Mid-Term Evaluation of the 2021-2027 Programme of the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy Forming Part of the Integrated Border Management Fund

Final report

For the Ministry of the Interior

Vilnius, 2024

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List of Abbreviations

BMVI Action Plan	BMVI Programme Action Plan, confirmed by the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. 1V-1145 of 6 November 2020 (wording of Order No. 1V-770 of 28 November 2023)
BMVI	Border Management and Visa Instrument (referring to the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy Forming Part of the Integrated Border Management Fund)
BMVI Programme	2021-2027 Programme of the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy Forming Part of the Integrated Border Management Fund
CPMA	Central Project Management Agency (*lt. Centrinė projektų valdymo agentūra, CPVA*)
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
EC	European Commission
EES	Entry/Exit System
ETIAS	European Travel Information and Authorisation Systems
EU	European Union
IDPC	Identity Documents Personalisation Centre under the MoI (*lt. Asmens duomenų išrašymo centras prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos*)
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ITCD	Information Technology and Communications Department under the MoI (*lt. Informatikos ir ryšių departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos*)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania (*lt. Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija, URM*)
MoF	Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania (*lt. Lietuvos Respublikos finansų ministerija, FM*)
MoI	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (*lt. Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerija, VRM*)
N.VIS	National Visa Information System
NCC	National Coordination Centre
NPP	National Progress Plan 2021-2030
PD	Police Department under the MoI (*lt. Policijos departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos, PD*)
Programme	2021-2027 Programme of the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy Forming Part of the Integrated Border Management Fund
PSS	Public Security Service under the MoI (*lt. Viešojo saugumo tarnyba prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos, VST*)
SBGS	State Border Guard Service under the MoI (*lt. Valstybės sienos apsaugos tarnyba prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos, VSAT*)
SIRENE	Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries
SIS	Schengen Information System
SO	Specific objective
STS	Special Transit Scheme
VSFSVVP IS	Electronic data exchange system of the Programme

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Summary

The primary objective of the mid-term evaluation of the BMVI Programme is to assess the intervention logic of the Programme, considering the evaluation criteria and at the level of the specific objective (hereinafter – SO) of the Programme, assessing the current situation, possible gaps and changed needs. The evaluation covers the entire BMVI Programme, including the specific actions and technical assistance. The conclusions and recommendations drawn from the evaluation are based on critically evaluated evidence. The evaluation criteria include RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY, COHERENCE, and EU-ADDED VALUE. The evaluation's foreseen tasks encompass assessing the progress made towards achieving the Programme within allocated resources, compatibility with other funding sources and programmes, recognising factors that influence goal achievement, proposal of new/additional measures and Programme adjustments, accordingly, providing insightful recommendations. Programme management procedures are also under evaluation regarding the impact of the requirements of the national internal security strategy to enhance its capabilities of external border control, integrated communication systems, better risk assessment and strengthening the skills and capacity of border guards. Following up on the strategy, the BMVI Programme places a significant emphasis on investments for further developing the national components of EUROSUR, actions improving the reaction capability of patrol units, Investment in technical and operational tools for border control, Interoperability package and development of large-scale IT systems, border management training and common visa policy. By leveraging previous achievements, the program is strategically aligned with the goals outlined in the EU Security Strategy, thereby actively contributing to the overarching objectives of bolstering internal and external security.

The evaluation covers the timeline of 2021–2023, noting a delayed start in project implementation due to planning delays by the European Commission (hereinafter – EC). Based on COM Decision (2023) No. 8651 on 5 December 2023, the BMVI programme has a total budget of EUR 351.73 MILLION, primarily sourced from EU funds (EUR 330.79 MILLION) and co-funded from the national budget (EUR 20.94 MILLION). The total funds allotted to the Special Transit Scheme (hereinafter – STS) are EUR 211,856,603.77, excluding technical assistance. Notably, 9 calls for 50 projects (63.29% of all planned projects) commenced punctually per the stipulated timeline outlined in the Action implementation plan of the Programme. In the future, the calls for the remaining 23 projects (or 36.71%) are scheduled for the subsequent implementation phases within the designated timeframe of the Programme. In terms of implementation progress, 35 projects are underway, with 10 awaiting payment approval and 5 still ongoing despite early start dates. Planned project payments amount to EUR 96.68 MILLION. Payment applications submitted amount to EUR 86.63 MILLION, with EUR 6.37 MILLION and EUR 3.59 MILLION requested.

THE PROGRAMME'S RELEVANCE AND ADAPTABILITY TO CHANGING NEEDS AND CURRENT SITUATION. The BMVI Programme aligns with stakeholders' legal responsibilities and addresses their needs. Legal obligations are confirmed through a comprehensive analysis of national legislation, and stakeholder needs are evaluated based on detailed written submissions and interviews, showing a significant majority (63%) of satisfaction with the current situation. The Monitoring Committee has demonstrated flexibility by making necessary adjustments to ensure appropriate resource allocation. The Programme's list of measures is designed to meet current and future stakeholder needs by translating them into actionable milestones. The BMVI is regularly updated in response to contextual changes, such as project inclusions and fund redistribution. Notably, all changes to the action plan are assessed by the Monitoring Committee, subject to a reasoned letter from the beneficiary. Proper procedures are followed when implementing changes, and timely input from the Monitoring Committee members allows for flexibility in Programme design. Overall, the BMVI Programme effectively meets stakeholder requirements while fully complying with legal obligations and adapting to changing circumstances.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA. The implementation of the Programme has commenced, with operations selected for support across all relevant objectives and types of intervention, except for intentionally delayed ones. Tender publication remained on schedule according to monitoring data. The BMVI programme funds started to be used on 1st January 2021. This results in 30% of eligible Programme funds being declared. Early progress aligns with expectations, with key activities underway as indicated by monitoring data and interviews. Challenges that hinder implementation are identified and effectively addressed, with all respondents acknowledging their identification and applying suitable measures for remedy. The Programme supports

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interventions proven effective by available evidence, incorporating diverse measures to enhance border control. Good practices are integrated to optimise implementation, supported by interim evaluation of previous period analysis. Moreover, an electronic data exchange system between Programme authorities and beneficiaries (CPR Art. 69(8)) is in place, and functionality has been significantly improved. Nevertheless, as indicated by the interviewees, the system still faces many technical and functional issues that make it hard to work with it, thus resulting in additional manual work, which is time-consuming and comes with an added administrative burden.

Although some issues still affect implementation, the monitoring requirements are well-understood, and the supervising institutions provide relevant and practical training to ensure that project implementers report the progress of the project. Accordingly, the reporting on indicators accurately reflects implementation progress, and program-specific indicators fill any gaps, allowing for a more tailored and comprehensive assessment. The recorded data provides ample evidence for future evaluations. The Monitoring Committee ensures the involvement of all beneficiaries and inclusion of additional institutions. Rules of procedure are established to ensure participation throughout all programming stages. The Programme effectively integrates horizontal principles through established regulations and monitoring mechanisms. Dissemination activities use various channels, although there is potential for improving the promotion of the Programme's activities. The Programme effectively reaches target groups through its funding opportunities. Overall, the Programme confidently demonstrates a proactive approach to challenges, integrating best practices and ensuring comprehensive implementation aligns with objectives and principles. The language is diplomatic and respectful, acknowledging the efforts made while emphasising the Programme's competence and expertise.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO EFFICIENCY CRITERIA. The Programme implements interventions and actions that have proven to be cost-effective. This includes maintaining and enhancing IT systems and improving interfaces with other EU systems for border management. By doing so, Lithuania oversees its national components to ensure these systems' interoperability and communication infrastructure. Moreover, academic research strongly supports investing in education and training for officers. This leads to the development of advanced skills and competencies, resulting in improved communication and problem-solving and a reduction in incidents involving the use of force. Early evidence suggests that the cost per unit for similar operations may vary due to differences in the complexity of project activities. It is worth noting that the preliminary results regarding unit costs align with established benchmarks and estimates. However, they also underscore the variability of the expenses observed among similar operations within the program. Thorough analysis shows that eight projects exceed the weighted average price per unit of the same output indicators among different projects. This is due to necessary equipment, specific vehicles, the number of IT functionalities or the complex nature of projects, which results in higher expenses. The Programme's management and control system functions well. Recent administrative changes, such as the introduction of the Common Provisions Regulation (hereinafter – CPR) and the national Strategic Management Methodology, have increased the workload for both the Managing Authority and some project implementers. However, efforts are being made to raise awareness about simplified cost options, although their utilisation varies. Notably, the options are not always beneficial, as expressed during interviews with project implementers. The technical assistance available is sufficient to strengthen the management and control system, ensuring the program's effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its goals.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO COHERENCE CRITERIA. The BMVI Programme has effectively established the necessary organisational structures and procedures to ensure coordination across its various management modes. Regular consultations occur before meetings of the Monitoring Committee, which facilitates coordination. Furthermore, despite similarities with the ISF Programme, the BMVI Programme successfully mitigates potential overlap in intervention areas and target groups by sharing the same managing authority, intermediate body, and Monitoring Committee. The cooperation between agencies is evident, with consultations and coordination taking place before Monitoring Committee meetings, along with regular communication to address questions or concerns. The initiative is in line with both EU and national policy agendas, such as the EU Security Union Strategy, Lithuania's 2021–2030 National Progress Programme, National Security Strategy, and the Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme. The Programme has coordination and overlap prevention mechanisms in place to ensure efficient implementation and alignment with strategic goals. Additionally, it indirectly supports and complements EU external action and Horizon Europe, contributing to broader strategic objectives in security and international cooperation. Notably, the Lithuanian Science Council has been included in the Committee, which

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administrates the investments in the security field through the Horizon programme, ensuring the potential for overlap is mitigated.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO UNION ADDED VALUE. The Programme focuses on areas, interventions, and target groups where the European Union's (hereinafter – EU) collective achievements surpass what individual Member States can accomplish independently. It is evident that the scale and breadth of activities funded by the BMVI would only be partially achievable due to the limited availability of national funding in Lithuania. The limitation significantly impacts activities related to SBGS border management, the management and interoperability of large-scale IT systems, and the training of consular staff. It is important to note that there is no evidence to suggest a systematic lack of investment from national resources or for relevant services solely reliant on EU funds, except for the STS referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1148, which is 100% funded by the EU funds. The Program's strategic allocation of resources ensures efficient achievement of EU-wide objectives by leveraging collective efforts across Member States. This approach also fosters collaboration and synergy among law enforcement institutions, maximising the impact of EU funding on enhancing security and operational capabilities.

LESSONS LEARNED. The Programme evaluation highlights key lessons learned that are integral to its success. Addressing technical challenges within critical IT infrastructure is crucial to maintaining optimal functionality and minimising disruptions. Careful evaluation is necessary to balance regulatory compliance with project efficiency, ensuring that mandates contribute meaningfully without unduly burdening projects. Simplified cost schemes can be considered on a project-by-project basis to provide flexibility in matching project complexities. Effective planning, communication, and coordination are essential for overcoming delays and ensuring smooth implementation. It is crucial to align with EU-level policies while being aware of national funding priorities to maximise the impact of the Programme's activities. Adaptability, efficiency, and strategic alignment are essential in achieving the Programme's objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The provided recommendations are dedicated to ensuring a better Programme implementation process and success in the second part of the programming period. Recommendations encompass various issues indicated in the BMVI Programme evaluation. Implementing stricter requirements for the purchase of IT solutions for Programme management will ensure the acquisition of dependable components, reducing the risk of system failures and administrative burdens. Maintaining solid connections among relevant institutions and continuously cultivating a skilled workforce enables effective communication and collaboration. This is crucial for mitigating issues and risks. The Programme's strategic objectives can be achieved by expediting decision-making, increasing efficiency, and streamlining administration by using clauses that exempt the need for analysing alternatives in project investment plans, as outlined in higher-level legal documents of the EU. This approach minimises unnecessary delays and resource expenditures.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES. Examples of good practices used in the implementation encompass many various measures. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement are crucial for the success of any Programme. Utilising a range of communication channels ensures that stakeholders are directly and actively involved, promoting collaboration and a shared understanding of objectives and responsibilities. Moreover, a joint Monitoring Committee that oversees the BMVI Programme streamlines oversight enhances coordination, and mitigates potential conflicts or overlaps, thus optimising resource allocation and effective management. Involving beneficiaries in the development of the Programme integrates their perspectives and needs into project design and ensures a more effective and efficient Programme implementation process. These strategies facilitate a collaborative environment, streamline decision-making processes, and enhance the Programme's effectiveness and sustainability.

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Introduction

Evaluation is conducted by Smart Continent LT, UAB (hereinafter – Evaluator) as per public procurement contract Nr. 1S-251 regarding the Mid-term Evaluation of the BMVI Programme (hereinafter – Evaluation), which was signed on the 1st of December 2023.

EVALUATION GOAL: The evaluation must assess the intervention logic of the Programme, considering the evaluation criteria (see below), and at the level of the SO of the Programme, assessing the current situation, possible gaps and changed needs. The evaluation must cover the Programme, including the specific actions, thematic facility or other additional resources foreseen in the Programme. The conclusions and recommendations drawn from the evaluation must be based on critically assessed evidence.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:[1]

- Relevance;
- Effectiveness;
- Efficiency;
- Coherence;
- EU added value.

EVALUATION'S TASKS:

- assess the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the Programme within the available resources planned in the Programme, considering the moment of approval of the Programme and the actual start of its implementation;
- assess compatibility with other funding sources and programmes;
- identify the factors influencing the achievement of the objectives and measures set out in the Programme and, where appropriate, propose new/additional measures, make recommendations and/or adjust the Programme accordingly. Recommendations must be clear and realistic, indicating the addressee and the actions to be recommended;
- assess the management procedures for the Programme and its projects, particularly the procedures for monitoring Programme indicators. In assessing the established procedures for the management of the Programme and its projects, account should be taken of the impact of the requirements of national strategic management legislation (e.g., Strategic Management Methodology) on Programme and project management;
- assess other aspects relevant to the management and implementation of the Programme.

THE OBJECT OF THE ANALYSIS: BMVI Programme.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT:

- Summary;
- Introduction;
- Methodology;
- Policy Background;
- Reconstruction and Description of the Intervention Logic;
- State of Play;
- Evaluation Results (results are presented separately according to criteria);
- Conclusions (including lessons learned, recommendations and examples of good practice);

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[1] Evaluation is conducted according to 5 criteria, specified in procurement's technical specification (hereinafter – TS) and guidelines, prepared by EC.

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1. Methodology

This evaluation follows the Technical Specifications that lay down the Evaluation's tasks, criteria, preliminary questions, and aspects.

Evaluation criteria align with those specified by the European Commission's Home Affairs Programmes 2021-2027 Revised Background Note.[2] The evaluation criteria are as follows:

1. **Relevance** – primarily to assess whether the Programme is still "fit for purpose".
2. **Effectiveness** – primarily to assess whether the Programme contributes to achieving the stated objectives (acknowledging the early progress stage). Additionally, the effectiveness of the monitoring framework, application of the partnership principle, horizontal principles and communication measures are analysed.
3. **Efficiency** – primarily focused on the cost-effectiveness of analysed measures. Additionally, the efficiency of the management and control system and the possibility for further simplification are investigated.
4. **Coherence** – primarily focused on internal and external coherence.
5. **EU added value** – focused on identifying changes due to the EU intervention over and above what could reasonably have been expected from national action by the Republic of Lithuania.

Technical specification breaks down these criteria into additional preliminary Evaluation questions and aspects, which narrows down and specifies the scope of this Evaluation. The evaluation matrix method allows these questions and aspects to be operationalised by introducing judgement criteria (hypothesis) and specific descriptors or indicators. The application of methods aims to confirm or refute these hypotheses (see Annex 2).
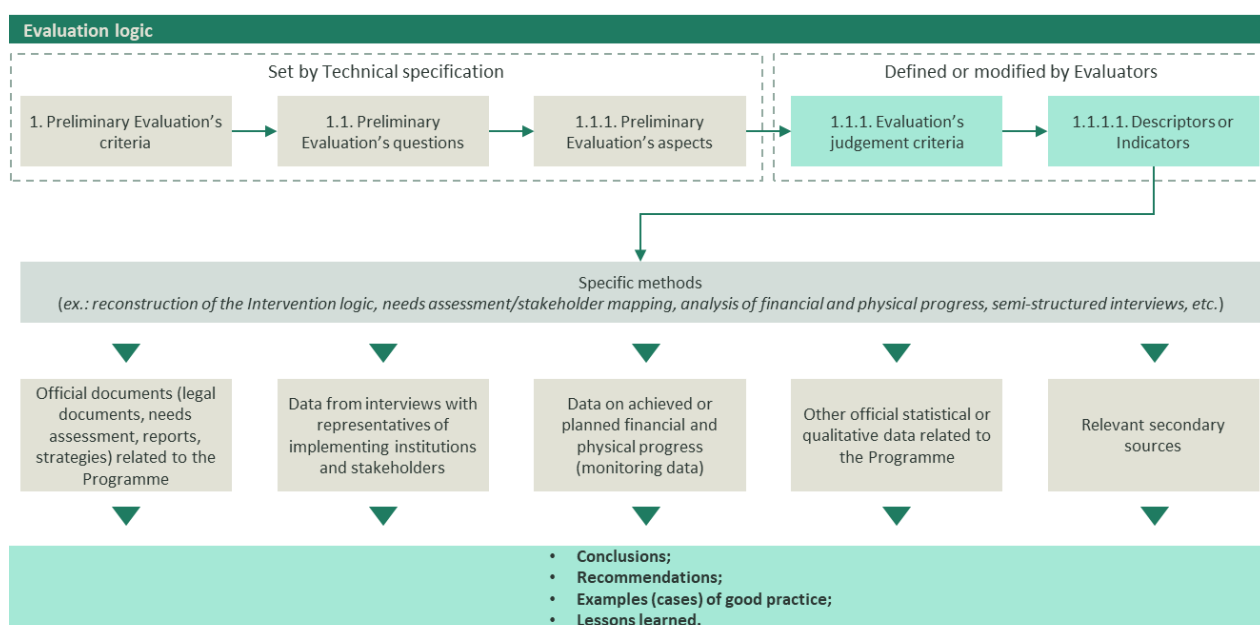
Figure 1. Evaluation's logic
Source: composed by Evaluator

The following methods will be applied:

1. **Reconstruction of the Intervention logic** – since no significant progress is expected to be achieved at the time of mid-term evaluation, this study focuses on the relevance of the initial needs evaluation in the context of changing needs. Reconstruction of the intervention logic thus allows the identification of the existing issues and causal links expected to solve or reduce said issues. The method is heavily based on analysing BMVI official documents, initial needs evaluation, and other primary and secondary sources.

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[2] EC. Webinar of 19 April 2023 on the key elements of the mid-term evaluation and evaluation plans. Home Affairs Programmes 2021-2027. Revised Background Note – May 2023

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2. **Needs evaluation and stakeholder mapping –** to ensure that all relevant stakeholders' needs are correctly understood and reflected, this method is applied to identify relevant stakeholders and sort them according to their interests, influence, needs, etc.
3. **Semi-structured interviews** are conducted with identified stakeholders. The questionnaire is prepared in line with the judgement criteria and indicators (descriptors) specified in the Evaluation matrix. During roughly 45-minute-long remote interviews (the interview duration may vary depending on the stakeholder's level of engagement), representatives of identified stakeholders answer questions. Interviewers and respondents may deviate from the questionnaire if it does not interfere with the quality of answers and produces more relevant data for the evaluation.
4. **Analysis of financial and physical progress** – such analysis is focused on comparing actual progress, both financial and physical, to the planned progress. The cost-per-unit analysis also complements it. It is vital to contextualise any analysis based on data from the monitoring system with data from interviews, the Programme's reports and internal documents, as raw quantitative data might lack context.
5. **Analysis of other relevant primary and secondary sources** – a broad range of primary and secondary sources related to the Programme will be analysed to answer a wide range of Evaluation questions specified in the Evaluation matrix.

Methods		1. Reconstruction of the Intervention logic	2. Needs assessment / stakeholder mapping	3. Semi-structured interviews	4. Analysis of financial and physical progress	5. Primary and secondary sources analysis
Relevance	1.1. To what extent does the programme respond to changing needs / current situation?	✔	✔	✔		✔
	1.2. To what extent can the programme adapt to changing needs / current situation?		✔	✔		✔
Effectiveness	2.1. What is the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the Programme?	✔		✔	✔	✔
	2.2. To what extent is the monitoring and evaluation system adequate to report on progress towards achieving the objectives of the programme?	✔		✔	✔	✔
	2.3. How is the involvement of relevant partners ensured at all stages of programming, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation?		✔	✔		✔
	2.4. To what extent does the implementation of the programme respect or promote the horizontal principles?					✔
	2.5. How effective is the programme in communicating funding opportunities and results?			✔		✔
Efficiency	3.1. To what extent does the programme finance cost-effective measures?	✔		✔	✔	✔
	3.2. How effective is the management and control system?			✔		✔
	3.3. What further/additional simplifications/facilitations are possible?			✔		✔
Coherence	4.1. To what extent is the programme compatible with other initiatives supported under this policy area?	✔		✔		✔
	4.2. To what extent is the programme compatible with other EU funds (including other home affairs funds), and in particular with the EU's external actions?	✔		✔		✔
EU added value	5.1. To what extent does the programme generate EU added value?	✔				✔

Figure 2. Evaluation methods

Source: composed by Evaluator

For a more detailed breakdown of methods, data sources, etc., see the Evaluation Matrix in Annex 1.

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2. Policy background

According to TS, an overview of the relevant policy background is conducted based on official strategies, programmes, and European and Lithuanian national security plans.

The contemporary long-term threats to security and stability in Europe affect Lithuanian national security directly and indirectly.[3] Frozen conflicts, hostile states, hybrid attacks, and the power and security vacuum they create build conditions for uncontrolled migration[4], human trafficking, and humanitarian crises that pose severe challenges to the EU unity. In this context, the Republic of Lithuania, like many other nations in the Euro-Atlantic community, is compelled to adopt a multifaceted and proactive approach. Recognising the intricate challenges posed, Lithuania seeks to prioritise strengthening both its domestic and external resilience. The necessity to maintain domestic security and external state borders was enhanced by the refugee crisis in 2021 organised by the undemocratic Belarusian regime.[5] Since the start of the refugee crisis, more than 21 THOUSAND refugees have been prevented from crossing the Lithuanian border illegally.[6] For many refugees, Lithuania is a transit country to come to Western EU countries and seek asylum there. Although the refugee crisis was contained, the current geopolitical situation and ongoing attempts to illegally cross the Lithuanian state border indicate that the threat of illegal migration remains high.[7] Accordingly, MORE THAN 11,200 ATTEMPTS[8] to enter Lithuania illegally were made in 2022, and 2643 illegal immigrants were pushed back to prevent the crossing of the Lithuanian border in 2023.[9] Moreover, the war in Ukraine is also pushing for the consolidation of Lithuania's border control. Since the start of the war, over 80 THOUSAND Ukrainian refugees have come to Lithuania to seek asylum and safety[10]. Particularly, such increased migration flows demand that Lithuania remains vigilant in managing its borders to prevent unauthorized migration and crime whilst ensuring that those in genuine need of protection receive appropriate assistance.

For the reasons mentioned above, different policies have been implemented to create a unified security framework that addresses emerging threats. The Lithuanian NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY identifies Lithuania's essential national security interests and analyses the principal risk factors and dangers to national security, as well as border security, emanating from these regional issues.[11] The strategy identifies foreign threats and sets out defence policies together with long-term tasks to ensure the state's security and territorial integrity. The Lithuanian government aims to proactively respond to evolving security dynamics and effectively counteract potential threats by undertaking this strategic approach.[12] THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY ALSO SETS OUT OBJECTIVES THAT support effective European integrated border management at the external borders and the common visa policy per Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1148. By doing so, Lithuania seeks to support effective European integrated border management at the external borders, facilitate legitimate border crossings, prevent and detect illegal immigration and cross-border crime and effectively manage migratory flows coming to the EU.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania and Defence Intelligence and Security Service Under the Ministry of National Defence, 2023 National Threat Assessment, 2023, 84-89 p.

[5] Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme, adopted by the Resolution No. XI-2088 on 22 June 2023.

[6] SBGS. Neįleistų neteisėtų migrantų statistika. Available at: https://vsat.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/neileistu-neteisetu-migrantu-statistika/

[7] Areas of management entrusted in the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania Strategic Action Plan 2024-2026, approved by the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania by Order No. 1V-2 of the Republic of Lithuania of 2 January 2024, Chapter II, Section 1, p. 6.

[8] State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania. National Threat Assessment 2023. p. 20. Available at: https://www.vsd.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ENG-2023-Gresmes-ENG-el_-1.pdf

[9] SBGS. Neįleistų neteisėtų migrantų statistika. Available at: https://vsat.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/neileistu-neteisetu-migrantu-statistika/

[10] Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Karo pabėgėliai iš Ukrainos: statistika. Available at: https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/socialine-integracija/lietuva-ukrainai/karo-pabegeliai-is-ukrainos-statistika/

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

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Moreover, by supporting the common visa policy, a harmonised issuance of visas is ensured, and legitimate travel, while helping to prevent migratory and security risks, is facilitated.[13]

Furthermore, the PUBLIC SECURITY STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME has been adopted to implement the objectives in the NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY and Strategic Goal 10 ("Strengthen National Security") objective 10.6, which seeks to "increase the effectiveness of EU external border controls and strengthen the prevention and control of unlawful migration" of the NATIONAL PROGRESS PLAN 2021-2030[14] (hereinafter – NPP). The Programme sets out the priorities and directions for increasing external border control and strengthening illegal migration prevention, as well as the progress measures, the outcome indicators, and the indicative progress funds.

To fulfil Lithuania's NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY objectives, protect both the national and EU borders, and comply with EU security regulations, the INSTRUMENT FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BORDER MANAGEMENT AND VISA POLICY from INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT FUND is implemented in Lithuania.[15] The aim of the BMVI is to develop and implement strong and effective European integrated border management at the external EU borders, ensuring a high level of internal security for the Union. Notably, within the framework of the BMVI in Lithuania, there is a multi-layered approach to enhancing the country's border security and contributing to the integrated management of external borders in Europe. The measures encompass various measures and investments to bolster surveillance, control procedures, and overall efficiency in managing border-related activities (for more details, see Chapter 5.3).

First, the BMVI involves the implementation of advanced border surveillance systems. This includes introducing state-of-the-art technologies along the border with Belarus and upgrading the existing land and sea surveillance systems at the borders with Belarus and Russia. These enhancements are designed to improve the detection and monitoring of border activities, thereby strengthening security measures.[16]

Second, the BMVI financing is directed towards upgrading patrol vehicles, ensuring that border enforcement agencies have the necessary resources for adequate mobility and response. The improvement and modernisation of border control procedures contribute to more efficient processes, enhancing the ability to manage and regulate the flow of people and goods across borders. Moreover, infrastructure programmes, comprising the restoration of the Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier and maintaining the border patrol path, are also an integral part of the initiative's pursuits.[17] These schemes are vital to uphold and augment the fundamental infrastructure for efficient border administration.

Furthermore, the BMVI helps implement the EU's common visa policy. This includes providing efficient and user-friendly services during visa applications, promoting cooperation among member states in visa processing, digitalising visa procedures, and overseeing the operation and upkeep of the National Visa Information System (N.VIS).[18] This, together with other comprehensive actions supported by the BMVI, demonstrates a commitment to strengthening Lithuania's borders, implementing EU visa policy, and contributing to the broader objectives of integrated external border management within the EU.

In conclusion, the Lithuanian NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY provides a guiding framework that identifies vital interests, analyses risks, and outlines defence and domestic policies to guarantee the security and territorial integrity of the country. Implementing the Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme aligns with strategic goals, highlighting the significance of vigorous contingency planning, communication, awareness-raising and investing in innovative technologies. The BMVI enhances border security while promoting integrated

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[13] Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

[14] Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme, adopted by the Resolution No. XI-2088 of 22 June 2023.

[15] Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

[16] My government. Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy from Integrated Border Management Fund (IMBMF). Available at: https://lrv.lt/lt/es-fondu-investicijos-lietuvoje-2021-2027-m/sienu-valdymo-ir-vizu-politikos-finansines-paramos-priemones-itrauktos-i-integruoto-sienu-valdymo-fonda-programa

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

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management of external EU borders. In this way, Lithuania promotes its own security and directs funding towards actions that offer significant Union added value.

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3. Reconstruction and Description of the Intervention Logic

The 2021–2027 Programme of the BMVI, established as a part of the IBMF, was created following the establishment of the BMVI in Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1148. The primary policy objective of the Programme, as well as the BMVI itself, is to ensure strong and effective European integrated border management at the external borders, thereby contributing to ensuring a high level of internal security within the Union while safeguarding the free movement of persons within it and fully respecting the relevant Union *acquis* and the international obligations of the Union and the Member States arising from the international instruments to which they are party.

The Programme is broken down into:

- Special objectives (SO);
- Implementing measures;
- Actions;
- Projects.

SO. The implementation of the overarching policy objective is laid out in the two SOs underlying the Programme:

1. EUROPEAN INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT: the goal is to support effective European integrated border management at the external borders, implemented by the European Border and Coast Guard as a shared responsibility of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the national authorities responsible for border management, to facilitate legitimate border crossings, to prevent and detect illegal immigration and cross-border crime and to manage migratory flows effectively.

2. THE COMMON VISA POLICY: the goal is to support the common visa policy to ensure a harmonised approach regarding the issuance of visas and to facilitate legitimate travel while helping to prevent migratory and security risks.

Following Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1148 pertaining to the support and resources allocated to Lithuania for the **STS**, Lithuania is also to receive support to cover foregone fees from visas issued for the purpose of transit and additional costs incurred in implementing the facilitated transit scheme following Regulations (EC) No. 693/2003 and (EC) No. 694/2003. **The support shall be made available as additional operating support under SO1**.

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The Border Management and Visa Instrument 2021-2027

Needs

To ensure strong and effective European Integrated border management at the external borders, thereby contributing to ensuring a high level of internal security within the Union, while safeguarding the free movement of persons within it and fully respecting the relevant Union acquis and the international obligations of the Union and the Member States arising from the international instruments to which they are party.

