COUNTRY POLICY
REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Lithuania

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) is an independent and self-governing organisation. The Agency is co-funded by the ministries of education in its member countries and by the European Commission via an operating grant within the European Union (EU) Erasmus+ education programme (2014-2020).

The views expressed by any individual in this document do not necessarily represent the official views of the Agency, its member countries or the Commission.

Extracts from the document are permitted provided that a clear reference to the source is given. This document should be referenced as follows: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016. *Country Policy Review and Analysis: Lithuania*. Odense, Denmark

The information in this document was current in September 2016.

Please note that legislation may have changed since the analysis grid was completed. Anyone using the grid should contact the Representative Board Member for more details.

Further information about the Country Policy Review and Analysis (CPRA) activities is available on the CPRA web area.

Section 1: Country priorities for education

The text below presents the main country priorities in the field of education, with special attention to the development of inclusive education.

Country priorities

Lithuanian education policy priorities, long-term education goals, directions of change of education content and funding priorities shall be set forth in the National Education Strategy. The Strategy shall cover a period of ten years and shall be reviewed at least every four years.

The main strategic goal is:

- to make Lithuanian education a sustainable basis for the state increased prosperity, develop ambitious, independent and solidary people responsible for generating their own, Lithuania's and the world's future.

The third goal of the *National Strategy on Education for the years 2013–2022* is targeted on:

- to ensure access to education and equal opportunities; to maximize the development of children and youth in education enrolment; provide pupils, students and young people the most favourable opportunities to develop individual capacity, and meet their special educational and learning needs; to provide effective pedagogical and psychological assistance to students with learning difficulties.

(National Strategy on Education for the years 2013–2022. The Resolution No XII-745 of Dec 23, 2013 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (Valstybės žinios, Dec 30, 2013, No. 140-7095). www.e-tar.lt/portal/legalAct.html?documentId=b1fb6cc089d911e397b5c02d3197f382)

The priority of education stated in the *16th Government Programme 2012–2016*:

- the development of flexible, open and high-quality, education system accessible to everyone, which corresponds to the individual needs and the needs of the country's economy in an open civil society; make lifelong learning and development possible. (The Decree of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 13/12/2012, No XII-51).

Section 2: Analysis grid

Measure 1: To improve inclusive education and to ensure that good quality education is accessible for all

Agency recommendation	Findings
1.1 There is a clearly stated policy for the promotion of quality in inclusive education. *(Policy aims to widen access to education and to promote full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realise their potential. Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.)*	1.1.1 The Action plan for strengthening general education schools providing primary and basic education programmes and for the development of inclusive education for 2014–2016 was passed for the implementation of priority measures of the Republic of Lithuania's 16th Government for 2012–2016. The goal of the Action Plan is to increase access to education, improve the quality of education in schools implementing primary and basic (lower secondary) education programmes. The tasks of the Action Plan are: - to allow schools more flexibility in shaping the curriculum and organising training and learning process; - to improve skills of school staff, education support institutions and education specialists at municipal administrations needed for shaping and implementation of the curriculum; - to improve and modernise the physical and social environment of the schools. (The Order of the minister of education and science, 05/09/2014, No V-808)
1.2 Legislation and policy are consistent with the principles of the UNCRC and the UNCRPD. *(Legislation and policy and upholds the right of all learners to full participation in school with their own local peer group.)*	1.2.1 Article 14.7. *The education of learners with special educational needs shall be implemented by all schools that provide compulsory and universally available education, other education providers and, in certain cases, by schools or classes designated for the education of learners with special educational needs* (OoP, p. 3)

Agency recommendation	Findings
1.3 The concept of inclusion is clarified in education policy as an agenda that increases quality and equity for all learners. *(Policy aims to address underachievement of all vulnerable groups including children with disabilities.)*	1.3.1 Regardless of the absence of the term 'inclusion' in the legislation of education and the restricted understanding of *full integration*, the main ideas of inclusive education and the concept of 'inclusion' are stated in different national level documents (*Law on Education*; *The National Education Strategy 2003–2012*; *Profile of the Competence of the Teaching Profession*; *Teacher Training Standards*). (TE4I, p. 3) The Action plan provides measures for strengthening general education schools providing primary and basic education programmes and for the development of inclusive education for 2014–2016: - the development, testing and implementing of the models of different learning support for pupils with learning difficulties; - the sponsorship of the general education schools, implementing innovative models of organisation for the learning and educational support for pupils with special needs; special classes, which provide individualised programmes in primary education, individualized basic education programmes or social skills training programmes. (Order of the Minister of Education and Science, 05/09/2014, No V-808)
1.4 Legislation and policy for inclusive education is cross-sectoral. *(Policy outlines procedures to ensure the efficient co-ordination of services, as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities.)*	1.4.1 Art. 34. A municipality in the territory where learners with special educational needs reside shall ensure said learners' access to education. Accessible education shall be ensured by adapting the school environment, by providing psychological, special pedagogical, special and socio-pedagogical assistance, by supplying schools with technical aids and special teaching aids, and in other ways as prescribed by law. (OoP, p. 4)
1.5 There is a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality inclusive education at national, regional	1.5.1 According to the Lithuanian vision of education – every child and young adult seeks and easily finds a place to learn; the country's education system consists of state, municipal and non-governmental educational institutions constantly evolving and cooperating with each other and with

Agency recommendation	Findings
and / or organisational levels.	partners, whose employees have authority in society and support the ongoing debate on the development of education, the state of Lithuania and its people and the success of the cultural and economic development, taking into account rural and urban sustainable development.
1.6 Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.	1.6.1 Art. 53.1. The purpose of monitoring of education shall be to empower all the entities engaged in education management to adopt reasoned decisions and to provide management assuring education quality (Law on Education, 2011)
1.7 Policy has the goal of supporting all teachers to have positive attitudes towards all learners.	–
1.8 Policy requires learning material to be accessible.	1.8.1 Art. 22. According to the Law on Special Education, assistive devices and teaching assistants, etc., have to be provided for people with SEN according to their educational needs. (OoP, p. 2)

