

Strategic diagnosis for the project “Strengthening Border Communities in the Polish Lithuanian Functional Zone” No. LTPL00271

Strategic diagnosis of the Lithuanian territory

Intended for: Lazdijai District Municipality
Vilnius, 2025



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Key abbreviations and terms

Mun	Municipality
Gmina	Small administrative unit, smaller than municipality
EGTC zone	Vilkaviškis d. mun., Kalvarija mun., Lazdijai d. mun., Sejny city, Sejny gmina, Giby gmina, Krasnopol gmina, Punszk gmina, Jeleniewo gmina, Rutka–Tartak gmina, Szypliszki gmina, Wiżajny gmina
Client	Lazdijai district municipality
Consultant	Smart Continent LT, UAB



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Introduction

The Strategic Diagnosis for the project "Strengthening of Border Communities in the Polish Lithuanian Functional Zone" No LTPL00271 is being prepared in accordance with the Contract No 53-22 of 18 February 2025 between the Lazdijai District Municipality Administration and Smart Continent LT, UAB (hereinafter referred to as the Consultant).

A strategic diagnosis includes the diagnosis of the EGTC zone. The EGTC zone covers 12 territorial units in Lithuania and Poland. In this version, 3 Lithuanian municipalities belonging to the EGTC zone will be analysed: the municipalities of Vilkaviškis dist., Kalvarija and Lazdijai dist.

A strategic diagnosis includes an analysis of economic, social, cultural, geographic, administrative indicators and the local potential growth opportunities.



1. Economic indicators

This chapter analyses the structure of the economy and the main economic sectors, their importance and prospects. The indicators analysed include:

- number of enterprises operating in municipalities;
- registered enterprises by economic activity at the beginning of the year.

NUMBER OF ENTERPRISES OPERATING IN MUNICIPALITIES. In total, 952 enterprises were operating in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023, which is 20.2% more than in 2019. The highest growth is recorded in the municipality of Lazdijai dist. (40%), and the lowest - in the municipality of Vilkaviškis dist. (14.1%).

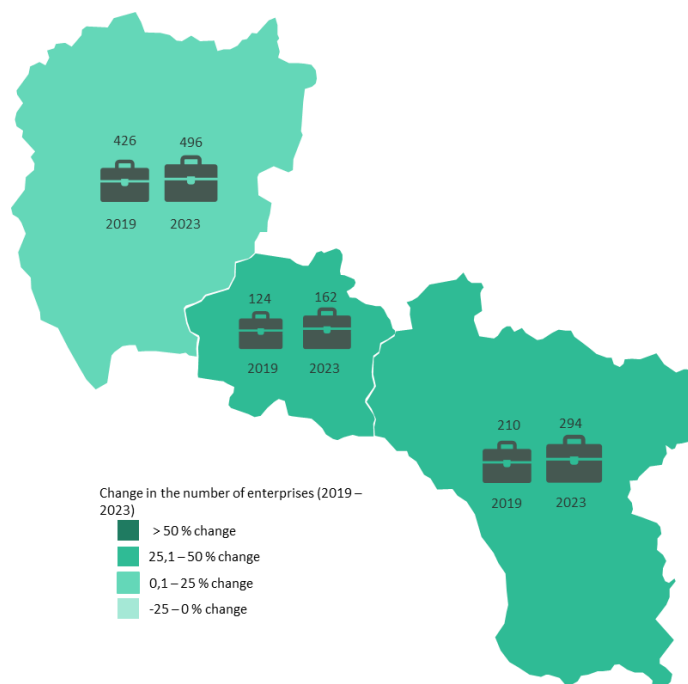


Figure 1. Number of operating enterprises in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency ¹ data

REGISTERED ENTERPRISES BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. According to the EGTC zone data, the total number of registered entities in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023 was around 2.5 thousand, which is 13.4% more than in 2019, when 2.2 thousand entities were registered. The largest number of enterprises in 2023 was registered in the municipality of Vilkaviškis dist. (1,349 units) and the smallest in the municipality of Kalvarija (431 units).

A significant share of economic entities in 2023 is accounted for by entities active in wholesale and retail trade or repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, ranging from 14.3% (municipality of Lazdijai dist.) to 22.5% (municipality of Vilkaviškis dist.). Another significant share was also accounted for by enterprises engaged in service activities, including activities of households employing persons - municipalities of Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija are the first in terms of the number of registered enterprises, while municipality of Vilkaviškis dist. is the second in terms of the number of enterprises engaged in such activities. In all municipalities, this activity accounts for about one fifth of the total number of registered entities.

¹ State Data Agency. Online access: <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/>



The figure below shows the distribution of economic activities accounting for more than 5% of the total number of economic entities in 3 Lithuanian municipalities. Those activities which account for less than 5% of the total structure are listed as "Other".

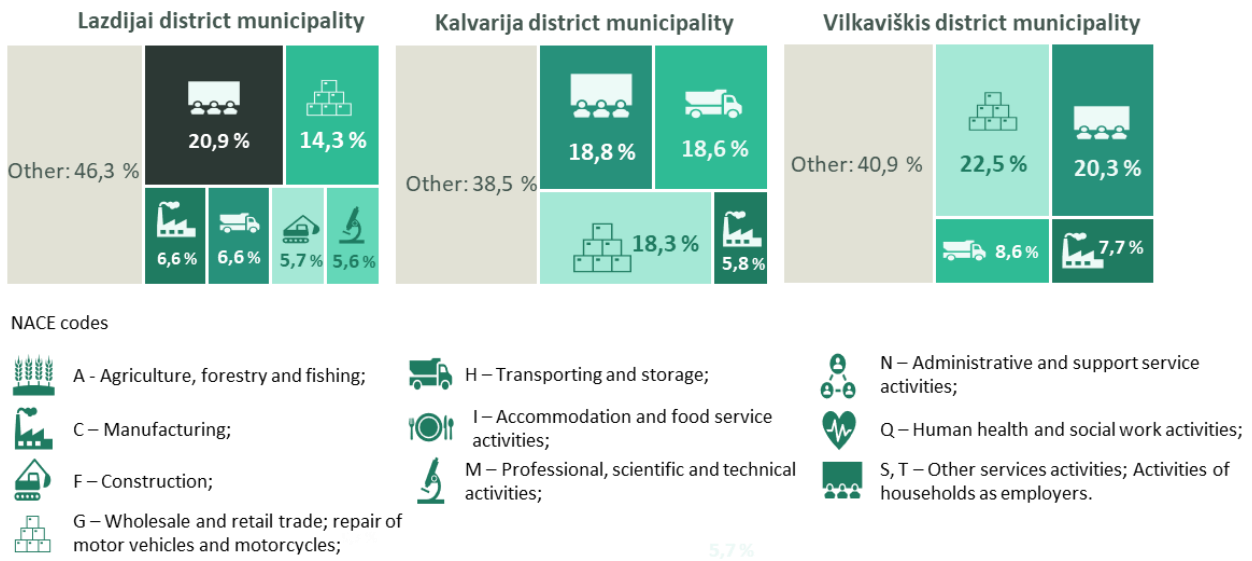


Figure 2. Registered economic operators by economic activity in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023
Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency) data

Summarising the economic indicators of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone for the period 2019-2023, the overall economic situation is improving. The number of enterprises operating in the territory of the analysed Lithuania territory is increasing, and the number of registered economic entities is growing. A larger share of economic activities of economic operators is accounted for by wholesale and retail trade or repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and other service activities, including activities of households with employees. There is no single activity involving a particularly high proportion of economic operators in the whole analysis area. No single economic activity covers more than 22.5% of the total number of economic entities registered in Lithuanian municipalities. This means that activities are diversified and there is no dependence on a single branch of economy or type of activity. On the other hand, this situation shows that municipalities have not developed specialisation, which allows them to attract investment in a particular field and develop specific competences and skills.



2. Social indicators

This chapter analyses the following groups of social indicators: the demographic structure of the population, social infrastructure, employment and the structure of the labour market. The first group of indicators, the demographic structure of the population, analyses the structure of the population and the aspects that characterise it and includes the following indicators:

- population;
- population structure by age group;
- birth rate per 1,000 inhabitants;
- death rate per 1,000 inhabitants;
- net international migration;
- net internal migration.

The second group of indicators - social infrastructure - looks at the quality and accessibility of education, health and social services and includes the following indicators:

- Education:
 - number of educational institutions (number of pre-school, general education institutions, vocational training institutions, higher education institutions);
 - number of people attending educational institutions (pre-school, pre-primary, schoolchildren, students);
 - proportion of children enrolled in pre-primary education from 3 years of age up to the compulsory age of primary education (7 years);
- Healthcare:
 - number of beds;
 - number of pharmacies;
 - number of health facilities by type of facility;
 - standardised mortality rate for certain diseases.
- Social services:
 - number of elderly (65+) as a share of the total population;
 - number of persons with disabilities as a share of the total population;
 - number of institutions providing social services by type of institution.

The third set of indicators - employment and labour market structure - includes the following indicators:

- number of employed;
- number of employed by industry;
- number of unemployed;
- unemployed as a share of the total working age population.

2.1. Demographic structure of the population

POPULATION. The total population of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023 was 61.9 thousand, which is a decrease of 5.9% since 2019, when the population of the municipalities was 65.8 thousand. The highest change in 2023 was in of Lazdijai dist. municipality (a decrease of 7.9% to 17.6 thousand), and the smallest was in the Vilkaviškis dist. municipality (a 5% decrease to 34.4 thousand).



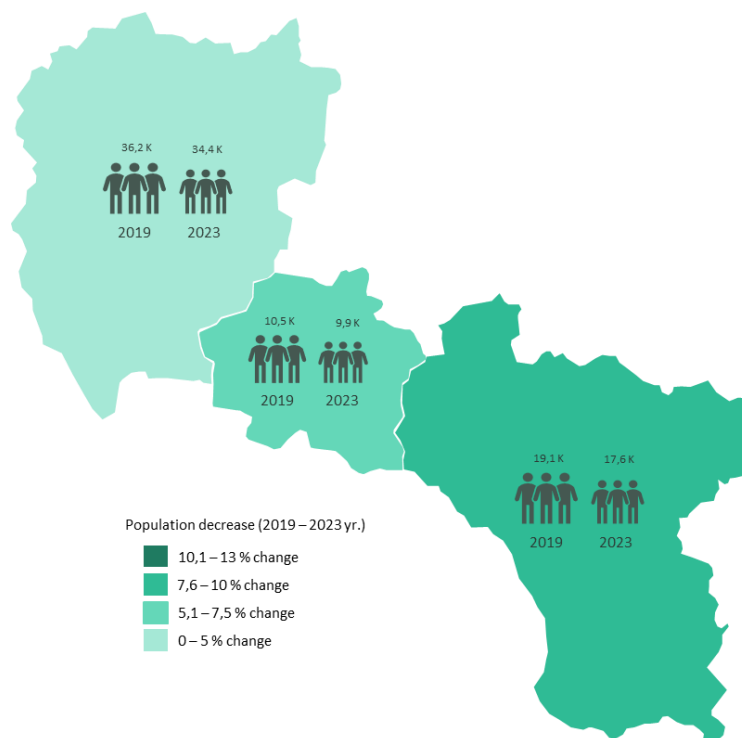


Figure 3. Population changes in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2019 and 2023

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

POPULATION STRUCTURE BY AGE GROUP. The distribution of the population by age groups in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania was uneven. Three age groups were analysed: population under 15, population 15-64 and population over 64.

During the analysed period, the total share of the population under 15 in the area under analysis decreased by 1% and was on average 13.2% of the total population in 2023. Although Kalvarija municipality recorded the most significant decrease in this group during the period under consideration (1.5%), the highest share of the population in this group was recorded in this municipality (14.1%), while the lowest share was recorded in Lazdijai dist. municipality (11.2%).

The share of people of working age in the total working-age population increased by 0.9 percentage points to 65.6%. The share of people of working age in 2023 in individual municipalities accounted for about two-thirds of the total population, ranging from 64.5% (Vilkaviškis dist. municipality) to 66.7% (Kalvarija municipality). In Lazdijai dist. municipality (2019-2023), the share increased by the highest amount - 2 percentage points - over the analysed period, while in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality it remained stable.