The Border Management and Visa Instrument Programme of Lithuania 2021-2027

Special Objectives

SO1: European integrated border management	SO2: The common visa policy

Implementation measures

1.1 The improvement of border control	1.2 Ensuring the uniform application of the Union *acquis* in relation to external borders	1.3 The setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems, including actions related to interoperability of the systems, data quality and the privision of information	2.1. The provision of efficient and client-friendly services to visa applicants while maintaining the security and integrity of visa procedures, and fully respecting human dignity and the integrity of applicants or visa holders	2.2. The setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems, including actions related to interoperability of the systems, data quality and the privision of information

Intervention fields

001. Border checks 003. Border surveillance – land equipment 004. Border surveillance – maritime equipment 005. Border surveillance – automated border surveillance systems 006. Border surveillance – other measures 007. Technical and operational measures within the Scehngen area which are related to border control 008. Situational awareness and exchange of information 010. Processing of data and information 019. Large-scale IT systems – Eurodac for border management purposes 022. Large-scale IT systems – European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) – Article 85(2) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 024. Large-scale IT systems – Schengen Information System (SIS) 025. Large-scale IT systems – Interoperability 027. Operating support – Large-scale IT systems for border management purposes 028. Operating support – Special Transit Scheme	002. Enhancing the efficiency, client-friendly environment and security at consulates 006. Large-scale IT systems – Visa Information System (VIS) 008. Operating support – Common visa policy 009. Operating support – Large-scale IT systems for visa application processing purposes

Actions

9 regular actions	3 specifc actions	4 regular actions
STS-related actions: 5 regular actions; 1 specific action; 1 action for visa fees not received.		

Output indicators

O.1.1 Number of items of equipment purchased for border crossing points (1020) O.1.1. of which number of Automated Border Control gates / self-service systems / e-gates purchased (0) O.1.2 Number of infrastructure maintained / repaired (1) O.1.3 Number of hotspot areas supported (0) O.1.4 Number of facilities for border crossing points constructed / upgraded (0) O.1.5 Number of aerial vehicles purchased (18) O.1.5.1 of which number of unmanned aerial vehicles purchased (18) O.1.6 Number of maritime transport mean purchased (1) O.1.7 Number of land transport means purchased (434) O.1.8 Number of participants supported (1857) O.1.9 Number of joint liaison officers deployed to third countries (1857) O.1.10 Number of IT functionalities developed / maintained / upgraded (51) O.1.11 Number of large-scale IT systems developed / maintained / upgraded (4) O.1.11.1 of which number of large-scale IT systems developed (0) O.1.12 Number of cooperation projects with third countries (0) O.1.13 Number of persons who have applied for international protection at border crossing points (2025)	O.2.1 Number of projects supporting the digitalization of visa processing (1) O.2.2 Number of participants supported (167) O.2.2.1 of which number of participants in training activities (158) O.2.3 Number of staff deployed to consulates in third countries (11) O.2.3.1 of which number of staff deployed for visa processing (8) O.2.4 Number of IT functionalities developed / maintained / upgraded (2) O.2.5 Number of large-scale IT systems developed / maintained / upgraded (1) O.2.5.1 of which number of large-scale IT systems developed (0) O.2.6 Number of infrastructure maintained / repaired (0) O.2.7 Number of real estates rented / depreciated (0)

Result indicators

R.1.14 Number of items of equipment registered in the Technical Equipment Pool of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (0) R.1.15 Number of Item of equipment put at the disposal of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (0) R.1.16 Number of initiated / improved forms of cooperation of national authorities with the Eurosur National Coordination Centre (3; no new authorities, only improved forms of cooperation among 3 authorities) R.1.17 Number of border crossings through Automated Border Control gates and e-gates (0) R.1.18 Number of addressed recommendations from Schengen Evaluations and from vulnerability assessments in the area of border management (100%) R.1.19 Number of participants who reported three months afthern the training activity that they are using the skills and competences acquired during the training (1732) R.1.20 Number of persons refused entry by border authorities (7500)	R.2.8 Number of new / upgraded consulates outside the Schengen area (24) R.2.8.1 of which number of consulates upgraded to enhance client-friendliness for visa applicants (24) R.2.9 Number of addressed recommendations from Schengen Evaluations in the area of the common visa policy (100%) R.2.10 Number of visa applications using digital means (300,000 annual average in 2026-2029) R.2.11 Number of initiated / improved froms of cooperation set up among Member States in visa processing (3) R.2.12 Number of participants who reported three months after the training activity that they are using the skills and competences acquired during the training (154)

Projects

28 projects, covering activities related to: • improving the responsiveness of patrol units; • updating SBGS armouries alarm systems; • strengthening cynological capacity; • reconstruction of Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier; • increasing national capacities to detect document fraud; • strengthening the criminal intelligence capacity of SBGS; • training; • operation and technical maintenance of integrated border management systems. **8 projects,** covering activities related: • installing new border surveillance systems in particular border posts; • purchasing drones, vehicles, mobile headquarters and other technical tools; • strengthening the Lithuanian SIRENE Bureau's capacity and interoperability of information systems in the police; • improving technical capacities of SBGS to protect the EU's external border.	**3 projects,** covering activities related to: • enhancing N.VIS and other related nacional systems and improving their operation and technical maintenance; • training; • maintenance of consular officers.
36 projects, covering STS activities related to (including operating support and foregone visa fees): • refurbishment of administrative premises of the diplomatic mission to Russian Federation and apartments in Moscow; • purchase of vehicles; • upating STS hardware and software; • training.	
Implemented by: • State Border Guard Service; • The Information Technology and Communications Department under MoI; • Police Department under MoI; • Ministry of Foreign Affairs. • Public Security Service under MoI; • Identity Documents Personalisation Centre under the MoI.	Implemented by: • State Border Guard Service; • The Information Technology and Communications Department under MoI; • Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Technical assistance
Received and used by the MoI (as the Managing authority), CPMA (as the Interim Body) and the Centralized Internal Audit Division of the MoI (as the Audit Authority)

Intervention fields:
001. Information and communication
002. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and control
003. Evaluation and studies, data collection
004. Capacity building

Figure 1. Reconstruction of Intervention Logic of the Programme
Source: prepared by Evaluator

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IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES. Contributions to each SO are made by focusing on the chosen implementation measures listed in Annex II of Regulation No. 2021/1148. Lithuania's BMVI Programme focuses on the following implementation measures laid out in Table 1.

Table 1. Implementation measures for each SO in Lithuania's BMVI Programme

SO1 – European Integrated Border Management	SO2 – The Common Visa Policy
a) the improvement of border control in accordance with point (a) of Article 3(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, ensuring the uniform application of the Union *acquis* in relation to external borders.	a) the provision of efficient and client-friendly services to visa applicants while maintaining the security and integrity of visa procedures and fully respecting the human dignity and the integrity of applicants or the visa holders in accordance with Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008
d) to external borders, including through the implementation of recommendations from quality control mechanisms.	e) the setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems pursuant to Union law in the common policy on visas, particularly the VIS, including the interoperability of those large-scale IT systems and their communication infrastructure, and actions to enhance data quality and the provision of information
e) the setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems pursuant to Union law in border management, in particular SIS, ETIAS, the EES and Eurodac for border management purposes, including the interoperability of those large-scale IT systems and their communication infrastructure, and actions to enhance data quality and the provision of information	

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on Programme

INTERVENTION FIELDS. The implementation measures cover several intervention fields for each SO that overarch regular and specific actions as well as projects. They indicate the main priority areas chosen from Annex VI in Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1148. The BMVI Programme also shows the breakdown of indicative financing amounts for each intervention field. Notably, the intervention fields are included not only for the SOs but also for the technical assistance provided at a flat rate.

Table 2. Indicative amounts for each intervention field per SO and Technical Assistance as foreseen in the BMVI Programme

SO / Technical assistance	Intervention field	Indicative amount (Euro; rounded up, only EU contribution)	Percentage share of total funds
SO1 – European Integrated Border Management	001. Border checks	3.65 million	1.18%
	003. Border surveillance – land equipment	9.47 million	3.08%
	005. Border surveillance – automated border surveillance systems	48.1 million	15.62%
	006. Border surveillance – other measures	20.87 million	6.78%
	007. Technical and operational measures within the Schengen area which are related to border control	6.54 million	2.12%
	008. Situational awareness and exchange of information	580 thousand	0.19%
	010. Processing of data and information	862.5 thousand	0.28%
	019. Large-scale IT systems – Eurodac for border management purposes	600 thousand	0.19%
	022. Large-scale IT systems – European Travel Information and Authorisation Systems (ETIAS) – Article 85(2) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1240	400 thousand	0.13%
	024. Large-scale IT systems – Schengen Information System (SIS)	1.29 million	0.42%
	025. Large-scale IT systems – Interoperability	1.71 million	0.56%
	027. Operating support – Large-scale IT systems for border management purposes	2.1 million	0.68%

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SO / Technical assistance	Intervention field	Indicative amount (Euro; rounded up, only EU contribution)	Percentage share of total funds
	028. Operating support – STS	211.86 million	68.78%
	Total: 308.02 million		**93.18%**
SO2 – The Common Visa Policy	002. Enhancing the efficiency, client-friendly environment and security at consulates	180 thousand	0.06%
	006. Large-scale IT systems – Visa Information System (VIS)	1.2 million	0.39%
	008. Operating support – Common visa policy	2.38 million	0.78%
	009. Operating support – Large-scale IT systems for visa application processing purposes	285 thousand	0.09%
	Total: 4.04 million		**1.16%**
Technical assistance	001. Information and communication	1.09 million	0.29%
	002. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and control	14.07 million	4.64%
	003. Evaluation and studies, data collection	2.86 million	0.49%
	004. Capacity building	700 thousand	0.23%
	Total: 18.72 million		**5.66%**

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on Programme Lithuania – BMVI

Notably, the most significant share of the funds is allocated to SO1 – around 93%. Out of the intervention fields, operating support for the STS and the border surveillance – e-surveillance systems are assigned the most funds – 68.78% and 15.62%, respectively.

ACTIONS. The BMVI Programme Action Plan, confirmed by the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. 1V-1145 of 6 November 2020 (wording of Order No. 1V-770 of 28 November 2023), accounts for the detailed list of regular and specific actions for each SO as well as prefatory list of projects to be implemented with the foreseen maximum funding and preliminary implementation periods. Crucially, this document includes a detailed list of actions to be taken to implement the STS, given the allocation of funds to its operating support under SO1.

Table 3. The BVMI regular and specific actions with the allocated fundings and the responsible institutions as in the Action Plan

SO / STS	Regular / Specific action	Allocated funding (rounded up in Euro)	Percentage share of total funds	Applicant
SO1 – European Integrated Border Management	1.1 Regular action: Investments in the further development of the national components of EUROSUR	16.89 million	4.8%	SBGS
	1.2 Regular action: Actions to improve the responsiveness of patrol units	12.96 million	3.68%	SBGS
	1.3 Regular action: Investments in technical and operational border control measures	7.43 million	2.11%	SGBS and ITCD
	1.4 Regular action: Reconstruction of the Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier	4.18 million	1.19%	SGBS
	1.5 Regular action: Increasing national capacity to detect document fraud	1.86 million	0.53%	SGBS
	1.6 Regular action: Strengthening the technical base for risk analysis and criminal intelligence	2.3 million	0.65%	SGBS
	1.7 Regular action: Border management training	1.02 million	0.29%	SGBS
	1.8 Regular action: Investing in the interoperability and development of large-scale IT systems	4.03 million	1.15%	SGBS and ITCD

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SO / STS	Regular / Specific action	Allocated funding (rounded up in Euro)	Percentage share of total funds	Applicant
	1.9 Regular action: Operation and maintenance of the national SIS, AIS, ETIAS and EURODAC (only for border control purposes) (operational support)	2.8 million	0.8%	ITCD
	1.10 Specific action: Support for border management (BMVI/2021/SA/1.5.8)	57.65 million	16.39%	SGBS
	1.11 Specific action: Support for the implementation of the legal framework for interoperability of IT systems (BMVI/2021/SA/1.5.4)	1.09 million	0.31%	PD
	1.12 Specific action: Equipment for the national components of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency procured under the BMVI and transferred to Frontex (BMVI/2023-2024/SA/1.2.2/03)	3.56 million	1.01%	SGBS
	Total:	**115.77 million**	**32.91%**	
STS (part of SO1)	3.1 Regular action: Upgrading the systems for issuing and serving Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD)	3.86 million	1.09%	MFA
	3.2 Regular action: Ensuring and developing control over persons travelling on the basis of FTD/FRTD	2.63 million	0.75%	SGBS
	3.3 Regular action: Strengthening response capacities to ensure smooth transit of Russian citizens	1.9 million	0.54%	PSS
	3.4 Regular action: Training of staff implementing STS	1.24 million	0.35%	MFA, SGBS, PD
	3.5 Regular action: Additional operating costs	135.92 million	38.64%	MFA, SGBS, PD, PSS, ITCD, IDPC
	3.6 Foregone visa fees	52.07 million	14.8%	MFA
	3.7 Specific action: Support for STS in accordance with Article 17(5) of the BMVI Regulation (BMVI/2023/SA/1.1.1/001)	14.24 million	4.05%	SGBS
	Total:	**211.86 million**	**60.22%**	
SO2 − The Common Visa Policy	2.1 Regular action: Investment into N.VIS	1.6 million	0.45%	ITCD
	2.2 Regular action: N.VIS operation and technical maintenance (operational support)	380 thousand	0.11%	ITCD
	2.3 Regular action: Consular staff training	240 thousand	0.07%	MFA
	2.4 Regular action: Strengthening of staff resources for the processing of visa applications and on-the-spot checks on the activities of the external service provider (operational support)	3.17 million	0.9%	MFA
	Total:	**5.39 million**	**1.53%**	
Technical Assistance	**Total:**	**18.72 million**	**5.32%**	
	Total (SO1+SO2+Technical assistance)	**351.74 million**	**100%**	

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on the Action Plan for the Implementation of the BMVI Programme 2021-2027

The STS, as part of SO1, is allocated the biggest share of the total funds – more than 60%. The rest of the actions under SO1 and SO2, as well as the technical assistance funds, represent the rest 40%, with 32.91%, 1.53% and 5.32%, respectively. This support for the STS is significant since it is the part that the Union funds entirely, while other actions are co-funded by Lithuania. Separate actions that are allocated the highest percentages of the total funds are additional operating costs under the STS (EUR 135.92 million or 38.64%), support for border

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management (specific action, EUR 57.65 million or 16.39%), and compensation for foregone visa fees (EUR 52.07 million or 14.8%).

INDICATORS. The BMVI Programme foresees output and result indicators for each SO to be fulfilled by implementing the projects (without identifying which implementation measures, actions, or projects would specifically contribute to the fulfilment of the indicators). Targets are set for both 2024 and 2029 to trace the progress of the implementation. Seemingly, most output and result indicators are not interconnected, but some – particularly regarding the staff training indicators – can be directly related and fulfilled concurrently.

Table 4. Output indicators in the BMVI Programme

Special objective	ID	Indicator	Measured in number	
			Milestone (2024)	Milestone (2029)
SO1 – European Integrated Border Management	O.1.1	Number of items of equipment purchased for border crossing points	218	950
	O.1.1.1	of which number of Automated Border Control gates / self-service systems / e-gates purchased	0	0
	O.1.2	Number of infrastructure maintained / repaired	0	2
	O.1.3	Number of hotspot areas supported	0	0
	O.1.4	Number of facilities for border crossing points constructed / upgraded	0	0
	O.1.5	Number of aerial vehicles purchased	0	18
	O.1.5.1	of which number of unmanned aerial vehicles purchased	0	17
	O.1.6	Number of maritime transport means purchased	0	1
	O.1.7	Number of land transport means purchased	141	299
	O.1.8	Number of participants supported	1,076	1,957
	O.1.8.1	of which number of participants in training activities	1,076	1,957
	O.1.9	Number of joint liaison officers deployed to third countries	0	0
	O.1.10	Number of IT functionalities developed / maintained / upgraded	17	48
	O.1.11	Number of large-scale IT systems developed / maintained / upgraded	4	4
	O.1.11.1	of which number of large-scale IT systems developed	0	0
	O.1.12	Number of cooperation projects with third countries	0	0
	O.1.13	Number of persons who have applied for international protection at border crossing points	900	2,025
SO2 – Common Visa Policy	O.2.1	Number of projects supporting the digitalisation of visa processing	0	1
	O.2.2	Number of participants supported	77	158
	O.2.2.1	of which number of participants in training activities	77	158
	O.2.3	Number of staff deployed to consulates in third countries	9	12
	O.2.3.1	of which number of staff deployed for visa processing	5	8
	O.2.4	Number of IT functionalities developed / maintained / upgraded	2	2
	O.2.5	Number of large-scale IT systems developed / maintained upgraded	1	1
	O.2.5.1	of which number of large-scale IT systems developed	0	0

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Special objective	ID	Indicator	Measured in number	
			Milestone (2024)	Milestone (2029)
	O.2.6	Number of infrastructure maintained / upgraded	0	0
	O.2.7	Number of real estate rented / depreciated	0	0

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on Programme Lithuania – BMVI

Table 5. Result indicators in the BMVI Programme

Special objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Target (2029)
SO1 – European Border Integrated Management	R.1.14	Number of items of equipment registered in the Technical Equipment Pool of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency	Number	0	198
	R.1.15	Number of items of equipment put at the disposal of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency	Number	0	198
	R.1.16	Number of initiated / improved forms of cooperation of national authorities with the Eurosur National Coordination Centre (hereinafter – NCC)	Number	0	3
	R.1.17	Number of border crossings through Automated Border Control gates and e-gates	Number	0	0
	R.1.18	Number of addressed recommendations from Schengen Evaluations and from vulnerability assessments in border management	Percentage	0	100
	R.1.19	Number of participants who report three months after the training activity that they are using the skills and competencies acquired during the training	Number	0	1,822
	R.1.20	Number of persons refused entry by border authorities	Number	0	7,500
SO2 – Common Visa Policy	R.2.8	Number of new / upgraded consulates outside the Schengen area	Number	0	24
	R.2.8.1	of which number of consulates upgraded to enhance client-friendliness for visa applicants	Number	0	24
	R.2.9	Number of addressed recommendations from Schengen Evaluations in the common visa policy	Percentage	0	100
	R.2.10	Number of visa applications using digital means	Number	0	300,000
	R.2.11	Number of initiated/improved forms of cooperation set up among Member States in visa processing	Number	0	3
	R.2.12	Number of participants who report three months after the training activity that they are using the skills and competencies acquired during the training	Number	0	154

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on the BMVI Programme

PROJECTS. The list of projects to be financed was confirmed by the Order of Minister of Interior No. 1V-208 of 17 March 2021 (wording of Order No. 1V-771 of 28 November 2023).

The Order foresees **31 projects** for SO1 (including STS) and SO2 in a total of more than EUR 168 million in allocated funds.

Table 6 summarises the projects based on whether they contribute to the implementation of an SO1 or the SO2, as well as to the fulfilment of regular or specific action. Notably, the projects do not cover all regular or specific actions foreseen in the BMVI Programme, and thus, the allocation of funds differs from the sums indicated in the BMVI Programme. SBGS are responsible for most projects – 16 out of 31, while the remaining projects are to be implemented by the MFA, the ITCD, the PD, the PSS, and the IDPC.

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Table 6. Distribution of allocated funding based on projects per each action and SO

Special objective	Regular / Specific action	Project	Allocated funding (total, rounded up in Euro)	Percentage share of total funds	Implementer
SO1 – European Integrated Border Management	1.2 Regular action: Actions to improve the responsiveness of patrol units	Repair works on the border patrol path	9.99 million	5.93%	SBGS
	1.3 Regular action: Investments in technical and operational border control measures	Purchase of transport vehicles	2.33 million	1.38%	SBGS
		Update of the SBGS armouries alarm systems	499.97 thousand	0.30%	SBGS
		Strengthening cynological capacity, Phase 1	239.44 thousand	0.14%	SBGS
	1.4 Regular action: Reconstruction of the Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier	Reconstruction of the Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier	4.18 million	2.48%	SBGS
	1.5 Regular action: Increasing national capacity to detect document fraud	Equipment for border inspection posts for the verification and examination of documents, Phase I	1.52 million	0.9%	SBGS
	1.7 Regular action: Border management training	Specialised and advanced training for border guards, Phase I	512 thousand	0.3%	SBGS
	1.9 Regular action: Operation and maintenance of the national SIS, AIS, ETIAS and EURODAC (only for border control purposes) (operational support)	Operation and maintenance of integrated border management systems, Phase I	2.2 million	1.31%	ITCD
	1.10 Specific action: Support for border management (BMVI/2021/SA/1.5.8)	Installation of border surveillance systems (A. Barausko, Kapčiamiesčio, Kabelių, Adutiškio, Tverečiaus, Puškų frontier stations)	40.02 million	23.76%	SBGS
		Acquisition of technical equipment for border surveillance and control	3.71 million	2.2%	SBGS
		Acquisition of unmanned aerial vehicles	5.38 million	3.19%	SBGS
		Acquisition of SBGS vehicles	4.49 million	2.67%	SBGS
		Purchase of vehicles equipped with thermal imaging equipment	3.3 million	1.96%	SBGS
	1.11 Specific action: Support for the implementation of the legal framework for interoperability of IT systems (BMVI/2021/SA/1.5.4)	Strengthening the capacity of the Lithuanian SIRENE Unit and the interoperability of information systems in the police	999.12 thousand	0.59%	PD
STS (part of SO1)	3.1 Regular action: Upgrading the systems for issuing and serving Facilitated Transit Documents (FTD) and Facilitated Rail Transit Documents (FRTD)	Renovation of administrative premises in the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Lithuania in the Russian Federation and service apartments in Moscow, Phase I	400 thousand	0.24%	MFA

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Special objective	Regular / Specific action	Project	Allocated funding (total, rounded up in Euro)	Percentage share of total funds	Implementer
		Purchase of vehicles	205 thousand	0.12%	MFA
	3.2 Regular action: Ensuring and developing control over persons travelling on the basis of FTD/FRTD	STS hardware and software upgrades	297.23 thousand	0.18%	SBGS
	3.3 Regular action: Strengthening response capacities to ensure smooth transit of Russian citizens	Purchase of STS vehicles	175 thousand	0.1%	SBGS
		Purchase of vehicles	360 thousand	0.21%	PSS
	3.4 Regular action: Training of staff implementing STS	STS Staff Training, Phase I	210 thousand	0.12%	MFA
		STS Employees Training, Phase 1	37.88 thousand	0.02%	SBGS
	3.5 Regular action: Additional operating costs	Additional MFA operating costs 2021–2023	16.37 million	9.72%	MFA
		Additional SBGS operating costs 2021–2023	27.70 million	16.44%	SBGS
		Additional PD operating costs 2021–2023	19.32 million	11.47%	PD
		Additional PSS operating costs 2021–2023	24.94 thousand	0.01%	PSS
		Additional IDPC operating costs 2021–2023	595.32 thousand	0.35%	IDPC
		Additional ITCD operating costs 2021–2023	971.33 thousand	0.58%	ITCD
		Additional MFA operating costs 2024–2027	20.63 million	12.25%	MFA
SO2 – Common visa policy	2.2 Regular action: N.VIS operation and technical maintenance (operational support)	Operation and maintenance of N.VIS and related national systems	380 thousand	0.23%	ITCD
	2.3 Regular action: Consular staff training	Training of visa staff, Phase I	93.33 thousand	0.06%	MFA
	2.4 Regular action: Strengthening of staff resources for the processing of visa applications and on-the-spot checks on the activities of the external service provider (operational support)	Maintenance of consular officers, Phase I	1.29 million	0.77%	MFA

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on the List of Projects to be Financed under the BMVI 2021-2027

Projects with the most significant shares of the funding are primarily for the additional operating cost under the STS for the MFA (in two tranches), SBGS, and PD. Other substantial portions of the funds are allocated to the installation of border surveillance systems at A. Barausko, Kapčiamiesčio, Kabelių, Adutiškio, Tverečiaus and Puškų

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frontier stations (more than EUR 40 million or 23.76% of total funds), and repair works on the border patrol path (almost EUR 10 million or 5.93%) – both implemented by the SBGS.
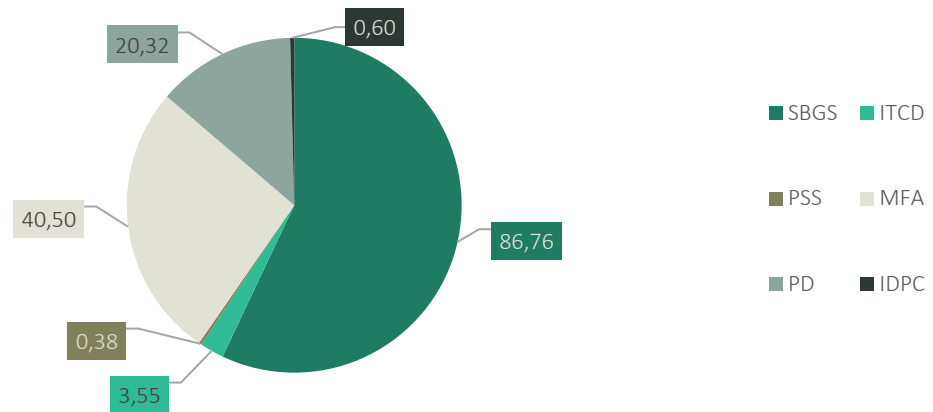

Figure 2. The distribution of the funds allocated to each project implementor, millions of Euros
Source: prepared by Evaluator based on the Lists of Projects to be Financed under the BMVI 2021-2027

Figure 2 illustrates how funds are distributed among the project implementors – than half of the funds (57% to be precise) go to the projects managed by the SBGS, with the MFA projects receiving the second biggest share of the funds totalling EUR 40.5 million (or 27%). The rest of the funding is shared among the rest of the project implementors.

Generally, the list of projects was created based on the needs expressed by the stakeholders during the Programme planning stage. All institutions delivered their needs in written form (they are detailed in section 5.1.1). The final list was prepared based on the allocation of funds in the Programme, considering the expressed needs and suggestions for potential projects.

The reconstructed intervention logic validates the alignment of the BMVI Programme with the EU regulations governing the BMVI. The identified Special Objectives, implementation measures, and chosen intervention fields cohesively address Lithuania's contemporary challenges and overarching policy objectives. The established output and result indicators demonstrate clear concordance with the defined objectives, and the ensuing projects arising from them distinctly achieve the envisaged policy outcomes.

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4. State of Play

This chapter aims to highlight the progress and key developments of the BMVI. The timeline covered in the report is 2021–2023. The project implementation scheduled for the Programme has already started. Notably, the Programme implementation started on 1st January 2021, despite the planning delays on the EC part.

The efficiency and effectiveness of projects can be partially assessed at the time of evaluation. The total budget of the BMVI Programme (excluding technical assistance) is EUR 333.01 MILLION, of which EUR 312.07 MILLION are EU funds, while EUR 20.94 MILLION are national funding. If calculated in percentages, EU funding makes up 93.71%, and national funding comprises 5.87%. The BMVI Programme also includes a detailed list of actions to be taken and funded for the implementation of SO1 (including STS) and SO2. The STS is allocated the most significant share of the total funds – more than 60%. Other actions under SO1 and SO2 and the technical assistance funds represent the remaining 40%, with 32.91%, 1.53% and 5.32%, respectively.

The implementation measures cover several intervention fields for each SO that overarch regular and specific actions as well as projects. SO1 is allocated EUR 327.62 MILLION, while SO2 is allocated EUR 5.39 MILLION for project implementation in specific intervention fields. Funding for technical assistance consists of EUR 18.72 MILLION. Dedicated funds for SO1, SO2, and technical assistance account for 93.14%, 1.53%, and 5.32% of total funds, respectively.

CALLS. 73 projects (6 projects for foregone visa fees not received have no calls planned) are planned to be implemented during the BMVI Programme. 9 calls for 50 projects (which equals 63.29% of all planned projects) commenced punctually per the stipulated timeline outlined in the Action implementation plan of the Programme. The calls for an additional 23 projects, which is 36.71% of all planned projects, are scheduled for subsequent implementation phases within the designated timeframe of the Programme.

PROGRESS OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. Currently, 35 projects are being implemented. 10 projects do not have payment requests timeline approved yet, while 25 have. VSFSVVP IS data shows that 5 projects are still being implemented despite the earliest commencement of activities.

PAYMENTS. At the time of evaluation, a total of EUR 86.63 MILLION worth of payments is planned to be paid out. At the time of evaluation, 4 projects submitted requests for payments, which equalled EUR 2.66 million, whereas 20 projects had approved payment requests totalling EUR 31.7 MILLION.
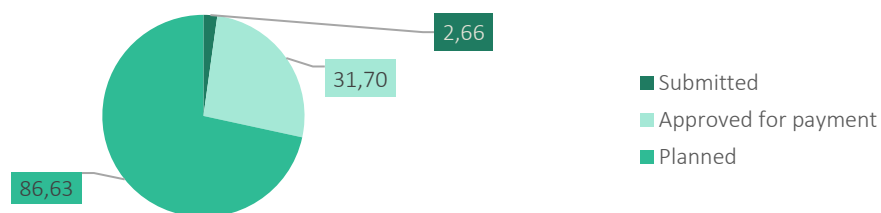
Figure 3. Value of payments by status, millions of Euros
Source: prepared by Evaluator using data from VSFSVVP IS

MAIN ISSUES THAT NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME. The implementation of the Programme faces time-related challenges primarily stemming from delayed planning, which has adversely affected the initiation of projects. Delays in communication guideline approval have also contributed to a less-than-optimal implementation process[19]. However, interview respondents expressed confidence that the Programme will meet its deadlines, and indeed, such a possibility exists (see Chapter 5 for more details).

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[19] During the preparation of this evaluation, they were approved and published on 7 February 2024, available at: https://www.cpva.lt/globalios-naujienos/44/svvp-ir-vsf-20212027-m.-programu-pareiskejams-ir-projektu-vykdytojams-parengtas-komunikacijos-vadovas:995.

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5. Evaluation results

As described in the Methodology chapter, the Evaluation results are presented according to evaluation questions (see Annex 1 for the Evaluation Matrix).

5.1. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme according to relevance criteria

According to the EC Revised Background Note, the evaluation of the relevance criteria focuses on whether the needs identified during the programming phase are still the most relevant and whether the programme can sufficiently adapt to newly emerging or evolving needs. This analysis involves analysing data extracted while reconstructing the intervention logic, reviewing the key issues identified and their drivers, and investigating the continued relevance of the objectives identified on a legal basis.

5.1.1. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's relevance to changing needs or current situation

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following question:

1.1. To what extent does the Programme address the evolving needs?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

1.1.1. The Programme stakeholders[20] are correctly identified and in line with the legally established objectives.
1.1.2. The needs analysis that has informed the design of the Programme and its allocation of resources is consistent with the current situation and the current needs of stakeholders.
1.1.3. A Programme strategy has been developed to address these needs, broken down into specific milestones and objectives, using proportionate resources.
1.1.4. The list of implementing measures provided in the Programme is adequate to meet the current and future needs of the target groups/stakeholders and is in line with the legal requirements.