1.8.2 Art. 15.2. Special needs education is provided by all compulsory and comprehensive education programmes. In order to meet a pupil's needs, these programmes have to be changed, adapted or new special educational programmes must be created; additional assistance must be provided. (OoP, p. 2)

1.8.3 Article 21. Special pedagogical assistance and special assistance. The purpose of special pedagogical assistance and special assistance shall be to increase the effectiveness of learning for individuals with special educational needs. (OoP, p. 3)

1.8.4 Vocational training schools and higher education institutions shall establish their admission procedures for people with special educational needs. A municipality in the territory where learners with special educational needs reside shall ensure said learners' access to education. Accessible education shall be ensured by adapting the school environment, by providing psychological, special pedagogical, special and social-pedagogical assistance, by supplying schools with technical aids and |

Agency recommendation	Findings
	special teaching aids, and in other ways as prescribed by law. (OoP, p. 4)
	1.8.5 Vocational training schools, colleges and universities establish additional rules for admitting students with SEN. The school environment has to be adapted to a person with SEN. Psychological, special pedagogical and special assistance, as well as assistive devices and special educational materials have to be provided. Accessibility of education for people with SEN is ensured in other ways in accordance with legislation. (OoP, pp. 2–3)
	1.8.6 Pursuant to the Law on Education, students, their parents/foster parents/guardians, teachers and education providers can be offered education assistance which aims at increased effectiveness of education. The Law on Education ensures psychological assistance; social pedagogical assistance; special pedagogical and special assistance; assistance to the school and the teacher.
	(Law on Education, 2011)
1.9 Policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement inclusive education. *(Support structures focus on different forms of educational resource centres that are locally organised to offer support to individual or clusters of schools.)*	1.9.1 A Child Welfare Commission shall carry out the initial evaluation of learners' special educational needs. A pedagogical-psychological service shall evaluate a learner's special educational needs (except those occurring because of exceptional talents) in terms of pedagogical, psychological, medicinal and socio-pedagogical aspects. Special education shall be assigned by the head of a pedagogical-psychological service and – in certain cases – by the school principal with the consent of the parents or guardians, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. (OoP, p. 8)
	1.9.2 Objective: to create conditions for successful and versatile student development, to establish methodological support and resource centres for special education, to update the school material base of the youth schools and to set up work places for professionals (ICT4I, p. 3)
	1.9.3 Two national projects, 'Prevention of drop-outs from schools' and 'Developing a Network of PPSs' were implemented between 2004 and 2008, financed by EU Structural Funds and the Ministry of Education and Science. During the project, all PPSs were renovated and provided with advanced

Agency recommendation	Findings
	assessment tools and computers. Specialists from PPSs and schools in municipalities underwent upskilling. (OoP, p. 14)
	1.9.4 Under the project 'Development of education forms for people with special needs' [*Specialiųjų poreikių asmenų ugdymo(-si) formų plėtra*], 70 special education counsellors have been trained to provide methodological assistance to general education teachers working with pupils with special educational needs. (OoP example, p. 14)
	1.9.5 The 'Work environment modernisation of the pedagogical-psychological services infrastructure for special education teachers, social educators, psychologists and speech therapists' project was implemented between 2010 and 2013. This saw 121 schools and 55 educational, psychological and educational institutions that offer psychological education being supplied with hardware (laptops and interactive whiteboards) (ICT4I example, p.7)
1.10 Policies outline a continuum of support for children and young people in schools, to meet the full diversity of learners' needs.	1.10.1 Art. 21. Special assistance in schools shall be provided to individuals in need of such assistance. They shall be provided with services which increase education accessibility, including translating verbal language into sign language, text reading and summarising. The procedure for providing special assistance in schools (except higher education institutions) shall be laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. Special assistance in higher education institutions shall be provided in accordance with the procedure laid down by the higher education institution. Special pedagogues from pedagogical-psychological services shall provide consultancy to the recipients of special assistance and their parents or guardians, as well as to teachers. (OoP, p. 3)
1.11 Policy outlines strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.	–

Agency recommendation	Findings
1.12 Policy outlines the development of the role of special schools as a resource to increase the capability of mainstream schools and improve support for all learners. *(The specialist knowledge and skills of special school / resource centre are maintained and further developed so as to enhance support for learners, such as those with low-incidence disabilities.)*	1.12.1 The State Educational Strategy for 2003–2012 and a programme for its implementation (2003) in the special needs education field aims to (…) gradually decrease the number of special (boarding) schools and, along with this, to facilitate the creation of resource centres: the most advanced special (boarding) schools are to be transformed into resource centres (OoP, p. 11)

Measure 1 evaluative comments

–

Measure 2: To support improved co-operation, including greater involvement of parents and local community

Agency recommendation	Findings
2.1 The full involvement of families in all educational processes is outlined in legislation and policy.	2.1.1 Parents are involved in the process of evaluation and assessment of child's situation and special/individual needs of a child and a family; family has a right to choose the institution and the type of support (ECI, p. 8)
2.2 Policy for inclusive education places learners and their families at the centre of all actions.	2.2.1 Following a decree from the Minister of Education and Science, a child welfare commission has been established in every school. One of the functions of the Commission is to adapt educational programmes for learners with SEN. (VET, p. 13)

Agency recommendation	Findings
	2.2.2 The Act also states: The purpose of education for learners with special educational needs shall be to help learners learn and to be trained according to their abilities, attain an education level and acquire a qualification by recognising and developing their abilities and capacities. The education of learners with special educational needs shall be organised in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. (OoP, p. 8)
	2.2.3 Families have the right to receive training upon request; family (mostly mothers) training mostly is informal as a sharing of experience/showing exercises (therapies) etc. There are no specialised training programmes for families (with the exception of project based programmes on parenthood education) (ECI, p. 13)
	2.2.4 The Act of Special Educational Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Educational Institutions (1993) mandates parents' formal right to choose the educational institution. (OoP, p. 1)
	2.2.5 Early rehabilitation centres/services (...) Parents are directly involved in the process – they stay with the child during therapy (ECI, p. 3)
	2.2.6 Infant homes with multi-professional teams (...) in the biggest cities of the country. The social worker of the institution is responsible for contact with families – the main focus of his/her work is to involve family members into the child's life. (ECI, p. 5)
2.3 Sharing information among professionals and families is a policy priority.	2.3.1 The main providers of required information for families are paediatricians/family doctors (first professionals who meet child and family). (ECI, p. 12)

