informal **investment coordination mechanisms** were utilized. AMIF NP, FEAD, ESF, and ISF investments were coordinated using a **formal coordination mechanism** involving representatives from institutions responsible for coordinating investments from different funding sources in the AMIF Monitoring Committee. For AMIF NP, ESF and ISF investments, an **informal coordination mechanism** was also applied - informal consultations between representatives of institutions coordinating investments from

different funding sources. **No coordination mechanisms were established** for AMIF NP in relation to the ENPI and the EEA and Norway Grants investments.

EFFICIENCY

EFFICIENCY OF USING INNOVATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES. The innovative administrative procedures - **multiannual programming, standardized procedures for projects' administration and financing, and application of simplified cost methods** – applied during the implementation of AMIF NP contributed to a greater or lesser extent to **reducing the administrative burden** on project promoters and the Delegated Authority. Multiannual programming helped the Delegated Authority simplify the application assessment procedures, while ensuring more flexible planning of project activities for project promoters. The standardized procedures for projects' administration and financing, aligned with the practices of other EU funds for the 2014-2020 period, established a unified legal basis for investment implementation, enhanced clarity for applicants (project promoters), and prevented fraud and other violations. The application of simplified cost methods - standard scales of unit costs and flat rates - helped AMIF NP project promoters to plan project expenses more accurately, save time and human resources, and often ensured more efficient use of funds allocated to projects. The use of standard scales of unit costs made it easier for the Delegated Authority to assess applications and administer projects, helping to save time and human resources. Despite this, **the review and updating of standard scales of unit costs** during the AMIF NP implementation period were **insufficient** considering market situation changes. Moreover, there is a **need to expand the base of standard scales of unit costs in the future**. The innovative administrative procedures did not solve all the challenges faced by project promoters, as these are determined not only by the administration system but also by in some cases limited capacities of the project promoters themselves. To strengthen these, the Delegated Authority conducted **active and personalized consulting of the project promoters' representatives** at various stages of project implementation, which also contributed to effective prevention of violations.

EFFICIENCY OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION. The analysis of the relationship between the annual total number of applications assessed and projects administered and the annual expenses for technical assistance in the period of 2015-2024 revealed that the use of technical assistance funds essentially corresponded to the changing administrative load of the AMIF NP. Therefore, **the use of financial resources** for program administration is considered **adequate**. During the period analysed, despite fluctuations in the number of applications assessed and projects administered, the number of staff positions at the Delegated Authority that worked with the AMIF remained constant. However, the numbers of applications assessed, and projects administered only reflects a portion of the administrative load experienced by the Delegated Authority. The maintenance of existing staff positions at the Delegated Authority was crucial given the additional administrative burden caused by the limited functionality of the investment administration information system and the need to ensure continuity of functions as staff changes. Considering this, **the use of human resources** for program administration is deemed **adequate**.

EFFICIENCY OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION. To assess the efficiency of the AMIF NP implementation at the **program level**, a relationship between achieved values of monitoring indicators and financial resources used for their achievement was established and compared among different SOs. In the case of all SOs, a high immediate impact of investments on the dynamics of monitoring indicators was observed. Thus, **the use of financial resources** for AMIF NP interventions at the program level is considered **efficient**. To assess the efficiency of AMIF NP implementation at the **project level**, unit costs of indicators achieved were identified and compared

among projects. 7 out of 8 monitoring indicators were achieved relatively efficiently. Projects contributing to the achievement of these indicators incurred similar costs for creating indicator unit. Therefore, the use of their **financial resources** is considered **efficient**. Only up to ten percent of the projects analysed were **relatively inefficient**. However, this was mostly due to the **specificities of the projects** - mobilization of project funds for urgent addressing of the challenges caused by the migration crisis or objectively more costly activities.