Institutions implementing the Programme are set in accordance with the Law on the basics of national security[13], where the institutions ensuring national security are established in Chapter 12. The list of those institutions and their status in the Programme and legally established functions are provided in the table below.

Table 7. Legally established functions of the stakeholders

Institution	Status	Legally established functions related to the Programme
Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania	Managing authority	As set in the Rules of Procedure of the MoI[21]: • Form the state policy in the field of public security, organize, coordinate, and control its implementation;

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[20] Clarification provided by EU Revisited Background Note: Stakeholders typically include actors involved in the design and implementation of the Programme, potential and actual beneficiaries as well as end-users/recipients/beneficiaries among the population. Within the range of the different stakeholders and in line with the legal basis, the needs evaluation should normally identify the needs that receive highest priority as well as the related target groups. Target groups are not necessarily or solely the end-users, as based on the intervention logic of the Programme it may be that priority is given to the strengthening of a specific body, service, system etc. Whilst the general population is inevitably indirectly affected by the intervention, it may not represent its specific target group.
[21] Rules of Procedure of the Ministry of Interior, approved by the Resolution No. 291 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 14 March 2001 (wording of Order No. 21 of 3 January 2024).

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Institution	Status	Legally established functions related to the Programme
		• Formulating, organising, coordinating and monitoring public policy on migration.
Centralised Internal Audit Unit of the MoI	Audit authority	Performing audit activities.
CPMA	Intermediate body	The functions include: • Evaluation of projects; • Conclusion of contracts and supervision of their implementation; • Procurement supervision; • Conducting on-site inspections; • Eligibility assessment and declaration of expenditure; • Breach management; • Information and publicity (in the case of BMVI – on the projects' level).
State Border Guard Service of Lithuania (hereinafter – SBGS)	Final beneficiary	As set in the Rules of Procedures of the SBGS[22], the institution is responsible for implementing national border protection and control policy.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – MFA)	Final beneficiary	As set in the Rules of Procedure of the MFA[23]: • Formulating foreign affairs and security policy (developing bilateral and multilateral relations to safeguard Lithuania's national security interests, international relations and membership of international organisations, economic security, foreign trade, development cooperation, communication to the international community and the Lithuanian public, and public and cultural diplomacy), and organising, coordinating and controlling the implementation of that policy; • Formulating, organising, coordinating and controlling the implementation of the policy on representation of the Republic of Lithuania abroad, diplomatic and consular relations, the diplomatic service, the Lithuanian state and diplomatic protocol, international contractual relations and visas; • Coordinating Lithuania's representation in the EU and positions on EU policy issues.
Police Department under the MoI (hereinafter – PD)	Final beneficiary	Besides other functions, it forms the general policy of subordinate police institutions, controls and coordinates the activities of subordinate police agencies and provides them with recommendations and instructions in relevant fields, including criminal intelligence investigations, maintenance of public order, international cooperation of police agencies, develops international relations and cooperates with EU institutions, services, agencies, other international organizations, competent institutions and institutions of EU member states and associated Schengen states, coordinates international cooperation of police and other law enforcement institutions in the investigation and prevention of criminal acts or public in the areas of security, ensuring uninterrupted exchange of information (as set in Rules of Procedure of the Ministry of Interior[24]).
Information Technology and Communications Department under the MoI (hereinafter – ITCD)	Final beneficiary	International functions: participates in projects carried out by the EC on the development, operation and use of the second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS II); ensures data exchange with the central SIS; cooperates with the responsible institutions of the EU member states; cooperates with the UNODC, the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale Information Technology Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, the EU-LISA; exchanges data on criminal convictions through the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) with other authorized institutions of the EU Member States; participates in

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[22] Rules of Procedure of the SBGS, approved by the Resolution No. 194 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 22 February 2001 (wording of Order No. 893 of 15 November 2023).
[23] Rules of Procedure of the MFA, approved by the Resolution 1155 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 25 September 1998 (wording of Order No. 77 of 29 January 2020).
[24] Rules of Procedure of the Ministry of Interior, approved by the Resolution No. 291 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 14 March 2001 (wording of Order No. 21 of 3 January 2024).

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Institution	Status	Legally established functions related to the Programme
		projects carried out by the EC and MS related to the simplification and improvement of mechanisms for the exchange of criminal record information, etc. National functions: Manages and develops the Internal Affairs Information System, the Lithuanian National Schengen Information System, the Lithuanian National Visa Information System, and other internal administration systems and ensures their security; administers information resources in the field of internal affairs, coordinates their use, provides IT services to institutions in the field of internal affairs, etc.[25]
Public Security Service under the MoI (hereinafter – PSS)	Final beneficiary	As set in the Rules of Procedure of the PSS[26], it is responsible for strengthening the forces of the Lithuanian Police, the SBGS under the Ministry of the Interior, the Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior, the Command Security Department under the Ministry of the Interior, and the Financial Crime Investigation Service under the Ministry of the Interior, and assist them in the implementation of the functions assigned to them.
IDPC	Final beneficiary	As set in the Rules of Procedure of the IDPC[27], it is responsible for ensuring the design, production and issuance of personal documents that comply with the requirements of legal acts and international standards, ensuring the implementation of the national policy on the issuance of personal documents, including the issuance of secure personal documents.

Source: prepared by Evaluator

During the planning stage, the members of the Inter-Institutional Working Group, whose purpose was to prepare the BMVI Programme (as well as the ISF one), were selected by institutions they represented, while prior to this, the Ministry of Interior prepared a list of relevant institutions as laid out in the Order No. 1V-613 of 20 July 2021 (changing the wording of Order No. 1V-323 of 6 April 2020), which are as follows:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania;
- State Border Guard Service under the MoI ;
- Police Department under the MoI;
- Information Technology and Communications Department under the MoI;
- Public Security Service under the MoI;
- Financial Crime Investigation Service under the MoI (relevant to ISF only);
- Customs Department under the Ministry of Finance (relevant to ISF only);
- State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania (relevant to ISF only);
- Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania (relevant to ISF only).

Notably, the BMVI Programme is rather specific due to the level of confidentiality, sensitivity of the information, and specificity of technical and infrastructural matters. This meant a somewhat limited, albeit sufficient, list of the involved institutions. No other stakeholders were formally involved in the development of the Programme except those mentioned.

Stakeholders were asked to provide their needs in written form for the Inter-Institutional Working Group to include in the Programme.

Table 8. Needs expressed by stakeholders in the Programme planning period

Institution	Needs provided for consideration	Interview responses on the degree their needs are addressed in the Programme
SGBS	**Needs pertaining to the SO1 (European integrated border management):**	

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[25] Priority activities of the ITCD. https://www.ird.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/prioritetines-veiklos-kryptys
[26] Rules of Procedure of the PSS, approved by the Resolution No. 278 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 14 March 2007 (wording of Order No. 672 of 29 June 2016).
[27] Rules of Procedure of the IDPC under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, approved by the Resolution No. 681 of the Minister of Interior (wording of Order No. 1V-760 of 6 November 2017).

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	Need A: Upgrading border surveillance systems in Druskininkai, Bardinai, Tribonys, Purvėnai, Švenčionys, Pavoverė, Rociškės, Vištytis, Viešvilė, Plaškiai, Kybartai, Lavoriškės, Vileikiai, Padvarionys, Kena and Neringa frontier stations. **Need B**: Purchasing new or refurbishing patrol vehicles, service dogs and equipment for working with dogs. **Need C**: Upgrading the mobile laboratory for document verification and examination, purchasing a high-performance imaging spectral comparator and magnifying glasses, and upgrading certain systems to deal with forged documents. **Need D**: A stationary vehicle hide detector to detect persons evading SGBS checks and seeking to cross the state border illegally. **Need E**: Particular means to work in conditions of limited visibility (at night, in fog, when the objects to be observed are distant), i.e., night vision devices, portable thermal imaging devices, binoculars and binoculars for long-distance viewing. Special intercom equipment in the form of compatible radios and active headsets is also required to allow multi-frequency operation and retransmission capability. **Need F**: A new hovercraft equipped with a modern navigation system, a long- or medium-range electro-optical day- and night-vision surveillance system and radio equipment, searchlights, and ice rescue equipment to patrol the water-based border with the Russian Federation. **Need G**: Upgrading the equipment of the computer network, the licence of the tele-management software, and the software to ensure proper operation of the information system of the NCC, SIS, VIS, ETIAS and VSATIS. **Need H**: A new, advanced alarm system for armouries. **Need I**: Specialised and advanced training for border guards and aviation personnel.	Needs are incorporated and reflect well the main activities and responsibilities of SGBS
	Needs pertaining to the STS: **Need A**: Upgrading the electronic control systems of transit trains in Kena and Kybartai. **Need B**: Strengthening response capacities and upgrading the wireless connection at Kena and Kybartai railway transit points to ensure the smooth transit of Russian citizens (the capacities include different types of vehicles, technology, such as night vision devices, portable thermal imaging devices, etc., communication devices to allow multi-frequency operation and retransmission capability, service dogs, GPS trackers and others). **Need C:** Replacing the transit train monitoring equipment, acquiring the relevant software licences, and purchasing the transit train monitoring software. **Need D**: Training of staff involved in STS, particularly regarding their English language skills. **Need E**: Additional operating support.	
ITCD	**Needs pertaining to the SO1 (European integrated border management):** **Need A**: Development of the second-generation Schengen Information System (N.SISII): • Modernising biometric identification tools, improving the efficiency and quality of the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), thus also creating the necessary conditions for the exchange of information related to alerts by ensuring centralised biometric data processing; • Expanding the processability of large datasets, monitoring the lawfulness of data processing and self-monitoring; • Implementing the recommendations made following the evaluation of Lithuania's application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in the area of the operation of the SIS; • Developing technical and organisational measures for the administration and auditing mechanisms for the users of the national information systems, thereby ensuring the lawfulness of data processing and the rights of data subjects. **Need B**: Operational costs and maintenance of the technical infrastructure of the integrated border management systems; organising the continuous support and maintenance of the IT and communication infrastructure for national information	Needs were incorporated adequately; however, the circumstances keep changing.[28]

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[28] Interview with the ITCD.

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systems interfacing with European large-scale IT systems; maintaining and developing the skills of staff implementing and maintaining IT and communication systems.

Need C: Upgrading the technical infrastructure and strengthening the security of integrated border management systems.

Need D: Developing the digital mobile radio system by introducing new technological solutions and expanding the scope of services required for border control.

Needs pertaining to the SO2 (Common visa policy):

Need A: Development of the N.VIS in terms of efficiency, security, interoperability and data integrity: preparing for the digitisation of the visa application process and stickers, simplifying the application process; improving the quality of the biometric data and extending processing capabilities by introducing new technologies and solutions; streamlining processes by speeding up visa decisions, expanding the scope of visa validity checking tools, establishing data exchange interfaces with the European Automated Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS).

Need B: Compensation of N.VIS operational costs and maintenance of the technical infrastructure, including organising training of the staff implementing and maintaining those IT systems.

Needs pertaining to the STS:

Need A: Technical assistance and compensation for the digital mobile radio network services and responsible staff salaries (including other expenses).

PD	**Needs pertaining to the SO1 (European integrated border management):**	The needs were mainly addressed, albeit to a limited extent due to a lack of funds; the focus is on the main priorities, so no major lack is perceived.

Need A: Implementation of the new obligations coming from EU relations, in particular ETIAS and EES, will make the PD act as the central police authority, which requires appropriate transposition of the established processes into national law and development of the relevant national IT systems.

Need B: Competences and training in regard to the implementation of the new SIS II, ETIAS, EES, and other EU regulations, interoperability of national and international law enforcement information systems, handling of information received through international cooperation channels and automation processes.

Need C: Operating support to implement the SO and relevant actions (specifically for two new job positions responsible for implementing the functions assigned to PD in the Programme).

Needs pertaining to the STS:

Need A: Improving the professional competencies of police officers whose operational or administrative functions are related to the safeguarding of public security in the context of the application of the requirements of the STS and the Schengen *acquis* and ensuring the qualifications of the police officers required for the performance of such functions.

Need B: Compensation of costs of maintenance (salary, social insurance contributions) of the personnel employed in the control of the transit of the Russian citizens through the territory of the Republic of Lithuania as well as the maintenance of (rented) police vehicles, maintenance, repair, extension or modernisation of the video surveillance system on the Kena-Vilnius-Kybartai transit section.

PSS	**Needs pertaining to the STS:**	All needs are reflected well in the Programme, but they have changed since then

Need A: Refurbishing the vehicles.
Need B: Acquisition of new radio devices.
Need C: Purchasing new personal protection equipment.
Need D: Additional operating support (particularly vehicle maintenance costs).

MFA	**Needs pertaining to the SO2 (Common visa policy):**	All the needs are reflected and incorporated into the Programme

Need A: Development of the N.VIS.
Need B: The maintenance of consular staff in Almaty.
Need C: Continuous training, updating and adaptation to changing conditions for the consular staff.

Needs pertaining to the STS:

Need A: Updating and ongoing system maintenance for issuing and dispensing Special Travel Documents.

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Need B: A sufficient number of qualified diplomats and special couriers to serve the STDs and take decisions on board the train, with adequate working and resting conditions, including transport in the representations, refurbed or installed recreational and administrative facilities, communication devices (mobile phones), and special clothing for consular teams.
Need C: Sufficient numbers of staff administering the implementation of the STS in the MFA and diplomatic missions (IT, financial management, HR, procurement specialists, etc.), who are provided with adequate working and, for those working in diplomatic missions, apartments in the missions and workplaces in the MFA.
Need D: Continuous maintenance and development of the skills of staff implementing the STS.
Need E: Additional operating support.

Source: prepared by Evaluator, based on information provided by MoI

The stakeholders are included in the Monitoring Committee, which, as per information provided by stakeholders during interviews, ensures their needs are also met during the later stages of implementation of the Programme. Table 8 displays the needs expressed by stakeholders during the Programme planning period; it is clear that more than 90% of the needs were incorporated into the final Programme. What was excluded was the request of the PD to allocate more operating support funds for their staff implementing actions under SO1. The stakeholders confirmed this insight during the interview – the PD[29] claimed that not all needs were included due to a lack of funds, yet it does not represent a major problem because the primary priority needs were still included and reflected in the Programme and later in the Action Plan; other stakeholders expressed no complaints regarding the lack of need implementation, leading to the general conclusion that the Programme was developed addressing the central part of the needs of the stakeholders.

In addition, the reconstructed intervention logic indicates that it was then broken down into more concrete actions and specific milestones to be achieved by 2024 and 2029. The projects are also in line with the current needs of the stakeholders and are adjustable in case different priorities arise in the future, as was confirmed during the interviews. This was the case with the SBGS needs – the initial Programme did not include actions to address the border patrol reactivity in the external EU borders; this was later adjusted, and the Programme was changed by reallocating EUR 10 million to refurbish the border patrol path.

A particular case where a need was not appropriately included is the case of the EES system development on the national level. During the interview, the ITCD[30] expressed that the project was not included in the second part of the Programme because the SBGS plans to fund it from the national budget allocations, which might not be sufficient, according to the ITCD.

The allocated funding seemingly matches these actions – a conclusion that was also confirmed by the interviews[31] as most indicated that funding was sufficient, while the ITCD[32] and PSS[33] expressed the potential lack of funds in the future due to the changing situation (particularly price changes and evolving technologies, licences becoming more expensive for the maintenance of the IT systems) and the PD[34] indicated that funding could also always be more considerable since the needs and situations change – additional financing could be utilised to acquire better equipment or expand the staff working on the projects. The ITCD, however, also expressed the risk of not using the allocated funds to the project to develop the Eurodac system (a need properly incorporated) due to the delays on the European level.

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[29] Interview with the PD.
[30] Interview with the ITCD.
[31] Interviews with the MFA, the IDPC and the SBGS.
[32] Interview with the ITCD.
[33] Interview with the PSS.
[34] Interview with the PD.

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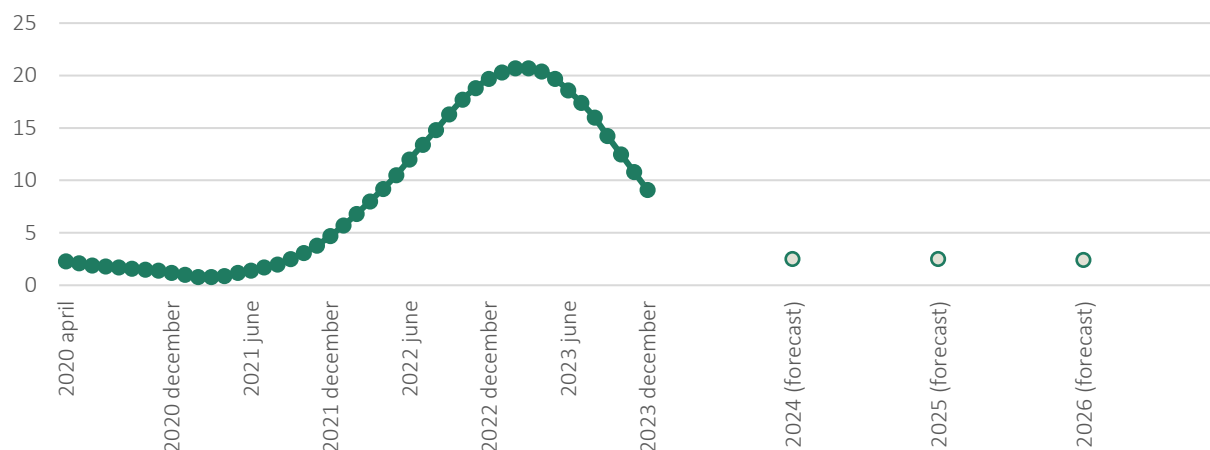Final Report

Figure 4. Inflation rate in Lithuania 2020-2023 with forecasts for 2024, 2025 and 2026 annual average inflation rates
Source: Official Statistics Portal[35] and Bank of Lithuania[36]

Lastly, during the interviews, three final beneficiaries[37] expressed concerns about inflation spiking in the last few years (see Figure 4). This circumstance can potentially hinder the implementation of some projects planned for the later part of the financing period, as prices might increase even more compared to the initial allocated funding. In particular, the PSS expressed that they will need to reallocate funds among the projects in order to fulfil the objectives set in the Programme.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The Programme stakeholders are correctly identified in line with the objectives established legally in the national legislation:
1.1. The analysis of national legislation on the Rules of Procedure of each institution confirmed this conclusion.
2. The needs analysis that has informed the design of the Programme and its allocation of resources is consistent with the current situation and the current needs of stakeholders:
2.1. 63% of the stakeholders were satisfied with the Programme design and allocation of resources; three expressed concerns regarding shifting needs due to inflation, changing technologies and general instability, yet they assured the funds were sufficient. This is evidenced by the analysis of the needs expressed in written form (where more than 90% of the needs were identified as incorporated in the Programme) that was double-checked with the answers during the interviews;
2.2. There is also evidence of flexibility as the funding allocation is adjusted throughout the implementation period by the Monitoring Committee when it is requested by the stakeholders (explained in detail in section 5.1.2).
3. The needs were broken down into actions and specific milestones, using proportionate resources and allocating funding accordingly.
4. The list of implementing measures and projects provided in the Programme is adequate to meet the current and future needs of the target groups/stakeholders and is in line with the legal requirements.

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[35] Official Statistics Portal. CPI-based average annual inflation, available at: https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=0ea3ead7-e658-459c-bb4e-2d787992c643#/
[36] Bank of Lithuania (2023). Lietuvos ekonomikos raida ir perspektyvos. Available at: https://www.lb.lt/lt/leidiniai/makroekonomines-prognozes-2023-m-gruodzio-men?html=1#_Toc130288666
[37] Interviews with the IDPC, the ITCD, and the PSS.

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5.1.2. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's ability to adapt to changing needs or current situations

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

1.2. To what extent can the Programme adapt to the evolving needs?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

1.2.1. A needs evaluation is performed and updated on a regular basis or whenever there are relevant contextual changes.
1.2.2. The partnership/Monitoring Committee can provide timely input on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground.
1.2.3. There is an adequate degree of flexibility in the design of the operations.
1.2.4. Where necessary, non-substantial changes to the Programme strategy can be applied swiftly.
1.2.5. There are rules and procedures in place that ensure that substantial adjustments to the Programme can be implemented in due time if new needs arise.
1.2.6. If there have been changes in the needs after the Programme adoption, the Programme strategy or operations have been adapted in due time, or, alternatively, the new needs have been duly addressed via the thematic facility.

The following indicators were collected, composed, and analysed to answer the evaluation question in line with the earlier-mentioned judgement criteria:

- Evidence that needs evaluation is regularly performed and updated;
- Normative judgements by the implementing institutions and stakeholders;
- Evidence of timely partnership/Monitoring Committee input on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground;
- Evidence of flexibility and change in reports of involved institutions;
- Examples of swift adjustments of the Programme;
- Rules and/or procedures for substantial adjustments to the Programme;
- If possible, cases of significant adjustments of the Programme;
- Formal rules and/or procedures in place to accommodate substantial changes to the Programme.

In the Programme, it is established that it will maintain a level of flexibility to respond to events and future needs as they arise, including actions to address new developments of Union *acquis* or action plans, flexibility to respond to events and future needs (e.g. new EU policy/regulations/requirements). Mechanisms to do so are not established in the Programme directly; however, in the description of the management and control system,[38] it is set that the Managing Authority (in this case, the MoI) is mandated to make changes to the Programme where it is necessary and provide them for the assessment of EC after the Monitoring Committee considers and approves them. Crucially, the members of the Monitoring Committee comprise all the relevant stakeholders; thus, the need for changes would be raised in a timely and appropriate manner as the members observe any changing situations despite the lack of official needs analysis or mechanisms to respond to changing conditions. This was confirmed during the semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders; they all corroborated that the circle of the stakeholders and relevant institutions is relatively small; therefore, they all keep in touch regularly (both formally and informally).

An example of flexibility and ability to adapt to the changing needs mentioned by the Managing Authority and the SBGS respondents is the project to upgrade the border patrol path that was included after the Programme and the list of projects to be funded were approved. Such issues as the border guards' ability to respond quickly and

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[38] ANNEX XVI. Template for the description of the management and control system — Article 69(11). https://www.vsfsvvp.lt/data/public/uploads/2023/09/en-mcs-description_xvi-annex_20230531.pdf

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on time in case of emergencies or other challenges at the border with Belarus led to a request from the SBGS to reallocate the Programme funds; hence, the appropriate changes were made according to relevant procedures.

This example and conclusions were corroborated by analysing the Monitoring Committee's documents and meeting protocols, where evidence of adjusting allocated funding as priorities shifted and some needs changed was identified. Protocols of the Monitoring Committee meetings[39] that were analysed:

- 1st meeting on 23 November 2022;
- 2nd meeting (written decision-making procedure from 6 to 9 of February 2023);
- 3rd meeting (written decision-making procedure from 17 to 21 of April 2023);
- 4th meeting on 27 June 2023;
- 5th meeting on 4 October 2023;
- 6th meeting (written decision-making procedure from 6 to 9 of November 2023).

The earlier mentioned project to refurbish the border patrol path and the consequent changes to the Programme was agreed upon during the second Monitoring Committee meeting in February 2023; more than EUR 2 million were reallocated from regular action 1.3 to 1.2 and EUR 10 million were included in regular action 1.2 to refurbish the border patrol path in line with the request submitted by the SBGS on 9 December 2022. Additionally, this meeting confirmed the changes in the timeline to publish the calls for four projects due to requests submitted by the ITCD, PD, and MFA.

The third Monitoring Committee meeting in April 2023 considered the proposal submitted by the MFA on 30 March 2023 to adjust the funding of around EUR 16 million initially allocated to the project "Additional operating cost for MFA 2021-2023" given that the extreme situation imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic as well as the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 led to the closure of the Lithuanian consulate in Saint Petersburg and the expulsion of the diplomatic staff form the Lithuanian embassy in Moscow. These circumstances meant that the initial amount would not be necessary, and therefore, the project funding shall be reduced to around EUR 9 million, EUR 2 million shall be reallocated to the project "Additional operating cost of MFA 2024-2027" as well as EUR 5 million shall not be needed at all. In addition, the IDPC preliminarily completed the project "Additional IDPC operating costs 2021-2023" and allegedly saved almost EUR 5,000 (final expenses declaration submission date foreseen as 12 March 2024); hence, the meeting confirmed more than EUR 5 million as unused or to be reallocated in the future. Lastly, the Monitoring Committee also approved some adjustments to the timelines to publish calls for two projects implemented by the SBGS and ITCD.

The fourth meeting confirmed some significant changes due to additional funding received for the STS, where two new specific actions were included (Equipment for the national components of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency procured under the BMVI and transferred to Frontex (BMVI/2023-2024/SA/1.2.2/03); Support for STS in accordance with Article 17(5) of the BMVI Regulation (BMVI/2023/SA/1.1.1/001)) – the critical example also mentioned by the Managing Authority during the interview. In addition, the residual EUR 5 million was allocated as additional operating support for the SBGS for the 2021-2023 period, the Border management system update initial three projects were combined into one, and the project call period was postponed to the third quarter of 2023. Lastly, some minor adjustments in the project call publishing timelines were also incorporated upon the ITCD and SBGS requests.

Generally, four[40] stakeholders mentioned that changes, reallocation, and redistribution of funds after the implementation have happened in a proper way to ensure the most efficient usage of available funds, confirming the results of the analysis of the Monitoring Committee meeting protocols, where all the changes and adjustments were made in consensus.

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[39] Protocols of Meetings of the Monitoring Committee. Available at: https://www.vsfsvvp.lt/bendra-informacija/svvp-ir-vsf-20212027-m.-programu-stebesenos-komitetas/32
[40] Interviews with the CPMA, the MFA, the PD, and the SGBS.

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After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Despite the official mechanism or frequent needs evaluation, the Programme is updated on a regular basis or whenever there are relevant contextual changes:
1.1. The interviews with the stakeholders and the Monitoring Committee meeting protocol analysis confirm that. The key examples are the inclusion of the project to refurbish the border patrol path as well as the decision to redistribute the funds saved by the MFA and IDPC;
2. The Monitoring Committee members provide timely input on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground, and there is an adequate degree of flexibility in the design of the operations:
2.1. The Monitoring Committee meeting protocols illustrate this flexibility – for example, many projects' timelines to publish calls are adjusted in almost every meeting, either pushing them to earlier or later periods as requested by the beneficiaries;
2.2. No stakeholders indicated severe problems in terms of Programme adjustability and the inability to express evolving needs and relevant developments;
3. Programme changes have been adapted in due time following the proper procedures:
3.1. The example of the inclusion of the new project to refurbish the border patrol path illustrates that substantial changes are made in accordance with procedures as expressed by the SBGS during the interview;
3.2. Other non-substantial changes, such as distributing newly received funds from the EC and adjusting timelines to publish project calls, were also implemented in line with the procedures (submitting the written request before the Monitoring Committee meeting, where it is then considered, and decisions are made in consensus).

5.2. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme according to effectiveness criteria

According to the EC Revised Background Note, under this criterion, the independent evaluators will gauge the extent to which the programmes have progressed towards their objectives and whether their design is likely to be conducive to their achievement by the end of the programming period. Factors affecting the implementation and any unexpected or unintended outcomes should be assessed in this regard. This criterion looks not only into the progress towards the SO of the funds but also into any horizontal objective or principle established on a legal basis, including the effectiveness of the communication strategy and the monitoring system, as well as any SO of the Programme, beyond those set at EU level.

5.2.1. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's effectiveness in achieving set goals

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

2.1. To what extent is the Programme on track to achieving its objectives?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

2.1.1. Implementation started with operations selected to support the Programme under all relevant specific objectives and types of intervention, except where a delayed start was planned by design.
2.1.2. The early progress towards the achievement of the milestone and target values, accounting for the timing for the adoption of the Programme, is in line with expectations.
2.1.3. Challenges that affect implementation and the progress towards the objectives of the Programme are duly identified and linked with effective remedy strategies.
2.1.4. The Programme supports types of interventions and actions that are known to be effective as per the available evidence (e.g., relevant academic literature, the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme, etc.).
2.1.5. The Programme makes use of available good practices where relevant and possible.

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START OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. It has been established that project implementation has successfully begun, even though it was slightly delayed as the planning of EC took longer than expected. Nevertheless, as representative of the MoI indicated, STS projects' implementation started in 2021, i.e. from the first day of eligibility of expenditure under the BMVI programme – earlier than in the other Member States, thus resulting in 30% of the funds declared to the EC.[41] The table below presents the adherence of call publication for projects from 2020 to 2023. Notably, most projects are planned for 2024–2027, which cannot be evaluated as of now; hence, the adherence analysis encompasses all calls published so far.

Table 9. Adherence to the invitation to submit an application

Planned period of invitation to submit an application	Call	Project title	Responsible institution	Actual call publication	Adherence to plan
4th quarter of 2020	SVVP20211	Additional operating support for the MFA 2021-2023	MFA	13/11/2020	Yes
	SVVP20211	Additional operating support for the SBGS in 2021-2023	SBGS	13/11/2020	Yes
	SVVP20211	Additional PD operating support 2021-2023	PD	13/11/2020	Yes
	SVVP20211	Additional operating support for the PSS in 2021-2023	PSS	13/11/2020	Yes
	SVVP20211	Additional IDPC operating support 2021-2023	IDPC	13/11/2020	Yes
4th quarter of 2021	SVVP20212	Additional ITCD operating support 2022-2023	IDPC	13/10/2021	Yes
4th quarter of 2022	SVVP20224	Purchase of vehicles	PSS	27/12/2022	Yes
	SVVP20224	STS Staff Training, Phase I	MFA	27/12/2022	Yes
	SVVP20223	Installation of border surveillance systems (A. Barausko, Kapčiamiesčio, Kabelių, Adutiškio, Tverečiaus, Puškų frontier stations)	SBGS	29/11/2022	Yes
1st quarter of 2023	SVVP20235	Specialised and advanced training for border guards, Phase I	SBGS	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Operation and maintenance of N.VIS and related national systems	ITCD	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Renovation of administrative premises in the diplomatic missions of the People's Republic of Lithuania in the Russian Federation and service apartments in Moscow, Phase I	MFA	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Purchase of vehicles	MFA	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Updating STS software and hardware	SBGS	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Purchase of STS vehicles, Phase I	SBGS	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20235	Training of STS staff, Phase I	SBGS	30/01/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Repair works on the border patrol path	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Purchase of vehicles	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Upgrading of the alarm system of the SBGS armoury	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Strengthening of cynological capacities, Phase I	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Reconstruction of the Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Purchase of technical equipment for border surveillance and control	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Purchase of unmanned aerial vehicles	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Purchase of SBGS vehicles	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes

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[41] Interview with a representative of the MoI.