Agency recommendation	Findings
2.4 Policy has the goal of supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.	2.4.1 Art. 47.2. Parents (guardians, curators) must co-operate with the school principal, other education providers, teachers, and other specialists who provide special, psychological, socio-pedagogical, special-pedagogical assistance, healthcare in dealing with the issues of children's learning and follow their recommendations (Law on Education, 2011).
	2.4.2 Schools consult parents by providing educational, social, psychological, special, health and informational support for pupils.
2.5 Schools are expected and supported to involve a wider range of partners and foster formal and informal networks that support their practice.	2.5.1. In recent years, the Special Education study programme was renewed to meet challenges for special needs teachers in inclusive education. Emphasis is not only on the preparation for educating children having special educational needs, but also to work collaboratively and engage in teamwork with other participants of the educational process and other institutions. Such modules/courses are included in the study programme as 'Collaboration with family', 'Teamworking', 'Management of special education'. (TE4I example, p. 10)
	2.5.2 Most of mainstream kindergarten has speech therapist; in some of them + social pedagogue. According to the needs of children, there are specialised educational centres (only a few) with multi-professional teams (ECI example, p. 7)

Measure 2 evaluative comments

–

Measure 3: To develop monitoring strategies, establishing a comprehensive accountability and evaluation framework for inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
3.1 Policy describes clear mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness and quality in inclusive education.	3.1.1 Monitoring of the implementation (of inclusive education) is carried out by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science. (ICT4I, p.3) 3.1.2 Special Vocational and Consecutive study programme regulations, affirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter, the Ministry), and other legal acts regulating higher education, are used to evaluate the programmes in terms of programme accreditation criteria and provide suggestions for the Ministry with regard to its accreditation. The Ministry shall take into consideration these conclusions in the manner prescribed by the Government. (TE4I, example p. 13) 3.1.3 Art. 37.4. In order to improve education quality an education monitoring, research, self-evaluation and external evaluation of school activities, performance review of school principals and teachers, evaluation of learning achievements shall be carried out (Law on Education, 2011).
3.2 Monitoring procedures ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources at regional or organisational levels are addressed.	3.2.1 The quality of study programmes is periodically assessed. The assessment is carried out by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter, the Centre) in the manner prescribed by the Government. Each institution publicly announces the conclusions. The Centre determines how the study programme content, its structure and realisation correspond to the regulations of a particular study field, the requirements of sequential study programmes, graduate study programme general regulations. Special Vocational and Consecutive study programme regulations, affirmed by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter, the Ministry), and other legal acts regulating higher education, are used to evaluate the programmes in terms of programme accreditation criteria and provide suggestions for the Ministry with regard to its accreditation. The Ministry shall take into consideration these conclusions in the manner prescribed by the Government. (TE4I, p. 13) 3.2.2 The strategy implementation course is systematically reviewed, assessed and discussed each year. All the factors which describe the progress of ICT and changes in education are taken into consideration and the strategy and its implementation programmes are revised, corrected and

Agency recommendation	Findings
	improved accordingly. For example, a group of scientists from the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics, under the leadership of Professor V. Dagiene prepared a research report (...). Continual analysis of STT need is being pursued. For example, in 2010 research was conducted into the supply of special teaching tools to schools (509 special education commissions from educational institutions were surveyed). The research data was used to plan activities in the 'Special Teaching Tool Creation' project (ICT4I, p. 2)
3.3 Accountability measures that impact upon educational professionals' work reflect the importance of wider learner achievements.	3.3.1 Art. 37.4. In order to improve education quality (…) performance review of school principals and teachers, evaluation of learning achievements shall be carried out.
3.4 Policy outlines common standards for service and provision evaluation for use across health, education and social services.	3.4.1 Qualifications are usually designed through developing VET standards, which are adopted at the national level with the purpose of ensuring comparability and transparency of qualifications awarded, and to match them with the needs of the economy (competence-based). (VET example, p. 6)
3.5 Policy outlines how to involve families in the process of evaluating quality of services.	3.5.1 Art. 37.5. Fields of self-evaluation of activities of a school (except higher education institutions), a method of carrying-out of the self-evaluation shall be chosen by the School council. It shall analyse self-evaluation results and take decisions regarding the improvement of activities. 3.5.2 (Law on Education, 2011) During the organisation of external evaluation of school activity, a research of pupils' and parents' opinion towards school activity is being carried out. External evaluators have meetings with parents during the external school evaluation. The head of school initiates the presentation of the conclusions of the external evaluation for parents. 3.5.3 The Procedure of the external evaluation of the quality of general education schools, 2009

Agency recommendation	Findings
	www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=340885&p_query=&p_tr2=2
3.6 Policy describes mechanisms to evaluate demand for services.	–
3.7 Policy supports opportunities for school teams to evaluate their practice through involvement in research and development activities.	–

Measure 3 evaluative comments

–

Measure 4: To improve the cost-effectiveness of the education system, combining efficiency, effectiveness, equity and inclusion

Agency recommendation	Findings
4.1 National level inclusive education strategies are linked to long-term financial support.	4.1.1 Pupil basket funds are allocated to municipalities by the central government as targeted grants. Each year, the Parliament establishes basic allocations for pupil education per capita, and the total amount of pupil baskets in the school budget depends on the number of pupils in the school. The pupil basket funds are used to implement the education plan approved by the Minister of Education and Science, i.e. teaching and administrative staff, social pedagogue and librarian, teacher in-service training, textbooks and other teaching aids. (OoP, p. 5)
4.2 Funding policies and structures provide flexible resourcing systems that	4.2.1 The state (central government) budget finances vocational schools and advanced vocational schools, with the budget of each individual institution administered by its head, who is answerable to