EFFECTIVENESS

1 SO CEAS

IMPROVEMENT OF MATERIAL RECEPTION CONDITIONS. 1.9 million Euros from the AMIF NP funds were invested in improving and expanding the infrastructure of migrant accommodation centres in the country. The investments in the renovation of the dormitory for asylum seekers (AS) at the FRC and the construction of a new dormitory for vulnerable AS created or improved **105 accommodation places, enhanced the basic living conditions, leisure, and primary health care services for AS, and provided better opportunities to meet the special needs of vulnerable AS**. The investments in the renovation and furnishing of the Refugee Reception Centre (RRC) and the Naujininkai Refugee Camp (NRC) **improved 300 accommodation places**, which can be used to house TCNs of any status. Additionally, **0.25 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated for the purchase of temporary accommodation services for AS, although **the goal to find an alternative to reception or integration centres was not achieved**. In total, AMIF NP interventions improved or newly created **604 (405 of which - sustainable) accommodation places** for migrants - nearly three times more than it was planned in the AMIF NP. Considering the high effectiveness of these interventions and the qualitative contribution to improving the quality of life for migrants, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES TO AS. 1.88 million Euros from AMIF NP funds were invested in providing various services to AS, which helped **ensure the rights guaranteed by law** during the submission and processing of asylum applications, **eased the financial burden on the state** associated with these processes, and **improved the non-infrastructural reception and living conditions of AS**. In total, AMIF NP interventions supported **nearly 5,5 thousand AS** - more than five and a half times more than it was planned in the AMIF NP. Project promoters indicated **challenges** while in working with **some vulnerable groups**, such as persons with undiagnosed mental disorders and children. During the 2021 migration crisis, **innovative service delivery models for AS** were tested, such as involving volunteers in service provision and offering services remotely. These practices are distinguished as examples of **good practice** in addressing the shortage of human resources needed for providing services to migrants. Considering the high effectiveness of these interventions and the qualitative contribution to improving the non-infrastructural reception and living conditions of AS, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

IMPROVEMENT OF ASYLUM PROCEDURES. 1.17 million Euros of AMIF NP funds were invested in expanding infrastructure necessary for the application of asylum procedures. A broad circle of interested institutions were provided with centralized fingerprint collection and transmission system EURODAC which **made it possible to save time, human resources, and financial resources** for travelling to locations where asylum applications are submitted. The creation of a confidentiality-assuring interview infrastructure at the FRC **allowed for the collection of more high-quality information needed for processing asylum applications**. The implementation of solutions based on modern technologies enabled remote interviews of AS and

can help save time, human resources, and financial resources of institutions. Considering the qualitative contribution of these interventions to improving the quality and increasing the efficiency of asylum procedures, the analysed interventions are considered effective. Additionally, **72.4 thousand Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to providing access to the specialists at the Migration Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (MD) to the latest information on the countries of origin of AS, as well as creating technical conditions for the accumulation and analysis of this information. These investments helped gather and consolidate information of various sources about the countries of origin, necessary for **the smooth processing of asylum applications and the preparation of decisions on the granting of asylum, as well as for the preparation and submission of statistical asylum reports**. Given the high effectiveness and qualitative contribution to the efficiency of asylum procedures, these interventions are considered effective.

STRENGTHENING THE COMPETENCIES OF ASYLUM SPECIALISTS. **0.2 million Euros** from the AMIF NP funds were invested in strengthening the competencies of asylum specialists. The AMIF NP funds were allocated for funding secondments of the MD employees to the EU-level training for specialists working in EU MS' asylum systems. This contributed to **ensuring that the knowledge and competencies of the country's asylum specialists met the changing requirements of the CEAS**. AMIF NP investments were also allocated to organizing accredited training for social workers in the asylum field from both the public and non-governmental sectors. This contributed to the **formal qualification improvement** of these specialists. In total, **over 500 asylum specialists** were trained using AMIF NP funds - nearly three times more than was planned in the AMIF NP. Considering the high effectiveness of these interventions and the qualitative contribution to improving the quality of asylum procedures, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED IMPROVEMENT OF THE ASYLUM SYSTEM. **139.5 thousand Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated for monitoring of the reception conditions of AS and asylum procedures, as well as evaluating the asylum system. These investments contributed to **ensuring the continuity of monitoring and evaluation processes** in this area and **created the necessary evidence for improving reception conditions and asylum procedures**. Considering the direct use of evaluation results during the reform of the country's asylum system, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