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Planned period of invitation to submit an application	Call	Project title	Responsible institution	Actual call publication	Adherence to plan
	SVVP20236	Purchase of vehicles equipped with thermal imaging equipment	SBGS	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Strengthening the capacity of the Lithuanian SIRENE Unit and the interoperability of information systems in the police	PD	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Training of visa staff, Phase I	MFA	17/03/2023	Yes
	SVVP20236	Maintenance of consular officers, Phase I	MFA	17/03/2023	Yes
2nd quarter of 2023	SVVP20237	Equipment for border inspection posts for the verification and examination of documents, Phase I	SBGS	23/06/2023	Yes
	SVVP20237	Operation and maintenance of integrated border management systems, Phase I	ITCD	23/06/2023	Yes
	SVVP20237	Additional operating support for the MFA 2024-2027	MFA	23/06/2023	Yes
3rd quarter of 2023	SVVP20238	Upgrading border surveillance systems	SBGS	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Enhancing the technical capacity of the SBGS to protect the EU's external borders	SBGS	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Upgrading, modernising, and developing STS infrastructure, workstations, and information systems, Phase I	MFA	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Additional ITCD operating support 2024-2027	ITCD	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Acquisition of a specialised helicopter	SBGS	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Upgrading the train monitoring system	SBGS	25/08/2023	Yes
	SVVP20238	Improving the digital mobile radio network	ITCD	25/08/2023	Yes
4th quarter of 2023	SVVP20239	Development of N.VIS and related national systems, Phase I	ITCD	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Training of police officers, Phase I	PD	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Additional operating support for the SBGS in 2024-2027	SBGS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Additional PD operating support 2024-2027	PD	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Additional operating support for the PSS in 2024-2027	PSS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Purchase of equipment for the detection of absconders	SBGS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Acquisition of additional STS vehicles	SBGS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Purchase of radio equipment	PSS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Acquisition of mobile headquarters	SBGS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	*Eurodac* development, phase I	ITCD	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Tactical training for officers	SBGS	10/11/2023	Yes
	SVVP20239	Developing the interoperability components of integrated border management systems	ITCD	10/11/2023	Yes

Source: composed by the Evaluator, based on CPMA monitoring data

Comparing the Action implementation plan of the Programme and factual dates when the calls were published indicates that all calls were executed as planned, meaning that the Programme is being implemented as it was designed.

Generally, key activities outlined in the Programme are underway and align with expectations. The start of project implementation has been timely, and progress can already be seen. Notably, according to project implementers and Programme authorities, if any project implementation delays happen, such as the late start of IT projects due to the postponement of the deadline for the final implementation of central IT systems or delayed projects due to other objective reasons, such as the lack of time to prepare the investment plans, etc., they were anticipated to be manageable. Resource allocation and utilisation have been optimised to ensure efficient progress.

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CHALLENGES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME. According to the representative of CPMA, three main obstacles affect Programme implementation. First is the malfunctioning electronic data system[42] that affects data transfer, document uploading, etc. Often, this increases the administrative burden for project implementers since they have to prepare paper versions of documents. To tackle the problem, users report issues to the service providers and communicate between institutions to find other ways to share documents and data. Unfortunately, interview respondents indicated that the service provider fails to fulfil its obligations, i.e., technical issues are not fully corrected, and the operability and functionality of the system are not properly ensured. These issues complicate work and increase the administrative burden.

Second, regarding the rising number of projects to be financed, there is a high possibility that CPMA will face a lack of human resources. The agency is seeking to hire new employees to ensure that the workload is distributed appropriately and that high work quality is maintained.[43] In particular, it was highlighted that this is a problem of identifying and recruiting human resources rather than a lack of technical assistance funding. Representatives of the MoI also indicated the same challenge, emphasising that such issues occur due to fluctuating workload, i.e., sometimes the number of projects is higher than expected, sometimes lower. Nevertheless, they actively look for ways to distribute the workload between employees effectively and maintain adequate quality of the Programme's management.

Finally, no communication guidelines are available[44]. These guidelines are meant to ensure effective communication with both Programme institutions and final beneficiaries and provide information about the Programme, documentation, etc. Notably, the EC clarifications on some aspects of the CPR are awaited, which delays the process.[45] Even though no communication guidelines were available during the evaluation, effective communication was ensured through various other measures such as social media, direct communication via emails, phone calls, etc. (more information about communication measures is provided in section 5.2.5).

EFFECTIVENESS OF CHOSEN INTERVENTION MEASURES. The Programme encompasses a diverse range of measures to enhance the effectiveness of border management. According to academic literature and previous evaluations, these measures play a pivotal role in not only improving the operational efficiency of border patrol units but also in expanding the effectiveness and maintenance of technologies employed in the process. Implementing these measures shows a notable increase in territorial coverage and better border security infrastructure. Furthermore, by investing in training programmes and service-oriented procedures, the Programme ensures that border control and consular personnel provide effective, client-friendly services to customers while ensuring and maintaining the security of visa-issuing services. The table below presents a list of measures used to support the SOs of the Programme.

Table 10. Effectiveness of the types of interventions supported by the Programme

Aim	Types of interventions	Academic literature
SO1		
The improvement of border control	Improving the responsiveness of patrol units	More prepared border control units result in quicker and more effective responses to potential threats.[46]
	Purchasing drones, vehicles, mobile headquarters and other technical tools	Improved surveillance coverage along remote border sections results in higher detection rates of illicit activities, enhanced border security, and

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[42] Interviews with the CPMA, the MoI, the MFA, the PD, the IDPC, the ITCD, the PSS, and the SBGS.

[43] Interview with the CPMA.

[44] During the preparation of this evaluation, they were approved and published on 7 February 2024, available at: https://www.cpva.lt/globalios-naujienos/44/svvp-ir-vsf-20212027-m.-programu-pareiskejams-ir-projektu-vykdytojams-parengtas-komunikacijos-vadovas:995.

[45] Interviews with the CPMA and the MoI.

[46] Kenwick, M. and Simmons, B. A. (2020). Pandemic Response as Border Politics. *International organization, 74*, 36-58.

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Aim	Types of interventions	Academic literature
		more effective response capabilities to ensure the integrity of national borders.[47]
	Strengthening cynological capacity	The deployment of detector dogs bolsters the ability to enhance overall border security.[48]
	Reconstruction of Kopgalis Coast Guard Pier	New, improved, or reconstructed physical elements enable the personnel to perform their duties.[49]
	Operation and technical maintenance of integrated border management systems	Maintenance ensures the reliability, security, and performance of systems and technologies.[50]
	Installing new border surveillance systems in particular frontier stations	Technology enhances situational awareness.[51]
Ensuring the uniform application of the Union *acquis* in relation to external borders	Increasing national capacities to detect document fraud	Increased capacities improve information sharing, coordination, and resource optimisation.[52]
	Strengthening the Lithuanian SIRENE Bureau's capacity and interoperability of information systems in the police	
	Training	Targeted and tailor-made training helps to ensure effective Union *acquis* application.[53]
The setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems, including actions related to interoperability of the systems, data quality and the provision of information	Strengthening the criminal intelligence capacity of SBGS	Through capacity-building, law enforcement agencies increase their effectiveness in addressing the threats of criminal activity.[54]
	Updating SBGS armouries alarm systems	Maintenance ensures the reliability, security, and performance of systems and technologies.[55]
	Improving the technical capacities of SBGS to protect the EU's external border	
SO2		
The provision of efficient and client-friendly services to visa applicants	Training	Training improves commitment to service and work performance.[56]

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[47] Congressional Research Service. Homeland Security: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Border Surveillance. Internet access: https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA524297.pdf

[48] Emergency Services Foundation. Investigation of best practices for use of detector dogs in emergency prevention and response biosecurity surveillance programs. Available at: https://esf.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Detector_Dog_Final_Report.pdf

[49] Dugan, R. and Hinman-Sweeney, E. (2009). International border management systems: analyst tools. *Conference on Technologies for Homeland Security*, 576-583.

[50] Boranbayev, A. et. al. (2020). Measures to Ensure the Reliability of the Functioning of Information Systems in Respect to State and Critically Important Information Systems. *Intelligent Systems and Applications: proceedings of the 2020 Intelligent Systems Conference, 3*, 139-152.

[51] Vikainis, R. et al. (2020). Border surveillance and control system, perspectives for its establishment and practical application. *Border Security and Management*, 77-87.

[52] United Nations Office of Counterterrorism. Good practices in the Area of Border Security and Management in the Context of Counterterrorism and Stemming the Flow of "Foreign Terrorist Fighters". Available at: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/goodpractices_bsm_english_2018_0.pdf

[53] Wagner, J. (2022). The European Union's model of Integrated Border Management: Preventing transnational threat, cross-border crime and irregular migration in the context of the EU's security policies and strategies in Leuprecht, C., Hatley, T., and Brunet-Jailly, E. (eds) *Patterns in Border Security* (pp. 76-100), Routledge. Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003216926-5/european-union-model-integrated-border-management-preventing-transnational-threats-cross-border-crime-irregular-migration-context-eu-security-policies-strategies-johann-wagner

[54] Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (2020). Annual report of the Secretary General on Police-related activities. Available at: https://www.osce.org/secretariat/494107

[55] Boranbayev, A. et. al. (2020). Measures to Ensure the Reliability of the Functioning of Information Systems in Respect to State and Critically Important Information Systems. *Intelligent Systems and Applications: proceedings of the 2020 Intelligent Systems Conference, 3*, 139-152.

[56] Tyler, M. C. (2016). Diversity and diplomacy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 70,* 695-697.

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Aim	Types of interventions	Academic literature
while maintaining the security and integrity of visa procedures and fully respecting human dignity and the integrity of applicants or visa holders	Maintenance of consular offices	It improves customer experience.[57]
The setting up, operation and maintenance of large-scale IT systems, including actions related to interoperability of the systems, data quality and the provision of information	Enhancing N.VIS and other related national systems and improving their operation and technical maintenance	Maintenance ensures the reliability, security, and performance of systems and technologies.[58]

Source: composed by the Evaluator

GOOD PRACTICES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME. Good practices to improve the performance of border control and visa policies of the Programme were identified in the interim Programme 2014–2020 report. By integrating them, the Programme aims to achieve optimal results, thereby ensuring that challenges disturbing the effectiveness of the Programme's implementation are successfully addressed and eliminated. The table below presents the realisation of identified practices and evaluates whether their implementation is successful.

Table 11. Implemented good practices

Insights from the Interim Report 2014–2020	Suggested good practices	Implementation	Evaluation
Noticeable shortcomings in the electronic system	Improving technical capacities of the electronic system and its operation and technical maintenance	System improvement works are constantly implemented, as indicated during the interview with the representative of MoI.[59] Although an electronic system has been introduced, interviewees still highlighted issues with this system (see section 5.2.2.)	✓ [60]
Innovative procedures which tackle administrative burden could be used wider, thereby achieving further reduction in administrative workload	Finalise necessary methodologies to achieve understanding with project promoters to make the use of simplified cost options wider	Efforts are made to create a methodology, as indicated during the interview with the representative of MoI.[61] Final beneficiaries indicated that when there is a need, a simplified cost option is used; however, most did not see the need to apply it (see section 5.3.2.).[62]	✓
The period between submission of the project application and the actual start of procurement lacks flexibility and may lead to failure of activity	Consider and document the cases in which more flexibility could be applied to the approved maximum amount for a particular budget line	According to interview respondents, project implementers calculate the required budget regarding possible challenges or economic change (e.g. inflation).[63] The supervising authorities respond to possible changes, allowing for more flexibility and incorporating new perspectives, for	✓

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[57] Lin, J.-S. C. and Liang, H.-L. (2011). The influence of service environments on customer emotion and service outcomes. *Managing Service quality: An International Journal, 21*, 350-372.

[58] Boranbayev, A. et. al. (2020). Measures to Ensure the Reliability of the Functioning of Information Systems in Respect to State and Critically Important Information Systems. *Intelligent Systems and Applications: proceedings of the 2020 Intelligent Systems Conference, 3*, 139-152.

[59] Interview with the MoI.

[60] Although actions to improve technical capacities of electronic system (VSFSVVP IS) have been taken, unforeseen circumstances have arisen that limit the effectiveness of the recommendation (see section 5.2.2.).

[61] Interview with the MoI.

[62] Interviews with the MFA, SBGS, PD, PSS, ITCD.

[63] Interview with the MFA.

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Insights from the Interim Report 2014–2020	Suggested good practices	Implementation	Evaluation
		instance, as happened with the border patrol path project.[64]	
A long-term approach encompassing full-scale analysis of future threats and challenges in the light of the geopolitical situation could be beneficial for the future relevance and capability of the policy	Foresee Programme and/or national instruments and funds to increase and enhance the capacity to study and analyse future challenges and threats in the respective policy area	Other national instruments and funds were established, as indicated during the interview with the MoI representative.[65] National Security Strategy was adopted, and the NPP has made security one of the main priorities.	✓
The specificity of the policy and the Programme leads to relatively closed planning and implementation administrative system and culture	Incentives and actions made to ensure openness of the planning and implementation processes	Active voluntary cooperation between Programme institutions is ensured in the Monitoring Committee, as indicated during the interview with the representatives of the MoI, the PD, and the CPMA.[66] More institutions were involved in the Monitoring Committee – Lithuanian Science Council and Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Also, the committee is expanding to include more members.[67]	✓ [68]

Source: composed by the Evaluator

Overall, good practices and recommendations from the 2014–2020 period interim evaluation have been fully or partially implemented.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Implementation has started with operations selected for support of the Programme under all relevant SO and types of intervention, except where a delayed start was planned by design:
1.1. Based on monitoring data, the project call publications did not experience any delays;
1.2. Based on the interview responses, the planning phase was prolonged due to objective reasons such as the complexity of the projects, lack of time to prepare required documentation, delayed implementation of central IT systems, etc.
2. The early progress towards the achievement of the milestone and target values, account taken of the timing for the adoption of the Programme, is in line with the expectations:
2.1. Based on the analysis of monitoring data and interview responses, key activities outlined in the Programme are underway and align with expectations.
3. Challenges that affect implementation and the progress towards the objectives of the Programme are duly identified and linked with effective remedies:
3.1. All interview respondents indicated that implementation challenges were identified and that effective measures were used to remedy them.
3.2. Based on insights from two respondents, identified issues are known to Programme institutions that actively work on finding solutions to address these issues.
4. The Programme supports types of interventions and types of actions that are known to be effective as per the available evidence:
4.1. Based on academic literature, implemented types of interventions are proven to be effective.
4.2. Based on the reconstructed intervention logic analysis, types of actions encompass a diverse range of measures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of border control.

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[64] Interview with the MoI.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Interviews with the MoI, the PD, and the CPMA.
[67] Meeting with the MoI.
[68] Although only two new institutions became members of Monitoring Committee, institutional and stakeholder engagement activities are ongoing.

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5. Good practices are used to improve the implementation and performance of the Programme:
5.1. Based on the analysis of the previous programming period report, good practices have been implemented to a significant extent.
5.2. Based on the analysis of previous interim evaluations, the Programme aims to achieve optimal results by ensuring that potential issues are successfully addressed.

5.2.2. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's monitoring measures

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

2.2. To what extent is the monitoring and evaluation framework suitable to inform on the progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Programme?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

2.2.1. A reliable electronic data exchange system (especially between Managing Authorities / Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries) is in place for recording and storing data for monitoring and evaluation;
2.2.2. Monitoring requirements are duly understood by the actors involved in the data supply process, and training or info sessions are organised where relevant;
2.2.3. The reporting on output and result indicators correctly reflects the level of implementation on the ground (not over / under-reporting);
2.2.4. The common indicators capture the main achievements of the Programme in line with the intervention logic of the Programme;
2.2.5. Programme-specific indicators are used to fill any substantial gap in the common indicators based on the intervention logic of the Programme;
2.2.6. The overall set of data recorded generates sufficient evidence to be used as a basis to estimate the impacts of the funds (i.e., impacts attributable to the Programme with a clear causal link), thus paving the way for the ex-post evaluation.

VSFSVVP IS ELECTRONIC SYSTEM AND ITS ISSUES. An electronic data exchange system – VSFSVVP IS – was created for the 2014–2020 period and then upgraded for the current financing period. The Managing Authority must authorize people wishing to use the system. In addition, logging in to the system takes place via the E-Government gateway (lt. *Elektroniniai valdžios vartai*) – a system that helps to identify the user securely and reliably and is considered to guarantee the highest level of authorisation security and reliability in Lithuanian public sector. A separate secure option for authorised government employees is also included. The system stores information about the Programme and its status (indicators, budget, project calls released, funding, etc.), action plan, ex-post monitoring reports, audit recommendations, etc. Moreover, the data is presented in headings that help the user search for relevant data and information. However, according to interview respondents, many issues must be fixed. Most respondents indicated that most VSFSVVP IS issues are technical (the system is designed correctly, but it simply does not function as expected). This creates an extra administrative burden for all Programme employees.

The first issue respondents indicated was that the system behaved slowly; they have been experiencing system freezes, hindering the work. The users then must inform the service provider about a specific issue and wait for it to be fixed[69], which can take a long time (sometimes up to a full workday). Second, it is occasionally impossible to log in and upload, review, or sign specific documents.[70] Third, respondents also mentioned that sometimes the VSFSVVP IS system faces technical issues – it does not allow them to fill in the required data about project implementation.[71] The fields that need to be filled in do not open or allow data upload. Notably, respondents highlighted that such issues primarily arise when uploading documents and considerable amounts of data. Fourth,

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[69] Interview with the PD.
[70] Interview with the SBGS.
[71] Interview with the PD.

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the problems are repetitive. Although system users report such issues to the service provider, unfortunately, it is not ensured that the same problems will not happen again.

A performance analysis should be initiated to identify and rectify system slowdowns and freezes and address the identified issues comprehensively. The electronic system should be optimised by mitigating bottlenecks, conducting regular maintenance activities, and refining the authentication and data upload processes for a more streamlined user experience. Moreover, integration solutions and leveraging application Programme interfaces should be considered to connect disparate systems, facilitating seamless data transfer.

Although VSFSVVP IS has many issues, institutions cooperate to address them and ensure that system upgrading is implemented regularly and effectively.[72] The goal is to create a comprehensive and well-functioning electronic system, which ultimately would be linked to the shared EU system.[73] This would eliminate (or at least reduce) the work of uploading data, documents, etc., from VSFSVVP IS to EU systems, consequently reducing the administrative burden for the employees.[74]

During an interview, the representative of the CPMA expressed disappointment about the quality of maintenance and administration of the VSFSVVP IS system's service provider.[75] Unfortunately, due to the procurement system and contract, the CPMA's ability to interact with the service provider is limited, and they cannot collaborate with it to help upgrade the VSFSVVP IS system.[76] Notably, to ensure a well-functioning system is provided in future, the procurement procedures should be adjusted to ensure a more rigorous assessment of the potential contractor's competence and ability to provide such service.[77]

Notably, the Evaluators have been granted access to the VSFSVVP IS system, facilitating a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of the VSFSVVP IS system.
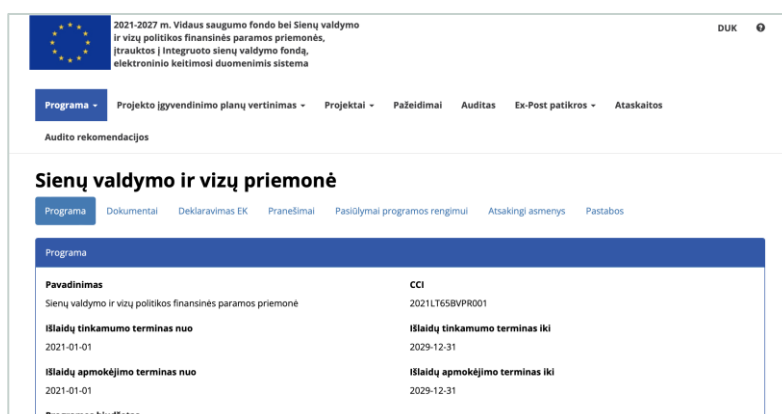
Figure 5. VSFSVVP IS website
Source: VSFSVVP IS

MONITORING. Interview respondents assured they clearly understand the monitoring requirements because they constantly receive training or support.[78] Notably, this ensures that experienced people work with the Programme, meaning they do not need as much information and training throughout the whole implementation process. Also, Programme institutions actively communicate during project implementation – they answer questions via emails and telephone calls. Nevertheless, the respondents stated that if additional training and information sessions were offered, they would be interested in participating[79] to expand their knowledge and skills.

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[72] Interview with the MoI.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Interview with the CPMA.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Interview with the SBGS.
[79] Interview with the PD.

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COMPREHENSIVENESS OF KEY PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS. The BMVI Programme includes output and result indicators for each SO that must be met through project implementation. In essence, these indicators contribute to a holistic and effective evaluation of the BMVI Programme's success, ensuring a well-rounded assessment of its impact on the intended outcomes.

All participants were asked whether Programme indicators were clear and comprehensive during the interviews. All of the respondents answered that they were mainly clear.[80] However, four indicators (two output and two result indicators) have been identified as potentially too abstract or unclear, raising concerns about their ability to provide valuable insights into the Programme's implementation. They are summarised in the table below.

Table 12. Unclear Programme indicators

Indicators		Interview respondents' comment	Evaluator's note
OUTPUT INDICATORS			
O.1.2.	Number of items of infrastructure maintained / repaired	The representative of the MoI indicated that this indicator is too vague	The lack of clarity in defining the scope of "items of infrastructure" could result in including public infrastructure beyond the project's influence, thus undermining the indicator's focus on the project's impact alone.
			The lack of clarity in defining the indicator poses a risk of misinterpretation and undermines the reliability of the information it provides.
			Comparability is challenging if different projects have varying types of infrastructure.
O.1.10	Number of IT functionalities developed / maintained / upgraded	The representatives of the MoI and the ITCD indicated that this indicator is too vague	The indicator is project-specific, focusing on the number of IT functionalities. However, it is too abstract since quantifying functionality may not capture the complexity, quality, or user impact, necessitating a more comprehensive assessment incorporating efficiency, user satisfaction, and system performance.
			It is hard to compare different projects with different definitions of IT functionalities or if there are variations in the complexity and scope of functionalities.
RESULT INDICATORS			
R.1.14.	Number of items of equipment registered in the technical equipment pool of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency	The representative of the MoI indicated that this indicator is too vague	It is hard to compare if different projects involve different types of equipment or if there are variations in the criteria for registration.
R.1.15.	Number of items of equipment put at the disposal of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency	The representative of the MoI indicated that this indicator is too vague	It is hard to compare if there are different variations in the criteria for disposal, as it introduces potential inconsistencies in the assessment of the indicator across projects.

Source: composed by the Evaluator

Generally, the data recorded is sufficient evidence to assess the impact of the Programme funds. The electronic system provides information on the Programme's implementation, budget, etc., allowing us to see the progress made on the implementation. Furthermore, the publicly available list of projects to be funded under the BMVI provides insights into the priority given to projects. The funded projects contribute to the SO of the Programme and, at the same time, help to improve the environment for border security and visa procedures. Notably, output and result indicators help to recognise how the implemented measures contribute to the SO of the Programme and what results the funded projects would help to achieve. They also provide an overview of the areas of intervention where the funded projects will seek to bring about change.

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[80] Interview with the PD, the SBGS, the MFA, the IDPC, and the ITCD.

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REPORTING OF OUTPUT, RESULT, AND SPECIFIC INDICATORS. The BMVI Programme outlines output and result indicators for each SO. Indicator targets were set for 2024 and 2029 to monitor the implementation progress. They contribute to a comprehensive and effective evaluation of the Program's success. Notably, they do not specify the measures, actions, or projects that will contribute to fulfilling these indicators. Programme-specific indicators have been established to address that. They contribute to the fulfilment and comprehension of common Programme indicators. Also, these indicators allow for a more granular and tailored assessment of each project's progress and success, ensuring that the evaluation criteria align closely with the unique goals and objectives of the BMVI Programme.

Targets for each specific project are set and can be seen in the VSFSVVP IS monitoring system. Since some of the ongoing projects' foreseen activities start in 2024 or later and their progress cannot be measured, the analysis will be limited to the completed or ongoing activity indicators. The table below presents the ongoing or finished project activities since 2021.

Table 13. Reporting on indicators for projects' activities under implementation

Institution	Project title	Financed activities	Implementation period		Indicator	Indicator type	Target value	Factual value	Progress rate
			Start	Finish					
MFA	Additional operating costs of MFA 2021–2023	9.1 Maintenance of staff implementing the STS in diplomatic missions	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	37	31	83.7%
		9.2 Retention of staff implementing the STS in the MFA	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	78	55	70.5%
		9.3 Maintenance of staff on temporary additional duty on trains or on STS implementation tasks in the MFA of the Republic of Lithuania or in its diplomatic missions	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	328	524	159.7%
		9.4 Rent and maintenance of premises, working tools for the implementation of the STS	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	2 277	1 630	71.5%
		9.6 Maintenance and support of STDIS	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	2	2	100%
		9.7 Communications costs	01/03/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	3	3	100%
PD	Additional operating costs of PD 2021–2023	9.1 Reimbursement of the costs of maintenance (salary, social insurance contributions) of the staff of police agencies ensuring the control of the transit of citizens of the Russian Federation through the territory of the Republic of Lithuania by rail and by land	01/01/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	Quantity indicator	1 900	13 264	698%
		9.2 Reimbursement of police vehicle running costs	01/01/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	850	4 396	517%
		9.3 Reimbursement of police vehicle rental costs	01/01/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	160	826	516.25%

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Institution	Project title	Financed activities	Implementation period		Indicator	Indicator type	Target value	Factual value	Progress rate
			Start	Finish					
		9.4 Reimbursement of the costs of maintenance, repair, extension or modernisation of the video surveillance system on the transit railway section Kena-Vilnius-Kaunas-Kybartai	01/01/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	3	5	166.6%
PSS	Additional operating costs of PSS 2021–2023	9.1 Maintenance and upkeep of 35 vehicles	01/02/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator	Quantity indicator	35	9	25.7%
ITCD	Additional operating costs of ITCD 2021–2023	9.1. SMRRT operating costs	01/01/2022	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. SMRRT operating costs)	Quantity indicator	11.54	22.96	198%
		9.2 Operating costs of the VRTT	01/01/2022	31/12/2023	Project indicator (26. Other)	Quantity indicator	11.54	11.42	98.96%
SBGS	Installation of border surveillance systems (A. Barausko, Kapčiamesčio, Kabelių, Adutiškio, Tverečiaus, Puškų frontier stations)	10.1 Installation of wall monitoring systems	01/02/2021	31/12/2023	Project indicator (1. Surveillance system developed/upgraded and related special equipment procured (Land Surveillance System, Video Surveillance System, Marine Surveillance System, etc.)	Quantity indicator	6	6	100%
			01/02/2021	31/12/2023	Programme indicator (O.1.10)	–	6	6	100%
SBGS	Strengthening of cynological capacities, Phase I	10.1 Purchase of service dogs	02/10/2023	31/12/2025	Project indicator (15. Capacity building (cynology, customs units, LPAOR "Aras")	Quantity indicator	25	6	24%
			02/10/2023	31/12/2025	Programme indicator (O.1.1)	–	168	10	5.95%
		10.3 Purchase of protective training suits for dogs	03/10/2023	30/08/2024	Project indicator (15. Capacity building (cynology, customs units, LPAOR "Aras")	Quantity indicator	6	0	0%
		10.6 Purchase of ammunition and maintenance kits for service dog training	04/09/2023	30/04/2024	Project indicator (15. Capacity building (cynology, customs units, LPAOR "Aras")	Quantity indicator	25	0	0%
SBGS	Specialised and advanced training for border guards, Phase I	10.1 Foreign language (English) training	02/01/2023	31/12/2025	Project indicator (6. Staff/officers trained)	Quantity indicator	120	12	10%
			02/01/2023	31/12/2025	Programme indicator (O.1.8)	–	871	0	0%
			02/01/2023	31/12/2025	Programme indicator (O.1.8.1)	–	871	41	4.71%
			02/01/2023	31/12/2025	Programme indicator (R.1.19)	–	843	41	4.86%
		10.2 Intermediate (Level II) Training Course in Document Inspection and Investigation (ALDO)	01/02/2023	31/10/2025	Project indicator (6. Staff/officers trained)	Quantity indicator	105	14	13.3%
		10.3 Stolen vehicle identification training	02/05/2023	31/10/2025	Project indicator (6. Staff/officers trained)	Quantity indicator	105	15	14.28%

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Institution	Project title	Financed activities	Implementation period		Indicator	Indicator type	Target value	Factual value	Progress rate
			Start	Finish					
MFA	Maintenance of consular officers, Phase I	10.1 Maintenance of consular officers at the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in Almaty	28/06/2022	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	2	2	100%
			28/06/2022	31/12/2024	Programme indicator (O.2.3)	–	12	5	41.6%
					Programme indicator (O.2.3.1)	–	8	4	50%
					Programme indicator (R.2.8)	–	3	2	66.6%
					Programme indicator (O.2.8.1)	–	24	2	8.3%
					Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	2	2	100%
		10.2 Maintenance of technical staff at the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in Almaty	01/03/2023	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	2	1	50%
		10.3 Maintenance of a consular officer at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Armenia	03/09/2022	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	1	1	100%
		10.4 Maintenance of a technical staff member at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Armenia	01/12/2022	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	1	0	0%
		10.5 Maintenance of a technical staff member at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Turkey	01/07/2023	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	1	0	0%
		10.6 Maintenance of diplomats in the Consular Department of the MFA	01/03/2023	31/12/2024	Project indicator (7. Retained staff (salaries and other related costs)	–	2	1	50%
SBGS	Acquisition of STS vehicles, Phase I	13.1 Purchase of STS transport vehicles	01/02/2023	30/09/2024	Project indicator (12. Vehicles purchased)	Quantity indicator	3	2	66.7%

Source: composed by the Evaluator based on VSFSVVP IS monitoring data

Clearly, most factual values reported are lower than established target values. Yet, it is essential to look at the implementation timeline. Many projects are currently in progress; thus, the factual values are lower than the target ones. Additionally, the alignment of reported values with the expected project timelines and the projected completion dates in 2024 or 2025 indicates that the project implementation is happening smoothly. It is imperative to highlight that a few project activities have achieved higher values than expected.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. An electronic data exchange system (especially between the Managing Authority/Intermediate Body and beneficiaries) for recording and storing data for monitoring and evaluation is in place:
1.1. According to all respondents, the electronic system has many issues that affect Programme implementation. Lack of a proper, well-functioning system leads to more delays and increased administrative burden;
1.2. Compared to the previous period, the interviewees expressed that the system has improved considerably in terms of functionality. Notably, correcting the technical failures would ensure an even smoother user experience.