Agency recommendation	Findings
promote inclusion.	the central authorities. Higher education institutions, although financed from the state budget, enjoy considerable autonomy in relation to their courses and activity, and their resources are managed in accordance with their statutes. (OoP, p. 6)
	4.2.2 Annually, at the beginning of the school year, each school informs its funder (municipality or other) about the number of pupils with SEN. The funder informs the Centre of Information Technologies of Education (under the Ministry of Education), which is responsible for compiling a database of all students. Every school funder (e.g.: municipality) also uses the recommendations for calculating students' backpack funding and recommendations for calculating students' backpack funding for learners with SEN attending mainstream settings. Therefore, the funder divides finances among its schools accordingly. Non-teaching staff, operational resources and capital assets (movable and fixed) remain within municipal/local education budgets. (OoP example, p. 5)
4.3 There are long-term funding commitments to support collaborative initiatives between various school-based, resource centre and research teams.	–
4.4 Policy outlines mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure and implementation that informs cost-effectiveness issues.	4.4.1 The Centre of Information Technologies in Education collects, stores and structures information on the Lithuanian education and science system, and analyses the data on education; implements, develops and manages the educational databases, registries and information systems, and coordinates their usage.

Measure 4 evaluative comments

–

Measure 5: To increase participation in good quality inclusive early childhood education and care and enrolment rates in pre-school education

Agency recommendation	Findings
5.1 Policy clearly respects the rights and the needs of children and their families.	5.1.1. Article 34. At the request of the parents or guardians of a learner with special needs, conditions shall be created for them to study at a pre-school education and general education school located close to their home or at any state, municipal or regional school designated for learners with special educational needs (OoP, p. 3)
5.2 Support is available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child. *(Support focuses upon and what is in the child's best interests.)*	5.2.1 Due to demands of organising principles, description and rendering of service for children with developmental disorders in early rehabilitation, ECI in Lithuania reaches all children and families in need (in a case of bio-psycho-social risk or identified disorder every child should be seen by paediatrician/family doctor/neurologist and sent to ECI within the first twelve months). (ECI, p. 11) 5.2.2 Early rehabilitation centres/services (...) are targeting babies and children at risk (bio-psycho-social); babies and children with developmental disorders. (ECI, p. 4)
5.3 Policy outlines how ECI services should be provided for children and families as early as possible and as quickly as possible, following identification of need.	5.3.1 According to the Governmental Programme for 2008–2012 the official document has been prepared and approved in 2009/10/12 by the Ministry of Education: 'The description of the model Improvement of life and educational conditions of children from birth till starting school', focused on support to children and their families living in socially disadvantaged contexts. (ECI, p. 17)
5.4 Policy states that in risk situations, the child's rights should come first.	5.4.1 The Law on Education and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child define the child's main needs for a healthy, safe life and development, set international obligations of the state as to how the state intends to ensure the child's welfare and right to a happy childhood and life. The political measures are provided for in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2012–2016).
5.5 Policy measures and guidelines clearly define quality standards for early	–

Agency recommendation	Findings
childhood services and provision.	
5.6 Early childhood guidance is developed jointly by departments of health, education and social services.	–
5.7 Policy for early childhood services supports cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary working at regional and local levels.	–
5.8 Policy ensures there are pre-school places offered to children coming from ECI services/provision.	–
5.9 Policy outlines how cost-free services/provision are made available for families.	5.9.1 ECI provision is free of charge (ECI, p. 16)
5.10 Policy ensures the same quality of service irrespective of differences in geographical location. *(Such as isolated or rural areas).*	–

Measure 5 evaluative comments

–

Measure 6: To improve student-focused measures such as mentoring, personalised learning approaches and improved guidance

Agency recommendation	Findings
6.1 High expectations for all learners' achievements underpin policy for inclusive education.	–
6.2 Policy outlines that learners' voices should be listened to in decision-making that affects them.	–
6.3 Teaching, support and guidance has the goal of empowering all learners.	6.3.1 Article 14. of the new law amending the Law on Education (2011) defines special educational needs as a need for assistance and services in the education process that occurs due to being exceptionally gifted, having congenital or acquired disorders, or disadvantages in a person's surroundings. (OoP, p. 8)
6.4 Appropriate educational support is available as necessary and is fit for purpose in meeting personal learning needs.	6.4.1 Article 21. Special pedagogical assistance and special assistance. Special pedagogical assistance for people under 21 years of age shall be provided by special pedagogues from pedagogical-psychological services, according to the procedure established by the Minister of Education and Science. The purpose of special pedagogical assistance and special assistance shall be to increase the effectiveness of learning for individuals with special educational needs (…) Special assistance in schools shall be provided to individuals in need of such assistance. They shall be provided with services which increase education accessibility, including translating verbal language into sign language, text reading and summarising. The procedure for providing special assistance in schools (except higher education institutions) shall be laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. Special assistance in higher education institutions shall be provided in accordance with the procedure laid down by the higher education institution. (OoP, p. 3)