2 SO INTEGRATION AND LEGAL MIGRATION

IMPROVEMENT OF TCNs' INTEGRATION POLICY. **0.02 million Euros** from the AMIF NP funds were allocated for the preparation of a strategic document for the integration policy of foreigners granted asylum. Although it did not become a full-fledged national strategy, it served as a **foundation for evidence-based policy formation for the integration of TCNs** during the 2014-2020 period (in the preparation of the Action Plan 2018-2021 on the Integration of Foreigners into Society) and for the 2021-2027 period (in the development of the progress measure *Develop foreigners' integration system*). Considering this, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

ENSURING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES FOR TCNs. **5.76 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated for the provision of various integration support services to TCNs during both the initial and subsequent stages of integration. Among the services provided to TCNs during the primary integration stage, the **personal assistant (mentor) service** is highlighted as a **good practice**, which may see increased demand in the future due to the growing number of migrants in the country. AMIF NP funds financed integration centres of non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) where essential services for migrant integration into the labour market and society were provided, **filling a niche in the provision of services to TCNs during the secondary integration stage**. The AMIF NP funds financed specific projects that facilitated the foreigners' employment and the improvement of the quality of Lithuanian language training services. In total, AMIF NP funds helped provide various integration services to **11.7 thousand TCNs** - three times more than it was planned in the AMIF NP. Considering the high effectiveness of these interventions and their importance in ensuring the accessibility of services to TCNs, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF TCNs IN THE SOCIETY AND THEIR INCLUSION IN THE COMMUNITIES. **1 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to increasing the visibility of TCNs in the society and enhancing their inclusion in the communities. AMIF NP investments promoted migrants' experiences in the media, **fostering positive public opinion and encouraging dialogue**. Through various volunteer activities, intercultural discussions, and events, efforts were made to **strengthen connections between local communities and migrants**. However, the activities of AMIF NP projects were too fragmented to create an effective mechanism for foreigners' integration into communities, thus the effectiveness of the analysed interventions is considered limited.

IMPROVEMENT OF INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TCNs. **0.14 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to financing of the migration and integration information platform *MIPAS*, which published a wide range of migration-related information in several languages. However, **the implementation of the project did not fully meet the initial expectations** - *MIPAS* mainly provided bureaucratic and academic information, which was more useful for various institutions and organizations. As a result, after the end of project funding, neither the continuity of website updates nor its functionality was ensured, rendering the effectiveness of the analysed interventions limited.

STRENGTHENING THE COMPETENCIES OF SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF TCNs' INTEGRATION. **0.46 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were invested in strengthening the competencies of specialists. Training in intercultural competencies and other relevant areas allowed public sector employees to **understand the cultural characteristics of TCNs, provided practical skills** for handling specific situations, and **encouraged tolerance** toward foreigners. A notable **good practice** was the **strengthening of competencies of specialists working in municipalities** through training and visits by foreign experts, followed by the development of TCN integration plans at the local level. These interventions enabled municipal administrations to become more involved in providing services to TCNs and are therefore considered effective.