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2. Monitoring requirements are duly understood by the actors involved in the data supply process, and training or info-sessions are organised where relevant:

2.1. 85% of the interview respondents said that the Programme institutions, primarily the CPMA, provided them with the relevant information before the start of projects;

2.2. They also assured that they can contact institutions and receive adequate support if any questions arise.

3. The reporting on output and result indicators correctly reflects the level of implementation on the ground (not over / under-reporting):

3.1. Based on monitoring data analysis, 21 ongoing projects will be completed in late 2024 or 2025; thus, the current reported values are lower than the target values;

3.2. The reporting is aligned with the expected project timelines.

4. The common indicators capture the main achievements of the Programme in line with the intervention logic of the Programme:

4.1. According to 90% of interview respondents, the result and output indicators are rather clear. The remaining 10% of respondents indicated that some indicators are too vague;

4.2. Based on a comparative analysis of the reconstructed intervention logic and planned indicators, two result and two output indicators are too vague.

5. The Programme indicators are used to fill any substantial gap in the common indicators based on the intervention logic of the Programme:

5.1. Project indicators serve as specific indicators as was identified during the project monitoring analysis;

5.2. Project indicators allow for a more granular and tailored assessment of each project's progress, ensuring that the evaluation criteria align closely with the unique goals and objectives of the BMVI Programme.

6. The overall set of data recorded generates sufficient evidence to be used as a basis to estimate the impacts of the fund, thus paving the way for the ex-post evaluation:

6.1. Common indicators help to recognise how the implemented measures contribute to the SOs of the Programme and what projects would help achieve them;

6.2. Some common indicators are too vague and are compensated by project indicators;

6.3. Project indicators tend to generate a lot of additional material for future ex-post evaluation.

5.2.3. Evaluation of relevant partner's inclusion

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

2.3. How was the involvement of the relevant partners ensured across all stages of the programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

2.3.1. There is a strategy in place to identify, inform and reach the most relevant partners, which aims to ensure their balanced representation in the Monitoring Committee;

2.3.2. Relevant partners have been identified and involved at the programming stage;

2.3.3. Relevant partners participate in the Monitoring Committee in line with their role as defined by the relevant rules of procedure;

2.3.4. Actions are put in place to enable the participation of the partners across all stages of the Programme cycle.

The stakeholders that were involved in the Inter-Institutional Working Group and later in the Monitoring Committee were selected and invited by the Managing Authority according to relevant procedures. All of these institutions are now responsible for the management of the Programme or the implementation of the projects. The current members of the Monitoring Committee are:

- Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Lithuanian Science Council;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania;
- State Border Guard Service under the MoI;
- Police Department under the MoI;

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- Information Technology and Communications Department under the MoI;
- Public Security Service under the MoI;
- Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Financial Crime Investigation Service under the MoI;
- Customs Department under the Ministry of Finance;
- State Security Department of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania.

The key difference from the composition of the Inter-Institutional Working Group is the inclusion of the **Lithuanian Science Council** and **the Ministry of Social Security and Labour**; these institutions did not participate in creating the Programme but are now full members of the Monitoring Committee. This was done partly to address the recommendation in the 2014–2020 period interim evaluation that pointed towards the close circle of institutions and recommended expanding it to include more actors. The Lithuanian Science Council's participation in the Monitoring Committee also mitigates the risk of overlap between the BMVI activities and the Horizon Europe research projects in Lithuania.

Crucially, the Managing Authority expressed that the further expansion of the Monitoring Committee is currently underway – the invitations were sent to **the Mykolas Romeris University Public Security Academy, the International Police Association's Lithuanian Section,** and **the Lithuanian Defence and Security Industries Association**. It is extremely likely that these organisations will appoint their representatives and will get involved in the Monitoring Committee soon; therefore, no substantial issues with the partners' inclusion were identified during the evaluation.

Upon analysing the composition of the Monitoring Committees of other member states, the lack of non-governmental organisations, especially those working in the fields of diversity, equality, migration, and fundamental rights, was identified. For example, in Poland, additional members of the Monitoring Committee are international organizations, such as IOM Poland and UNHCR, and public institutions like the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons and the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment.

However, the Lithuanian Monitoring Committee primarily covers the BMVI and ISF programmes, while in many other Member States, the same committee also manages the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund. The Monitoring Committee in Lithuania, nevertheless, includes the Managing Authority of AMIF (the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) to ensure no overlaps happen. Given the area of work of this fund, it makes more sense to include a wider range of organisations as in other Member States. It was also noted that the non-governmental organisations in Lithuania usually are not keen on joining the Monitoring Committee given that it is an unpaid additional responsibility for them[81]; this constitutes a major hindrance to the expansion of the membership.

In general, all stakeholders expressed their satisfaction with the institutions involved and the work of the Monitoring Committee during the semi-structured interviews. In answer to the question regarding potential new members, all institutions mentioned the specificity of the programme and the lack of need for more members. Most interviewees praised the quality of cooperation and communication. This is also evidenced by the Monitoring Committee meeting protocols, where it is visible that members actively participate in the Programme implementation process, relevant issues are raised and discussed, and the decisions are made in consensus (for more detailed analysis, see section 5.1.2). It should be highlighted that relevant partners participate in the Monitoring Committee in line with their role as defined by the rules of procedure that have already been approved by the committee in the first meeting.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Members of the Monitoring Committee were selected at the programming state to ensure all final beneficiaries were involved. The Lithuanian Science Council and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour have also joined to address the potential overlap with other initiatives.

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[81] Meeting with the MoI.

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1.1. Generally, the Monitoring Committee consists of relevant stakeholders; however, the membership of the Monitoring Committee could have been expanded – during the evaluation, some additional invitations were extended to the Mykolas Romeris University Public Security Academy, International Police Association's Lithuanian Section, and Lithuanian Defence and Security Industries Association, meaning the potential issues is being proactively addressed by the Managing Authority;

1.2. No complaints were expressed during the interviews with the stakeholders; many praised the quality of cooperation and communication.

2. Rules of procedure have been approved during the first Monitoring Committee meeting to ensure everyone's participation.

3. Actions and procedures are in place to enable the participation of members across all stages of the programming cycle. Each institution has appointed representatives to ensure their representation in planning and later stages of the Programme. The meetings allow the space to discuss various issues raised by different members, as evidenced by the meeting protocols.

5.2.4. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's impact on horizontal principles

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

2.4. To what extent does the Programme respect or promote the horizontal principles in its implementation?

The following judgement criteria are investigated:

2.4.1. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place to ensure the respect of the charter of fundamental rights of the EU in the Programme implementation - Art. 9(1);
2.4.2. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place which ensure that appropriate steps are taken to consider and promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming across all stages of the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the Programme - Art. 9(2);
2.4.3. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place that allow taking appropriate steps to prevent discrimination on all grounds and across all stages of the programming cycle - Art. 9(3);
2.4.4. The Programme has suitable arrangements that ensure that implementation is aligned with the objective of promoting sustainable development, as set out in Article 11 TFEU, considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the "do no significant harm" principle - Art. 9(4).

During the evaluation of the BMVI Programme's impact on horizontal principles, Rules of the ISF and the BMVI[82], national funding and tenders' rules[83] on the management of financing of projects under the ISF, ordinances of the action plans for the implementation of the BMVI instrument, BMVI Programme and other documents have been analysed. The analysis showed that respect and promotion of horizontal principles are established throughout the project evaluation and monitoring procedures. Notably, the representatives from institutions responsible for Programme implementation indicated that requirements of Article 9 of GPR are not fully in line with the BMVI specificities, resulting in added administrative burden.[84] However, the adherence to horizontal principles analysis will not cover the administrative burden, which is analysed in section 5.3.3.

The BMVI Programme sets out horizontal enabling conditions to ensure that horizontal principles are respected. Specific criteria are presented to ensure that all enabling conditions are fulfilled. All conditions are effectively fulfilled by creating rules and procedures that authorities must follow and not discriminate against gender, race, disabilities, etc., respecting the principle of "do no significant harm".

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[82] Rules for the management and financing of projects under the ISF and the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy included in the Integrated Border Management Fund, approved by Order No. 1V-467 of the Minister of the Interior on 4 July 2022.
[83] Guidelines for applicants submitting project implementation plans under the programmes of the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy includes in the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Internal Security Fund for the period 2021-2027, approved by Order No. 2022/8-472 the Director of the CPMA on 28 November 2022.
[84] Interview with the MoI.

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In compliance with horizontal principles, the Rules of the ISF and the BMVI have set out an evaluation criterion for projects funded under the BMVI that states that "the project does not have a negative impact on the horizontal principles set out in Article 9 of General Provisions Regulation and in Chapter III of the NPP for 2021–2030 approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No. 998 of 9 September 2020 "On the Approval of the National Progress Plan for the period 2021–2030 years".[85] This clause ensures that all projects' objectives, results, output, measures, and the definition of target groups must not include actions or procedures that would violate the horizontal principles and must be supported and implemented accordingly. This criterion has been transferred to CPMA, which administers the project implementation.[86] Moreover, the funding authority scores the project's compliance with horizontal principles based on selection criteria. If the project does not meet the criterion, no score (or low score) is given and vice versa.

Furthermore, the implementation of the project is monitored to ensure adherence to horizontal principles. Responsible authorities "must carry out financial and operational verification for each project at the project site"[87]. This means that institutional bodies meet the performance standards and horizontal principles. Also, any dispute that arises must be resolved objectively, adhering to the Fundamental Rights Charter of the EU.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusion can be made:

1. The BMVI Programme consistently integrates and promotes horizontal principles through established rules, criteria, and monitoring mechanisms, demonstrating commitment to their comprehensive implementation:
1.1. Rules of the ISF and the BMVI have set an evaluation criterion for projects funded under the BMVI;
1.2. Projects are scored based on their compliance with horizontal principles listed in the Fundamental Rights Charter of the EU, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement;
1.3. Projects are monitored based on project monitoring procedures and rules to ensure they comply with horizontal principles throughout the implementation process.

5.2.5. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's communication measures

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

2.5. To what extent is the Programme effective in communicating and disseminating its opportunities and achievements?

The following judgement criteria are investigated:

2.5.1. Dissemination activities reach the target audience and are carried out through an appropriate mix of communication channels and platforms, including social media, and generate interactions;
2.5.2. Funding opportunities are adequately advertised and reach the identified target group of potential beneficiaries.

METHODS APPLIED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. The BMVI Programme sets an objective to ensure the visibility, transparency, and communication activities of the BMVI in Lithuania. Notably, the MoI has an employee responsible for coordinating dissemination activities. Also, it is foreseen that the communication and the visibility will be carried out at two levels:

- By the Managing Authority (providing information about the implementation of the Programme to other institutions, applicants, final beneficiaries, etc.);

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[85] Rules for the management and financing of projects under the Internal Security Fund and the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy included in the Integrated Border Management Fund, approved by Order No. 1V-467 of the Minister of the Interior on 4 July 2022, Chapter II-III, point 24.5.
[86] Guidelines for applicants submitting project implementation plans under the programmes of the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy includes in the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Internal Security Fund for the period 2021-2027, approved by Order No. 2022/8-472 the Director of the CPMA on 28 November 2022, point 39.5.
[87] Rules for the management and financing of projects under the Internal Security Fund and the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy included in the Integrated Border Management Fund, approved by Order No. 1V-467 of the Minister of the Interior on 4 July 2022, Chapter VIII-I, point 169.

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- Direct communication with the citizens about the role and achievements of the Programme.[88]

This way ensures that all information reaches the target audience and the public. The target audience is rather narrow due to Programme specificity, i.e., its relation to border security management. Also, the Programme has established a list of potential beneficiaries (see Chapter 3), concluding what institutions can seek financing for and implement projects. Nevertheless, according to all interview respondents, particularly project implementers, the required information, including funding opportunities, is available to them.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND SOLUTION METHODS. Generally, it was foreseen that communication guidelines would be prepared.[89] During an interview with the CPMA, the agency's representative highlighted the necessity to have comprehensive communication guidelines. However, the development process has been somewhat stagnant due to the emergence of additional questions about CPR and challenges. Despite these challenges, the CPMA had a vision of what guidelines are supposed to look like and what information should be provided; however, due to external issues such as late responses or feedback from EC, they were prepared and released much later than intended.

Supervising institutions actively communicated with project implementers via other methods to overcome challenges posed by the lack of communication guidelines. Notably, the representatives of the IDPC, the PD, the MFA and other institutions highlighted that supervising institutions still ensure that all the required information is provided to them. If any questions arise, they can contact them via phone or email and get immediate responses with answered questions.[90] Also, they participated in informative events hosted by the CPMA, where they were introduced to information about project rules, requirements, funding, etc. Nevertheless, supervising institutions that use such activities and methods to ensure effective communication expressed that it adds some extra administrative burden to their employees.[91]

Digital communication channels are also used to share relevant information. The MoI provides information about the BMVI and funding on an internet website designed for the BMVI and ISF. The website shares information about the BMVI, legal information (national and EU laws), news, communication, etc. This website aims to deliver information on the ongoing projects and their development. The needed information can be found under the heading. Also, this website provides informative material such as podcasts and videos that introduce people to the results of implemented projects, measures taken to strengthen the external borders, etc. Notably, you can subscribe to a newsletter and get information regarding the Programme and projects through email.

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Figure 6. Internet website for the BMVI and ISF 2021-2027
Source: https://vsfsvvp.lt/en

The CPMA manages the second internet website where the information concerning the Programme, ongoing projects and funding is provided,[92] including but not limited to the details on the areas funded by the Programme, who can be potential project promoters, and the amount of funds of the Programme (national and EU funds) that are available. Moreover, information about the Programme's tenders includes financial support instruments for border management and visa policy included in the IBMF, the emblem to highlight the support from the EU and guidelines for applicants submitting project implementation plans (applications) under the BMVI.[93]
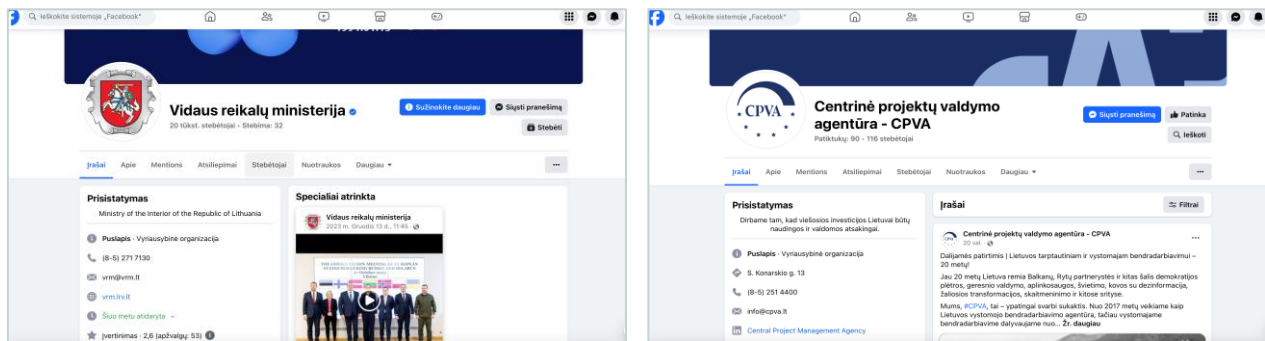

Figure 7. Internet website for the CPMA
Source: https://www.cpva.lt/sienu-valdymo-ir-vizu-politikos-finansines-paramos-priemone-ir-vidaus-saugumo-fondas-2021-2027/856

Additionally, a general government portal, where all the primary information on EU funds is provided, provides summary information on BMVI and links to portals previously mentioned.[94]

Furthermore, the MoI and the CPMA have social media accounts on YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook (additionally, the MoI has an Instagram account mainly used to inform the public about international and public meetings and celebrations). Institutions use LinkedIn and Facebook accounts to share news and events and engage with the public through comments and messages. Although both institutions are quite active on these social media platforms, they do not share enough information about the BMVI Programme. For instance, at the time of the Evaluation, only two posts from 2022 and 2023 had been published on the MoI Facebook page: the first post informed about the amount of funding from the EU for the BMVI Programme; the second was about the best 2014–2020 Programme projects. On the contrary, CPMA has no posts about previous or current BMVI programmes.

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[92] CPMA. Areas of action. Available at: https://www.cpva.lt/sienu-valdymo-ir-vizu-politikos-finansines-paramos-priemone-ir-vidaus-saugumo-fondas-2021-2027/856
[93] CPMA. Border Management and Visa Policy Support Instrument and Internal Security Fund 2021-2027. Tenders. Available at: https://www.cpva.lt/sienu-valdymo-ir-vizu-politikos-finansines-paramos-priemone-ir-vidaus-saugumo-fondas-2021-2027/kvietimai/859
[94] Access via internet: https://lrv.lt/lt/es-fondu-investicijos-lietuvoje-2021-2027-m/

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Figure 8. MoI (left) and CPMA (right) Facebook accounts
Source: Facebook

Accordingly, it is recommended that both MoI and CPMA increase their social media presence and engagement, specifically regarding the BMVI programme. Also, it is essential to ensure that the MoI and the CPMA LinkedIn profiles are regularly updated with accurate information about the BMVI programme, attracting professionals and potential collaborators.

Moreover, YouTube is mainly used for informative videos to introduce the work institutions do and educate the public on how to correctly fill in documents for project funding, presentations, etc. Also, they post educational videos about the impact of introduced policies or funded projects and the changes that happened.
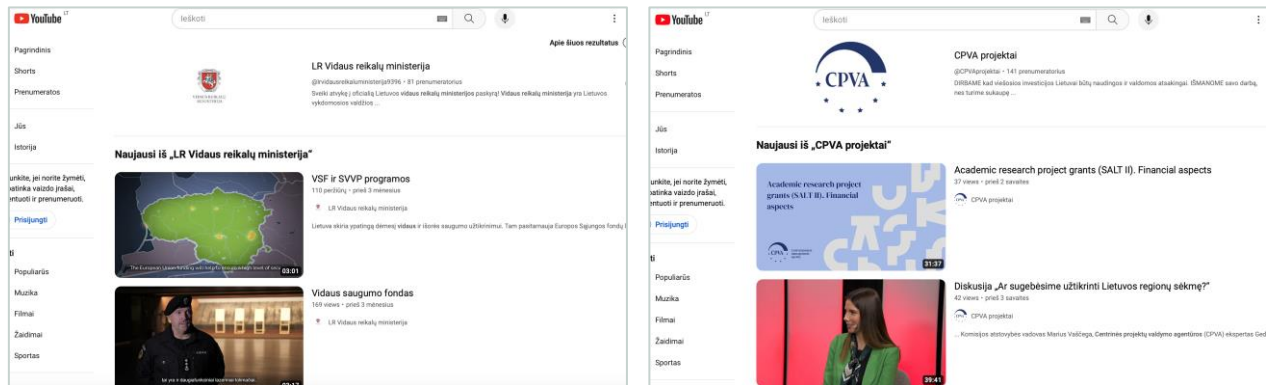

Figure 9. MoI (left) and CPMA (right) YouTube accounts
Source: YouTube

Regarding the BMVI Programme, the MoI has two videos posted on its YouTube channel: one introductory video about the BMVI Programme and ISF (objectives, funding provided, aims, etc.) and one video about ISF (what equipment was purchased, how it enables better border control, etc.). In contrast, the CPMA does not have any videos concerning the Programme; instead, there is information about documentation preparation, calculating required finances, etc.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Dissemination activities reach the target audience and are carried out through an appropriate mix of communication channels and platforms, including social media, and generate interactions:
1.1. Based on the analysis of information dissemination activities, social media accounts and websites are utilised somewhat sufficiently by the MoI and CPMA; however, there is a lack of content specifically related to the BMVI Programme, indicating potential improvement in leveraging these channels for raising awareness;
1.2. Based on the interview with the representative of CPMA, a lack of communication guidelines hindered the effective implementation of the communication strategy.
1.3. Communication guidelines has been approved during preparation of this report and were published on 2024–02–07
2. Funding opportunities are adequately advertised and reach the identified target group of potential beneficiaries:
2.1. Based on the interviews and the reconstructed intervention logic, the target audience is narrow due to Programme specificity (border security and management);
2.2. The analysis of information dissemination activities shows that the target audience is aware of the funding opportunities.

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5.3. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme according to efficiency criteria

According to the EC Revised Background Note, efficiency assesses the relationship between the resources used by an intervention and the changes generated by it. In the context of this evaluation exercise, the focus will lie on the extent to which the design of the Programme is conducive to efficient use of resources and whether there is room for further economies or simplification. Early comparative evidence stemming from operation-level data will indicate the state of play at the beginning of the programming period.

5.3.1. Evaluation of the extent to which the BMVI Programme invests in economically efficient measures

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

3.1. To what extent does the Programme support cost-effective measures?

The following judgement criteria are investigated:

3.1.1. The Programme supports types of interventions and types of actions that are known to be cost-effective, based on available evidence, including relevant literature or the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme;
3.1.2. The early evidence coming from the operations indicates that the cost per unit is in line with or below existing benchmarks and estimates;
3.1.3. The differences in the cost per unit among similar operations within the same Programme can be explained and justified (e.g., differences in the intensity or quality of the support offered, innovativeness, etc.).

COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMME TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS. Generally, despite the challenges in evaluating the efficiency of implemented projects due to the delayed start of implementation of the Programme and the incomplete status of projects at the time of evaluation, the indicators suggest potential efficiency gains. CPMA plays a crucial role in ensuring effective utilisation of Programme funds. The institution showcases its extensive expertise in managing EU initiatives by assessing the costs outlined in project application budgets, performing pre- and post-evaluations of public procurement procedures and implementing measures to prevent, detect, report, and address irregularities.[95] These activities are executed with assurance and accuracy, guaranteeing the efficient and effective utilisation of EU funds. Numerous projects within the BMVI concentrate on enhancing IT systems and networks, procuring equipment, and advancing education and training. These endeavours are carefully planned to seamlessly integrate Lithuania's IT systems into the broader EU framework and promote collaboration among law enforcement institutions on the European level. Projects centred on international training are anticipated to fortify cooperation and improve the capabilities of security-related institutions, thereby reinforcing Lithuania's IT systems. Importantly, these initiatives not only significantly contribute to strengthening national security but also result in heightened security measures at the EU level. The cost-effectiveness of the selected interventions is thoroughly substantiated by academic research.

IT SYSTEMS. Academic research underscores the cost-effectiveness of investing in IT systems for national security due to various compelling reasons. Investment in the IT sector enhances efficiency, automates processes, improves information sharing, and facilitates collaboration.[96] Furthermore, it enables the proficient analysis of large datasets through advanced analytics and data processing capabilities, supporting predictive modelling for the early identification of potential threats. It is also crucial for developing robust cybersecurity measures, with

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[95] Guidelines for applicants submitting project implementation plans under the programmes of the financial support instrument for Border Management and Visa Policy includes in the Integrated Border Management Fund and the Internal Security Fund for the period 2021-2027, approved by Order No. 2022/8-472 of the Director of the CPMA on 28 November 2022.
[96] Setia P., Patel C. P. (2013). How Information Systems Help Create OM Capabilities: Consequents and Antecedents of Operational Absorptive Capacity, *Journal of Operational Management, 31(*6), 409-431.

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the added advantage of easy upgrades and adaptations to address new and emerging threats.[97] The adaptability of national security infrastructure ensures its effectiveness in response to evolving security landscapes. Additionally, IT systems empower countries to engage actively in global threat intelligence sharing networks, facilitating the exchange of information on international security threats.[98] Consequently, a strong focus of projects within the Programme is directed towards IT systems that enable interconnectedness with the international networks.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT. Providing law enforcement agencies with advanced technology and tools serves as a deterrent to potential criminal activities.[99] The conspicuous presence of well-equipped police forces discourages individuals from participating in illegal actions, thereby contributing to a safer environment. Advanced equipment significantly augments the capability of law enforcement agencies to respond effectively to diverse threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, and organized criminal activities. Timely and efficient responses play a crucial role in preventing the escalation of incidents and safeguarding public safety. Investing in state-of-the-art equipment tailored to prescribed border control functions enhances communities' safety and security. The perception of law enforcement as well-equipped and proficient in handling emergencies fosters trust and confidence in the authorities.[100] Furthermore, investing in cutting-edge technology enables law enforcement agencies to avoid threats and challenges posed by criminals who continually adapt to new technologies and strategies. This ensures that these agencies are well-prepared and well-trained to combat crime effectively.

SPECIAL STAFF/OFFICER TRAINING AND EDUCATION. Investing in education and training is crucial in equipping personnel with advanced skills and competencies.[101] This will enable them to improve communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills essential for effective policing. Officers who receive comprehensive training are better equipped to handle difficult situations without resorting to excessive force. Instruction in de-escalation techniques also leads to a significant reduction in use-of-force incidents. Emphasising competence further strengthens the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve, promoting increased public trust and cooperation.[102] Continuing education ensures that law enforcement agencies remain updated with evolving laws, technologies, and policing strategies. Adaptability is crucial in effectively addressing emerging threats. Well-trained officers are less likely to make errors that could result in legal liabilities for law enforcement agencies, reducing the risk of legal challenges, lawsuits, and associated costs.[103]

SUFFICIENCY OF FUNDS. According to interview respondents, the funds distributed for each project under the BMVI are sufficient. Notably, respondents indicated that despite inflation, they had not experienced any lack of funds. This is because project implementers, before project implementation, had implemented effective budgeting and financial management practices that foresee possible price changes or a need for more funds.[104] These practices ensure that the allocated funds for each project are carefully planned. The CPMA and its procedures also ensure the effective use of funding. However, some respondents indicated that they received less funding than initially requested.[105] They see a risk that the funds received might be insufficient to implement projects fully. Also, they noted that when planning the required amount of funds, it is hard to calculate the exact amount of funding that will be needed due to project specificity. Nevertheless, they ensure that received funding is spent effectively and the remaining funds are used if there are any savings from other projects.[106]

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[97] Jacobs, J., Rudis, B. (2014). *Data-driven Security: Analysis, Visualization and Dashboards*, John Wiley & Sons.

[98] Choucri, N., Madnick, A., Koepke, P. (2016). *Institutions for Cyber Security: International Responses and Data Sharing Initiatives*, Working Paper CISL# 2016-10, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

[99] Byrne, J., Marx, G. (2011). Technological Innovations in Crime Prevention and Policing. A Review of the Research on Implementation and Impact, *Cahiers Politiestudies Jaargang, 20*, 17-40.

[100] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2011). *Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity*.

[101] Tyler, M. C. (2016). Diversity and diplomacy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 70*, 695-697.

[102] Whitfield M. (2019). *Influence of Implicit-Bias Training on the Cultural Competency of Police Officers*, Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection, Walden University.

[103] White, M. D., Orosco, C. & Watts, S. (2023). Can police de-escalation training reduce use of force and citizen injury without compromising officer safety? *Journal of Experimental Criminology*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-023-09584-8

[104] Interview with the MFA.

[105] Interview with the ITCD.

[106] Ibid.

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COST PER UNIT ANALYSIS. Generally, the variations in the cost per unit among similar operations can be clarified and validated by factors such as the intensity and quality of support provided or the level of innovativeness. This highlights the intricate dynamics of program components, where the nature of assistance differs based on specific contextual needs or the inherent complexity of certain tasks. The ongoing Programme projects have approved funding for implementing activities (see Table below). STS projects are not analysed because they have no designated Programme output indicators.

Table 14. Cost per unit analysis for implemented projects

Action	Institution	Project	Indicator (product)	Programme goal	Project goal	Total project investments, Eur	Relative investment of the project, Eur	Weighted average (cost per indicator unit)	Assessment	Assessment
1.10	SBGS	1101	O.1.10	48.00	6.00	40 015 594 €	6 669 265.7 €	2 103 612 €	Above weighted average	A higher number of functionalities must be developed/maintained/operated compared to other projects
1.10	SBGS	1102	O.1.1	950.00	80.00	70 701.2 €	883.8 €	19 430.3 €	Below weighted average	−
1.10	SBGS	1103	O.1.5.1	17.00	18.00	5 337 500 €	296 527.8 €	462 831.6 €	Below weighted average	−
1.10	SBGS	1104	O.1.7	299.00	92.00	4 382 841.3 €	47 639.6 €	65 646.8 €	Below weighted average	−
1.10	SBGS	1105	O.1.1	950.00	3.00	3 201 000 €	1 067 000 €	19 430.3 €	Above weighted average	More transport vehicles with special equipment must be purchased compared to other projects
1.1	SBGS	111	O.1.10	48.00	4.00	15 952 200 €	3 988 050 €	2 103 612 €	Above weighted average	A lower number of functionalities must be developed/maintained/operated compared to other projects
1.11	PD	1111	O.1.10	48.00	17.00	829 730.75 €	48 807.7 €	2 103 612 €	Below weighted average	−
1.11	PD	1111	O.1.8	1957.00	600.00	829 730.75 €	1 382.9 €	1 382.9 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	−
1.11	PD	1111	O.1.8.1	1957.00	600.00	829 730.75 €	1 382.9 €	892.3 €	Above weighted average	A higher number of participants participating in training activities compared to other projects
1.12	SBGS	1121	O.1.5.1	17.00	1.00	3 456 300 €	3 456 300 €	462 831.6 €	Above weighted average	More specific and complex equipment must be purchased compared to other projects
1.12	SBGS	1121	O.1.7	299.00	13.00	3 456 300 €	265 869.2 €	65 646.8 €	Above weighted average	More specialised transport vehicles must be purchased compared to other projects
1.2	SBGS	122	O.1.2	2.00	1.00	9 800 000 €	9 800 000 €	6 924 319.2 €	Above weighted average	Bigger scale and scope of activities compared to other projects
1.3	SBGS	131	O.1.7	299.00	49.00	2 270 463 €	46 336 €	65 646.8 €	Below weighted average	−
1.3	SBGS	135	O.1.0	48.00	1.00	28 433.68 €	28 433.7 €	28 433.7 €	Impossible to compare (single	

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Action	Institution	Project	Indicator (product)	Programme goal	Project goal	Total project investments, Eur	Relative investment of the project, Eur	Weighted average (cost per indicator unit)	Assessment	Assessment
									project per indicator)	
1.3	SBGS	136	O.1.1	950,00	168.00	223 777.5 €	1 332 €	19 43.3 €	Below weighted average	–
1.4	SBGS	141	O.1.2	2.00	1.00	4 048 638.31 €	4 048 638.3 €	6 924 319.2 €	Below weighted average	–
1.5	SBGS	151	O.1.1	950.00	3.00	1 439 815.23 €	479 938.4 €	19 430.3 €	Above weighted average	More specific and complex equipment must be purchased compared to other projects
1.7	SBGS	171	O.1.8.1	1957.00	871.00	482 872.4 €	554.4 €	892.3 €	Below weighted average	–
1.9	ITCD	191	O.1.11	4.00	3.00	664 923.78 €	221 641.3 €	221 641.3 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	–
2.3	MFA	231	O.2.2.1	158.00	158.00	79 801.58 €	505.1 €	505.1 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	–
2.3	MFA	231	O.2.2.1	158.00	158.00	79 801.58 €	505.1 €	505.1 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	–
2.4	MFA	241	O.2.3	12.00	12.00	1 249 146.33 €	104 095.5 €	104 095.5 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	–
2.4	MFA	241	O.2.3.1	8.00	8.00	1 249 146.33 €	156 143.3 €	156 143.3 €	Impossible to compare (single project per indicator)	–

Source: composed by the Evaluator using the latest available data on VSFSVVP IS

Analysis shows that eight projects exceed the weighted average of the cost per unit of the same output indicator among different projects. It is primarily due to each project's necessary equipment, vehicles, number of IT functionalities, or the complex nature of the project itself (project No. 122). Furthermore, concerning training activities (project No. 1111), more participants lead to higher costs.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The Programme supports types of interventions and types of actions that are known to be cost-effective, based on available evidence, including relevant literature or the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme:

1.1. Literature shows that investment in IT systems for national security is cost-effective through improved efficiency, information sharing, and analysis. These systems support predictive modelling, robust cyber security and adaptability to emerging threats and facilitate the global sharing of threat information, which is critical to addressing international security challenges;

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1.2. In addition, the literature shows that equipping agencies with advanced technology deters crime and enhances their ability to respond to diverse threats, thereby promoting public safety. Adequate, modern equipment builds community trust, while investment in cutting-edge technology keeps agencies ahead of the evolving challenges posed by adaptive criminals;

1.3. Academic literature also points to the fact that investment in education and training tends to promote advanced skills and competencies, improving communication and problem-solving. Well-trained officers handle situations skilfully, reducing incidents involving the use of force and thus minimising legal liabilities as well as reducing the risk of legal challenges and associated costs.