The population aged 65 and over increased by 0.1 percentage points between 2019 and 2023, and in 2023 the average share of the population in this age group in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania was 21.2%. Such an increase was recorded in the municipalities of Vilkaviškis dist. municipality (0.6 percentage points) and Kalvarija municipality (1.2 percentage points), but the average increase was significantly reduced by the decrease of this group by 0.8 percentage points recorded in Lazdijai dist. municipality.

BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 INHABITANTS. The fertility rate (number of births per 1,000 inhabitants) of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023 ranged from 4.9 (Lazdijai dist. municipality) to 6 (Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality).

DEATH RATE PER 1,000 INHABITANTS. The mortality rate (the number of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants) of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023 was significantly higher than the fertility rate. This means that more people are dying in Lithuanian municipalities than being born. This indicator ranged from 16 persons (Kalvarija



municipality) to 21.6 (Lazdijai dist. municipality). The figure below shows the age distribution of the population and the birth and death rates in the Lithuanian municipalities under consideration.

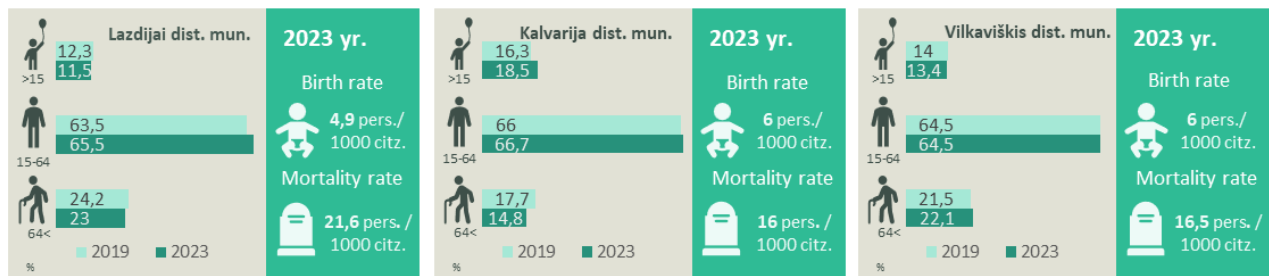


Figure 4. Population distribution by age groups in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2019 and 2023, birth and death rates in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NET INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION. The net international migration indicator shows the difference between the arrivals and departures of international migrants in an administrative unit.

The municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania have recorded a fluctuation of the net international migration indicator - a sharp increase in 2022 and a decrease in 2023. In Lazdijai dist. municipality, a change of 10,9% was observed in the period under consideration, and the indicator increased to 51 (2023). Kalvarija municipality recorded a 2,8-fold increase over the period under consideration, with an indicator of 70 in 2023. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality had a negative indicator in 2019, and in 2020-2022, the municipality sees a significant increase in the number of international arrivals, but it more than doubles again in 2023 (to 117). Thus, although the indicator in 2023 was higher than in 2019, there was a negative change in the indicator over the whole period considered. The start of the war in Ukraine, when large numbers of Ukrainians arrived in Lithuania, had a significant impact on the trends in 2022.

Table 1. Net international migration in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2019-2023

Administrative unit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lazdijai dist. mun.	46	87	36	146	51
Kalvarija dist. mun.	25	35	19	137	70
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	-36	207	212	297	117

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NET INTERNAL MIGRATION. The net internal migration rate shows the difference between the arrivals and departures of a country's population within an administrative unit. The overall net internal migration rate of the EGTC zone has fluctuated over the period considered, and was negative in 2023, with more local residents leaving than arriving from other areas of the country. However, it is worth noting that in Kalvarija municipality this indicator has increased since 2019, while in Lazdijai dist. municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality it has decreased. The largest number of local residents in 2023, compared to the number of arrivals, left from Vilkaviškis d. municipality, a trend that is particularly pronounced in 2021-2023.

Table 2. Net internal migration in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone 2019-2023

Administrative unit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lazdijai dist. mun.	-142	-253	-43	-174	-158
Kalvarija dist. mun.	-162	-133	-69	-78	-158
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	-115	-156	-157	-398	-275

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data



Summarising the demographic structure of the population of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone for the period 2019-2023, there is a tendency of population decline and ageing. In all Lithuanian municipalities, the population has declined over the 5-year period, and the birth rate in 2023 was lower than the death rate - there were more deaths per population than births. The best demographic situation is observed in Kalvarija municipality, where the population has increased by 20 per cent since the beginning of the twentieth century. The population of Kalvarija municipality has shown a moderate decline, with an increase in the share of the population aged 0-14 and 15-64 in the total population, while the share of the 65+ age group has been decreasing. In Vilkaviškis municipality, the share of the population aged 0-14 decreased by 0.6 percentage points and the share of the population aged 65+ increased by 0.6 percentage points. The net internal migration rate remained negative in Lithuanian municipalities throughout the whole period under analysis, while in Lazdijai and Vilkaviškis municipalities the negative value increased further - more local people left than came to live in the municipalities under analysis from other areas of the country. On the other hand, Lithuanian municipalities had higher flows of international immigrants in 2023 compared to 2019.

2.2. Social infrastructure

2.2.1. Education

NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. In the EGTC zone the structure of education consists of pre-schools (kindergartens), general education institutions and vocational schools. The largest number of pre-school education establishments (5 units) in 2023 was in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which also has the largest population. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality also has the highest number of general education institutions (12), Lazdijai dist. municipality has 7 and Kalvarija municipality has 4 general education institutions.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. When analysing the number of pupils attending educational institutions, there is a tendency that it depends on the population of the municipality - the highest share of pupils is in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, and the lowest in Kalvarija municipality. In all three municipalities, the total number of kindergarten (1-5 years) pupils in 2023 was 1436, the total number of pre-primary school (6-7 years) pupils in 2023 was 1436, the total number of pre-school (6-7 years) pupils in 2023 was 13.5 %, The number of pre-primary school (6 - (7)) pupils, on the contrary, increased or remained the same (Lazdijai dist. municipality). The highest increase (18.9%) was recorded in Kalvarija municipality. As regards to general education, it can be noted that in all three municipalities the decrease in the number of pupils during the period under consideration was similar - 9-10%.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION FROM 3 YEARS OF AGE UP TO THE COMPULSORY AGE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION (7 YEARS). The proportion of children enrolled in pre-primary education programmes compared to children of the same age (3-7 years) varies across the EGTC zone. In Lithuanian municipalities, the share varies from 46.3% (Lazdijai dist. municipality) to 60.6% (Vilkaviškis dist. municipality). The higher the proportion, the more children benefit from early childhood education, which is not compulsory in Lithuania.



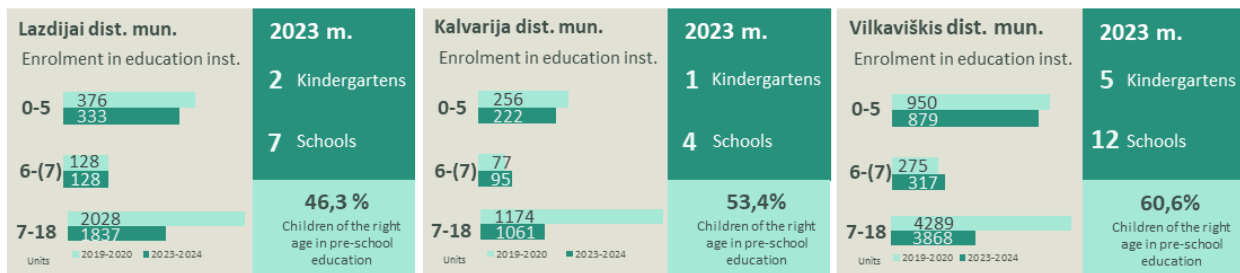


Figure 5. Indicators of educational establishments and enrolment in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2019 and 2023
Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

Summarising the education indicators of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, the number of educational institutions correlates with the number of inhabitants – Vilkaviškis dist. municipality has the highest number of educational institutions and Kalvarija municipality has the lowest number of institutions. It is worth noting that there are no vocational training institutions in Lithuanian municipalities. When analysing the number of pupils attending educational establishments, there is a tendency that the number of pupils attending pre-school and general education establishments has decreased during the period under consideration, while the number of pre-primary school educational establishments has increased. In Lithuanian municipalities, the number of children attending pre-school education institutions was more than half of the total number of children of the same age, except for Lazdijai dist. municipality.

2.2.2. Healthcare

NUMBER OF BEDS. The number of inpatient beds in health care institutions in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania has been decreasing during the period under review, while in Kalvarija municipality there were no inpatient beds at all. This means that there was an overall decrease in the availability of inpatient care for patients admitted to hospitals or nursing facilities. Lazdijai municipality had the highest number of beds (3.3 beds per 1000 inhabitants).

Table 3. Number of inpatient beds in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone 2019-2023, pcs.

Administrative unit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Number of beds. / 1000 inhabitants (2023)
Lazdijai dist. mun.	62	62	62	58	58	3,3
Kalvarija dist. mun.	15	15	0	0	0	0
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	98	95	87	89	81	2,4
Total:	175	172	149	147	139	

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NUMBER OF PHARMACIES. In 2023, there were a total of 30 pharmacies in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone. There were 8 in Lazdijai dist. municipality, 5 in Kalvarija municipality and 17 in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. The number of pharmacies remained stable during the period under consideration.

Table 4. Number of pharmacies in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone 2019-2023, pcs.

Administrative unit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lazdijai dist. mun.	9	9	9	8	8
Kalvarija dist. mun.	5	5	5	5	5



Administrative unit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	16	17	17	17	17

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NUMBER OF HEALTH FACILITIES BY TYPE OF FACILITY. The analysis looks at the situation of Lithuanian municipalities in terms of healthcare infrastructure. Public personal health care institutions in the municipalities are divided into hospitals, primary health care centres, polyclinics, dispensaries, mental health centres, family doctors' offices, health centres and nursing and palliative care institutions². The analysis divides medical care institutions into hospitals and other institutions, with the latter also including private medical institutions (UAB, IJ). Nursing and palliative care facilities are analysed separately.

Among the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, there is only one hospital in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. In the other administrative units there are other types of medical care facilities. There are 10 in Lazdijai dist. municipality, 5 in Kalvarija municipality and 22 in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality (without a hospital). Out of these, it is recorded that there are 3 facilities providing dental services in Lazdijai municipality, 2 each in Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. There are also nursing or supportive care facilities in all three municipalities.

Table 5. Number of health care facilities in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone

Administrative unit	Medical aid institutions		Nursing and palliative care
	Hospitals	Other	
Lazdijai dist. mun.	1	10	3
Kalvarija dist. mun.	0	5	2
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	1	22	2

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

STANDARDISED MORTALITY RATE FOR CERTAIN DISEASES. When analysing the mortality rate in the EGTC zone municipalities of Lithuania in 2023, it is observed that the main cause of death in 2023 were diseases of the circulatory system, which accounted for 57.3% to 62.7% of all deaths in the municipality. The highest proportion of deaths due to this group of diseases was recorded in Kalvarija municipality. The second group of diseases in terms of the number of causes of death were malignant neoplasms, which accounted for between 16.3% and 18.1% of all deaths. These two causes of death are responsible for more than three quarters of all deaths in the three Lithuanian municipalities analysed. A more detailed breakdown of diseases as causes of mortality in the EGTC zone municipalities of Lithuania in 2023 is presented in the figure below.