6.4.2 Following a decree from the Minister of Education and Science, a child welfare commission has |

Agency recommendation	Findings
	been established in every school. One of the functions of the Commission is to adapt educational programmes for learners with SEN. (VET, p. 13) 6.4.3 Practical VET Resources Development Programme (*Praktinio profesinio mokymo ištekliu pletros programa*, 2007) is targeted at enhancing accessibility, flexibility and attractiveness of VET. (VET example, p. 6)
6.5 The learning process is based on flexible curricula based on learner centred approaches and the development and implementation of individual learning plans as necessary.	6.5.1 The Law on Education (2011) states: when necessary, general education curricula and vocational training programmes shall be adapted to learners with special educational needs. Learners with special educational needs may complete formal education programmes within a period of time shorter or longer than the period of time set for such programmes; they may study at intervals and complete said programmes by way of separate modules. Learners with major and severe special educational needs may study in general education schools or classes designated for learners with special educational needs until 21 years of age. (OoP, p. 13) 6.5.2 During the 2012–2014 period, the SPPC is implementing the second stage of the 'Special Teaching Tool Creation' project. This aims to create preconditions for in-service training in STT, training that is adapted for evaluators of textbooks for students with special needs and training for education support specialists and teachers working with such students. It ensures that education for students with special needs is organised in accordance with their needs. (ICT4I example, p. 7)

Measure 6 evaluative comments

_

Measure 7: To improve the school ethos (such as the creation of supportive learning environments, adapting learning environments to specific learning needs)

Agency recommendation	Findings
7.1 Policy supports school leaders to value diversity among staff as well as learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation.	7.1.1 Concerning continuous professional development and In-Service teacher training, according to requirements by Ministry of Education and Science, in 2007, all teachers seeking higher professional qualifications ought to have 60-hour courses in special needs education and psychology. This training was also recommended for school managers (TE4I example, p. 7)
	7.1.2 During the model implementation phase of the 'Improvement of Primary and Special Education Teachers' Competences in Using ICT and Innovative Methods of Teaching and Learning' project, a virtual learning environment was created. The environment includes: a school collaboration environment; digital learning objects; distance in-service teacher training courses; digital literacy course for educators (educational part). During project implementation, 60 in-service teacher training workshops for special needs educators were organised. They were attended by 300 educators (ICT4I example, p. 5)
7.2 Policy outlines the responsibility of school leaders to effectively communicate their vision for inclusive education to the school teaching team and wider school community.	7.2.1 Art. 59.5. The head of an educational institution shall be responsible for the democratic management of the educational institution; ensure relations based on co-operation, the observance of the norms of teacher's ethics, transparency in decision-making, the provision of information to community members, in-service training for the teaching and non-teaching staff, a sound and safe environment that prevents any manifestation of violence or intimidation, as well as the formation of hazardous habits.
7.3 Policy aims to ensure the recruitment of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.	–

Agency recommendation	Findings
7.4 Policy supports schools to ensure teaching staff are able to meet diverse learning needs. *(Teaching staff have competence and expertise to develop individual plans, implement learner-centred approaches and support learners in personalised learning.)*	7.4.1 Art. 21. Special pedagogues from pedagogical-psychological services shall provide consultancy to the recipients of special assistance and their parents or guardians, as well as to teachers. (OoP, p. 3) 7.4.2 Art. 14.5. When necessary, general education curricula, vocational training programmes shall be adapted to learners with special educational needs in accordance with the procedure specified in paragraph 1 of this Article. 7.4.3. Pursuant to the Law on Education, students, their parents/foster parents/guardians, teachers and education providers can be offered education assistance which aims at increased effectiveness of education. The Law on Education ensures psychological assistance; social pedagogical assistance; special pedagogical and special assistance; assistance to the school and the teacher.
7.5 The school ethos and culture is guided by school strategic plans that have high expectations for the academic and social achievements of all learners.	–
7.6 School strategic plans describe how universal design for learning approaches are used to provide individualised learning tools and opportunities.	–
7.7 School strategic plans stipulate that all learners are entitled to be active participants in the life of the school and community.	–
7.8 School strategic plans have clear	–

Agency recommendation	Findings
statements on the value of diversity.	
7.9 School strategic plans describe mechanisms for shared leadership, teamwork and collaborative problem solving.	–

Measure 7 evaluative comments

–

Measure 8: To reduce the negative effects of early tracking (the early streaming of pupils by ability into different types of provision or schools) and to reduce the extensive use of grade retention[1]

Agency recommendation	Findings
8.1 Legislation across relevant public sectors has the goal of ensuring educational services enhance developments and processes working towards equity in inclusive education.	8.1.1 The National Education Strategy 2003–2012 clearly states that it is a priority to create opportunities for efficient education of children with different abilities and needs and learning and studying conditions for children of ethnic minorities shall be ensured; opportunities to learn and acquire education shall be created for children of migrant families; the system of support for children and youth of exceptional abilities shall be developed and expanded. (TE4I, p. 4)
	8.1.2 Important national strategic documents include the Strategies for Application of ICT in Secondary and Vocational Education and Training for 2008–2012, approved by the Minister of Education and

---

[1] Early tracking means the early streaming of pupils by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools.

The extensive use of grade retention means holding students back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible individual support.

Agency recommendation	Findings
	Science in 2008. The strategies claim that special attention should be paid to preparation and implementation, as well as to updating electronic teaching material, constantly improving its quality, visibility and accessibility. (ICT4I, p.2)
	8.1.3 During the model implementation phase of the 'Improvement of Primary and Special Education Teachers' Competences in Using ICT and Innovative Methods of Teaching and Learning' project, a virtual learning environment was created. (ICT4I example, p. 5)
	8.1.4 Every year, the institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania arrange training in technological and professional computer literacy for teachers. (ICT4I example, p. 2)
	8.1.5 Approval of the Action Plan that provides for better accessibility of inclusive education, provision of quality education assistance to children with special needs and their families, greater inclusion of drop-outs or early school leavers, development of the usage of sign language, etc.
	8.1.6 The third goal of the National Strategy on Education for the years 2013–2022 targets:
	ensuring access to education and equal opportunities; maximising the development of children and youth in education enrolment; providing pupils, students and young people in the most favourable opportunities to develop individual capacity, meeting the special educational and learning needs, and providing effective pedagogical and psychological assistance to students with learning difficulties.
8.2 Policy outlines how support structures that impact upon inclusive education are diverse and easily available. *(Support structures prevent early tracking and streaming of pupils at an early age).*	8.2.1 There are consultancy divisions at three national centres (the funder is the Ministry of Education and Science): the Lithuanian Training Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Lithuanian Educational Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Lithuanian Centre for Pre-School Age Hearing Impaired Children. Families and teachers from mainstream institutions can apply for consultancy services. (OoP, p. 13)
8.3 Assessment mechanisms are in place	8.3.1 Pedagogical Psychological Services in close co-operation with other services (...) children 2–18