3 SO RETURN

MEASURES COMPLEMENTING THE RETURN PROCEDURES. **1.44 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to financing measures complementing the return procedures. Investments in updating the accommodation infrastructure for detained TCNs at the FRC contributed to **improving the accommodation conditions for TCNs awaiting return**, ensuring a uniform living standard for detained individuals and compliance with legal requirements for their housing conditions. Providing services to detained TCNs at the FRC helped **ensure the continuity of services for returning TCNs**, offering not only basic but also quality-of-life-enhancing services. Although the monitoring of enforced return operations covered only a little more than a tenth of all such operations funded by AMIF NP, it **provided necessary evidence for improving enforced return procedures**. The measures complementing the return procedures funded by the AMIF NP are considered effective.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RETURN MEASURES. **1.67 million Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to financing the return measures of the TCNs. The AMIF NP supported the **voluntary return of about one and a half times more** TCNs than it was planned. This was due to both successful interventions and the increased volume of immigration to Lithuania. On the other hand, the **reintegration assistance** was utilized by **only a quarter of the TCNs** that were initially planned. **Low demand for reintegration assistance** was largely due to low motivation among returning TCNs to participate in reintegration planning, mental health vulnerabilities, and the urgency to leave within the period specified in the return decision. **Challenges** identified in **providing reintegration assistance** included the **exclusion of minors from the target group** and **fragmentation of voluntary return and reintegration services** within projects. While reintegration support measures are considered effective in the short term, it is not possible to assess their long-term effectiveness due to the lack of ongoing reintegration monitoring. Greater progress in voluntary return, along with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in **a return rate for TCNs that was half of what was planned**. Although the majority of TCNs returned with AMIF NP funds were deportees, a significant portion of voluntary returns indicates **positive progress in the voluntary return system**. Since voluntary return is prioritized in the return sector, the interventions in this area are considered effective.

STRENGTHENING THE COMPETENCIES OF SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF RETURNS. **25.7 thousand Euros** of AMIF NP funds were allocated to financing the participation of specialists from institutions working in the field of returns in collaborative visits to other EU MS and training sessions. In total, **120 specialists** were trained - one-fifth more than it was planned in the AMIF NP. These activities helped **adopt best foreign practices in managing centres for detained TCNs** and conducting returns, as well as **gain knowledge essential for working with TCNs to be returned**, which proved valuable in an evolving migration context with a growing number of migrants with diverse characteristics. Given the high effectiveness of these interventions and their qualitative contribution to strengthening the competencies of specialists in the field of returns, the analysed interventions are considered effective.

4 SO SOLIDARITY

RELOCATION OF TCNs FROM THIRD COUNTRIES. **1.24 million Euros** of AMIF funds were allocated for the relocation of TCNs to Lithuania from Turkey and providing various forms of assistance to relocated individuals to facilitate their integration in Lithuania. Under the EU relocation program, a total of **124 TCNs were relocated from third countries** to Lithuania - over 1,5 times the number planned in the AMIF NP. Given the high effectiveness of interventions in this area, these measures are considered effective. Lithuania **made a substantial contribution to the smooth implementation of the EU relocation program**. Most of the funds in this area were allocated to projects aimed at integrating relocated individuals in Lithuania. However, their effectiveness cannot be assessed due to the lack of monitoring of the number of TCNs who are no longer receiving integration support in the country.

RELOCATION OF TCNs FROM EU MS. **2.45 million Euros** of AMIF funds were allocated for the relocation of TCNs to Lithuania from Greece, Italy, and Malta, as well as for providing various forms of integration assistance to relocated individuals. Under the EU relocation program, a total of **408 TCNs were relocated from other EU MS** to Lithuania - more than half of the target set in the AMIF NP. The lower-than-planned number of relocated individuals was due to objective factors, such as the **lengthy alignment of procedural mechanisms** and the **reluctance of some individuals to relocate to Lithuania**. Moreover, in comparison to the EU level, Lithuania's achievements essentially match those of the EU. Considering this, these interventions are deemed effective. Lithuania made a **significant contribution to the smooth implementation of the EU**

relocation program. Most of the funds in this area were allocated to the project aimed at the integration of relocated individuals in Lithuania. The project funds were used to test an advanced practice recommended by integration experts, involving housing migrants within the community from the first day of arrival to the country. However, the effectiveness of these integration-related interventions cannot be fully assessed due to the lack of data on the number of TCNs who no longer receive integration support in the country.