² LR sveikatos priežiūros įstaigų įstatymas, priimtas 1996 m. birželio 6 d. I-1367 (galiojanti suvestinė redakcija nuo 2025-01-01 iki 2025-06-30), 39 straipsnio 1 p. Prieiga internetu: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.29546/asr>



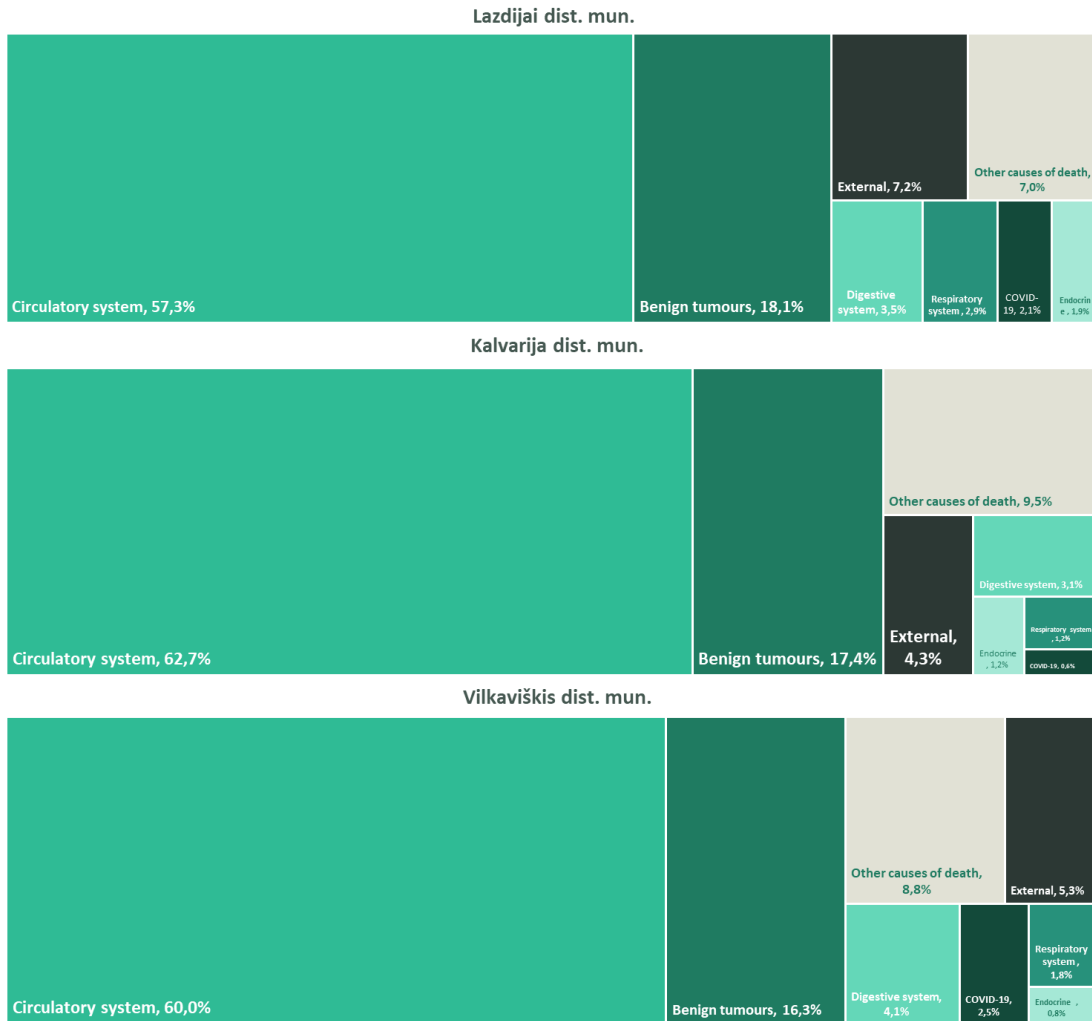


Figure 6. Causes of death by disease in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2023
 Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

Summarising the health indicators of municipalities in the EGTC zone of Lithuania, it was found that the amount of significant health care and medical assistance infrastructure in municipalities depends on the size of their population. Among the Lithuanian municipalities analysed there is one hospital and 37 other types of medical facilities. There are also 7 nursing and palliative care facilities and 30 pharmacies. Looking at the causes of mortality by disease, it can be seen that the largest number of deaths are caused by circulatory diseases, which account for more than half of the population in all Lithuanian municipalities in recent years.

2.2.3. Social services

NUMBER OF ELDERLY (65+) AS A SHARE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. The population aged 65 and over in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania amounted to 13.4 thousand in 2023 and decreased by 0.9 thousand from 2019. Their share in the total population in 2023 ranges from 14.8% to 23%. The increasing number of elderly people may indicate an increasing need for specialised services.

NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS A SHARE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. Persons with disabilities can be those who have a total disability or a certificate stating that they are unable to work at a certain level. The number of



people with disabilities in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania in 2023 was estimated at 5.6 thousand and represented 9% of the total population of the three municipalities. The lowest share of persons with disabilities was recorded in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality (8.1%), while in Lazdijai dist. municipality and Kalvarija dist. municipality the share of persons with disabilities amounted to 10.3% and 10.4%, respectively. This share decreased everywhere from 7.5% (Kalvarija dist. municipality) to 11.3% (Lazdijai dist. municipality).

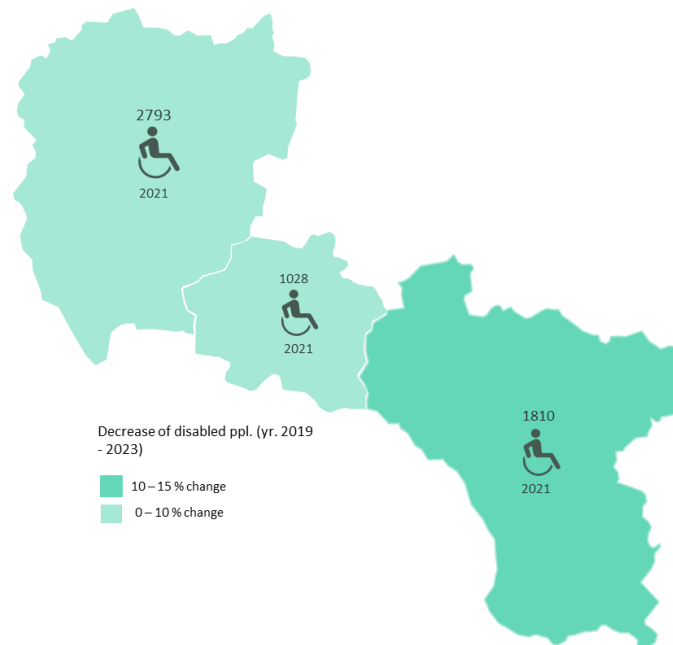


Figure 7. Number of disabled people in the in 2023 and its change in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone 2019-2023
Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION. When analysing the nursing and palliative care facilities in the EGTC zone municipalities of Lithuania, their distribution is quite even in all three municipalities: 3 in Lazdijai dist. municipality, 2 in Kalvarija dist. municipality and 2 in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, so the accessibility of social services is proportional, but it should be increased in view of the increasing number of elderly in Lithuania.

Summarising the availability of social services in the municipalities of the EGTC zone of Lithuania, it is noted that the distribution of institutions providing such services in the three municipalities is quite even, with a total of 7 institutions providing nursing and palliative care services. However, there is a need for future expansion of social services to cover the potentially increasing number of population in need of such services in the EGTC zone.

2.3. Employment and labour market structure

NUMBER OF EMPLOYED. In the EGTC zone, the total number of registered employees in Lithuanian municipalities in 2023 was around 23,000. The largest number of employed persons (14.3 thousand) is recorded in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which is almost twice as many as the number of employed persons in Lazdijai dist. municipality and Kalvarija municipality combined.



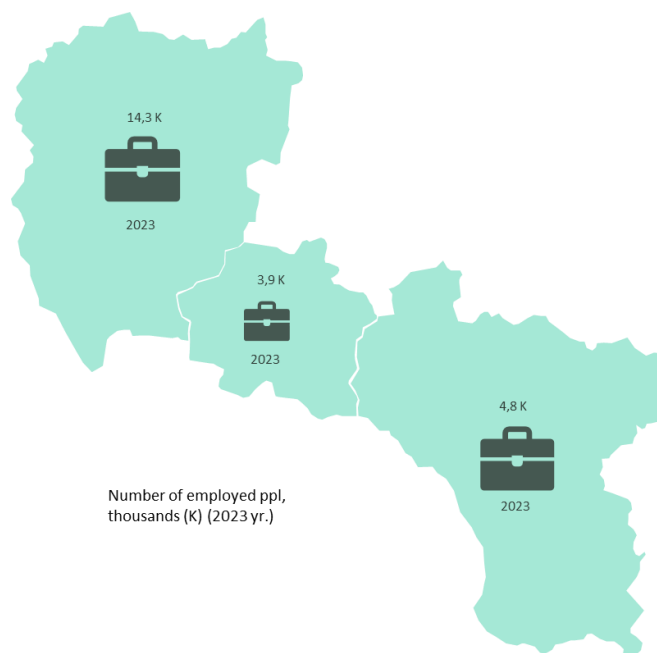


Figure 8. Number of employed persons in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NUMBER OF EMPLOYED BY INDUSTRY. As there is no data on this distribution at municipal level, it is assessed for two Lithuanian counties, Alytus (which includes Lazdijai dist. sav.) and Marijampolė (which includes Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality). In these counties, the distribution of employment by sector is fairly even. There is a clear tendency for the services sector to dominate, accounting for 63.6% and 56.4% of the employed population. The industrial sector is the second most popular and accounts for 30.3% of the employed population. Alytus and Marijampolė counties account for 30.6 % and 29.6 % respectively. The agricultural sector accounts for the lowest share of the employed population - 6.1%. The share of employed persons in the labour market is 6.6 % in Alytus and 12 % in Marijampolė counties respectively.

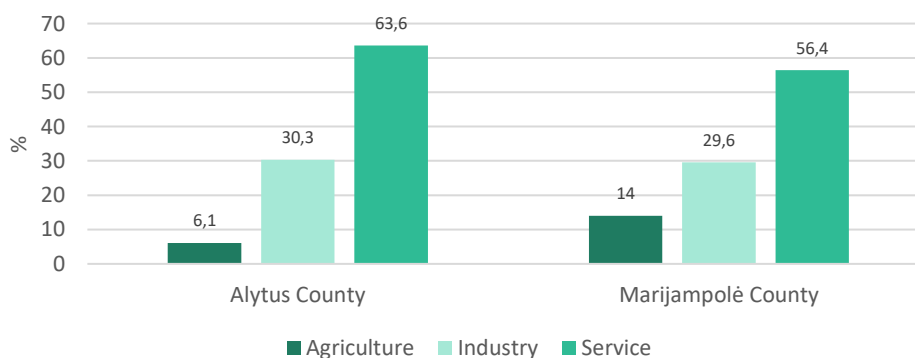


Figure 9. Distribution of employed persons (%) by sector in Alytus and Marijampolė counties in 2023

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED. During the period under review, the number of unemployed persons decreased in Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija municipalities, while in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality this indicator increased by 13.7%, with 2,056 unemployed persons in 2019, rising to 2,337 in 2023. The largest positive change in the period under review was recorded in Lazdijai dist. municipality, where the number of unemployed persons in the municipality decreased by 36.2% from 2019, when the number of unemployed persons reached 1463.



UNEMPLOYED AS A SHARE OF THE TOTAL WORKING AGE POPULATION. The share of unemployed people in 2023 was higher than 5% in Lazdijai dist. municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. Meanwhile, Kalvarija municipality recorded an unemployment rate higher than 7.5%. It is worth noting that the number of unemployment in Kalvarija municipality and especially in Lazdijai dist. municipality has decreased since 2019, while in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality it has increased.

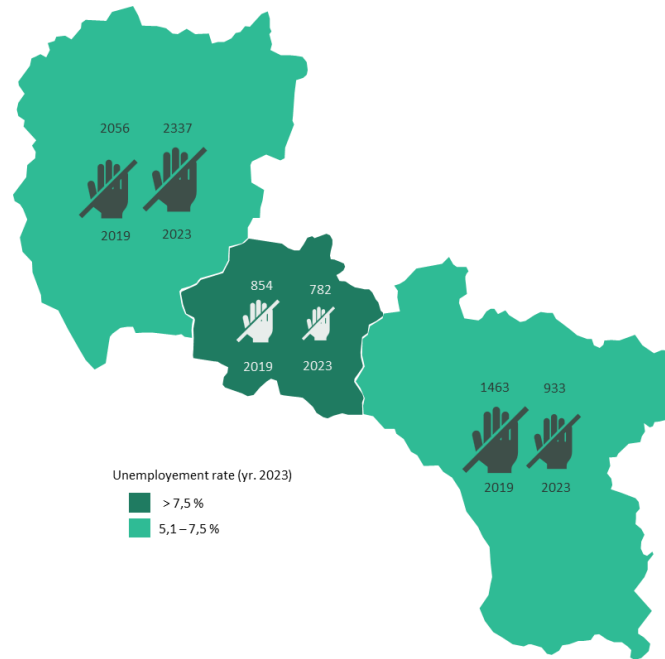


Figure 10. Unemployment rate and unemployment share in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2019 and 2023
 Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

Summarising the employment and labour market quality of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, it is observed that the unemployment rate has been decreasing in the majority of the territory during the period under analysis, although it is not uniform, with both positive and negative tendencies being observed. The largest share of employment is in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, where 14.3 thousand people were employed in 2023, three times more than in Lazdijai dist. municipality, where 4.8 thousand people were employed. The service sector creates the most jobs and employs the most people, while the agricultural sector employs the least in all Lithuanian municipalities. The highest share of unemployed people is recorded in Kalvarija municipality, but it is noticeable that it is decreasing during the period under consideration.