Agency recommendation	Findings
to identify the support needs of learners at an early stage.	years of age at risk, with developmental problems/special needs/special educational needs (ECI, p. 8)

8.3.2 Art. 14.3. Primary evaluation of learners' special educational needs shall be executed by a child welfare commission. Special educational needs of a learner (except those occurring because of exceptional talents) shall be evaluated by a pedagogical psychological service from pedagogical, psychological, medicinal and socio-pedagogical aspects; special education shall be assigned by the head of a pedagogical psychological service and in certain cases – by the school principal with the consent of the parents (guardians, curators) in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Minister of Education and Science. |
| 8.4 Data is available relating to learners' rights to age appropriate education. | – |

Measure 8 evaluative comments

–

Measure 9: To support improvement in schools with lower educational outcomes

Agency recommendation	Findings
9.1 Clear mechanisms exist to identify schools with lower educational outcomes.[2]	9.1.1 Art. 37.4 In order to improve education quality an education monitoring, research, self-evaluation and external evaluation of activities of schools, performance review of school principals and teachers, evaluation of learning achievements shall be carried out.

---

[2] This recommendation does not directly come from the Agency work covered in the CPRA activities. A number of project recommendations have implicitly, but not explicitly referred to this issue. However, the piloting work and detailed discussions with PG countries showed it is necessary to have this explicit recommendation linked to this measure.

Agency recommendation	Findings
	These tools help to identify schools with lower educational outcomes, to identify their problems and to find the ways for improving their educational processes.
9.2 Policy outlines how methods of assessment, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to school improvement processes. *(Accountability measures support inclusive practice and inform further improvement of provision for all learners.)*	9.2.1 Art. 38.1 The purpose of evaluation of learning achievements shall be to help learners check their learning progress, determine their achievements and, upon comparison with achievement levels set out in general programmes or/and vocational or vocational training standards – make decisions concerning further study or occupation. 9.2.2 Art. 38.4 Institutions authorised by the Minister of Education and Science and municipal executive institutions shall organize testing of learning according to general education curricula (Matura examinations, other examinations, credits and other ways of testing learning achievements) in compliance with learning achievements testing programmes approved by the Minister of Education and Science and descriptions of the procedure for organising and implementing the testing of learning achievements, studies of learners' achievements.
9.3 Policy aims to increase the capacity of all schools to meet a greater diversity of needs and support learners within their local communities. *(Schools are supported to use innovative teaching methods, practical learning approaches and individual plans, focusing on learners' capabilities.)*	9.3.1 The procedure for providing special pedagogical assistance, enacted by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 8 July 2011, provides an expansion of special pedagogical assistance. The municipal administration department of education and/or the pedagogical-psychological service will provide assistance for all types of schools. (OoP, p. 9) 9.3.2 In recent years, the 'Development of the key competencies of the students of the first concentric circle (grades 5–8) of basic education' project has created different e-learning (…) Most digital educational resources are available on the Education portal who has an internet connection. Under the 'Work environment modernisation of the pedagogical-psychological services infrastructure for special education teachers, social educators, psychologists and speech therapists' project, the following were bought for its partners: hardware: laptops, computers, touchscreen computers; printers, multimedia equipment, compensatory keyboards with software; CDs, TV sets with DVD players, voice recorders, video cameras, suspended screens; furniture. (ICT4I example, p. 5)

Agency recommendation	Findings
	9.3.3 One of the essential impacts on teacher education for inclusion was in 2000–2004, when the North and Baltic countries project 'School for All' was carried out. One of the project themes was 'Teacher Training to Educate Special Needs Children in Mainstream Classes'. The student teachers were aware of the main ideas of School for All and had the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from foreign universities preparing the 'Guidelines for Teacher Training to Educate Special Needs Children in Mainstream Classes' (2003) as the result of the project. (TE4I example, p. 5)
9.4 Policy outlines clear incentives for schools to take all learners from their local community.	9.4.1 During the professional rehabilitation process, students may receive a scholarship depending on their results. Students from disadvantaged families receive social subsidies; free meals, transport exemptions. In other cases (disease, childbirth, health insurance), subsidies are paid according to the legislation of Lithuania Republic, as for any other citizen of Lithuania (VET, p. 13)
	9.4.2 During the 2008–2010 period, the SPPC implemented a project entitled 'Special Teaching Tool Creation'. The main activities were focussed on STT development: for students educated through the adapted general basic education curriculum; for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities. (ICT example, p. 6)
9.5 Policy requires school strategic plans to outline preventive educational action against dropouts. *(Including necessary measures so that learners who become disengaged find new educational alternatives.)*	9.5.1 Education youth schools (*jaunimo mokykla*) specialised lower secondary school providing general lower secondary education together with pre-vocational training. Youth School Conception (*Jaunimo mokyklos koncepcija*, 2005) establishes that the goal of these schools is to assist children and youngsters to return to the mainstream education system. The focus group are young people (from 12 to 17 years old) who prefer practical activities, have learning difficulties, lack motivation and need assistance on socialisation skills. (VET, p. 4)
	9.5.2 Art. 54.4 A school shall prepare a strategic plan. The school principal shall approve a strategic plan with the consent of the school council, the institution exercising the rights and duties of the owner of the school, the municipal executive institution or a person authorised by it, the institution exercising the rights and duties of the owner and the owner. (Law on Education, 2011)

Agency recommendation	Findings
	9.5.3 In accordance with the *Model of provision of pedagogical and psychological assistance* (being updated now), pedagogical psychological assistance is provided to a student not attending school in the environment that is closest to the child's home, i.e. at school. Most schools have specialists in social pedagogy who deal with the issue of absence from school. Schools cooperate closely with inspectors for juvenile affairs from the territorial unit and the staff of municipal children's rights protection units.
	9.5.4 The National Centre for Special Needs Education and Psychology together with six partners implements the project 'Creation of a Safe Environment at School'. In 2012, the project was supplemented with a new action, i.e. the update of software for the information system of children who do not attend school, which is implemented in cooperation with the Centre of Information Technologies in Education.