2. The early evidence coming from the operations indicates that the cost per unit is in line with or below existing benchmarks and estimates:

2.1. Based on 86% of responses, the funds distributed for each project are sufficient despite inflation. This is due to the precise calculation of required funds and the CPMA procedures that ensure effective funding allocation and spending;

2.2. 14% of respondents said they received less funds than requested, which makes project implementation harder. Nevertheless, they ensured that the received funding was spent effectively, and the remaining funds were used if there were any savings from other projects.

3. The differences in the cost per unit among similar operations within the same Programme can be explained and justified (e.g., differences in the intensity or quality of the support offered, innovativeness, etc.):

3.1. Based on the data analysis of project activities funding, the differences in the cost per unit can be explained and justified by project activity types and their complexity.

3.2. Eight projects have a higher than the weighted average price for the cost per unit for the same output indicator due to necessary equipment, specific vehicles, number of IT functionalities or the complex nature of the project itself.

5.3.2. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's management efficiency

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

3.2. To what extent is the management and control system efficient?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

3.2.1. The management and control system, described as per the legal basis, aims to ensure efficiency in the selection of operations, management tasks, work of the Monitoring Committee, fulfilment of accounting function and recording and storing of data on each operation;

3.2.2. The administrative burden is proportionate for all implementing actors (Managing Authority, Intermediate Body) compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups without the support of the Programme;

3.2.3. The administrative burden is proportionate for all end-users, compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups without the support of the Programme;

3.2.4. The administrative burden is proportionate for all beneficiaries, compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups without the support of the Programme;

3.2.5. Absence of 'gold-plating' at the national level (e.g. from Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, national Audit Authorities), i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively than the legal basis or relevant documents providing methodological advice to the Member States and unless a justified reason exists;

3.2.6. Absence of 'gold-plating' at the EU level, i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively than in the legal basis and unless a justified reason exists;

3.2.7. Simplified cost options used create simplification on the ground;

3.2.8. Technical assistance is used to strengthen the management and control system when necessary.

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The Managing Authority sets the BMVI Programme management and control system in the Allocation of functions between institutions implementing both the BMVI and ISF financial instruments[107]. It details the functions of the Managing Authority, the Intermediate Body, the Audit Authority, and the Monitoring Committee. The functions of the institutions are divided properly to ensure the highest level of efficiency in the selection of operations, management tasks, the work of the Monitoring Committee, the fulfilment of accounting requirements, and the recording and storage of data on each project.

All the institution representatives were asked to comment on the division of functions and general management efficiency, and all corroborated that the management works well without any major issues. The institutions' functions and responsibilities align with the area of work the institutions carry out; hence, no issues were identified.

EU REGULATION. Generally, the administrative requirements regarding the Programme creation come from the EC directives and are inflexible. In particular, the BMVI falls under the CPR, a rulebook of eight EU funds laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, complimenting the fund-specific regulations. It is a new EU-wide strategic document that was supposed to simplify the Programme formation and implementation processes for these funds. Yet, as expressed by the Managing Authority and corroborated by some other interviewees[108], the administrative burden has actually increased, especially compared to the last programming period. Table 15 summarises the specific provisions that have impacted the work and/or are perceived by the Managing Authority as excessive or irrelevant. Crucially, a part of the CPR articles and annexes are not applied to the BMVI, but the issue is that it is not noted in the legislation text, and therefore, creates confusion about whether to choose the applicable parts or rely on the materials prepared by the EC that detail which provisions are (not) applicable. The general impression is that the CPR is a highly complex legislation that covers many broad and different funds, thus reducing its utility.

Table 15. CPR Articles creating administrative burden and/or irrelevant to the BMVI

CPRCRP Article	Managing Authority comment
Article 8 "Partnership and multi-level governance"	Not all partners referred to in this article correspond to the content of the BMVI Programme.
Article 9 "Horizontal Principles"	Not all the principles fit the specificity of the BMVI Programme.
Articles 10-13 (part of the Chapter I "Partnership Agreement") on the Preparation, submission, content, approval, and amendment of the Partnership Agreement) Articles 10-13	Echoing the comment on Article 8, including the BMVI under these regulations seems more of a formality and does not add much value or ease the administrative burden.
Article 15 "Enabling conditions"	It is unclear how imperative it is for the Programme; it seems to be more of a responsibility of (or relevant to) the Member State rather than the Managing Authority.
Article 16 "Performance framework"	The formal adoption of indicators already set out in the Programme-specific regulations does not add value here.
Article 22 "Content of programmes"	Particularly, point 3 (d) (viii) requiring including the types of intervention and the indicative breakdown of the programmed resources by type of intervention, together with the types of interventions provided in Annex VI of the BMVI Regulations, create an additional administrative burden both for the Programme institutions and the project implementors.
Article 40 "Functions of the Monitoring Committee"	Points 2 (a) and (c) requiring the Monitoring Committee to approve the methodology and criteria for the selection of operations and the evaluation plans with any amendments thereto do not add much value given that the projects are selected through public project programming (the selection criteria are generic and do not depend on the specifics of the call).
Article 44 "Evaluations by the Members State"	Inflexible mid-term and final evaluations with pre-set concrete dates contradict the fact that the Programme implementation started late, and most projects have just been started at the time of the mid-term evaluation (instead, the deadlines could be set after a certain time passes since the start of the implementation rather than a concrete date).
Articles 46-50 (part of Chapter III "Visibility, transparency and communication")	Not entirely in line with the specificities of the BMVI, the sanctions for the lack of compliance are too harsh.

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[107] Description of the allocation of functions between institutions implementing the Border Management and Visa Policy financial instrument, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, and the Internal Security Fund Programmes for 2021-2027, approved by the Order No. 1V-705 of the Minister of Interior on 2 September 2021 (wording of Order No. 1V-321 of 26 May 2023).
[108] Interviews with the PSS, MFA, and PD.

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Article 53 "Forms of grants"	The inflexible obligation to apply simplified cost options for the projects where the financing does not exceed EUR 200 thousand in the case of the BMVI and the necessity to create the methodology for that is more burdensome rather than simplifies the process due to the relatively small number of projects, the nature of the project implementors and the specificities of the national project selection.
Article 69 "Responsibilities of Member States"	This creates more administrative burden, given that it is not very applicable to public projects.
Article 74 "Programme management by the managing authority"	The mandatory development of a risk-based methodology creates an additional administrative burden, while the project verification procedure has proved sufficiently effective in previous programming periods.

Source: prepared by Evaluator based on the information provided by the MoI

NATIONAL REGULATION. An additional source of regulations applies – the national Strategic Management Methodology[109]. It details extensively the procedures for making decisions on the preparation of planning documents and for various processes regarding the preparation, evaluation, monitoring, reporting, structure, and content of those documents, as well as the rights and obligations of the actors involved in these processes. It complements the requirements stemming from EU regulation on the BMVI, such as regarding result and output indicators. When asked how these procedures compared to the previous programming period, the interviewees, both the Programme institutions and the project implementors, expressed no severe issues during the semi-structured interviews.

However, SBGS and the CPMA expressed some complaints regarding the administrative burden in this programming period stemming from a national requirement to prepare investment projects for projects over EUR 1 million. More specifically, the list of projects to be implemented under the BMVI Programme is prepared in advance before the Programme itself is confirmed. This creates a situation where the project implementors are required by the Strategic Management Methodology (particularly points 81.2 and 120.5) to submit an investment project, where a detailed analysis of the potential alternatives is conducted. In addition, the Methodology for the Preparation of Investment Projects[110], created and approved by the CPMA that oversees the whole project implementation process, strongly recommends analysing at least three project alternatives.

This creates a paradox, where an already approved project with allocated funding from both the EU and the national budget is required to investigate alternatives (in case of projects worth more than EUR 1 million).

In reality, what happens is that these investment plans are regarded as of little importance and only create additional administrative burdens that could potentially be reduced, SBGS and CPMA interviewees said. To a certain extent, this represents a situation of 'gold-plating', given that national requirements are applied rather strictly and clash with the logic of the Programme and its implementation. It is imperative to highlight that these rules currently only apply to projects worth over EUR 1 million; given that around 40% of projects in the BMVI Programme exceed this amount, not all project implementors face this administrative challenge.

Regarding the simplified cost options, many financial beneficiaries indicated that they use these options on a case-by-case basis, depending on the project. Some rely on market analysis before calculating the preliminary financing needs instead. The Intermediate Body indicated that it strongly encourages and raises awareness among the financial beneficiaries regarding these options – it organised training for the final beneficiaries (see example in Figure 10). Those project implementing bodies that indicated that they do not utilise the simplified cost options explained their choice as one due to the internal decisions and the specific project needs; it is less burdensome from the administrative and accounting perspective to declare the actual costs instead of using simplified cost options. This is especially the case when specialised equipment or training is procured; the prices tend to be more varied, making it hard to use simplified cost options.

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[109] Strategic Management Methodology, approved by the Government of Lithuania by the Resolution No. 292 on 28 April 2021 (wording of Order No. 735 of 13 September 2023).
[110] Methodology for the Preparation of Investment Project, approved by the Order No. 2014/8-337 of the Director of the CPMA on 31 December 2014 (wording of Order No. 2023/8-4 of 6 January 2023).

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Figure 10. Screenshot of the slide about the simplified cost options prepared by the CPMA for the meeting that took place in June 2022, where the BMVI and ISF programmes were discussed
Source: slides prepared by the CPMA

Lastly, technical assistance is regularly used by all the Programme institutions to implement their activities properly. No complaints or issues were identified regarding its size or usage; they highlighted that the technical assistance as of the current moment is sufficient.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The interviews corroborated that the management and control system works well without significant issues. The functions and responsibilities of the Programme institutions are generally in line with the area of work the institutions carry out; hence, no problems were identified.
2. Compared to the last programming period, two significant changes in the administrative management of the Programme happened – the introduction of the CPR and the national Strategic Management Methodology. Both high-level strategic documents increased the administrative burden on the Managing Authority and some project implementors:
2.1. The Strategic Management Methodology requires the preparation of investment plans for projects worth over EUR 1 million, a requirement that only affects the minority of the project implementors – this case could be seen as an example of 'gold-platting' on the part of the MoF, not the Programme institutions;
2.2. Administrative rules stemming from the CPR primarily create an excessive administrative burden for the Managing Authority and the final beneficiaries, especially because some of the provisions do not make sense considering the specificity of the BMVI Programme and projects.
3. Simplified cost options are used on a case-by-case basis; few project implementors have expressed that they actively use them, despite the efforts on the part of the Intermediate Body to raise awareness about them.
4. Technical assistance is sufficient and helps to strengthen the management and control system when necessary.

5.3.3. Evaluation of possibilities to reduce the BMVI Programme's excessive administrative burden

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation questions:

3.3. To what extent is further simplification achievable, and how?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

3.3.1. There is evidence of legal requirements, rules of procedures or practices that create disproportionate administrative burden at the EU or MS level, and concrete alternatives exist;
3.3.2. There is room for additional use of simplified cost options and financing not linked to cost options;
3.3.3. There is evidence of a lack of coordination between the actors involved in the implementation of the Programme, resulting in, e.g., lack of coherence, increased administrative burden, etc.;
3.3.4. There are issues with the electronic data exchange systems that create delays and can and should be addressed.

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Despite the generally positive perception of administrative burden, some suggestions for further alleviating it can be made. Firstly, regarding the CPR, the expressed sentiment was that it is not necessarily entirely applicable to the management of the BMVI; it would be advised to reconsider its applicability to the instrument or make clear which provisions do apply to the Programme creation and management. The suggestion expressed by the Managing Authority during the interview was to revert some procedures to the rules of the last programming period since they were more efficient and did not create a substantial administrative burden as the CPR did.

In addition, when it comes to the Strategic Management Methodology's requirements, the preparation of investment plans for projects worth over EUR 1 million, the Strategic Management Methodology does indicate that alternatives may not be evaluated where the specific way a measure is to be implemented is set out in EU directives and regulations; hence, theoretically it could be adjusted on the Programme regulation level by the Programme authorities, too. At the beginning of the Programme implementation period, the Managing Authority tried to apply this exemption to the BMVI projects worth over EUR 1 million; yet the MoF (that is responsible for overseeing the financial procedures regarding project implementation and thus enforcing the Strategic Management Methodology rules) rejected the request citing the insufficient legislation to apply the exemption.

When it comes to the simplified cost options, more than half of the interviewees indicated that they are not using them for various reasons (explained in section 5.3.2). This gives the impression that there is little room to implement more of these options and reduce the administrative burden in such a way. A suggestion made by the Managing Authority was to create an over-arching methodology that could be passed on to the final beneficiaries. However, none of the interview respondents complained about the lack of the methodology, raising doubts about its necessity for the final beneficiaries.

Moreover, one project implementor[111] mentioned that the implementation periods are relatively short. Theoretically, short implementation periods would lead to a lower administrative burden, but on the ground, it can lead to a hasty and inadequate project implementation process. A reconsideration of the timing and introduction of more flexibility when it comes to some deadlines could be recommended to alleviate some administrative burden and stress for the final beneficiaries. Despite that, all Programme institutions and final beneficiaries evaluated the coordination and cooperation as satisfying; therefore, the short deadlines are not interpreted as a problem of coordination but rather of administrative regulation.

Lastly, issues with the national electronic exchange system VSFSVVP IS were explained in section 5.2.2. The potential solutions to the problems with the systems are to conduct a performance analysis to comprehensively address the identified issues, fix system slowdowns and freezes, optimise it by mitigating bottlenecks, and generally refine its functionality. This should be implementable given the high level of cooperation among the Programme institutions. Should the system be fixed and upgraded, it would eliminate (or at least reduce) some administrative and time-related burdens for all institutions involved and its interoperability with the EU systems.[112] As also explained in section 5.2.2, the issues could originate due to the service provider's quality of work. To ensure a well-functioning system, procurement procedures and conditions should be used to ensure a more rigorous assessment of the contractor's competence and ability to provide such service.[113]

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Some legal requirements at the EU and national levels create some disproportionate administrative burden for the Programme institutions:
1.1. A reconsideration of the applicability of the CPR to the BMVI management could be suggested together with a recommendation to revert to more efficient procedures from the previous programming period. Clear identification of applicable provisions is essential to reduce administrative burden;
1.2. Challenges with the Strategic Management Methodology's requirements for projects over EUR 1 million highlight a potential for adjustment at the Program regulation level. Despite attempts, the lack of legislative support led to rejection, indicating the need for flexibility in implementation.

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[111] Interview with the PD.
[112] Interview with the MoI.
[113] Interview with the CPMA.

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2. More than half of the interviewees do not use simplified cost options, suggesting limited room for implementation. While the suggestion of an overarching methodology was made, the absence of complaints about its lack raises questions about its necessity for final beneficiaries.
3. Short implementation periods, while theoretically reducing administrative burden, may result in hasty and inadequate project implementation. It is recommended that timing be reconsidered and deadline flexibility increased, which could alleviate stress for final beneficiaries without compromising coordination.
4. Issues with the national electronic exchange system VSFSVVP IS require comprehensive performance analysis, addressing slowdowns, freezes, and bottlenecks. Procurement procedures and conditions should ensure a rigorous assessment of the service provider to enhance system functionality.

5.4. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme according to coherence criteria

According to EC Revised Background Note, when evaluating coherence criteria, the evaluators will assess how well is the Programme coherent with both initiatives supported under the same policy domains across different management modes (internal coherence), as well as other EU funds and even EU's external action (external coherence). At this stage of the programming period, the evaluation will focus on the existence and initial effective use of procedure and arrangements for the cooperation of the relevant actors entrusted with the policy design and implementation, including the complementarities with the work of the relevant agencies, the content of different programmes, initiatives and funds to assess the level of potential overlap on objective grounds, and the evidence of inter-agency cooperation.

5.4.1. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's coherence with other initiatives under its policy domain

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation questions:

5.4.1. To what extent is the Programme coherent with initiatives supported under its policy domain, with support under the thematic facility across the different management modes?

The following judgement criteria are investigated:

5.4.1.1 Structures, organisational arrangements, or coordination mechanisms are in place which ensure coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies across the different management modes of the same Programme;
5.4.1.2. Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and to good effect;
5.4.1.3. Alleged overlaps are, in fact, justified on objective grounds (e.g. same target group but a different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen);
5.4.1.4. The Programme is coherent with the current policy agendas at the EU and national levels;
5.4.1.5. There is evidence of inter-agency cooperation.

EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES. The EU Security Union Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025[114] lays out the tools and measures to be developed over the five years to ensure security in the physical and digital environment of the Member States. The strategy builds upon progress achieved previously under the Commission's European Agenda on Security 2015-2020 and focuses on priorities endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council. The strategy lays out four strategic priorities to be advanced at the EU level while fully upholding fundamental rights: (i) a future-proof security environment, (ii) tackling evolving threats, (iii) protecting Europeans from terrorism and organised crime, and (iv) a strong European security ecosystem.

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[114] EC (2020). EU Security Union Strategy: connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1379

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Table 16. Strategic priorities of EU Security Union Strategy.

Strategic priority	Objectives
A future-proof security environment	• Critical infrastructure protection and resilience; • Cybersecurity; • Protecting public spaces.
Tackling evolving threats	• Cybercrime; • Modern law enforcement; • Countering illegal content online; • Hybrid threats.
Protecting Europeans from terrorism and organised crime	• Terrorism and radicalisation; • Organised crime.
A strong European security ecosystem	• Cooperation and information exchange; • The contribution of strong external borders; • Strengthening security research and innovation; • Skills and awareness raising.

Source: prepared by Evaluator

Remarkably, the fourth priority – a strong European security ecosystem – with the two objectives (i.e., cooperation and information exchange and the contribution of strong external borders) directly touches upon the special objectives of the BMVI Programme regarding the integrated European border management and the common visa policy. The SOs of the BMVI Programme also conceptualize the EU Security Union Strategy priorities and objectives in a more concrete and achievable direction.

Another key strategic priority of the EU is the Instrument for Financial Support for Customs Control Equipment (2021-2027) (after that – the Instrument), created together with the BMVI as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund. The Instrument's general objectives are to support customs authorities' effort to (i) protect EU and national financial and economic interests, (ii) ensure security and safety within the EU, (iii) protect the EU from illegal trade, and (iv) facilitate legitimate business activity[115]. The Instrument allows Member States to purchase, maintain and upgrade state-of-the-art customs equipment such as new scanners, automated number plate detection systems, teams of sniffer dogs and mobile laboratories for sample analysis[116]. Given that the EU is a customs union, the Instrument targets the external EU borders and thus covers the same territory and is relevant to the same stakeholders as the BMVI. Yet, the two instruments are complementary. As stated in Regulation 2021/1148[117], on the one hand, the BMVI financially supports the purchase of equipment and the development, operation, and maintenance of large-scale IT systems for which the primary purpose is integrated border management and allows their use in the complementary area of customs control. On the other hand, the Instrument for Financial Support for Customs Control Equipment financially supports the purchase of equipment with customs controls as the main purpose and allows its use for additional purposes such as border control and security. Such a distribution of roles aims to foster inter-agency cooperation as a component of European integrated border management, as provided for in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, thereby enabling customs and border authorities to work together and maximising the impact of the EU budget through co-sharing and interoperability of control equipment.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES. The 2021–2030 National Progress Programme of Lithuania[118] establishes ten strategic goals, of which the pertinent one to the BMVI's SOs is the tenth one regarding the strengthening of national security since it includes the actions to be taken to enhance the effectiveness of EU external border control and strengthen

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[115] EU instrument for financial support for customs control equipment (2021–2027). *EUR-Lex*. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-instrument-for-financial-support-for-customs-control-equipment-2021-2027.html

[116] Customs Control Equipment Instrument. *European Commission*. https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/eu-funding-customs-and-tax/customs-control-equipment-instrument_en

[117] Regulation 2021/1148 (2021). Regulation 2021/1148 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instruments for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy. *EU Monitor*. https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvk6yhcbpeywk_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vllqc8850gzu

[118] The 2021-2030 National Progress Programme (lt. *Nacionalinis pažangos planas*) was established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. 998 on 9 September 2020 (wording of Order No. 797 of 29 September 2021). https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/c1259440f7dd11eab72ddb4a109da1b5/asr

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the prevention and control of irregular migration by improving the interoperability, coordination and cooperation of competent authorities with external partners, and strengthening their capacity and capability. Even though the NPP connection with the BMVI is minimal and reflected partially in one of the strategic objectives, it is a positive indication that specifically, the integrated European external border management is clearly defined in the NPP; thus, it makes sense that the action is to be funded from the BMVI.

In addition, the National Security Strategy, as confirmed by Regulation No. IX-907 of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania on 28 May 2002 (wording of Regulation No. XIV-795 of 16 December 2021), identifies the essential national security interests, risk factors, dangers and threats to these interests, the priorities for the development of Lithuania's national security system, foreign, defence and domestic policy, and the long-term tasks for ensuring the state's security situation. It includes point 39, which mainly refers to the challenges of securing the EU's external borders and managing migration processes considering the evolving security situation. The plan lists the following actions:

- 39.1 Strengthening the EU's external border surveillance, renewing the EU's common strategic approach to the management of its external borders, establishing common standards for monitoring these borders, and effectively integrating new EU instruments in the area of migration and asylum to prevent the instrumentalization of migration processes and the abuse of asylum rights, as a matter of priority, implementing the modernisation of the state border protection of the Republic of Lithuania as a whole, with a particular focus on the introduction of advanced technical border surveillance tool, the strengthening of the physical protection and fortification of the border, the improvement of the interoperability of the competent authorities, the strengthening of the links with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex, and the provision of the necessary means to perform the functions;
- 39.2 Developing and enhancing national information resources and infrastructure, their accessibility, integrity, confidentiality and interoperability with EU central information systems in order to ensure the protection of the state border of the Republic of Lithuania and the management of the migration process;
- 39.3 Ensuring readiness to respond effectively to a possible influx of irregular migrants.

These actions directly relate to the strategic objectives of the BMV and thus signify the importance of implementing the actions under BMVI.

Moreover, the Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme, established by Regulation No. XIV-2088 by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania on 22 June 2023, refers to the National Progress Programme strategic objective ten as well as to the National Security Strategy point 39 in listing the intervention areas of point 28 that directly complement those of the BMVI. They are as follows:

- 28.1 Modern border surveillance technologies and physical barriers are used to protect the EU's external border (part of the Republic of Lithuania), and their proper maintenance is ensured;
- 28.2 Optimising the human resources and strengthening their capacity and technological capabilities of the state border control authorities to reflect the nature of the threats and take advantage of technological progress and innovations;
- 28.3 Upgrading the infrastructure of the border area of the Republic of Lithuania that is necessary for a rapid response to violations of the state border and the proper maintenance of the physical barrier and border surveillance systems;
- 28.4 The development of a common state information system covering migration processes and the improvement of other information resources of the state, such as the functionality, security and interoperability of the state information systems and registers in use with the EU information systems, and upgrading hardware and software;
- 28.8 Strengthening international cooperation, in particular with the Baltic Sea region countries and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX).

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEM. According to Resolution No. 164 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the designated authorities to manage the BMVI together with the ISF programmes are:

- Managing authority – the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania;
- Intermediate body –CPMA;

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- Audit authority – the Centralised Internal Audit Division of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Ministry of Interior confirmed the separation and distribution of functions between these authorities[119].

THE MONITORING COMMITTEE oversees and evaluates the implementation and progress of both the BMVI and ISF Programmes. The Committee consists of the Ministry of Interior, financial beneficiaries, the Research Council of Lithuania, and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Foreigners Integration Group). The Committee:

- Considers and authorizes project selection methodology and criteria, Programme modifications, annual performance reports, program evaluation plans, and their amendments;
- Monitors and evaluates the implementation and progress of BMVI and ISF Programmes;
- Reviews and provides recommendations on accounts for the accounting year, fund redistribution to projects, and the approval and modification of Programme action plans;
- Undertakes additional functions as necessary.

The analysis of the Monitoring Committee meeting protocols indicates that the members meet regularly and make decisions in consensus – an insight also confirmed during the semi-structured interviews. The results indicate that the members are coordinating regularly, and the communication is open. The representatives from the CPMA told about some past communication issues with the Managing Authority as the meetings were approaching; the MoI would only send out the meeting protocol, where the topics of discussion and decisions were already made without much prior consultation with other institutional members. This issue was brought up and cleared with the MoI, and more proper consultations are currently taking place, indicating strong inter-agency cooperation as well as the fact that coordination mechanisms are in place and used regularly.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Necessary organizational structures and procedures for effective coordination across the different management modes of the BMVI Programme are in place.
2. Coordination mechanisms are used regularly, with consultations before the Monitoring Committee meets.
3. Although the BMVI Programme is similar to that of the ISF, and hence, there is potential overlap in intervention areas and target groups, having the same managing authority, intermediate body, and the Monitoring Committee can prevent such instances.
4. The BMVI Programme is connected to both EU and national policy agendas. It is in line with the EU Security Union Strategy, Lithuania's 2021-2030 National Progress Programme, the National Security Strategy and the Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme.
5. There is evidence of inter-agency cooperation as indicated by the interviewees – consultations and coordination take place before the Monitoring Committee's meetings, and there is regular communication in instances where some questions or concerns occur.

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[119] The Description of the Procedure for the Separation of Functions Between Authorities in Implementing the 2021-2027 Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, as Part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, and the Internal Security Fund Programmes, approved by Order No. 1V-705 of 2 September 2021 of the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

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5.4.2. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's coherence with other EU funds

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation question:

5.4.2. To what extent is the Programme coherent with other EU funds (including other Home Affairs funds) and with the EU's external action?

The following judgement criteria are investigated:

5.4.2.1. Structures, organisational arrangements or coordination mechanisms are in place which ensure coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies across other EU funds, in particular, cohesion policy and EU's external action;
5.4.2.2. Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and to good effect;
5.4.2.3. Alleged overlaps are, in fact, justified on objective grounds (e.g., same target group but a different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen);
5.4.2.4. The Programme offers support to cross-cutting policy agendas by complementing the support offered by other EU funds.

The EU has created a range of financial instruments to enhance the security of its Member States through Home Affairs Funds. The EU has allocated approximately EUR 11.3 billion to fund multi-annual Member State programs through the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF), the BMVI, and ISF for the 2021-2027 period. These funds aim to address migration, borders, visas, and security priorities while promoting cooperation between Member States and the Commission.

THE ASYLUM, MIGRATION, AND INTEGRATION FUND (AMIF)[120] has been established for the 2021–2027 period, with a total budget of EUR 9.88 billion. This fund aims to enhance national capabilities, streamline migration management procedures, and foster solidarity and shared responsibility among Member States, especially through emergency aid and the relocation mechanism. AMIF is focused on achieving four SOs: (i) strengthening all aspects of the common European asylum system, including its external dimension; (ii) supporting legal migration to the Member States and facilitating the integration of third-country nationals; (iii) addressing irregular migration and ensuring the effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries; and (iv) promoting solidarity and responsibility sharing among Member States, particularly towards those most affected by migration and asylum challenges.

AMIF-funded initiatives cover a broad spectrum of actions, including:

- Ensuring consistent application of the EU "*acquis*" and priorities related to the Common European Asylum System, legal migration, and return;
- Providing tailored support and services in line with the status and needs of individuals, with a focus on vulnerable groups;
- Supporting resettlement, humanitarian admission, and the transfer of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection;
- Facilitating the development and implementation of policies that promote legal migration, such as mobility schemes to the EU and creating awareness of appropriate legal immigration channels;
- Backing integration measures customized to the requirements of third-country nationals and early integration programs that emphasize education, language, and other training (such as civic orientation courses and professional guidance) to prepare them for active participation in and acceptance by the receiving society;
- Supporting reception infrastructures for third-country nationals, potentially allowing multiple Member States to utilise such facilities jointly;
- Promoting an integrated and coordinated approach to return management at the EU and Member States' level, building capacities for effective and sustainable return, and reducing incentives for irregular migration.

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[120] Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2021–2027). https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

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- Facilitating assisted voluntary return and reintegration;
- Collaborating with third countries on asylum, legal migration, countering irregular migration, and effective return and readmission to manage migration.

The draft of the 2021–2027 Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund Programme of Lithuania[121] targets the following SO:

- To strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension;
- To support legal migration to the Member States and to contribute to the integration of third-country nationals;
- To contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring the effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries.