3. Cultural indicators

This section analyses the following groups of cultural indicators: cultural heritage and local traditions, educational institutions and training potential, cultural projects and community activity. The first group of indicators – cultural heritage and local traditions – includes the following indicators:

- number of cultural and tourist objects by type of objects;
- tourist and visitor flows;
- supply of tourism services:
 - number of accommodation establishments;
 - number of places in accommodation establishments;
 - number of tourists in accommodation establishments (annual data);
 - number of catering units of catering and beverage service establishments at the end of the year;
 - supply of car rental services.

The second group of indicators – educational institutions and training potential – was partly revealed in the previous chapter. This group of indicators covers the higher education opportunities in Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone.

The third group of indicators includes information describing cultural projects and community activity, i.e. information about community projects, cultural events, etc.

3.1. Cultural heritage and local traditions

NUMBER OF CULTURAL AND TOURIST OBJECTS BY TYPE OF OBJECTS. The number of cultural and tourism sites in the EGTC zone in Lithuanian municipalities includes cultural heritage, archaeological monuments and immovable cultural assets. The largest number of these objects is located in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. The highest number of archaeological monuments is in Lazdijai dist. municipality. In general, the highest recorded number was of immovable cultural assets.

Table 6. Number of cultural heritage and tourism sites in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Administrative unit	Cultural heritage monuments	Immovable cultural assets	Archaeological monuments
Lazdijai dist. mun.	34	305	74
Kalvarija dist. mun.	7	122	19
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	50	430	56

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

TOURIST AND VISITOR FLOWS. According to the State Data Agency, the EGTC zone municipalities in Lithuania had a total of almost 7,000 domestic and international tourists in accommodation establishments in 2024. This indicator was chosen to measure the number of tourists visiting the region for longer stays, at least for one day. There is a decrease in tourist arrivals, as the 2024 figure is almost three times lower than the 2020 figure of 20.3 thousand domestic and international tourists.

NUMBER OF TOURISTS IN ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS (INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS). A total of 1,111 foreign tourists was recorded in 2024. It can be noted that the number of foreign tourists in Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija municipalities has almost doubled during the period under consideration, while in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality it has decreased by more than three times, but foreign tourists visiting Vilkaviškis dist. municipality still account for the majority of all foreign tourists visiting Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone in 2024 (84.4%).



NUMBER OF TOURISTS IN ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS (DOMESTIC TOURISTS). In 2024, 5,840 domestic tourists were registered in accommodation establishments in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone. The highest share of accommodated domestic tourists was in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which recorded more tourists from Lithuania than Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija municipalities combined. In recent years, there has been a decline in the number of domestic tourists in Lazdijai dist. municipality by more than 6 times and in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality by about 2.5 times in the period of 2020-2024. In Kalvarija municipality, the number of local tourists, although decreasing, remained similar.

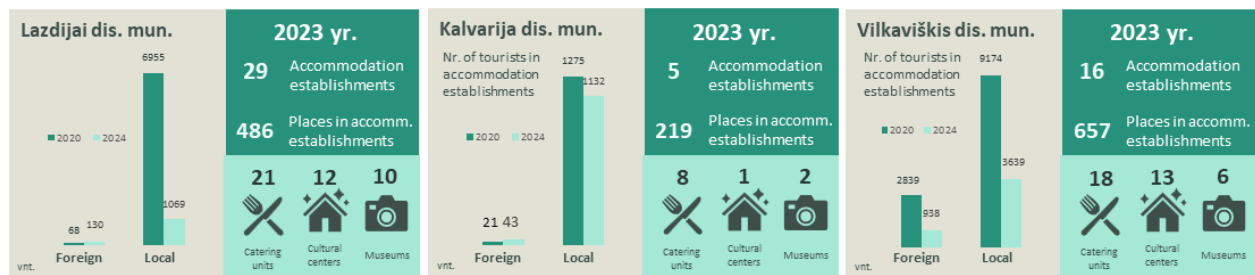


Figure 11. Number of tourists in accommodation establishments and supply of tourism services in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2020 and 2024

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency and tourism information centers data

The largest share of foreign tourists in 2024 came from Poland and Germany, accounting for 18.5% and 16.6% respectively of all foreign tourists registered in accommodation establishments in the EGTC zone. The highest tourist flows from all the countries listed below are to Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which receives at least three times as many visitors as Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija municipalities combined.

Table 7. Distribution of foreign tourists by country in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023

Municipality	From Poland	From Germany	From Latvia	From United Kingdom	From Belarus
Lazdijai dist. mun.	39	20	19	2	–
Kalvarija dist. mun.	3	4	6	–	1
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	163	160	84	74	30
Total:	205	184	109	76	31

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency and tourism information centres data

NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS. Analysing the supply of tourism services in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone, it is noted that in 2023, accommodation establishments and places of accommodation, eating and drinking places, museums and cultural centres, in general, are recorded where the highest tourist flows have been.

In 2023, more than half of all accommodation establishments were located in Lazdijai dist. municipality, although the highest number of accommodation establishments was recorded in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, where the highest tourist flows were observed. The smallest number of accommodation establishments and places was recorded in Kalvarija municipality, which had the lowest number of tourists.

EATING AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS. The distribution of eating and drinking establishments was even in Lazdijai dist. and Vilkaviškis dist. municipalities, where 21 and 18 establishments of this type were recorded respectively. In Kalvarija municipality there were 8 units. The overall indicator has been declining over the period under consideration, as Vilkaviškis municipality has more than halved in size since 2019 (51.4 %).

NUMBER OF CULTURAL AND TOURIST OBJECTS. In 2024, there were 26 museums and 18 cultural centres in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone. The cultural centres in Lazdijai dist. and Vilkaviškis dist. municipalities were evenly



distributed, with the largest number of museums, 10 including branches, in Lazdijai dist. municipality. Kalvarija municipality had only 1 cultural centre and 2 museums.

There is one tourism information centre in each of the Lithuanian municipalities under consideration. The tourist information centre in Lazdijai also has a branch on the Lithuanian-Polish border. In addition, there is one information centre for visitors in the Meteliai and Veisiejai Regional Parks in this municipality.

Table 8. Tourist information centres in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone by 2025

Administrative unit	Number of tourist information centres	Centre name and address
Lazdijai dist. mun.	1	Lazdijai Tourism Information Centre, Kauno st. 6A, Lazdijai, Lazdijai dist. municipality. There are other visitor centres in the municipality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lazdijai Tourism Information Centre at the Lithuanian-Polish border, Janaslavo county 10, Lazdijai dist. municipality; • Meteliai Regional Park Visitor Centre, Seirijų st. 2, Meteliai, Lazdijai dist. municipality; • Veisiejai Tourism Centre, Santarvės st. 9, Veisiejai, Lazdijai dist. municipality
Kalvarija dist. mun.	1	Kalvarija Regional Museum / Information Center, Dariaus ir Girėno St. 45B, 69219, Kalvarija, 69219 Kalvarija municipality
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	1	Vilkaviškis Tourism and Business Information Center. J. Basanavičiaus a. 7, Vilkaviškis, 70101 Vilkaviškis district

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on data from Lithuanian Tourism Information Centre

CAR RENTAL SERVICES. According to the latest data, in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone, car rental services are provided by 4 companies each in the municipalities of Lazdijai dist. and Vilkaviškis dist., while in Kalvarija municipality there are no such companies recorded.

Table 9. Companies providing car rental services in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2025

Administrative unit	Number of companies providing car rental services	Company names
Lazdijai dist. mun.	4	Aurisima, MB; Smitinta, MB; Vaidorida, MB; Sainvest, MB.
Kalvarija dist. mun.	0	–
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	4	Autodutau, MB; Rent me LT, UAB; Kvadratas komforto, MB; Laurauto, UAB.

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on data auto.lt³

Summing up the assessment of the cultural heritage and traditions of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, it is noted that the majority of cultural objects are located in the municipalities of Lazdijai dist. and Vilkaviškis dist. According to the available data, it is also noted that both foreign and domestic tourist arrivals in accommodation establishments have been decreasing over the period under consideration, with Vilkaviškis dist. municipality showing the largest decrease. The largest number of tourists in accommodation establishments is from Poland and Germany. In relation to other tourism services, in 2023, both accommodation establishments and places of eating and drinking, museums and cultural centres have a higher number of tourists in the areas with higher tourist flows, so the distribution of services is fairly even in terms of the number of tourists.

³

Online

access:

<https://www.auto.lt/?q=automobili%C5%B3+nuoma&adresas=Lazdijai&action=ieskoti&page=imones&view=greita&distance=&latitude=&longitude=>



3.2. Higher education opportunities and accessibility

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND COLLEGES IN THE EGTC ZONE. There are no higher education institutions, universities or colleges in the EGTC zone municipalities. There are also no vocational training institutions. This means that there is no access to higher education in the area and that it is necessary to travel to other cities. The nearest colleges in Lithuania are in Kaunas.

3.3. Cultural projects and community activism

EVENTS IN LITHUANIAN MUNICIPALITIES OF THE EGTC ZONE. According to the 2024 Lazdijai Tourism Center activity report, Lazdijai dist. mun. organizes events to commemorate public holidays and important occasions, such as January 13, February 16, and traditional, old Lithuanian cultural heritage celebrations. In the summer, many active recreation events are organized, such as educational, hiking or cycling trips, and canoeing in the Lazdijai dist. surroundings. Much attention is also paid to introducing students to further career opportunities - career days are organized for students 4 times a year.

According to the data from the Kalvarija Public Library's 2023 activity report, many events were organized in the public library - book presentations, trainings and exhibitions of local people were organized, adapted for both children and adults. Family days were also organized every month, designed to bring families together for creative activities, workshops, education or active leisure. Traditional exhibitions aimed to draw attention to dates of historical importance to Lithuania. It is noticeable that both the number of events and visitors increased. In 2023, 83 events were organized at the Kalvarija Regional Museum, and 16,3 thousand visitors visited the events - 51 events and 3,3 thousand visitors more, respectively, than in 2022.

According to the data of the Vilkaviškis Tourism Centre's 2023 activity plan, 34 events were organized that year, which is less than in 2022 (40 events). The tourism centre organizes the festival "We are shortening the distance", during which trips from Kybartai to Vilkaviškis were organized by train. An "Infotour" was also organized, designed to increase the awareness of the places of the Vilkaviškis region. Tourist trips and kayaking were organized.

Summing up the cultural projects and community activity in the EGTC zone of Lithuania, it is noted that most of the cultural events are related to the promotion of national and cultural and traditional values, as well as active tourism, especially in the warm season, and the presentation of educational and career opportunities for school-age children. The events aim to involve both children and adults, families, increase community involvement and raise the profile of the region.



4. Geographical indicators

This section analyses groups of geographical indicators: geographical location and uniqueness of the territory, transport infrastructure, natural and environmental challenges. When describing the geographical location and uniqueness of the territory, the location on a national scale, the climate of the region, and the rivers and lakes of the region are indicated.

The second group of indicators – transport infrastructure – includes an assessment of local infrastructure, i.e. indicating:

- roads, dividing them into national, regional and regional;
- railway, indicating passenger stops, cargo loading points;
- airports, airfields in the city in the region;
- inland waterway piers and their uses (tourism, cargo transportation, etc.);
- public transport infrastructure: companies providing passenger transportation services and the number of routes they serve, stops of international bus routes in the region.

The third group of indicators – natural and environmental challenges – includes an analysis of natural resources, nature protection requirements, ecological aspects and includes the following indicators:

- forest cover;
- protected areas (reserves, sanctuaries, etc.);
- NATURA 2000 areas (areas of importance for bird conservation and areas of importance for habitat conservation).