SUSTAINABILITY

Around **one-third** of AMIF NP **project** funds were used to create **sustainable products**: around one tenth of the projects created **infrastructural products**, while around one-third of the projects created **non-infrastructural products**. Infrastructural products, such as constructed or renovated buildings and purchased equipment, displayed the highest potential for sustainability. Their **continued use** upon completion of the projects will be ensured not only by the formal **requirements for investment continuity** but also by the **status of their users** in implementing public policy. The sustainability potential for non-infrastructural products differs. The future use of training programs has already been ensured by the **recognition** of their authors within the **market** of migration sector training, while the use of the strategic document for the integration of foreigners granted asylum has been ensured by its **user's role** in developing foreigners' integration policy. The continued use of municipalities' strategic documents will be supported by the **status of the documents** themselves, while the ongoing use of information reports will be ensured by the **status of their users** in the implementation of asylum policy. **The future use** of the Lithuanian language training program **depends on the political decisions** regarding Lithuanian language training services for foreigners, while the continued use of analytical documents relies on the **political will** to apply the evidence they provide for improving migration policy. Two-thirds of AMIF NP projects encompassed provision of various **services** or other **activities**, which, upon completion, did not produce sustainable products. Nevertheless, their value manifested through the **knowledge acquired or updated by specialists**, serving as a foundation for the improvement of the migration system, and through the **accumulated experience in providing services to TCNs**, serving as a basis for planning future interventions.

EU ADDED VALUE

Most of the results of the AMIF NP interventions **would not have been achieved without the EU funding**. The relatively highest added value of the AMIF funds was in the cases of **4 SO** and **2 SO** interventions. The transfer of TCNs to Lithuania under 4 SO was funded exclusively by the EU funds. AMIF NP funds under 2 SO essentially supported the entire TCN integration system. In the cases of **1 SO** and **3 SO** interventions, the EU added value mainly manifested through facilitated implementation of law in the fields of asylum and return, improvement in migrants' quality of life, reducing administrative burden on institutions, and development of the voluntary return system. The EU added value of the AMIF NP interventions is considered high.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

To ensure the effective planning and implementation of AMIF investments for the 2021-2027 period, it is **recommended** for the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority to:

- Ensure the **continuous review and regular updates of unit costs**, allocating necessary funding for commissioning research;

- in the event of significant price changes due to unforeseen external factors, consider the possibility of **conducting unit cost update studies ahead of schedule** or **temporarily suspending** the application of unit costs in some ongoing projects, providing alternative solutions;
- consider **expanding the base of unit costs**, taking into account project promoters' suggestions for their application to other expense categories;
- establish **formal coordination mechanisms** concerning all possible **funding sources**, including representatives from institutions responsible for the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants, as well as the ENPI investments, in the AMIF Monitoring Committee;
- initiate **experience exchange sessions** between the Responsible Authority and the Delegated Authority and project promoters of the projects funded by the AMIF NP where key **challenges** in providing services to TCNs, **best practices, and lessons learned** for the future would be identified;
- **fund projects** aimed at:
 - the participation of MD specialists working in the asylum field in **ongoing EU-level training programs**;
 - enhancing the competencies of specialists working in the asylum field in both public and non-governmental sectors, through **accredited training programs**;
 - **preparing** specialists working in the field of asylum to work in the event of an **emergency**;
 - **strengthening the competencies of municipal** institutions' specialists in the area of TCN integration;
 - **strengthening the competencies** of representatives from urban **Local Action Groups (LAGs)** in the area of TCN integration;
 - provision of **individualized Lithuanian language training** and **vocational-oriented** language training for TCNs;
- when planning **calls** for project proposals, consider the possibility of **establishing requirements** for:
 - AS service providers: **to have experience and/or competencies** in working with target groups of vulnerable individuals;
 - AS service providers: implement activities in projects **exclusively** dedicated to **children**;
 - TCN service providers: **include NGOs** in the **delivery of TCN services**;
 - TCN Lithuanian language training service providers: **use the Lithuanian language teaching methodology** developed in the period of 2014-2020;
 - providers of voluntary return and reintegration assistance services: to **comprehensively implement activities of voluntary return and reintegration** assistance within the same project;
- when planning calls for proposals for projects providing voluntary return and reintegration assistance services to TCNs, include **children** in the group of recipients of **reintegration services** (including reintegration benefits);
- enhance cooperation with the institution responsible for ESF+ funds, promoting the possibilities to fund interventions related to **Lithuanian language training for TCNs and increasing employment of TCNs by the ESF+**.