The EC has not yet approved this programme; hence, it should be considered carefully. However, it should be noted that this Programme will most likely target objectives that are less connected to the BMVI Programme, and therefore, the possibility of those programmes overlapping is probably minimal at this stage.

THE INTERNAL SECURITY FUND 2021–2027 PROGRAMME OF LITHUANIA, another key funding programme set up by the EU with a total budget of EUR 39.2 million, focuses on reaching a high level of security in the EU, in particular by preventing and combating terrorism, radicalisation, serious and organised crime and cybercrime, by assisting and protecting victims of crime, and by preparing for, protecting against and effectively managing security-related incidents, risks and crises. Lithuanian Programme for the ISF 2021-2027[122] lists three SOs:

- SO1: Exchange of information;
- SO2: Cross-border cooperation;
- SO3: Preventing and combating crime;

These SOs cover a wide array of actions, including but not limited to:

- Education and training of relevant law enforcement, judicial and administrative agency personnel and experts;
- Purchasing of equipment, vehicles, communication systems and critical security-related infrastructure;
- Development, operation, and maintenance of IT systems and networks;
- Actions supporting an effective and coordinated response to crises.

Although both Programmes (BMVI and ISF) are similar and there is potential overlap due to the same geographical intervention area (external EU borders), the prevention mechanism is in place by having the same managing authority, intermediate body, and Monitoring Committee. It should be highlighted that having one Monitoring Committee composed of representatives from all the central institutions involved in the Programmes can effectively prevent potential overlapping. Such practice can lead to another positive effect – institutions involved in implementing both Programmes can see the bigger picture of how measures affect the national security situation, so in cases of potential threats to national security, it could lead to more cohesive decision-making, policy and action.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE, as the diplomatic arm of the EU, focuses on promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, championing a rules-based international order, and engaging with global partners through its network of EU Delegations. It contributes to international peace, European defence, and the sharing of intelligence analysis among Member States. Operating under the authority of the High Representative, it plays a key role in the Union's common foreign, security, and defence policy, addressing a wide range of security issues and building international partnerships. Additionally, it prioritises the protection of EU citizens, crisis response

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[121] The National Programme of the 2021–2027 Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. https://www.pmif.lt/en/announcements/the-national-Programme-of-the-2021-2027-asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-is-being-developed
[122] Available at: https://isf.lt/vidaus-saugumo-fondo-programa

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capability, and the global projection of EU power through strategic communication and public diplomacy. It collaborates with all EU institutions to ensure coordination, effectiveness, and coherence in the EU's external action, policy implementation, and global impact in support of equality, prosperity, and sustainability.

The EU has formally approved the Strategic Compass[123], an ambitious plan of action for strengthening the EU's security and defence policy by 2030 as a response to the increasingly hostile and unstable security environment in Europe as Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The Strategic Compass aims to make the EU a stronger security provider that can protect its citizens and contribute to international peace and security. It also strives to enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and its ability to work with partners to safeguard its values and interests. The Strategic Compass provides a shared assessment of the strategic environment and the threats and challenges facing the EU by making concrete and actionable proposals with a precise timetable for implementation to improve the EU's ability to act decisively in crises and defend its citizens. The Strategic Compass covers all aspects of security and defence policy and is structured around four pillars: act, invest, partner, and secure.

Act pillar includes establishing a strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5,000 troops for various crises, being ready to deploy 200 fully equipped CSDP mission experts within 30 days, conducting regular live exercises, enhancing military mobility, and reinforcing EU civilian and military CSDP missions and operations.

Invest pillar encompasses Member states pledging to significantly increase their defence spending to align with the shared goal of addressing critical military and civilian capability gaps and bolstering our European Defence Technological and Industrial Base. By implementing Strategic Compass, the EU seeks to:

- Facilitate discussions on national objectives for increased and improved defence spending to meet our security requirements;
- Provide additional incentives for member states to engage in collaborative capability development and jointly invest in strategic enablers and next-generation capabilities across various domains, including land, sea, air, cyberspace, and outer space;
- Enhance defence technological innovation to address strategic gaps and reduce technological and industrial dependencies.

Partner pillar aims to strengthen cooperation with strategic partners like NATO, the UN, and regional entities such as the OSCE, AU, and ASEAN. Additionally, this pillar includes actions to establish more tailored bilateral partnerships with like-minded nations and strategic partners, including the US, Canada, Norway, the UK, Japan, and others. The EU also plans to develop tailored partnerships in the Western Balkans, its eastern and southern neighbourhoods, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, focusing on enhancing dialogue and cooperation, promoting participation in CSDP missions and operations, and supporting capacity building.

Secure pillar targets the EU's ability to anticipate, deter and respond to current and fast-emerging threats and challenges, as well as safeguard the EU's security interests. This encompasses measures such as:

- Boost intelligence analysis capacities;
- Develop Hybrid Toolbox and Response Teams bringing together different instruments to detect and respond to a broad range of hybrid threats;
- Further develop the Cyber Diplomatic Toolbox and set up an EU Cyber Defence Policy to be better prepared and respond to cyberattacks;
- Develop a Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Toolbox;
- Develop an EU Space Strategy for Security and Defence;
- Strengthen the EU's role as a maritime security actor.

Even though the BVMI seemingly cannot contribute to the pursuit of the EU's external action in different ways, indirectly, it can contribute to its success. Particularly, the SO2 that aims to support the common visa policy by ensuring a harmonised approach regarding the issuance of visas and facilitating legitimate travel while helping to prevent migratory and security risks can be connected to the EU's foreign policy and relationships with non-EU

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[123] Available at: A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence | EEAS (europa.eu)

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countries where the consulates operate. The well-operating consulates of member states can contribute to the Partner pillar and facilitate cooperation between the EU as an extension of the Member States and the non-EU host countries. When it comes to SO1, the Integrated European external border management also indirectly supports the goals of the Secure pillar as improved external EU border management contributes to the EU's ability to anticipate, deter, and respond to current and future security threats and challenges. Overall, the BMVI Programme plays an important role in supporting the EU's external action and helping to ensure the security of the EU and its citizens.

HORIZON EUROPE is a research and innovation funding programme until 2027, aiming to tackle climate change, help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and boost the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting, and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It also supports the creation and better dispersal of excellent knowledge and technologies. Its cluster 3, "Civil Security for Society",[124] under Pillar II, "Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness", partially connects to the BMVI strategic objectives given that it responds to the challenges arising from persistent security threats and supports policies related to border management. In Lithuania, this research programme is overseen by the Lithuanian Science Council, which is also included in the Monitoring Committee, ensuring the Horizon Europe research projects do not overlap with the BMVI Programme activities.

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

EU funds and external action analysed in the chapter relate to the overall goals of the BMVI despite targeting different intervention areas. The BMVI acts as a more concrete and targeted initiative in the realm of more broad security-related actions laid out by the other EU funds (and Lithuanian Programmes for them if they exist). Unlike them, the BMVI operates exclusively in the realm of external EU border management and common visa policy, ensuring no duplication or overlap with other funding mechanisms. While the potential of overlapping with the ISF is present, the control mechanism is in place by having the joint Managing Committee, as explained in section 5.4.1. Connection with the EU's external action is indirect yet crucial. Both BMVI SOs indirectly support specific pillars and contribute to the overall goals of the Strategic Compass and EU external action.

The section's judgement criteria are evaluated as follows:

5.4.2.1. Necessary structures and organisational arrangements needed for effective coordination are in place. All the procedures are foreseen to cover each aspect of the implementation of the Programme in each stage (already established in 5.4.1.).
5.4.2.2. Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and to good effect; the members of the Managing Committee communicate regularly.
5.4.2.3. The overlap prevention mechanism for ISF and BMVI is established by having the same Managing authority, Intermediate body, and Monitoring Committee (already concluded in 5.4.1.).
5.4.2.4. The BMVI Programme complements the activities funded by other EU funds by targeting specific areas of security and foreign policies, particularly the EU external border management and the common visa policy. Other funds target other policy areas, such as internal security, asylum and migration policy challenges, and civil security overall. The BMVI indirectly supports and complements EU external action and research projects under Horizon Europe.

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[124] EC. Horizon Europe – Cluster 3: Civil security for society. https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-Programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society_en

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5.5. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme according to Union added value criteria

European added value, or EU-added value, refers to the "value resulting from an EU intervention which is additional to the value that would have been otherwise created by Member State action alone."[125] According to the EC Revised Background Note, under EU-added value, the focus is set to be on the "additionality" of the support offered via the programmes compared to what could have been achieved at the national or local level to make sure the EU budget is spent in areas where it can provide the most comprehensive benefits, both qualitative and quantitative. More simply, the key question is related to the counterfactual: what would have happened if a Member State had acted alone (when there is no similar national support action) in the absence of the EU intervention? In its most basic understanding, it focuses on cross-national externalities and economies of scale. In some cases, it can also encompass some political benefits stemming from EU spending intervention. In the case of the EU-added value in the implementation of the BMVI Programme in Lithuania, the evaluation utilizes the broadest understanding of the term to analyse the current situation most comprehensively.

5.5.1. Evaluation of the BMVI Programme's added value to the European Union

This chapter is dedicated to answering the following evaluation questions:

5.1. To what extent is the Programme generating EU-added value?

The following judgement criteria are checked:

5.1.1. The Programme focuses on areas, interventions, and target groups where the results at the EU level can go beyond what can be achieved by the Member States acting on their own. Amongst others:
5.1.1.a. There is evidence of scope effects, i.e., of additional target groups addressed or additional types of intervention offered;
5.1.1.b. There is evidence of scale effects, i.e., of a higher volume of services offered/end-users addressed;
5.1.1.c. There is evidence of function effects, i.e., of learning and increased capacity to manage the provision of public support within the administrations involved;
5.1.2. There is no evidence of dependency, i.e., of systematic lack of investment based on national resources for relevant services that are provided entirely through support from EU funds.

Very broadly, effective implementation of European integrated border management and the objectives stemming from that are under shared responsibility between the Member States and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, thus requiring close collaboration among its components. A fair allocation of dedicated EU financial resources is needed to ensure that Member States facing the greatest impact have the necessary capacity to address challenges. This allocation is crucial for both addressing challenges to the benefit of the entire Union and supporting the countries that are facing the biggest challenges at the external EU border. Lithuania's BMVI Programme is mainly designed to contribute to this objective. The emphasis on improved management of the EU external border with Belarus (EUR 115 million allocated funding), significant funding allocated to the interoperability of IT systems as well as staff training to enhance client-friendliness and efficiency of services related to common visa policy (EUR 5.4 million) is clearly visible throughout the Programme, its implementation measures, regular and/or specific actions and planned projects. All these priorities exhibit clear Union added value as the results should benefit both Lithuania and the whole Union if implemented successfully.

Under the BMVI Programme, these stakeholders are responsible for the implementation of most actions (either regular or special):

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[125] Rubio, E. (2021). European added value: what does it mean? *European Court of Auditors in #ECAjournal, Medium*. https://medium.com/ecajournal/european-added-value-what-does-it-mean-b7a325e8906e

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- **SBGS** – 10 out of 12 actions under SO1 and 5 out of 7 actions under STS;
- **ITCD** - 3 out of 12 actions under SO1, 2 out of 4 actions under SO2, and 1 under STS (additional operating support);
- **MFA** – 2 out of 4 actions under SO2 and 4 out of 7 actions under STS.

These three institutions, thus, also receive the highest amounts of funding as foreseen in the Action Plan:

- **SGBS** – EUR 108 million under SO1 (out of EUR 115.8 million or 93.33%); EUR 79.8 million[126] under STS (out of EUR 211.9 million or 37.7%, including additional operating support).
- **ITCD** – EUR 6.6 million under SO1 (5.7%); EUR 1.98 million under SO2 (out of EUR 5.4 million or 36.72%); as well as EUR 2.9 million under STS as additional operating support;
- **MFA** – EUR 3.4 million under SO2 (63.28%), EUR 90.3 million under STS (42.63%, including additional operating support).

Since June 2021, Lithuania has faced a drastic increase in irregular migration flows through its (and external EU) border with the Republic of Belarus. Due to this substantial challenge, there was a significant increase in national attention and funding directed towards the functioning of the SBGS – the biggest receiver of funds under the BMVI. In 2024, for instance, the total assignations from the national budget to SGBS should preliminarily account for EUR 135 million, out of which EUR 91 million would go towards salaries and other staff-related expenses[127]. For comparison, the 2023 budget consisted of around EUR 108 million, which increased by EUR 10.9 million from the previous year[128]. The increasing budget has been cited because of geopolitical tensions and, thus, the need to increase the number of border guards (in 2024, it is planned to create 244 new positions).

Crucially, the support received from the EU under the BMVI goes primarily towards specific activities and not the maintenance, expansion, and operation of SGBS, meaning it allows to expand the scale and scope of SBGS activities, particularly in the management of external EU borders with Belarus and Russia. The recent purchase of additional helicopters can exemplify this: two of them were procured within the framework of the Progress Measure No. 07-012-10-04-01/07-013-10-04-01 "Strengthening preparedness to manage crises and emergencies and to deal with their consequences", approved by Order of the Minister of the Interior dated 14 March 2023 of the Civil Protection Reinforcement and Development Programme; the third one was procured under the BMVI specific action "Support to the Special Transit Scheme in accordance with Article 17(5) of the MBVI Regulation (BMVI/2023/SA/1.1.1/001)". At least two new helicopters of the same type, in good working order, specially adapted for airborne radar reconnaissance, are crucial to ensure a full 24/7 response in the event of an accident at the Astrava Nuclear Power Plant in Belarus. Having an additional new one purchased with the support of the EU allows expansion of the operations of aerial transit control of Kaliningrad and reinforces the monitoring of Russian trains going to and from Kaliningrad via Lithuania[129]. Without the support of the BMVI, it is improbable that the activities implemented under regular and specific actions would be carried out to the same extent or even at all. Thus, it can be assumed that Lithuania could not fully carry out the actions required to implement the EU policies in the areas supported by the BMVI without significant financial support.

In addition, the ITCD's annual budget in 2022 consisted of around EUR 15 million, an increase from approximately EUR 12 million the year before[130]. The EU contribution from the BMVI would only comprise a minimal share of the total budget (calculating the total sum ITCD receives throughout the programming period, the annual amount totals around EUR 1.47 million or around 9.8% of the annual budget in 2022). Crucially, the ITCD's activities cover

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[126] This sum includes EUR 62 400 000 of additional operating support – which was increased by EUR 8 400 000 on July 5, 2023, by the Monitoring Committee.

[127] BNS (2023). VSAT vadas: per dvejus metus sieną su Baltarusija saugos 450 daugiau pareigūnų. *Verslo žinios*. https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2023/11/05/vsat-vadas-per-dvejus-metus-siena-su-baltarusija-saugos-450-daugiau-pareigunu

[128] Perminas, P. (2022). Kitąmet daugiau pinigų gaus policija, ugniagesiai, pasieniečiai, VSD ir STT lėšos mažėja. *Kauno diena*. https://m.kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/kitamet-daugiau-pinigu-gaus-policija-ugniagesiai-pasienieciai-vsd-ir-stt-lesos-mazeja-1098554

[129] SBGS (2023). VSAT pirks tris sraigtasparnius radiacinei žvalgybai ir tranzito kontrolei. https://vsat.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/vsat-pirks-tris-sraigtasparnius-radiacinei-zvalgybai-ir-tranzito-kontrolei/

[130] ITCD (2023). 2022 m. gruodžio 31 d. pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys. Pinigų srautų ataskaita pagal 2022 m. gruodžio 31 d. duomenis. https://www.ird.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/finansiniu-ataskaitu-rinkiniai/2022-metai-1

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a wide range of IT infrastructures and systems that are at the core of the functioning of Lithuanian public administration as well as its participation in international organizations and activities; therefore, the activities ITCD carries out under BMVI contribute to the integration of the national large-scale IT systems related to border management, common visa policy and STS, with the centralised EU ones, such as Eurodac, ETIAS, SIS etc. Despite that, however, without the support of the EU, these activities would only be implemented to a much narrower extent or not at all, given the availability of funding and personnel as well as the wide range of responsibilities ITCD carries out. It can be concluded that ITCD does not have the financial means and ability to finance all projects and activities simultaneously and would focus on national needs first. As a result, it is believed that only few of the most important selected activities would be funded from national financing, while other activities would be postponed at the expense of Lithuania's ability to participate and ensure interoperability of all large-scale EU-wide IT systems in this area.

The investments into the implementation measures 1.3 regarding the interoperability of large-scale IT systems are complemented by the support to **PD**, which implements the Specific action: Support for the implementation of the legal framework for interoperability of IT systems (BMVI/2021/SA/1.5.4) and thus receives around EUR 1.1 million throughout the programming period. It particularly pertains to strengthening the capacity of the Lithuanian SIRENE Unit and the interoperability of information systems in the police. Such activities are supported by the PD budget already: for example, just in the 2022 budget, various IT-related activities received around EUR 2.33 million. Given that the funding under BMVI is meant for a seven-year period, activities PD carries out under BMVI contribute to the scale and scope by expanding and allowing an increase in the quality of operation, maintenance and development of large-scale IT systems related to border management. In addition, the PD receives EUR 19 million of operating support for the 2021-2023 period to support the implementation of STS. Given that, for example, the total PD budget in 2023 amounted to around EUR 284 million, the support received from the BMVI is marginal and extremely targeted to invest in specific activities and allow to expand their scope and scale. The same conclusion can be drawn regarding the STS operating support received by **the PSS** and **IDPC**.

When it comes to the implementation of SO2, the MFA receives the most financial support and thus is the main institution responsible for it. As foreseen in the 2024 budget, the MFA is supposed to receive around EUR 114 million from the national budget. To compare, in 2023, the MFA received around EUR 147 million; the highest increase in funding was for the NATO summit organization and projects to rebuild Ukraine and combat disinformation, refurbish embassies in Poland and Latvia, and maintain the new diplomatic representation in Singapore, established in 2022. The EUR 3.4 million received under the BMVI contributes to the implementation of SO2 and does not overlap with national investments in this area. In contrast, it allows the provision of additional consulate staff training and improves the quality of services provided by them in line with the priorities under SO2. It is likely, however, that such activities would be carried out on a much smaller scale and scope, given the limited availability of national funds for such activities.

Another crucial national investment that co-exists with and contributes to the BMVI's objectives is the installation of a physical barrier of around 500 kilometres on the border with Belarus, which was finished in August 2022. The funding totalled around EUR 118.4 million in multiple rounds for different border sections[131]. It contributes to Lithuania's ability to monitor the external EU border with Belarus, control the illegal migration flows and ensure proper border management. This is in line with the BMVI's special objectives.

Lastly, it is essential to emphasize that even though the BMVI fully funds the STS, it adds immense value to the Union and its relationship with the Russian Federation. The STS, agreed before Lithuania joined the EU, according to the Joint Statement on Transit between Kaliningrad and the Rest of the Russian Federation made by the EU and Russian Federation on 11 November 2002 and the Special Programme for Kaliningrad Transit 2003–2004 approved by Resolution No. 532 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 25 April 2003, allows for a smoother and faster transit of Russian citizens[132]. Since 2005, more than 6 million Russians (more than a thousand

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[131] EPSO-G (2022). FIZINIO BARJERO PRIE SIENOS SU BALTARUSIJA ĮRENGIMAS. https://www.epsog.lt/lt/projects/fizinio-barjero-prie-sienos-su-baltarusija-irengimas-1
[132] Consular information of MFA of Lithuania (2015, renewed in 2023). Facilitated Transit Documents. https://keliauk.urm.lt/en/entry-to-lithuania/visas/facilitated-transit-documents

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per day) have benefited from the EU-Russia STS[133]; in the last three years, every tenth person crossing the Lithuanian border was a Russian citizen travelling under the STS[134]. Without the support from the EU, the implementation of the scheme would not be possible due to a lack of national funding (and geopolitical considerations); therefore, Lithuania could not fully carry out the actions required to implement the EU agreement with the Russian Federation of 2002.

Table 17. Evaluation of EU added value criteria.

Criteria	SO1	SO2	STS
Evidence of scope effects	BMVI funds allow the expansion of the SBGS activities, such as procuring one more helicopter for border management.	Additional consulate staff training and improved services are possible due to BMVI support.	–
Evidence of scale effects	BMVI increases the quality and scale of SGBS's ability to manage the EU external border (e.g., procurement of vehicles) and the ITCD's ability to ensure interoperability of all large-scale EU-wide IT systems related to border management without overlapping with national funds.	All investments are focused on expanding the scale and scope of operation related to the quality and scale of large-scale IT systems (particularly N.VIS) and providing better quality and faster services related to common visa policy.	–
Evidence of function effects	BMVI support enables the ITCD and SGBS to increase capacity to conduct their operations and ensure proper border management in line with EU policies.	Trained consular staff enables an increase in the capacity for better provision of services.	–
Dependency criteria (there should be no systematic lack of national funds)	No systematic lack of national funds was indicated. Limited availability of national funds would potentially result in smaller-scale activities without BMVI support.	No systematic lack of national funds was indicated. Limited availability of national funds would potentially result in smaller-scale activities without BMVI support.	The scheme is entirely dependent on EU funds in line with the relevant regulations.

Source: composed by the Evaluator

After conducting this chapter's evaluation, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The Programme focuses on areas, interventions, and target groups where the results at the EU level can go beyond what can be achieved by the Member States acting on their own. In particular, there is evidence that the scale and scope of the activities funded by the BMVI would be conducted either partially or not at all due to the limited nature of Lithuanian national funding, especially regarding the SBGS border management activities, the management and interoperability of large-scale IT systems, and the training of the consular staff.
2. No evidence of dependency, i.e., of systematic lack of investment based on national resources for relevant services that are provided entirely through support from EU funds, was indicated. The exception is the STS, yet it is meant to be funded entirely by the EU as a special intiative.

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[133] BNS (2020). Linkevicius: underfunding of Kaliningrad transit scheme may jeopardize EU security. *Delfi*. https://www.delfi.lt/en/politics/linkevicius-underfunding-of-kaliningrad-transit-scheme-may-jeopardize-eu-security-83592907
[134] SBGS (2023). Kas dešimtas Lietuvos sieną kirtęs asmuo – Rusijos pilietis, vykęs pagal supaprastinto tranzito dokumentą (foto). https://vsat.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/kas-desimtas-lietuvos-siena-kirtes-asmuo-rusijos-pilietis-vykes-pagal-supaprastinto-tranzito-dokumenta-foto/

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6. Conclusions

This chapter provides vital conclusions and insights about the BMVI Programme implementation for 2021–2023, including lessons learned, recommendations, and good practices.

THE BMVI PROGRAMME IS RELEVANT GIVEN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING NEEDS. The BMVI Programme effectively meets stakeholder requirements while fully complying with legal obligations and adapting to changing circumstances. The Programme aligns with stakeholders' legal responsibilities and addresses their needs, as confirmed through a comprehensive analysis of national legislation. The Action Plan is designed to meet current and future stakeholder needs.

THE PROGRAMME IS ABLE TO ADAPT TO CHANGING SITUATIONS. The Monitoring Committee has demonstrated flexibility by making necessary adjustments to ensure appropriate resource allocation. The BMVI is regularly updated in response to contextual changes, such as project inclusions and fund redistribution, despite the absence of a formal needs assessment mechanism. Proper procedures are followed when implementing changes, and timely input from the Monitoring Committee allows for flexibility in Programme design.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION IS IN LINE WITH ACHIEVING GOALS. Implementation has started with operations selected for support of the Programme under all relevant SO and types of intervention, except where a delayed start was planned by design. Nevertheless, monitoring data analysis showed that tender publications did not experience any delays, thus leading to the project achievements of target values and indicators in time with expectations.

CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME ARE IDENTIFIED AND ARE LINKED WITH REMEDIES. Three main obstacles affect Programme implementation: malfunctioning electronic data system (VSFSVVP IS), a lack of readily available communication guidelines[135], and a risk of a lack of human resources. The latter issue occurs due to fluctuational workload, i.e., sometimes the number of projects is higher than expected, sometimes lower. To tackle the first issue, users report system issues to the service provider so they can be fixed, and they communicate between institutions to ensure other ways to share documents and data. Lastly, to compensate for the lack of communication guidelines (at the time of evaluation, they were not available), stakeholders actively communicated with each other by employing different methods such as emails, phone calls, etc.

THE PROGRAMME ENCOMPASSES EFFECTIVE MEASURES AND GOOD PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION. The Programme includes a diverse range of measures to enhance the effectiveness of border control. Good practices identified in the interim 2014–2020 report are also used. By integrating them, the Programme aims to achieve optimal results, ensuring that challenges disturbing the effectiveness of the Programme's implementation are successfully addressed and eliminated.

IT IS ENSURED THAT MONITORING MEASURES ARE FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND REPORTED AMONG STAKEHOLDERS. The actors involved in the data supply process have a clear understanding of the monitoring requirements due to receiving relevant training or information sessions. This ensures that experienced people work with the Programme and its implementation. Supervising institutions also contribute to ensuring the understanding of monitoring measures by actively communicating during the project implementation process and answering questions via email and phone calls.

RELEVANT PARTNERS' INCLUSION IN THE MONITORING COMMITTEE IS ENSURED FROM THE PROGRAMMING STAGE. Members of the Monitoring Committee were selected at the programming stage to ensure all final beneficiaries were involved. Therefore, the quality of cooperation and communication is highly effective and satisfactory. Even though the Monitoring Committee consists of relevant stakeholders, some additional institutions have been invited to expand the membership; therefore, no issue with the diversity of the membership of the Monitoring Committee was identified.

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[135] During the preparation of this evaluation, they were approved and published on 7 February 2024, available at: https://www.cpva.lt/globalios-naujienos/44/svvp-ir-vsf-20212027-m.-programu-pareiskejams-ir-projektu-vykdytojams-parengtas-komunikacijos-vadovas:995.

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MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED ACROSS ALL STAGES OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT. Actions and procedures are in place to enable the participation of members across all stages of the programming cycle. Each institution has appointed representatives of all final beneficiaries to ensure their representation in planning and later stages of the Programme. The meetings allow the space to discuss various issues raised by different members, as evidenced by the meeting protocols.

THE BMVI PROGRAMME CONSISTENTLY INTEGRATES AND PROMOTES HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES. The Programme showcases suitable organizational and procedural structures. These structures align with national regulations regarding funding, procurement, action plans, and legal frameworks. The Programme incorporates gender equality, anti-discrimination measures, and sustainable development goals throughout all phases as mandated by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement. Adherence to horizontal principles is also ensured through national legislation and legislative references, such as the NPP for 2021–2030, which bolster the dedication to these principles.

VARIOUS CHANNELS OF DISSEMINATION ARE USED TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. The communication and the visibility of the BMVI are carried out at two levels: through the Managing Authority and through communication with citizens. Traditional and digital tools are used to communicate about the Programme effectively and showcase its achievements. The latter include phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings. Also, there are internet websites where current or potential beneficiaries can find information about project calls, funding, and the current situation. Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube are used to spread information to a wider audience. Although these platforms are actively used, there is not enough information to promote the BMVI Programme, indicating a space for improvement.

THE PROGRAMME SUPPORTS COST-EFFECTIVE MEASURES. The Programme supports interventions and actions that are known to be cost-effective based on available literature. Investments in IT systems for national security, equipping agencies with advanced technology, and investments in education and training of officers and staff support robust security and adaptability to emerging threats. IT systems facilitate the global sharing of threat information, which is crucial to address international security challenges. Adequate, modern equipment builds community trust, while investment in cutting-edge technology keeps agencies ahead of the evolving challenges posed by adaptive criminals. Well-trained officers handle situations skilfully, reducing incidents involving the use of force, consequently minimising legal liabilities and reducing the risk of legal challenges and associated costs.

DESPITE INFLATION, THE FUNDS DISTRIBUTED AMONG PROGRAMME PROJECTS WERE SUFFICIENT. Despite some respondents indicating lower funding than requested, most interview responses expressed no lack of funds. Effective budgeting and financial management practices ensured that the allocated funds for each project were carefully planned. Also, the CPMA and their procedures support the effective use of funding. Nevertheless, those who experienced a lack of appropriate funding ensured that the funding they received was spent effectively.

VARIATIONS IN COST PER UNIT CAN BE EXPLAINED BY THE INTENSITY, QUALITY OF EQUIPMENT OR THE LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY OF THE PROJECTS. Preliminary results regarding unit costs align with established benchmarks and estimates. However, they also underscore the variability in costs observed among similar operations. The discrepancies in funding vary due to project activity types and complexity. Due to their differences, some of them have higher support intensity, resulting in higher costs per unit.

SINCE THE LAST PROGRAMMING PERIOD, THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN HAS INCREASED. Two significant changes happened: the introduction of the CPR and the national Strategic Management Methodology. Unfortunately, both high-level strategic documents increased the administrative burden on the Managing Authority and some project implementors because some of the provisions do not make sense considering the specificity of the BMVI Programme and projects.

NECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE COORDINATION ACROSS DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT MODES OF THE BMVI PROGRAMME ARE IN PLACE. Coordination mechanisms are used regularly, with consultations before the Monitoring Committee meets. Having the same Managing Authority, Intermediate Body, and Monitoring Committee can prevent potential overlap in intervention areas and target groups of different programmes. There is evidence of inter-agency cooperation as indicated by the interviewees – consultations and

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coordination take place before the Monitoring Committee's meetings, and there is regular communication in instances where some questions or concerns occur.

EU FUNDS AND EXTERNAL ACTION ANALYSED RELATE TO THE OVERALL GOALS OF THE BMVI DESPITE TARGETING DIFFERENT INTERVENTION AREAS. The BMVI acts as a more concrete and targeted initiative in the realm of more broad security-related actions laid out by the other EU funds. Unlike them, the BMVI operates exclusively in the realm of external EU border management and common visa policy, ensuring that there is no duplication or overlap with other funding mechanisms. The BMVI Programme complements the activities funded by other EU funds by targeting specific areas of security and foreign policies, in particular, the EU external border management and the common visa policy. Additional funds target other policy areas, such as internal security, asylum and migration policy challenges, and civil security overall.

PRIORITIES INDICATED IN THE BMVI CLEARLY EXHIBIT UNION ADDED VALUE. The results of the Programme should benefit both Lithuania and the EU if implemented successfully. The Programme focuses on areas, interventions, and target groups where the results at the EU level can go beyond what can be achieved by the Member States acting on their own. However, without the support of the BMVI, it is improbable that Lithuania could not fully carry out the actions required to implement the EU policies in the areas supported by the BMVI without significant financial support, which would result in activities funded by the BMVI would be conducted either partially or not at all due to the limited nature of Lithuanian national funding. Also, np lack of systematic investment based on national resources was indicated. The exception is the STS, yet it is meant to be funded by the EU entirely based on a separate agreement.