4.1. Geographical location and uniqueness of the territory

The municipalities analysed in the EGTC zone in the territory of Lithuania are located in the Sūduva Upland and the Užnemunė Lowland, which results in a different topography and landscape. The south-western region of Lithuania - Suvalkija - which includes the municipalities under analysis of Vilkaviškis dist., Kalvarija and Lazdijai dist. - is crossed by the trans-European North-South motorway Via Baltica. On the border with Poland is the Suwalki Corridor, the section between Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus. This is an important and sensitive geopolitical part of Lithuania.

The municipality of Vilkaviškis dist. is dominated by wood processing, fur processing, sewing, food and construction enterprises. Lazdijai dist. municipality is dominated by building materials, sewing, food (confectionery, bread, meat) and wood processing industries. The most important minerals are gravel. All three municipalities have a large agricultural area, mainly arable land and meadows and natural pastures. The three municipalities have a less ethnically diverse population, although less than one per cent of Russians, Ukrainians and Poles are recorded. The share of Ukrainians in the ethnic composition of the population is likely to have increased since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022.





Figure 12. Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone territories in hectares

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on data from the Lithuanian Encyclopaedia⁴

Lazdijai dist. mun. – the municipality is located in the southwestern part of Lithuania, belongs to Alytus county. In the north of the municipality is the eastern part of the Sūduva Upland (up to 202 m high, near Dainavėlė), in the south – the western part of the Dainava Lowland. Lazdijai dist. mun. borders with Belarus and the Polish Pusk, Sejny rural municipality and Sejny city. Also within the country it borders with Kalvarija municipality, Alytus city municipality, Varėna dist. mun. and Druskininkai municipality. The Nemunas River flows through the southeastern and northeastern outskirts of the municipality, and its tributaries – Baltoji Ančia, Seira – pass through the territory of the municipality.

Kalvarija mun. – the municipality is a municipality in the southwestern part of Lithuania, Marijampolė County. The territory is located in the Sūduva Upland. It borders Vilkaviškis dist. mun., Lazdijai dist. mun. and Marijampolė municipality. Kalvarija municipality also borders the Polish gminy of Rutka–Tartak, Šipliškė, and Pusk. The Šešupė River and its tributary Kirsna flow through the territory of the municipality. The northern part is dominated by a flatter terrain, while the southern part is hilly.

Vilkaviškis dist. mun. – the municipality is located in the southwestern part of Lithuania, belongs to Marijampolė county. It borders with Šakiai district, Marijampolė, Kazlų Rūda and Kalvarija municipalities. In the west, it borders with the Kaliningrad region of the Russian Federation, and in the south – with the Wiżajny and Rutka–Tartak gminy of the Republic of Poland. The Šešupė River flows through the municipality with its tributaries Širvinta and Rausve, as well as smaller rivers – Šeimena, Juodupė, Širvinta (Senaširvintė) and others.

CLIMATE. The climate of the region is very similar throughout the EGTC zone. The climate is continental, characterized by hot summers and cold winters. The average annual air temperature in 2020–2023 ranged from 7.5 °C to 9.5 °C. The average precipitation ranged from 500 to 800 mm compared to 2020–2023 (latest data for 2023). The territory of Lithuania is smaller, therefore climate changes in different areas and regions are less pronounced.

RIVERS AND LAKES. The EGTC zone has many rivers and lakes in the municipal areas of Lithuania, which encourages tourism. In total, there are 79 rivers and 231 lakes. The Lazdijai municipality has a particularly large number of

⁴ Lithuanian Encyclopaedia, Lithuanian municipal areas. Online access: <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/vilkaviskio-rajono-savivaldybe/>



lakes (see table below). On the border between Lithuania and Poland is the Galandusis Lake (in the territories of Lazdijai dist. municipality and Sejny gmina). The river Šešupė, which originates in Poland, flows through Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. More detailed information is given in the table below.

Table 10. Number of rivers and lakes in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Name	Rivers	Lakes
Lazdijai dist. mun.	39	159
Kalvarija dist. mun.	16	36
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	24	36
Total:	79	231

Source: prepared by the Consultant based on the list of water bodies in Lithuania in the Nature Catalogue ⁵

Summarizing the geographical location of the EGTC zone in Lithuania, the total area covered by the three Lithuanian municipalities and nine Polish municipalities amounts to 436,806 ha, while the area covered by the three municipalities amounts to 300,900 ha. All three municipalities border the Polish border. They have a similar climate, with warm summers and cold winters. The area is characterised by its abundance of rivers and lakes, which has the potential to boost tourism in the region.

4.2. Transport infrastructure

The following analysis of the transport infrastructure in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone: roads, railways, public transport network.

ROADS. In Lithuania, the following types of roads are distinguished: main, regional, district and local. The table below provides data summarizing the road infrastructure in municipalities.

Table 11. Roads in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Municipality	Highways/state roads		Country roads / voivodeship roads		District roads	
	Number	Title	Number	Title	Number	Title
Lazdijai dist. mun.	–	–	6	132 – Alytus–Seirijai–Lazdijai 134 – Leipalingis–Lazdijai–Kalvarija 135 – Lazdijai–Akmeniai 182 – Marijampolė–Liudvinavas–Krosna 181 – Seirijai–Igliauka 180 – Druskininkai–Seirijai	7	2608 – Jusevičiai – Būdvielis – Derviniai 2502 – Krosna–Lazdijai 2509 – Rūda – Šventežeris – Teizai – Kavalčiukai 2510 – Lazdijai – Kučiūnai – Veisiejai 2518 – Veisiejai – Vainiūnai – Barzdžiūnai – Liškiava 2503 – Veisiejai – Kapčiamiestis 2512 – Seirijai–Balkasodis–Tolkūnai
Kalvarija dist. mun.	1	A5 – Kaunas–Marijampolė–Suvalkai (part of „Via Baltica“ (E67) highway)	4	131 – Alytus–Simnas–Kalvarija 134 – Leipalingis–Lazdijai–Kalvarija 200 – Kalvarija–Gražiškiai–Vištytis 201 – Marijampolė–Kalvarija	3	5107 – Vilkaviškis – Kalvarija 2608 – Jusevičiai – Būdvielis – Derviniai 2615 – Salaperaugis – Liubavas – Aleksandravas

⁵ Nature directory, water bodies, lakes and rivers by municipality. Online access: <https://ezerai.vilnius21.lt/sav.php>



Municipality	Highways/state roads		Country roads / voivodship roads		District roads	
	Number	Title	Number	Title	Number	Title
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	1	A7 – Marijampolė– Kybartai– Kaliningrad	6	136 – Mauručiai–Vinčiai– Puskelniai 138 – Vilkaviškis–Šakiai 185 – Vilkaviškis–Gražiškiai 186 – Kybartai–Vištytis 187 – Gižai–Pilviškiai 200 – Kalvarija–Vištytis	14	5102 – Virbalis–Vištytis 5103 – Kudirkos Naumiestis – Kybartai 5112 – Virbalis – Žalioji 5115 – Patilčiai – Bartninkai – Kaupiškiai 5107 – Vilkaviškis – Kalvarija 5116 – Vilkaviškis–Suvalkai–Gižai 5117 – Gražiškiai – Vygreliai – Beržynai 5122 – Ožkabaliai – Turgalaukis – Liudvinavas 5121 – Ramoniškiai – Antanavas 5118 – Slabadai – Sūdava – Opšrūtai 5109 – Opšrūtai – Paežeriai – Šunskai 5106 – Vilkaviškis – Bartninkai – Aistiškiai 5124 – Putinai – Slabadai – Janukiškiai – Barzdai 1912 – Rupiniai–Griškabūdis– Kudirkos Naumiestis

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the List of roads of national importance⁶

Two Lithuanian municipalities – Vilkaviškis dist. mun. and Kalvarija mun. – have main roads. Vilkaviškis city is crossed by the A7 main road Marijampolė–Kybartai–Kaliningrad. Kalvarija city is crossed by the A5 main road Kaunas–Marijampolė–Suwałki. This road is part of the Via Baltica (E67) highway. Lazdijai dist. mun. has no main roads. Lazdijai district municipality and Vilkaviškis district municipality have 6 regional roads each. Kalvarija municipality has 4 regional roads.

RAILWAY. The Kaunas–Kybartai railway line has been built through Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which has several important stations – Kybartai and Vilkaviškis, as well as several passenger stops: Alvitai, Alksnėnai, Pilviškiai. This ensures effective connection with the major cities of Lithuania. Vilkaviškis dist. mun. also has international transport infrastructure – from Kybartai station, the railway line leads to the Kaliningrad region. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality has 2 stations: Vilkaviškis and Kybartai railway stations, but Vilkaviškis dist. mun. is not included in the “Rail Baltica” route. A railway line has been built through the territory of Kalvarija municipality, but the previously operating Kalvarija railway station is currently closed permanently. There are 2 international railway stations in Lazdijai district. One is in the town of Šeštokai, where the Russian-gauge railway track line intersects with the European-standard railway line. Major investment projects are planned on this railway section. In Lazdijai dist. municipality there is also Mockava railway station, a part of the “Rail Baltica” trajectory. It is also the only station in Lithuania with a direct connection to the Polish rail network. It is the Baltic “gateway” linking these stations to the European rail system. Cargo can reach European countries in a matter of days via Rail Baltica. The Mockava terminal, which provides loading and logistics services, is located next to Mockava railway station and covers 40 hectares. For these reasons, the railway system of Lazdijai dist. municipality can be assessed as having a high investment attraction and tourist potential.

The table below represents the layout of railway lines in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone .

⁶ List of roads of national importance. Online access: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.82066/asr>



Table 12. Layout of railway routes in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone (February 2025)

Municipality	Does the municipality have a railway line?	Railway station names
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	Yes	Kybartai and Vilkaviškis stations
Kalvarija mun.	Yes	Closed
Lazdijai dist. mun.	Yes	Šeštokai and Mockava stations

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on AB "Lithuanian Railways"

AIRPORTS. There are no actively operating or planned airports in any Lithuanian municipality belonging to the EGTC zone.

The nearest airport in Lithuania is Kaunas Airport.⁷ The nearest airport in Poland is Olsztyn-Masuria.⁸ According to the data of the Transport Competence Agency, aerodromes⁹ and outdoor landing sites¹⁰ in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, Kalvarija municipality and Lazdijai dist. municipality are not in the official lists¹¹.

INLAND WATERS AND THEIR USE. According to the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration's official list of registered inland water commercial marinas, Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, Kalvarija municipality and Lazdijai dist. municipality do not have any registered marinas in these municipalities. Vilkaviškis district municipality has Lake Vištytis, which borders the Kaliningrad region, and Lake Paežeriai. Although these water bodies are not officially marked as inland water marinas, it is likely that local holidaymakers use them for recreational purposes (boats, yachts, etc.). Lazdijai dist. municipality has Lake Snaigynas and Lake Veisiejės, which are intended for boats and small vessels, which are also used by local residents and holidaymakers.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE. There are no international bus stops in any of the three Lithuanian municipalities. In 2021, an agreement was signed on the Lithuanian Polish border functional tourism zone, the aim of which is to promote cooperation between Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, Lazdijai dist. municipality and Kalvarija municipality and 9 partners from Poland. Therefore, it is hoped that an international bus route may be developed in this region in the future. The number of intercity routes for each of the three Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone is given below.