Measure 9 evaluative comments

–

Measure 10: To improve the quality of school staff, focusing on the quality of teachers, quality in continuing professional development, developing teacher competences and reinforcing school leadership

Agency recommendation	Findings
10.1 Policy outlines how all school staff develops the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners. *(Appropriate training and professional development is provided to all school staff*	10.1.1 Since 1995, according to requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Science, all students training to become primary or subject teachers must complete 2 to 4 credits in special needs education (…) In relation to in-service teacher training, all teachers have the opportunity to attend courses offered by regional teacher education centres, teacher professional development centres or higher institutions in order to enhance their knowledge or acquire a specialisation in special education.

Agency recommendation	Findings
including teachers, support and administrative staff, counsellors, etc.).	(OoP, p. 15) 10.1.2 In the same document new developments in the training and work of teachers are defined: - efficiency of teacher training and qualification upgrading systems shall be assessed and international expertise of the study programmes shall be carried out continuously; - an integral teacher training and qualification upgrading system shall be developed; it should be oriented towards the changing role of a teacher in a knowledge society, and the new competences and values that are necessary for a contemporary teacher; - teacher training standards and requirements for study plans shall be developed. Common teacher training study and qualification upgraded modules, as well as a common accreditation and qualification recognition system shall be introduced. (TE4I, p. 5) 10.1.3 The development of staff responsible for teaching subject based modules/courses related to inclusive and/or special needs education, equality and diversity is more individual and based on personal aims, responsibilities and research interests. Collaboration with staff concerned with specialist content relating to inclusive and/or special needs education, equality and diversity is more informal than formal, based on informal individual contacts. (TE4I, p. 5) 10.1.4 From 1995, according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science every student who attempts to become a primary grade or subject teacher ought to study a compulsory course in special needs education. (TE4I, p. 6) 10.1.5 Vocational teacher training is organised on the basis of a consecutive model, where a vocational qualification is studied first, followed by education studies. Teachers who are without a pedagogical qualification, irrespective of their educational attainment level, are offered a 120-hour course on the principles of pedagogy and psychology. These courses can be organised by different institutions and companies that are entitled to provide them. In addition, universities provide programmes for pedagogical vocational teachers' education (special professional studies, master programme, etc.).

Agency recommendation	Findings
	Legal acts stipulate that each teacher must upgrade his/her qualification and is entitled to five days of continuing training per year. Vocational teachers' continuing training is implemented according to non-formal education programmes. There are many training projects for VET teachers in various fields (technological competences, key competences, etc.). (VET, p. 13)

10.1.6 During the 2012–2014 period, the SPPC is implementing the second stage of the 'Special Teaching Tool Creation' project. This aims to create preconditions for in-service training in STT, training that is adapted for evaluators of textbooks for students with special needs and training for education support specialists and teachers working with such students. It ensures that education for students with special needs is organised in accordance with their needs. (ICT4I example, p. 7) |
| 10.2 Policy supports the development of high quality and appropriately trained teacher educators.

(With improvements in recruitment, induction and continuing professional development.) | 10.2.1 In 2008, the Centre of Teacher Competences carried out the project 'Development of Teacher Training'. During this project, guidelines were created for the organisation of pedagogical traineeship and the methodology and programme for mentors and tutors training through which 166 mentors, 237 tutors were prepared. (TE4I example, p. 12) |
| 10.3 Policy supports flexible training opportunities in initial and continuing professional development, for all teachers.

(Schools and teacher education institutions will work together to ensure good models in practice schools and appropriate placements for teaching practice.) | 10.3.1 The main tasks for teachers' professional development in the National Strategy on Education for the years 2013–2022:

To develop high quality education and training fields of study, which will provide graduates to a wide range of cultural horizons and an opportunity to teach several subjects or perform a number of teaching roles;

to enhance motivation by providing opportunities for teachers constantly improve their qualifications expanding cultural horizons, increasing knowledge of modern technologies, with a focus on creativity, citizenship, leadership, entrepreneurship education and discovering more varied range of educational functions. Enable long working active teachers to develop a higher education qualification. To |

Agency recommendation	Findings
	encourage scientists to become involved in the general education and provide the latest news.
10.4 All teaching staff are supported and develop a clear understanding of effective learning strategies. *(Such as learning to learn and active learning approaches.)*	–
10.5 Policy supports schools to develop strategic plans of staff training in inclusive education.	10.5.1 Under the state planning project 'Assistance to pupil efficiency and quality development' [*Pagalbos mokiniui efektyvumo ir kokybės plėtra*], financed by the European Social Fund and supported by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, crisis management teams from all general educational institutions underwent training in crisis management principles and strategies. The training aimed to ensure a safe learning environment. (OoP example, p. 14)
10.6 Policy outlines the specialised training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education.	10.6.1 The in-service teacher training system is undergoing further development so that teachers can access a bigger variety of programmes regarding inclusive education. Each year, some financing from the Ministry programmes for in-service and initial teacher training programmes is allocated to special needs education. (OoP, p. 15) 10.6.2 Various in-service teacher training programmes were introduced for teachers who work with students with SEN in inclusive settings. The programme for the education of gifted and talented children, approved by the Minister of Education and Science in 2009, offers special provisions for the education of gifted children (ICT4I example, p. 4) 10.6.3 Training sessions for STT experts/consultants are organised. In-service training in STT usage for education support specialists is provided. (ICT4I example, p. 2) 10.6.4 Consultants on inclusive education who were involved in the Nordic and Baltic project 'A School for All' are disseminating their knowledge and experience. (OoP example, p. 13)