6.1. Lessons learned

Lessons learned while implementing the BMVI Programme are presented in the table below.

Table 18. Lessons learned

No	Lessons learned	Key takeaways
1.	Technical challenges in critical IT infrastructure	• VSFSVVP IS faces many issues which affect the completion of administrative tasks; • Resolving technical issues within critical IT infrastructure is challenging; • With the right expertise and timely solutions, system disruptions can be minimised, and optimal functionality of the system can be maintained.
2.	Balancing regulatory compliance and project efficiency	• Balancing regulatory compliance and project efficiency is essential; • Requirements imposed by national regulations to conduct alternative analyses are excessive and add extra administrative burden; • Evaluating regulatory mandates to ensure they contribute to informed decision-making without unnecessarily burdening projects is important.
3.	Simplified cost scheme consideration	• The simplified cost options might not consistently match the requirements of a project or provide the anticipated advantages; • The scheme is used on a project-by-project basis, i.e., project implementers might choose not to employ the scheme if it is deemed unsuitable for specific complexities of the project.
4.	Planning, communication and Programme coordination	• Planning and communication delays, particularly from EC, can disrupt Programme planning and strategic initiatives; • Early planning and communication endeavours are crucial for effective Programme implementation. • Establishing efficient communication channels and promptly addressing any delays is vital to ensure effective Programme implementation.

Source: composed by the Evaluator

6.2. Recommendations

The table below presents recommendations for further success of the implementation of the Programme.

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Table 19. Recommendations

Recommendation	Dedicated to
Application of stricter requirements in the purchase of critical IT infrastructure and other systems related to administrative tasks	• MoI; • CPMA.
More rigorous criteria would guarantee that only top-notch and dependable components of systems are obtained for monitoring and control purposes. When essential monitoring and control systems lack reliability and functionality, it leads to significant problems, such as increased administrative workload for everyone involved.	
Sustain and continue to cultivate a skilled workforce and maintain strong connections among representatives of pertinent institutions	• MoI; • CPMA.
One of the key aspects enabling the mitigation of both minor and significant issues and risks is the ability to communicate directly and collaborate effectively. Therefore, it is advisable to uphold the current level of interpersonal collaboration.	
Utilise the clause that exempts the need for analysing alternatives in situations where the specific project implementation is outlined in higher-level legal statutes	• EC; • MoF.
Improving decision-making involves enhancing efficiency and maintaining a focused approach to applying legal principles. Prioritising essential analyses can heighten overall effectiveness while minimising unnecessary delays and resource expenditures. General financing rules can achieve this for the BMVI, potentially alleviating current administrative complexities. Moreover, it would enhance efficiency and streamline administration, aligning with the distinctive nature of the Programme as a direct investment in specific strategic domains that involve only national law enforcement institutions.	

Source: composed by the Evaluator

6.3. Examples of good practices

The table below presents examples of good practices identified during the Evaluation.

Table 20. Good practices

No	Good practice	Implementation	Benefits
1.	Direct communication and active stakeholder involvement	Various channels and methods are employed to ensure direct and effective communication with stakeholders involved in the Programme.	Active participation from all parties guarantees effective cooperation, reduces misinterpretations, and fosters a mutual comprehension of objectives and duties.
2.	Shared Monitoring Committee to avoid overlaps	A common Monitoring Committee was established to monitor and oversee the implementation of both the BMVI and ISF programmes.	Central oversight ensures efficiency, coordination, streamlined communication, conflict prevention, and optimized resource allocation in project management.
3.	Early beneficiary involvement	Involving central institutions from the early start of Programme development is beneficial for the implementation of the Programme.	Involving beneficiaries from the beginning mitigates the likelihood of conflicts and prevents potential misinterpretations of their needs. This ensures that the project is better attuned to the genuine requirements and preferences of the intended beneficiaries, thereby boosting its overall efficacy.

Source: composed by the Evaluator

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Annexes

Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

Table 21. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
1. Relevance criteria				
1.1. To what extent does the Programme address the evolving needs?	1.1.1. The Programme stakeholders[137] are correctly identified in line with the objectives established legally; 1.1.2. The needs analysis[138] that led to the definition of the Programme and related distribution of resources is in line with the relevant current and prospective needs of the relevant stakeholders; 1.1.3. The strategy developed to address such needs, which is translated into concrete milestones and targets, aims to address the most relevant needs with proportionate resources; 1.1.4. The list of implementation measures included in the legal basis and planned within the Programme is suitable to	1.1.1.1. Number and type of stakeholders formally involved (NA/SM and PSSA); 1.1.2.1. Comparative list of stakeholder's needs and Programme's ways of addressing them (NA/SM and SI); 1.1.2.2. Normative judgements from potential and actual partners (SI); 1.1.3.1. Reconstructed Programme's intervention logic (RIL);	a) Need evaluation and stakeholder mapping; b) Semi-structured interviews; c) Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; d) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; b) Data from semi-structured interviews.

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[136] NA/SM – Needs evaluation/stakeholder mapping; SI – Semi-structured interview; ILR – Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; AFPP – Analysis of financial and physical progress; PSSA – Primary and secondary source analysis.

[137] Clarification provided by EU Revisited background note: Stakeholders typically include actors involved in the design and implementation of the Programme, potential and actual beneficiaries as well as end-users/recipients/beneficiaries among the population. Within the range of the different stakeholders and in line with the legal basis, the needs evaluation should normally identify the needs that receive highest priority as well as the related target groups. Target groups are not necessarily or solely the end-users, as based on the intervention logic of the Programme it may be that priority is given to the strengthening of a specific body, service, system etc. Whilst the general population is inevitably indirectly affected by the intervention, it may not represent its specific target group.

[138] Clarification provided by EU Revisited background note: Needs should always be intended as relevant needs within the remit of the Programme, in line with the EU treaties and the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity.

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
	address the current and prospective needs of the target groups.	1.1.3.2. Existence of formal strategy that is in line with stakeholders' needs (NA/SM and PSSA); 1.1.4.1. No contradictions among identified stakeholders needs and planned measures have been identified (RIL, NA/SM, SI);		
1.2. To what extent can the Programme adapt to the evolving needs?	1.2.1. A needs evaluation is performed and updated on a regular basis or whenever there are relevant contextual changes; 1.2.2. The partnership / Monitoring Committee can provide timely input on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground; 1.2.3. There is an adequate degree of flexibility in the design of the operations; 1.2.4. Where necessary, non-substantial changes to the Programme strategy can be applied swiftly; 1.2.5. There are rules and procedures in place that ensure that the substantial adjustments of the Programme can be implemented in due time if new needs arise; 1.2.6. If there have been changes in the needs after the Programme adoption, the Programme strategy or operations have been adapted in due time, or, alternatively, the new needs have been duly addressed via the thematic facility.	1.2.1.1. There is evidence that needs evaluation is regularly performed and updated (PSSA); 1.2.1.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions (SI); 1.2.2.1. There is formal evidence of timely input of the partnership / Monitoring Committee on evolving needs and relevant developments on the ground (PSSA and SI); 1.2.2.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions from potential and actual partners (SI); 1.2.3.1. Evidence of flexibility and change in reports of involved institutions could be identified (PSSA); 1.2.3.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions (SI); 1.2.4.1. Examples of swift adjustments of the Programme could be identified in reports of involved institutions (PSSA); 1.2.4.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions from potential and actual partners (SI); 1.2.5.1. Rules and/or procedures for substantial adjustments of the Programme could be identified (PSSA);	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews.

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
		1.2.5.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions (SI); 1.2.6.1. If possible, cases of substantial adaptation of the Programme could be identified (PSSA); 1.2.6.2. Normative judgements by implementing institutions (SI); 1.2.6.3. Formal rules and/or procedures in place to accommodate substantial changes to the Programme (PSSA).		
2. Effectiveness criteria				
2.1. To what extent is the Programme on track to achieving its objectives?	2.1.1. Implementation has started with operations selected for support of the Programme under all relevant specific objectives and types of intervention, except where a delayed start was planned by design; 2.1.2. The early progress towards the achievement of the milestone and target values, account taken of the timing for the adoption of the Programme, is in line with the expectations; 2.1.3. Challenges that affect implementation and the progress towards the objectives of the Programme are duly identified and linked with effective remedy strategies; 2.1.4. The Programme supports types of interventions and types of actions that are known to be effective as per the available evidence (including, e.g., relevant academic literature, the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme, etc.); 2.1.5. The Programme makes use of available good practices where relevant and possible.	2.1.1.1 Monitoring data (AFPP); 2.1.1.2. Reports by relevant institutions (PSSA); 2.1.2.1. Comparison of monitoring data to initial plan (AFPP); 2.1.3.1. Existence of relevant rules and/or procedures (PSSA); 2.1.3.2. Reports by relevant institutions (PSSA); 2.1.3.3. Normative judgements by implementing institutions (SI); 2.1.4.1. Reconstruction of the Intervention logic (RIL); 2.1.4.2. Academic literature and/or previous evaluations (PSSA); 2.1.5.1. Evidence of good practice implementation could be identified in formal planning documents (PSSA).	a) Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; b) Analysis of financial and physical progress; c) Primary and secondary source analysis; d) Semi-structured interviews.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews; d) Monitoring data; e) Academic literature and/or previous evaluations.
2.2. To what extent is the monitoring and evaluation framework suitable to inform on the progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Programme?	2.2.1. A reliable electronic data exchange system (especially between Managing Authorities / Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries) for recording and storing data for monitoring and evaluation is in place;	2.2.1.1. Evidence of electronic data exchange system being operational (PSSA);	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; c)	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
	2.2.2. Monitoring requirements are duly understood by the actors involved in the data supply process, and training or info-sessions are organised where relevant; 2.2.3. The reporting on output and result indicators correctly reflects the level of implementation on the ground (no over / under-reporting); 2.2.4. The common indicators capture the main achievements of the Programme in line with the intervention logic of the Programme; 2.2.5. Programme-specific indicators are used to fill any substantial gap in the common indicators based on the intervention logic of the Programme; 2.2.6. The overall set of data recorded generates sufficient evidence to be used as a basis to estimate the impacts of the funds (i.e., impacts attributable to the Programme with a clear causal link), thus paving the way for the ex-post evaluation.	2.2.2.1. Evidence of training material, manuals, guides and similar have been prepared and distributed (PSSA); 2.2.2.2. Normative judgement from potential and actual partners (SI); 2.2.3.1. No inappropriate reporting has been identified in reports by implementing institutions (PSSA, AFPP); 2.2.3.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 2.2.4.1. Comparative analysis of the Deconstructed Intervention logic and planned indicators (RIL, AFPP); 2.2.4.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 2.2.5.1. Comparative analysis of the Deconstructed Intervention logic and planned indicators (RIL, AFPP); 2.2.5.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 2.2.6.1. Comparative analysis of the Deconstructed Intervention logic and planned indicators (RIL, AFPP);	Analysis of financial and physical progress; d) Primary and secondary source analysis.	related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews; d) Monitoring data.
2.3. How was the involvement of the relevant partners ensured across all stages of the programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?	2.3.1. There is a strategy in place to identify, inform and reach the most relevant partners, which aims to ensure their balanced representation in the Monitoring Committee; 2.3.2. Relevant partners have been identified and involved at the programming stage; 2.3.3. Relevant partners participate in the Monitoring Committee in line with their role as defined by the relevant rules of procedure; 2.3.4. Actions are put in place to enable the participation of the partners across all stages of the Programme cycle.	2.3.1.1. Evidence of a formal procedure in place to inform stakeholders about the Programme's progress and updates (NA/SM, PSSA); 2.3.2.1. Number and types of stakeholders included; 2.3.2.2. Relevant partners acknowledge their effective involvement at the programming stage (SI); 2.3.3.1. Reports of Monitoring Committee meetings (PSSA);	a) Need evaluation and stakeholder mapping; b) Semi-structured interviews; c) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews;

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
		2.3.3.2. Normative judgement by relevant stakeholders (SI); 2.3.4.1. Existence of strategy, rules and/or procedures (PSSA).		
2.4. To what extent does the Programme respect or promote the horizontal principles in its implementation?	2.4.1. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place to ensure the respect of the charter of fundamental rights of the EU in the Programme implementation - Art. 9(1); 2.4.2. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place which ensure that appropriate steps are taken to consider and promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming across all stages of the preparation, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the Programme - Art. 9(2); 2.4.3. There are suitable organisational and procedural arrangements in place that allow taking appropriate steps to prevent discrimination on all grounds and across all stages of the programming cycle - Art. 9(3); 2.4.4. The Programme has suitable arrangements that ensure that implementation is aligned with the objective of promoting sustainable development, as set out in Article 11 TFEU, considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the "do no significant harm" principle - Art. 9(4).	2.4.1.1. Examples of rules and/or procedures could be identified which ensure the respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (PSSA); 2.4.2.1. Examples of rules and/or procedures could be identified which consider and promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming (PSSA); 2.4.3.1. Examples of rules and/or procedures could be identified which are aimed at preventing discrimination on all grounds (PSSA); 2.4.4.1. Examples of rules and/or procedures that ensure compliance with objectives promoting sustainable development (PSSA) could be identified.	a) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme.
2.5. To what extent is the Programme effective in communicating and disseminating its opportunities as well as achievements?	2.5.1. Dissemination activities reach the target audience and are carried out through an appropriate mix of communication channels and platforms, including social media, and generate interactions; 2.5.2. Funding opportunities are adequately advertised and reach the identified target group of potential beneficiaries.	2.5.1.1. Data on the impact of dissemination activities (PSSA); 2.5.1.2. Normative judgements by relevant stakeholders (SI)	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews.

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
3. Efficiency criteria				
3.1. To what extent does the Programme support cost-effective measures?	3.1.1. The Programme supports types of interventions and types of actions that are known to be cost-effective, based on available evidence, including relevant literature or the ex-post evaluation of the previous Programme; 3.1.2. The early evidence coming from the operations indicates that the cost per unit is in line with or below existing benchmarks and estimates; 3.1.3. The differences in the cost per unit among similar operations within the same Programme can be explained and justified (e.g., by differences in the intensity or quality of the support offered, innovativeness, etc.);	3.1.1.1. Deconstructed intervention logic (RIL); 3.1.1.2. Evidence from academic literature, previous evaluations and/or in practice (PSSA); 3.1.2.1. Monitoring data (AFPP); 3.1.2.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.1.3.1. Deconstructed intervention logic (RIL); 3.1.3.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI).	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; c) Analysis of financial and physical progress; d) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews; d) Monitoring data; e) Academic literature and/or previous evaluation reports.
3.2. To what extent is the management and control system efficient?	3.2.1. The management and control system, described as per the legal basis, aims to ensure efficiency in the selection of operations, management tasks, work of the Monitoring Committee, fulfilment of accounting function and recording and storing of data on each operation; 3.2.2. The administrative burden is proportionate for all implementing actors (Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies) compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups without the support of the Programme; 3.2.3. The administrative burden is proportionate for all end-users, e.g., compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups without the support of the Programme; 3.2.4. The administrative burden is proportionate for all beneficiaries, compared to the previous programming period/ similar services offered to comparable target groups	3.2.1.1. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.2.1.2. Evaluation of administrative burden provided by implementing institutions and stakeholders (PSSA); 3.2.2.1. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.2.2.2. Evaluation of administrative burden provided by implementing institutions and stakeholders (PSSA); 3.2.3.1. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI);	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews.

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
	without the support of the Programme; 3.2.5. Absence of 'gold-plating' at the national level (e.g. from Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, national Audit Authorities), i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively than the legal basis or relevant documents providing methodological advice to the Member States and unless a justified reason exists; 3.2.6. Absence of 'gold-plating' at the EU level, i.e. requirements are not interpreted more restrictively than in the legal basis and unless a justified reason exists; 3.2.7. Simplified cost options used create simplification on the ground; 3.2.8. Technical assistance is used to strengthen the management and control system when necessary.	3.2.3.2. Evaluation of administrative burden provided by implementing institutions and stakeholders (PSSA); 3.2.4.1. Comparison of current administrative burden and previous evaluations (PSSA); 3.2.5.1. Analysis of formal requirements (PSSA); 3.2.5.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.2.6.1. Analysis of formal requirements (PSSA); 3.2.6.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.2.7.1. Analysis of formal requirements for application of simplified cost options (PSSA); 3.2.7.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.2.8.1. Evidence of usage of technical assistance to strengthen the management and control system exists (PSSA and SI);		
3.3. To what extent is further simplification achievable, and how?	3.3.1. There is evidence of legal requirements, rules of procedures or practices that create disproportionate administrative burden at the EU or MS level, and concrete alternatives exist; 3.3.2. There is room for additional use of simplified cost options and financing not linked to cost options; 3.3.3. There is evidence of a lack of coordination between the actors involved in the implementation of the Programme, resulting in, e.g. lack of coherence, increased administrative	3.3.1.1. Analysis of formal requirements (administrative burden) (PSSA); 3.3.1.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.3.2.1. Analysis of formal requirements (administrative burden) (PSSA);	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme;

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
	burden, etc.; 3.3.4. There are issues with the electronic data exchange systems that create delays and can and should be addressed.	3.3.2.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.3.3.1. Comparison of current regulation to previous programming periods; 3.3.3.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI); 3.3.4.1. Evidence significant technical issues with electronic data exchange systems could be identified (PSSA and SI); 3.3.3.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions and stakeholders (SI);		c) Data from semi-structured interviews.
4. Coherence criteria				
4.1. To what extent is the Programme coherent with initiatives supported under its policy domain, with support under the thematic facility across the different management modes?	4.1.1. Structures, organisational arrangements, or coordination mechanisms are in place which ensure coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies across the different management modes of the same Programme; 4.1.2. Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and to good effect; 4.1.3. Alleged overlaps are, in fact, justified on objective grounds (e.g. same target group but a different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen); 4.1.4. The Programme is coherent with the current policy agendas at the EU and national level; 4.1.5. There is evidence of inter-agency cooperation.	4.1.1.1. Evidence of rules and/or procedures that enhance coordination, complementarities and synergies across different management modes of the Programme (PSSA); 4.1.1.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 4.1.2.1. There is evidence for effective and regular application of coordination mechanisms (PSSA); 4.1.2.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 4.1.3.1. Formal basis for alleged overlaps (PPSA); 4.1.4.1. Analysis of overlaps (PSSA); 4.1.5.1. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI).	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews.

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
4.2. To what extent is the Programme coherent with other EU funds (including other Home Affairs funds) and with the EU's external action?	4.2.1. Structures, organisational arrangements or coordination mechanisms are in place which ensure coordination, complementarities and, where relevant, synergies across other EU funds, in particular, cohesion policy and EU's external action; 4.2.2. Coordination mechanisms and arrangements are used regularly and to good effect; 4.2.3. Alleged overlaps are, in fact, justified on objective grounds (e.g., same target group but a different type of measure/ different need addressed/ different readiness of the type of funding support chosen); 4.2.4. The Programme offers support to cross-cutting policy agendas by complementing the support offered by other EU funds.	4.1.1.1. Evidence of rules and/or procedures that enhance coordination, complementarities, and synergies across different management modes of the Programme (PSSA); 4.1.1.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 4.1.2.1. There is evidence for effective and regular application of coordination mechanisms (PSSA); 4.1.2.2. Normative judgement by implementing institutions (SI); 4.1.3.1. Formal basis for alleged overlaps (PPSA); 4.1.3.2. Formal rules and/or procedures for support to cross-cutting policy agendas (PPSA);	a) Semi-structured interviews; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme; c) Data from semi-structured interviews.
	5. EU added value criteria			

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Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Indicator (Descriptor)[136]	Methods	Sources
5.1. To what extent is the Programme generating EU-added value?	5.1.1. The Programme focuses on areas, interventions, and target groups where the results at the EU level can go beyond what can be achieved by the Member States acting on their own. Amongst others: 5.1.1.a. There is evidence of scope effects, i.e., of additional target groups addressed or additional types of intervention offered; 5.1.1.b. There is evidence of scale effects, i.e., of a higher volume of services offered/end-users addressed; 5.1.1.c. There is evidence of function effects, i.e., of learning and increased capacity to manage the provision of public support within the administrations involved; 5.1.2. There is no evidence of dependency, i.e., of systematic lack of investment based on national resources for relevant services that are provided entirely through support from EU funds.	5.1.1.1. Deconstructed intervention logic (IRL); 5.1.1.2. Analysis of national policy in relevant field (PSSA); 5.1.2.1. Analysis of national investment in relevant field (PSSA).	a) Reconstruction of the Intervention logic; b) Primary and secondary source analysis.	a) Reports by involved institutions; b) Legal documents related to the BMVI Programme;

Source: composed by the Evaluator

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Annex 2. Questionnaire for semi-structured interviews programme

Table 22. Questionnaire for semi-structured interviews programme

Id	The target group of respondents[139]	Translation of interview questions (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Original interview questions in Lithuanian (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Relevant judgement criteria[140]
1. Questions related to the changing needs of stakeholders				
1.1.	FB	What are the current needs of the institution you represent in relation to the objectives and scope of the Programme? Have they changed, and/or are they likely to change during the implementation of the Programme?	Kokie yra Jūsų atstovaujamos institucijos dabartiniai poreikiai, atsižvelgiant į Programos tikslus ir tematiką? Ar jie pasikeitė ir / arba gali pasikeisti Programos įgyvendinimo metu?	1.1.2., 1.1.4.
1.2.	FB	Were your needs considered during the planning of the Programme, and are they correctly reflected in the Programme now? If not, please specify what corrections might be needed.	Ar Jūsų poreikiai buvo vertinami planuojant Programą, ar šie poreikiai korektiškai atspindėti Programoje? Jeigu ne – patikslinkite, kokių korekcijų galėtų reikėti.	1.1.2., 1.1.4., 2.3.2.
1.3.	PA	How has the evaluation of the needs of the project promoters been or is still being carried out to determine whether the Programme meets the identified needs? In your judgment, do the institutions implementing the Programme understand the needs of project promoters? Why?	Kokiu būdu vyko arba tebevyksta projektų vykdytojų poreikių vertinimas, ar Programa atitinka nustatytus poreikius? Kokios suinteresuotos šalys buvo arba yra įsitraukusios? Jūsų vertinimu, ar Programą įgyvendinančios institucijos turi gerą suvokimą apie projektų vykdytojų poreikius? Kodėl?	1.1.2., 1.1.4., 1.2.1., 2.3.2.
2. Questions related to the management of the Programme				
2.1.	PA and FB	In general, how do you assess the Programme's management and control mechanisms? Is there good internal communication and cooperation between stakeholders?	Bendrai, kaip Jūs vertinate Programos valdymo ir kontrolės mechanizmus? Ar vidinė komunikacija ir bendradarbiavimas tarp suinteresuotų šalių vyksta sklandžiai?	3.2.1., 3.3.3.
2.2.	PA	Is technical assistance used to reinforce the management and control system of the Programme where necessary?	Ar prireikus Programos valdymo ir kontrolės sistemai stiprinti yra naudojama techninė pagalba?	3.2.8.
2.3.	PA and FB	Do you agree that the Programme Monitoring Committee includes all stakeholders? Is the format of the Monitoring Committee effective?	Ar sutinkate, kad į Programos stebėsenos komitetą yra įtrauktos visos suinteresuotos pusės? Ar bendradarbiavimas stebėsenos komiteto formate yra veiksmingas?	1.2.2., 2.3.3.

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[139] Final beneficiaries (FB) – parties, responsible for the implementation of a project; Programme authorities – institutions, which are responsible for management of the Programme. In case of BMVI target group of Final beneficiaries consists of PD, ITCD, The Criminal Intelligence Unit of the SBGS, Coast Guard Unit of the BGS, MFA, PSS, IDPC. Target group of Programme authorities (PA) consists of MoI, Centralised Internal Audit Unit of the MoI and CPMA, MoF.

[140] See Annex 3.

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Id	The target group of respondents[139]	Translation of interview questions (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Original interview questions in Lithuanian (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Relevant judgement criteria[140]
2.4.	FB	Do you encounter the problem of excessive administrative burdens? Could you compare it with the previous financial period or other investment programmes?	Ar susiduriate su perteklinės administracinės naštos problema? Ar galėtumėte ją palyginti su ankstesniu finansiniu laikotarpiu arba kitomis investicijų programomis?	3.2.2., 3.2.3., 3.3.1.
2.5.	PA	Are EU recommendations on Programme administration being followed? Are additional national administrative requirements, procedures, etc., not foreseen by the EU? Are these administrative requirements, procedures, etc., not excessive?	Ar pavyksta laikytis ES rekomendacijų programos administravimo srityje? Ar yra įdiegti papildomi nacionaliniai, ES nenumatyti, administraciniai reikalavimai, procedūros ir pan.? Ar šie administraciniai reikalavimai, procedūros ir pan. nėra perteklinės?	3.2.5., 3.2.6., 3.3.1.
2.6.	PA and FB	Is the electronic data exchange system user-friendly and working properly?	Ar elektroninė duomenų mainų sistema yra patogi ir veikia tinkamai?	3.2.1., 3.3.4.
2.7.	PA	Have you been involved in adapting the Programme during the current period? If so, have these changes been implemented smoothly? In general, do you find the management of the Programme sufficiently flexible to ensure that possible changes to the Programme run smoothly in the future?	Ar Jums yra tekę dalyvauti koreguojant Programą dabartiniame laikotarpyje? Jeigu taip, ar šie pakeitimai buvo įgyvendinti sklandžiai? Bendrai, ar programos valdymas Jums atrodo pakankamai lankstus, ar galimi Programos pakeitimai ateityje vyktų sklandžiai?	1.2.3., 1.2.4., 1.2.6.
2.8.	PA	Are there internal procedures and arrangements in place to carry out a substantial change to the Programme? How do you evaluate these procedures?	Ar yra numatytos vidinės procedūros ir tvarkos, skirtos įvykdyti esminį Programos pakeitimą? Kaip vertinate šias procedūras?	1.2.3., 1.2.5.
2.9.	PA and FB	In your opinion, are there opportunities for simplified reimbursement fully exploited?	Jūsų nuomone, ar yra pilnai išnaudojamos galimybės taikyti supaprastintą išlaidų apmokėjimo būdą?	3.2.7., 3.3.2.
2.10.	PA	Do you face any challenges in carrying out dissemination and communication activities related to the implementation of the Programme?	Ar susiduriate su iššūkiais vykdydami sklaidos ir komunikacijos veiklas, susijusias su Programos įgyvendinimu?	2.5.1.
3. Questions related to early results of Programme implementation				
3.1.	PA	Have you encountered any challenges in ensuring timely progress in the implementation of the Programme? Have you possibly evaluated potential risks and future challenges? Are there measures or procedures in place to manage potential risks?	Ar susidūrėte su iššūkiais, siekiant užtikrinti savalaikį Programos įgyvendinimo progresą? Galbūt esate įvertinę galimas rizikas ir ateities iššūkius? Ar yra numatytos priemonės arba procedūros, skirtos valdyti galimas rizikas?	2.1.3.
3.2.	PA and FB	What measures have been taken to ensure that project promoters are aware of and understand the Programme's project rules, reporting and monitoring requirements?	Kokių priemonių imtasi siekiant užtikrinti, kad projektų vykdytojai būtų susipažinę su Programos projektų vykdymo taisyklėmis, atskaitomybės, stebėsenos reikalavimais, ir juos suprastų?	2.2.2.

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Id	The target group of respondents[139]	Translation of interview questions (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Original interview questions in Lithuanian (*interviews were conducted in Lithuanian*)	Relevant judgement criteria[140]
3.3.	PA and FB	Have you noticed a discrepancy between the planned monitoring indicators and the focus of the Programme and the projects? Have you noticed that the monitoring indicators need to be adjusted?	Ar pastebėjote suplanuotų stebėsenos rodiklių neatitikimą Programos ir projektų esmei? Galbūt pastebėjote, kad reikalinga stebėsenos rodiklių korekcija?	2.2.3., 2.2.4.
3.4.	PA and FB	How do you evaluate the funds planned for the implementation of projects? Are you facing problems with insufficient/excessive funds?	Kaip vertinate suplanuotas lėšas projektų įgyvendinimui? Ar susiduriate su nepakankamų / perteklinių lėšų problemomis?	3.1.2., 3.1.3.
		4. Questions related to inter-agency cooperation		
4.2.	PA	Do you see a need for cooperation with the authorities responsible for other programmes/funds in the field of security? If there is cooperation, is it smooth? Is such cooperation formalised?	Ar matote poreikį bendradarbiavimui su institucijomis, atsakingomis už kitų programų / fondų investicijas saugumo srityje? Jeigu bendradarbiavimas vyksta – ar jis yra sklandus? Ar toks bendradarbiavimas yra formalizuotas?	4.1.1., 4.1.5., 4.2.1., 4.1.2., 4.2.2

Source: composed by the Evaluator

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Annex 3. Respondents of the interview program

Table 23. Respondents of the interview program

Institution	Participants	Relation to the Programme	Date of the interview
Ministry of the Interior	Dalia Trinkūnienė	Managing authority	19th December 2023
Centralised Internal Audit Division of MoI	Respondents indicated that they had not carried out any evaluation related to Programme implementation yet and, therefore, declined the interview.	Audit Authority	No interview was conducted.
Coast Guard Unit of the State Border Guard Service[141]	Virgaudas Lukoševičius	Final beneficiary	29th December 2023
The Information Technology and Communications Department under MoI (ITCD)	Augustinas Zeirys, Artūras Kavolis, Alvyda Pupkovienė	Final beneficiary	18th January 2024
Ministry of the Foreign Affairs (MFA, lt. URM)	Inga Marcinkevičienė, Lilija Žinienė	Final beneficiary	9th January 2024
Police Department under MoI (PD, lt. PD)	Violeta Limanovksa, Vidmantas Vadeikis, Jurga Urbanavičienė	Final beneficiary	8th January 2024
Public Security Service under MoI (PSS, lt. VST)	Stanislava Varnienė	Final beneficiary	6th February 2024
Identity Documents Personalisation Centre under MoI (IDPC, lt. ADIC)	Lina Turonytė	Final beneficiary	4th January 2024
Central Project Management Agency (CPMA, lt. CPVA)	Mindaugas Rauba	Intermediate Body	10th January 2024
Ministry of Finance (MoF, lt. FM)	Rūta Dumušytė	MoF is the body that receives payments from the Commission	11th January 2024

Source: composed by the Evaluator

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[141] Representatives were able to answer questions on behalf of The Criminal Intelligence Unit of the SBGS.

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