Table 13. Public transport routes in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Municipality	Number	Direction
Lazdijai dist. mun.	16	Kaunas-Druskininkai Lazdijai-Kapčiamiestis-1 Lazdijai-Kapčiamiestis-2 Lazdijai-Veisiejai-Leipalingis Lazdijai-Druskininkai Lazdijai-Veisiejai Lazdijai-Būdvietis per Rudaminą Lazdijai-Ramanavas Lazdijai-Stebuliai

⁷All met sat, Airports, Kaunas airport. Online access: <https://lt.allmetsat.com/oro-uostai/estija-latvija-lietuva.php?icao=EYKA>

⁸All met sat, Airports, Poland. Online access: <https://lt.allmetsat.com/oro-uostai/lenkija.php?icao=EPSY>

⁹TKA, Aerodromes, List of Lithuanian Aerodromes, 2025. Online access: <https://tka.lt/katalogas/aerodromai/#tab-0>

¹⁰TKA, Outdoor areas, List of outdoor areas, 2025. Online access: <https://tka.lt/katalogas/lauko-aiksteles/#tab-0>

¹¹ Aerodromes. Online access: <https://www.ulop.lt/aerodromai>



Municipality	Number	Direction
		Lazdijai-Meteliai per Avižienius Lazdijai-Meteliai per Krikštonis Lazdijai-Rudamina Lazdijai-Būdvielis per Šeštokus Lazdijai-Rudamina-Vidzgailai Lazdijai-Vilnius
Kalvarija mun.	14	Marijampolė; Kaunas via Marijampolė; Vilnius via Alytus; Druskininkai via Lazdijus; Lazdijai; Pagraučiai via customs, Liubava; Alksninė; Aistriškiai; Gražiškiai; Zapalimai; Radiškė; Slabadėlė; Kvietkinė; Miklausė.
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	17	Marijampolė (Vilnius, Kaunas, Keturvalakiai) direction – (Serdokai, Antupiai, Gižai, Karkliniai ir kt.). Maršrutas starts at Kybartai; Kalvarija – Patilčiai direction (Mažieji Būdežeriai, Pūstapėdžiai, Mockabūdžiai, Pašeimeniai, Vaisbūniškiai ir kt.); Bartninkai direction (Lakštučiai, Geisteriškiai, Vartai, Rasiai, Piliakalnai ir kt.); Gražiškiai direction (Vaičlaukis, Klampučiai, Karalkrėslis, Jakiškiai, Duonelaičiai, Dotamai, Vygreliai ir kt.); Kybartai direction (Paežeriai, Čyčakai, Virbalis, Gudkaimis, Girėnai, Pajevonys, Vištytis, Varteliai ir kt.); Slabadų direction (railway station, Teiberiai, Didvyžiai, Alksnėnai, Arminai, Sūdava ir kt.); Kudirkos Naujamiestis direction (via Klausučiai, Žalioji, Juozapavas, Kataučiznas, Šakiai); Pilviškių kryptis (Zomčinė, Opšrūtai, Paežeriai k. Juodupiai, Bebrininkai ir kt.); Stirniškiai road (Gudeliai, Suvalkai, Gurbšilis, Rūda, K. Baršauskas home, Rimavičiai ir kt.). Palanga – Vilkaviškis – Marijampolė; Marijampolė – Vilkaviškis – Klaipėda Kaunas – Vilkaviškis – Vištytis; Vilkaviškis – Panevėžys. Kaunas – Kybartai – Klaipėda; Vilnius – Kybartai – Klaipėda; Vilnius – Kybartai – Šilutė; Vilnius – Kybartai – Šilalė.

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on Lazdijai dist. Mun.,¹² Vilkaviškis dist. Mun.¹³ And Kalvarija mun.¹⁴ bus routes and schedules

Lazdijai dist. municipality provides passenger transport services by "Lazdijai bus park", Vilkaviškis dist. municipality – UAB Kautra, Kalvarija municipality – UAB Autoridas. The number of intercity routes is similarly distributed, so it

¹² Lazdijai District Municipality, Transport routes, 2024. Online access: <https://www.lazdijai.lt/transporto-marsrutai/430>

¹³ Vilkaviškis buses, Departure directions. Online access: <https://vilkaviskioautobusustotisweebly.weebly.com/vilkaviscaronkis-marijampol279-keliu.html>; Vilkaviškis buses, Departure directions. Online access: <https://vilkaviskioautobusustotisweebly.weebly.com/vilkaviscaronkis-marijampol279-keliu.html>

¹⁴ Kalvarija Municipality, Traffic schedules. Online access: <https://www.kalvarija.lt/eismo-tvarkarasciai/>



can be concluded that there is an even distribution of public transport destinations in all municipalities in the EGTC zone.

Summarising the transport infrastructure in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone, the network of national and regional roads is relatively well developed, with the railway network also including strategically important and investment-attractive transport infrastructures such as the Rail Baltica railway and the Via Baltica motorway. There is no infrastructure for air and water transport in the area under consideration. It is worth noting that the possibilities for cooperation between the Lithuanian and Polish administrative units of the EGTC zone are limited by the absence of international bus or train routes between them.

4.3. Natural and environmental challenges

The following information is provided regarding natural and environmental challenges and certain environmental parameters.

FORESTRY. Lazdijai dist. municipality's forest cover in 2024 reached 36,9 percent of the municipality's territory. This is the most forested municipality among the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality's forest cover is 11 percent - it is the least forested of the three Lithuanian municipalities.

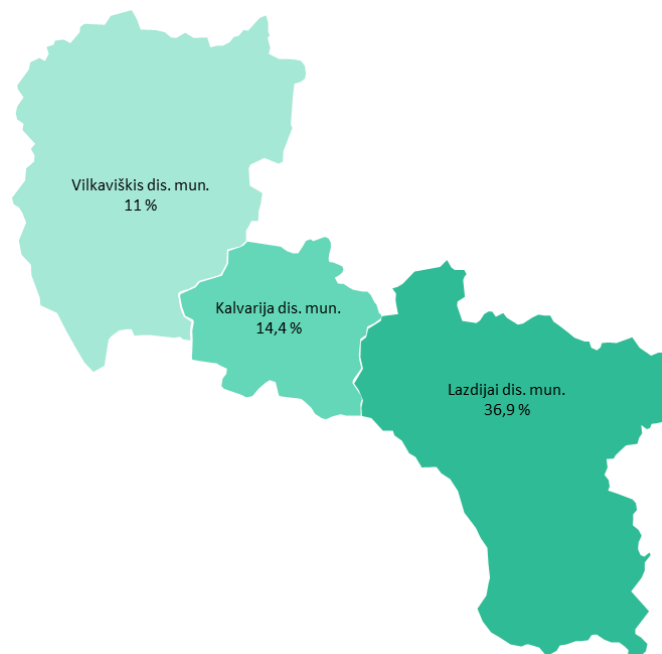


Figure 13. Forest cover of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the data from State Data Agency

PROTECTED AREAS. The system of protected areas in Lithuania consists of:

- conservation priority areas, which include reserves, sanctuaries, heritage sites/monuments;
- ecological priority areas, which include ecological protection zones;
- restorative priority areas, which include restorative and genetic plots;
- complex protected areas, which include state parks and biosphere monitoring areas.¹⁵

¹⁵ State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, System of Protected Areas. Online access: <https://vstt.lrv.lt/lt/saugomu-teritoriju-sistema/>



The municipalities analysed have the most reserves, as well as 25 natural heritage sites, and 49 NATURA2000 territories designated for the protection of birds and habitats.

Table 14. Protected areas in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone

Municipality	National parks	Regional parks	Nature reserves	Natural heritage sites	Protected areas	NATURA 2000 territories	Biosphere Reserve	Buffer protection zones	Functional priority zones
Vilkaviškis dist. mun.	0	1	2	15	12	10	0	14	20
Kalvarija mun.	0	0	0	2	6	5	1	2	0
Lazdijai dist. mun.	1	2	5	8	30	34	2	10	54
Total:	1	3	7	25	48	49	3	26	74

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on data from the Ministry of Environment¹⁶

Summarising the natural and environmental challenges in the Lithuanian municipalities of the EGTC zone, it is noted that there is an uneven distribution in terms of both forest cover and the location and number of protected areas. The Lazdijai dist. municipality has the highest forest cover and the highest number of protected sites of the three municipalities.

¹⁶ State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, 2025. Online access: <https://vstt.lrv.lt/lt/saugomu-teritoriju-sistema/saugomu-teritoriju-statistika/>



5. Administrative indicators

This section analyses administrative indicators:

- local government structure and self-government. The administrative structure of each municipality, the number of enterprises managed, and subordinate institutions are indicated.
- the functions of self-government are presented, including aspects of territorial planning.
- the most important strategic documents that influence municipal policy and development, decisions made (for example, regional plans, development plans, sustainable development plans, etc.) are reviewed, the most important development goals are indicated and the types of measures provided for their implementation are reviewed, with special attention paid to cooperation goals, tourism, and international business development goals.
- support measures intended for municipalities in both countries are analysed.

Strategic documents are analysed:

- Alytus Regional Development Plan;
- Marijampolė Regional Development Plan;
- Lazdijai District Municipality 2021–2027 Strategic Development Plan;
- Kalvarija Municipality 2025–2035 Strategic Development Plan;
- Vilkaviškis District Municipality 2019–2027 Strategic Development Plan;
- Alytus Functional Zone Strategy;
- Marijampolė Functional Zone Strategy;

5.1. Structure and functioning of local government

The government structure of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone does not differ in principle. All of them have their own mayors and councils. They also have administrations subordinate to them. Lithuanian municipal administrations have departments - Lazdijai dist. municipality and Kalvarija municipality have 12 departments each, and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality - 15 departments. In Lithuania, municipalities have institutions or enterprises subordinate to them.



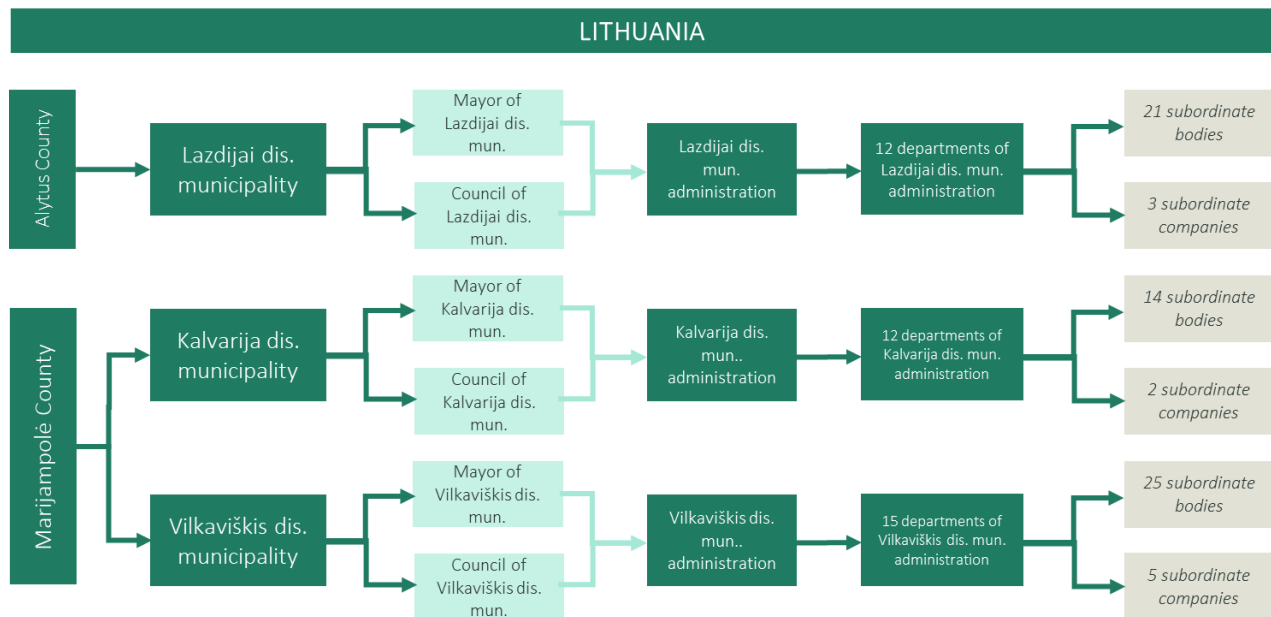


Figure 14. Government structure of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone
Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on data provided by Lithuanian municipalities

5.2. Regional policy and legislation

The following provides an overview of the most important strategic documents that influence the policy and development of municipalities, the decisions they make, the most important development goals are indicated and the types of measures planned for their implementation are reviewed, with particular attention paid to cooperation goals, tourism, and international business development goals. At the level of three Lithuanian municipalities, the development plans, municipal development plans and functional zone strategies of the Alytus and Marijampolė regions, to which these municipalities belong, are analysed.

ALYTUS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Describes the situation of the Alytus region, to which the Lazdijai dist. municipality analysed in the report belongs. The plan sets out priorities: a competitive economy, a sustainable community, and a safe, clean and comfortable living environment.