Agency recommendation	Findings
10.7 Policy supports research into the effectiveness of different routes into teaching. *(Including course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.)*	–

Measure 10 evaluative comments

–

Measure 11: To improve transition from education to work by increasing the coherence between employment incentives, education and VET; improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships; promoting cross-sector co-operation; simplifying the systems of qualifications

Agency recommendation	Findings
11.1 Policy ensures that VET programmes should address labour market skill requirements.	11.1.1 Qualifications are usually designed through developing VET standards, which are adopted at the national level and the purpose of which is ensuring comparability and transparency of qualifications awarded and to match them with the needs of the economy (competence-based). - VET curricula are partly developed by the VET providers and then transferred as standards. - The vocational teachers' technological competences are updated taking into account emerging labour market requirements and changing technologies. - Sectoral studies and newly developed methodology for early identification of future skill needs (VET, p. 8)

Agency recommendation	Findings
	11.1.2 VET curricula are based on VET standards established in cooperation with employers. When developing programmes, the demand for trained specialists is assessed and various research and analyses are taken into account. (VET example, p. 10) 11.1.3 2005–2008 national ESF project 'Development of the System of VET Standards' (Nacionalines profesinio rengimo standartu sistemos pletra) resulted in the development of 100 VET standards, which are the basis for curriculum development. Sectoral studies are carried out seeking to examine a certain economic sector with a view to assessing the prospects of its development and the impact on the number of employees and training needs. The project also resulted in a methodology for identification of future skill needs (VET example, p. 6)
11.2 Policy aims at matching labour market skill requirements and learners' skills, wishes and expectations.	11.2.1 The National Strategy on Education for the years 2013–2022: • to enable individuals to self-manage a career, providing individualised support in the various forms of real and virtual environments, developing the necessary skills and opportunities for developing of key competencies in shaping choice awareness of the way of life (career) and education continuity. Initiate and support the promotion of high quality study programmes, professions.
11.3 Policy outlines the development of partnerships and networking structures. *(Partnerships with a pool of local employers to ensure close co-operation with regard to learners' supervised practical training and finding employment after graduation.)*	11.3.1 Social partners take part in organising and carrying out the assessment of competences acquired by students. Social partners also participate in establishing the content of new qualifications, standards and VET curricula and assessing how VET programmes correspond to the needs of the economy. They also play a role in organising students' practical training. (VET example, p. 12)

Agency recommendation	Findings
11.4 Policy outlines how transition from education to employment is supported by adequate provision.	11.4.1 The National Programme for Vocational Guidance within Education System (*Nacionaline profesinio orientavimo švietimo sistemoje programa*, 2007) aims to ensure integrity and consistency of transition from general education to VET or higher education, variety, quality and accessibility of counselling and guidance services, development of necessary vocational guidance resources and involvement of social partners. (VET p. 6) 11.4.2 Practical VET Resources Development Programme (*Praktinio profesinio mokymo išteklių plėtros programa, 2007*) is targeted at enhancing accessibility, flexibility and attractiveness of VET, facilitating in-service training for VET teachers (VET example, p. 6)
11.5 Policy supports the availability of meaningful VET options for learners to choose from.	11.5.1 People with special educational needs may select from the following options: - Mainstream educational/VET settings, where learners with SEN are included in mainstream VET courses, Special VET units attended by learners with SEN within mainstream educational/VET settings; - Special educational programmes addressed to learners with SEN. In the Lithuanian Register of Study and Training Programmes, 6 types of formal special education programmes are registered (…) Learners with SEN (aged 12 to 17) may also enter youth schools (*jaunimo mokykla*), i.e. specialised lower secondary schools providing general lower secondary education together with pre-vocational training. (VET, p. 10) 11.5.2 There are currently 73 IVET providers; CVET programmes may be provided by IVET providers, 9 labour market training centres and private enterprises, etc. The Ministry of Education and Science has reported that in 2011–2012 special education IVET programmes for SEN learners were implemented in 13 VET providers. 3 IVET providers have special training for SEN learners (*Radviliškio technologiju ir verslo mokymo centras, Kauno socialiniu paslaugu ir statybos verslo darbuotoju profesinio rengimo centras* and *Šilutes žemes ukio mokykla*). VET for SEN learners may be also provided in the Lithuanian training centre for the blind and visually impaired, the Vilnius technology and rehabilitation centre and

Agency recommendation	Findings
	special professional rehabilitation centres. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange monitors professional rehabilitation services for disabled persons who have registered with the labour exchange. (VET, p. 10)
11.6 Policy supports the availability of supervised practical training.	–
11.7 Policy outlines how sustainable employment opportunities are supported through the availability of appropriate, on-going support.	–
11.8 Policy outlines how VET programmes are reviewed periodically. *(Both internally and/or externally in order to adapt to current and future skill needs.)*	11.8.1 Sectoral studies are carried out to evaluate the need for training and, partly, skills for the next five years. Sectoral studies provide specific sector-oriented recommendations, which address issues of training policy, vocational guidance and counselling, and VET curriculum. (VET example, p. 8)

Measure 11 evaluative comments

–

Measure 12: To improve educational and career guidance across all phases of inclusive education

Agency recommendation	Findings
12.1 Policy outlines the mechanisms for ensuring effective transition across educational sectors and phases. *(There are well-organised transition processes among services to ensure continuity in the support required when learners move from one form of provision to another.)*	12.1.1 The National Programme for Vocational Guidance within Education System (*Nacionaline profesinio orientavimo švietimo sistemoje programa*, 2007) aims to ensure integrity and consistency of transition from general education to VET or higher education, variety, quality and accessibility of counselling and guidance services, development of necessary vocational guidance resources and involvement of social partners. (VET p. 7)
12.2 Policy outlines how career counsellors/officers support learners and employers regarding employment possibilities. *(Support is provided with job applications, inform and support employers and facilitate contact between both parties.)*	–

Measure 12 evaluative comments

–