Identifies the measures for progress in the development of the region and the actions detailing them, relevant to Lazdijai municipality:

- **Establishment of pre-school education places.** The aim is to ensure universal and compulsory pre-school education for children growing up in socially at-risk families by establishing new indoor and outdoor educational centres and increasing its accessibility. Related actions: 3 groups, 46 new places in the Lazdijai school kindergarten "Vyturėlis"; 1 group, 12 new places in the Seiriai Gymnasium of Antanas Žmuidzinavičius in Lazdijai; and 2 groups, 36 new places in the Gymnasium of Sigitas Geda in Lazdijai to relocate part of the pre-school education activities;
- **Creation of all-day school spaces.** The aim is to increase the number of pupils participating in non-formal education and to expand the offer of non-formal education programmes in schools. Related actions - to adapt all-day school activities for primary school pupils in Lazdijai school-parentage "Kregždutė", Lazdijai district Seiriai Antanas Žmuidzinavičius Gymnasium, Lazdijai school-parentage "Vyturėlis", to provide full-day school activities for primary school pupils, and to provide full-time employment of children in school (from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm).



- **Increasing investment attractiveness and improving the business environment.** The aim is to develop the Alytus District Industrial Park. Related actions - establishment of an innovation and co-working centre in Lazdijai.
- **Enhancing the tourist attractiveness of the region.** Aiming to make natural and cultural sites accessible to visitors. Related actions - Improving accessibility and adaptation of the tourist attractions in Lazdijai dist. municipality
- **Improving the quality and diversity of public services.** Related actions - Ensuring the mobility of the population in Lazdijai dist.; Increasing access to public health and non-formal education services in Lazdijai dist. municipality.
- **Development of social housing stock.** Related actions - construction of a maximum of 12 flats in a multi-apartment building for large families and persons with disabilities on a plot of land in Lazdijai district.
- **Development of social services and infrastructure.** Related actions - sheltered housing (purchase of 3 flats and their adaptation for the provision of sheltered housing); establishment of a social workshop in Verstaminai village, Lazdijai eldership, adapting existing infrastructure.
- **Improving access to public health services.** Related actions - healthy living camps for adults, physical activity classes/water training, practical/theoretical nutrition training, mental health training, oncology prevention, injury prevention, promotion of physical activity for children and young people.
- **Promotion of the collection of recyclable waste.** Related actions - installation and/or reconstruction/extension of container sites for the collection of municipal waste and the purchase of containers for the collection of this waste; purchase of collection of municipal bio-waste, textiles, hazardous waste for individual households; installation of collection sites for bulky waste and purchase of collection containers; renovation of collection sites for bulky waste; creation/renovation of infrastructure for the collection of waste suitable for re-use. Infrastructure is understood as the installation/refurbishment of bulky waste collection sites or other locations, or the construction of containers or other means of collection; the provision of information to the general public, the region and/or the municipality to promote the separate collection of waste.

MARIJAMPOLÉ REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. Describes the situation of the Marijampolė region, which includes the Kalvarija and Vilkaviškis districts analysed in the report. The plan raises problems:

- **High social exclusion and high poverty risk,** the reasons for which are identified as the inadequacy of social services to the need, insufficient conditions and poor quality and accessibility of health care services and education services. The share of those waiting for social housing in the population of Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district is higher than the national average. This also leads to the problem of accessibility of services, since a large part of the population of the municipalities lives in rural areas where there are no essential services within easy reach. The average age of teachers in Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district is 50 years, which indicates that the shortage of pedagogical personnel will continue to increase in the near future. The share of students participating in non-formal education programs in Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district is also lower than the national average and indicates that in sparsely populated areas there are fewer opportunities to benefit from non-formal education services.
- **Low economic activity and investment attractiveness of the region,** the reasons for which are indicated as the lack of infrastructure suitable for investments, the gap between labour market needs and labour force qualifications and insufficient conditions for economic activity of the population, low diversity of economic activities. Residents of Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district municipality received the least investments from the entire Marijampolė region. These municipalities also had one of the highest unemployment rates in the region among working-age residents and an employment rate lower than the national average.
- **Insufficiently sustainable use of resources and the environment,** the causes of which are indicated as insufficient road safety, high greenhouse gas emissions due to unsustainable mobility and poor environmental quality due to air, water and landscape pollution, unsustainable use of resources and management of the effects of climate change. The Rail Baltica highway in the section from Kalvarija to Marijampolė is



characterized by high traffic intensity, as well as the regional roads Marijampolė–Vilkaviškis, Vilkaviškis–Virbalis, Vilkaviškis–Kudirkos Naumiestis, Vilkaviškis–Pilviškiai.

Regional development activities and projects detailing them are identified, which are relevant for Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis dist. municipality:

- **Increase the number of preschool education places.** Related projects – 1) creation of new preschool education places in Vilkaviškis district; 2) increasing access to education for children experiencing exclusion in Vilkaviškis district; 3) development of diverse education through all-day school activities in Vilkaviškis district and 4) creation of a safe and supportive environment for students in Kalvarija gymnasium.
- **Increase the availability of public health services and create conditions for a healthy lifestyle.** Related project – promotion of a healthy lifestyle in Vilkaviškis district municipality.
- **Development of the social housing fund, implementation of institutional care reform and development of non-residential social services.** Related projects – 1) development of the social housing fund in Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district; 2) modernization and development of the infrastructure of services necessary for the implementation of institutional care reform in Kalvarija municipality; 3) development of sheltered housing in Vilkaviškis district; 4) development of community accommodation and employment services for persons with intellectual and mental disabilities in Vilkaviškis district; 5) development of service infrastructure for children with disabilities in Vilkaviškis district; 6) development of non-residential social services in Vilkaviškis district.
- **Quality assurance and development of social services for the elderly.** Related projects – 1) development of social care services in Kalvarija municipality; 2) development of social services infrastructure for the elderly in Vilkaviškis district municipality.
- **Increasing the availability of drinking water supply and wastewater management services.** Related project – 1) development of water supply and wastewater systems in Vilkaviškis district municipality.
- **Improve conditions for attracting investments.** Related project – Preparation of investment-friendly infrastructure in Vilkaviškis district municipality.
- **To promote the economic growth of the region by exploiting the region's tourist resources.** Related projects – 1) adaptation of the shores of Lake Orija and 2) Kačergų Hill for visiting; 3) development of tourism infrastructure at Lake Paežeriai and 4) Vilkaviškis district municipality.
- **Increase the efficiency of public services and resource use.** Related project – improving the efficiency of public tourism services in the Marijampolė region.
- **Development of air monitoring infrastructure in the Marijampolė region.** Related project – Vilkaviškis district municipality. Strengthening air monitoring.
- **Improve long-term care services by investing in the missing infrastructure.** Related projects – 1) Development of long-term care services at the Public Institution Vilkaviškis Primary Health Care Center and 2) Vilkaviškis Hospital; 3) Implementation and development of targeted long-term care services in Kalvarija Municipality.
- **Green infrastructure development.** Related project – green infrastructure development in Vilkaviškis city.

LAZDIJAI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY 2021-2027 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The vision of Lazdijai district development is presented – Lazdijai district, as a border pearl, where nature and traditions inspire harmonious living, innovative work, and active recreation. The main idea is that the residents of Lazdijai dist. mun. would feel the benefits of cooperation with Poland and live in harmony with both renewable technologies and the nature and traditions of the region. The plan presents three priorities and the goals arising from them, in order to implement the vision set, including the development of cooperation with Poland.

Table 15. Priorities and goals of the Lazdijai district municipality strategic development plan

Priorities	Goals
A learning, socially responsible and change-making community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the education, culture and sports system; • Improve the quality of social and health services; • Promote the involvement of residents in decision-making processes;



Priorities	Goals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop attractive public infrastructure and living environment.
Balanced and progressive economic development of the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a favourable environment for investments and business by exploiting the territorial aspect – develop partnerships, attract businesses from Poland as well; • Create a unified and modern transport system, including the arrangement of connections with Poland; • Promote alternative activities in the countryside and climate-friendly agriculture.
Developed cultural and educational tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and develop the quality of tourism services and infrastructure; • Adapt natural and cultural heritage sites for tourism needs; • Form a unique identity of the district. • Develop active tourism in the border area, in cooperation with Kalvarija, Vilkaviškis municipalities and Poland - develop a network of bicycle routes/trails in the surrounding areas.

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the Lazdijai Municipality Strategic Development Plan

KALVARIJA MUNICIPALITY 2025–2035 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The development vision of Kalvarija municipality is presented – Kalvarija municipality, as a safe, hospitable and attractive municipality with a proactive and educated community that cherishes culture and heritage, attractive infrastructure and quality services focused on improving the quality of life of people living and visiting here. The vision indicates that the municipality’s priorities are the fostering of culture, heritage and quality and attractive public services and infrastructure for both residents and tourists. In connection with the vision of the plan, 6 current problems of Kalvarija municipality are identified, which complicate the further development of the municipality. One main goal is distinguished for each of these problems.

Table 16. Problem areas and goals of the Kalvarija Municipality Strategic Development Plan

Issues	Goals
Low student learning outcomes, lack of opportunities for more active youth activities	Improve the quality of educational services and promote youth activity
High level of poverty and social exclusion, insufficiently ensured public safety	Ensure social welfare and public safety
Insufficient development of local government infrastructure, resulting in a lower quality of life	Develop municipal infrastructure in accordance with the principles of environmental friendliness
Insufficient level of active leisure, cultural life, tourist attractiveness of the municipality	Improve the accessibility, quality and diversity of cultural and active leisure and tourism services
Low entrepreneurship and low attractiveness of the investment environment	Improve the business environment and promote investments
Lack of citizen engagement and evaluation of the effectiveness of local government activities	Improve the efficiency of municipal activities

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the Kalvarija Municipality Strategic Development Plan

VILKAVIŠKIS DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY 2019 – 2027 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN. The development vision of Vilkaviškis district is presented – Vilkaviškis district, as a safe border region of Lithuania, attractive for investments due to its natural and geographical location, rich in ethnic and cultural heritage, creating conditions for comprehensive development. The vision reflects the priorities of Vilkaviškis district municipality regarding national security, cultural richness and attractiveness for both residents and investments. In connection with the vision of the plan, three priority areas and goals of Vilkaviškis district municipality are identified.



Table 17. Vilkaviškis district municipality strategic development plan priority areas and goals

Priority areas	Goals
Promoting sustainable economic development and increasing competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the investment attractiveness of the Municipality; To increase the tourist attractiveness of the Municipality.
Cultivating a modern society and developing social welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality of education and training services; Increase the attractiveness of cultural services; Increase the attractiveness of sports services; Increase the attractiveness of services for youth Improve the accessibility and quality of healthcare services; Improve the accessibility and quality of social assistance services; Improve the quality of public governance.
Developing a sustainable environment and modern infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the attractiveness of public areas for residents and businesses; Reduce pollution of the municipal landscape; Increase the sustainability and accessibility of water supply and wastewater management services; Increase the competitiveness of heat production and supply services; Increase the sustainability and accessibility of waste management services; Improve the quality of transport services.

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the Vilkaviškis district municipality strategic development plan

ALYTUS REGION FUNCTIONAL ZONE STRATEGY. Describes the situation of the Alytus region, to which the Lazdijai district municipality analysed in the report belongs, the main problems, threats and potential, and the tasks and actions arising from this.

The following problems and threats in the region, relevant to Lazdijai district municipality, are identified:

- **Population decline** – in the Alytus region, the largest population decline occurred in Lazdijai district municipality (14,9 percent) during the period 2016-2023.
- **Population aging** – the demographic old age coefficient in the region exceeded the national indicator by 1,4 times. At the level of this region, Lazdijai district municipality was one of the highest – (199).
- **Insufficiently effective health promotion services** – all municipalities of the functional zone fall into the “red zone” of preventable mortality, and the worst situation is Lazdijai district municipality – 553,9 cases of preventable mortality per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022.
- **Insufficient physical education – a small number of programs in the direction of sports education** – the share of school-age children who exercised and played sports for at least 60 minutes every day, outside of school hours, in Lazdijai district municipality was 13,4%, the lowest of the entire functional zone. This also determined the highest proportion of obese children (25,3%) in Lazdijai district municipality from the entire functional zone.
- **High inequality of population employment in the functional zone** – the employed population of Lazdijai district municipality accounted for 67,6%, when the largest share of employed population was in Druskininkai city municipality (81,3%) and Alytus city municipality (75,3%) municipalities. Significant internal inequalities indicate insufficient or inefficient economic relations of the functional zone. In addition to Alytus city municipality, the monthly wage (gross) in the entire functional zone, including Lazdijai district municipality (EUR 1284,1) was lower than the average of the functional zone.

The tasks and actions of the functional zone relevant to Lazdijai district municipality are identified:

- **Increase investment attractiveness and improve the business environment.** Three of the actions - 1) Establishment of a joint cooperation agreement for the promotion and development of entrepreneurship in



the functional area of the Alytus region; 2) Preparation and implementation of incentives for the creation of businesses in the Alytus region; 3) Establishment of an innovation and coworking centre in Lazdijai.

- **Increase the tourist attractiveness of the region.** Two of the actions are 1) increasing the accessibility of tourist attractions in Lazdijai district municipality and 2) adapting the White Lake for visiting.
- **Increase the quality and diversity of public services.** Four of the actions are 1) ensuring the mobility of residents in Lazdijai district through the modernization of public stops; 2) signing a joint activity agreement on strengthening public health and increasing the availability of non-formal education services in the Alytus region functional zone and 3) separately in Lazdijai district municipality; 4) promoting preventive measures that strengthen public health and psychological well-being and resilience in Lazdijai district municipality.

MARIJAMPOLÉ REGION FUNCTIONAL ZONE STRATEGY. Describes the situation, main problems, threats and potential of the Marijampolė region, to which the Kalvarija municipality and Vilkaviškis district municipalities analysed in the report belong, as well as the tasks and actions arising from this.

The following problems and threats are identified in the region, relevant for Kalvarija and/or Vilkaviškis district municipalities:

- **Insufficient investment attractiveness of the region** – lack of investment-friendly territories, underdeveloped common marketing measures, lack of digital solutions. In Vilkaviškis district municipality and Šakiai district municipality, where the population is 45 percent of the total population of the region, material investments are extremely low, which is directly related to low wages (EUR 1303,1 – Vilkaviškis district municipality in 2022).
- **Low tourism in the region** – lack of tourism objects adapted for visiting, underdeveloped common marketing measures and lack of digital solutions; lower than average overall national assessment of tourist objects of Lithuanian municipalities in Kalvarija municipality.
- **Insufficiently effective public health services** – lead to high social exclusion rates and poor health of the population. In the Marijampolė region, avoidable mortality is highest in Kalvarija municipality. To increase the efficiency of public health services, the potential of the public health office operating in Marijampolė municipality should be exploited to meet the needs of Kalvarija municipality, since Kalvarija municipality does not have a separate health office.
- **Insufficient physical education** – the share of school-age children who exercised and played sports for at least 60 minutes every day, outside of school hours, in Kalvarija municipality was 12,9%, the lowest of the entire functional zone.

The tasks and actions of the functional zone are identified, which are relevant for Kalvarija and/or Vilkaviškis district municipalities:

- **Improve conditions for attracting investments.** Three of the actions are: preparation of infrastructure suitable for investments in Vilkaviškis district municipality; 2) implementation of investment promotion measures (creation of mobile applications informing about investment opportunities and relevant municipalities in Šakiai and Vilkaviškis districts); 3) publicity of the region's investment attractiveness.
- **Promote economic growth of the region by exploiting the region's tourist resources.** Five of the actions are: 1) adaptation of Lake Orija for recreation and visiting and 2) adaptation of Kačergų hill for visiting in Kalvarija district municipality; 3) development of tourism infrastructure in Vilkaviškis district municipality (adaptation of Lake Vištytis, the Šešupė River and the mounds located in the municipality for visiting); 4) efficiency of public tourism services and 5) publicity of the region's tourist attractiveness - conclusion of a joint activity agreement, in which the Vilkaviškis district municipality responsible for organizing joint activities will be appointed. sav., specific functions in the areas of communication and analysis have been established for all municipalities of the functional zone and the activities planned to be carried out have been defined, including tourism information centres in their implementation.
- **Increase the efficiency of public health services.** One of the actions is the implementation of preventive measures aimed at strengthening public health in cooperation between the municipalities of Kalvarija and Marijampolė.



Summarising the regional policy of Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, the planning documents focus on objectives that are related to reducing the biggest current problems and increasing the potential of existing strengths. On the one hand, the aim is to further develop tourism potential by promoting rural and recreational tourism and by focusing more on the development of tourism linking the different EGTC units. On the other hand, the aim is to reduce the problem of regional and rural exclusion and to improve education, health, social and transport services and their accessibility. The aim is to increase the region's yet undiscovered investment attractiveness and to increase the involvement of the population in community initiatives and decision-making processes. It also aims to increase sustainability and reduce pollution. Cooperation between Lithuania and Poland is not prioritised in the planning documents, and future development of the EGTC zone could take more account of increasing such partnerships.



6. Local potential growth opportunities

This chapter analyses three aspects: innovation and technology, green growth and the cultural and tourism sector.

The first aspect – innovation and technology – includes information on foreign direct investment and foreign direct investment per capita. It also analyses the measures planned by municipalities for the development of innovation and technology. The following aspects are analysed:

- industrial parks and free economic zones;
- foreign direct investment;
- physical investment;
- size distribution of enterprises;
- transport infrastructure;
- innovative and technological potential of the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone.

The second aspect includes green growth, which is revealed by analysing municipal strategic documents and the goals and measures established therein, contributing to national sustainable development and related goals, the development of alternative transport.

The third aspect, covering the culture and tourism sectors, is analysed through the prism of untapped and potential development objects and activities.

6.1. Innovation and technological potential

INDUSTRIAL PARKS AND FEZ. There are no industrial parks or free economic zones (FEZ) in the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone. This means that the territory of the EGTC zone is not adapted to attract companies, investments, promote economic activity and create new jobs. The nearest industrial park is in Alytus, and the free economic zone is in Marijampolė - these territories could also be adapted to promote the economic activity of the analysed municipalities.

The Marijampolė functional zone plan identifies the potential of the functional zone, relevant for Kalvarija and Vilkaviškis district municipalities – the potential for attracting investments. It is stated that Vilkaviškis city is connected to Marijampolė by regional-level functional relations and is classified as a local urban centre with sufficient potential, in which it is planned to concentrate public investments to support specialized economic activities, while utilizing functional relations with urban centres of the same and higher level.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT. 33.9 million foreign direct investment (FDI) was recorded in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2023. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality stands out in particular, where these investments accounted for more than half of the total FDI in the EGTC zone and amounted to EUR 22.5 million in 2023. During the period under review, FDI grew in all the municipalities under consideration. This growth in foreign investment shows that the investment potential of the EGTC zone is growing, although the distribution of investment is uneven.



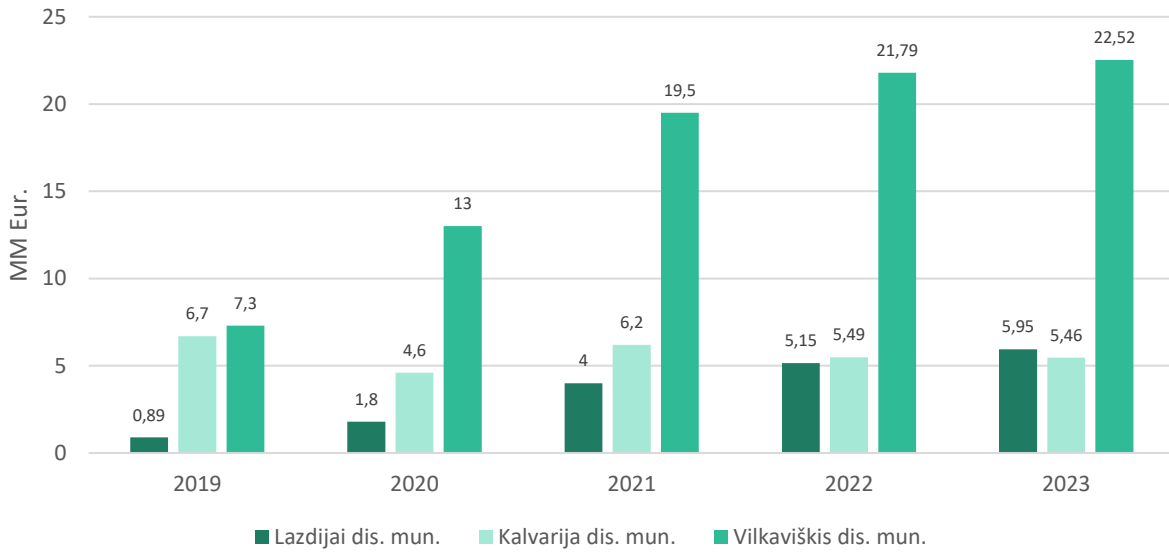


Figure 15. Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone foreign direct investment, million EUR

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

The average FDI per capita in Lithuanian municipalities is EUR 523.7. The distribution is not even, though, due to the different populations of the municipalities analysed. The largest share of FDI is still accounted for by the inhabitants of Vilkiškis dist. municipality - EUR 664 per capita in 2023. However, it is worth noting that Kalvarija municipality also recorded a high FDI per capita - in 2023, per capita FDI amounted to EUR 561, more than in Lazdijai dist. municipality, where the FDI indicator was generally the lowest among the municipalities of Lithuania in the period under analysis (EUR 346). This shows that FDI per capita is unevenly distributed in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone.

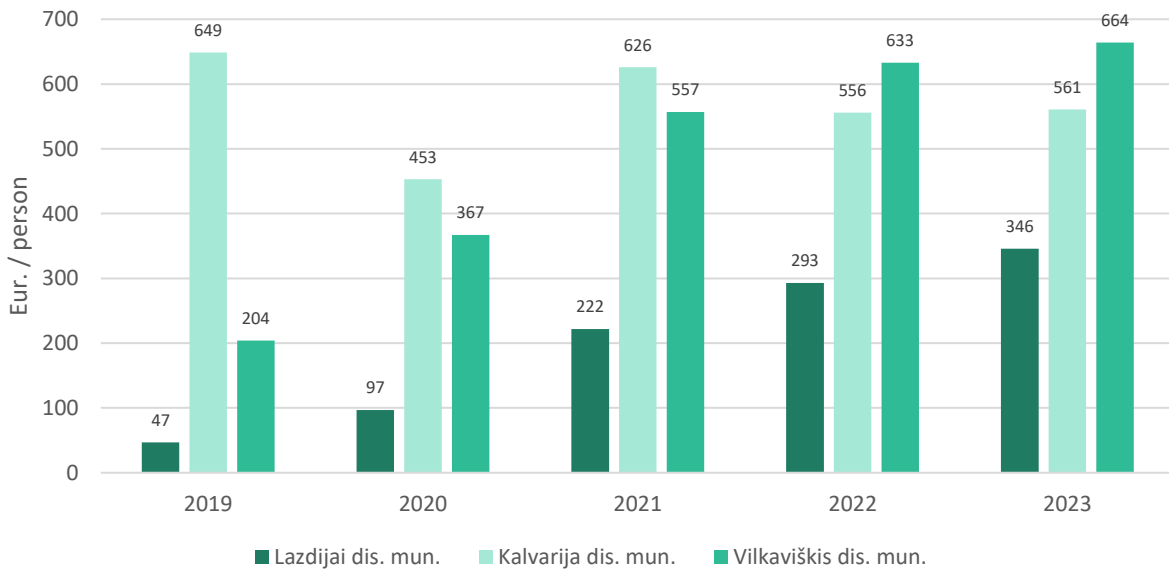


Figure 16. Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone foreign direct investment per capita, EUR/person

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

MATERIAL INVESTMENTS. When analysing tangible investments, it can be noted that in 2023 their distribution in the Lithuanian municipalities under consideration was quite even, and the amount was higher in comparison with the amount of FDI - EUR 51.5 million in 2023. It is worth noting, however, that this figure has fallen since 2020, when



tangible investments amounted to EUR 65.4 million. Vilkaviškis dist. municipality is the leading municipality in terms of tangible investments, with EUR 23.9 million of tangible investments in 2023. Kalvarija municipality has the lowest material investment in 2023. However, it is noticeable that material investments in the EGTC zone Lithuanian municipalities are much more evenly distributed than FDI.

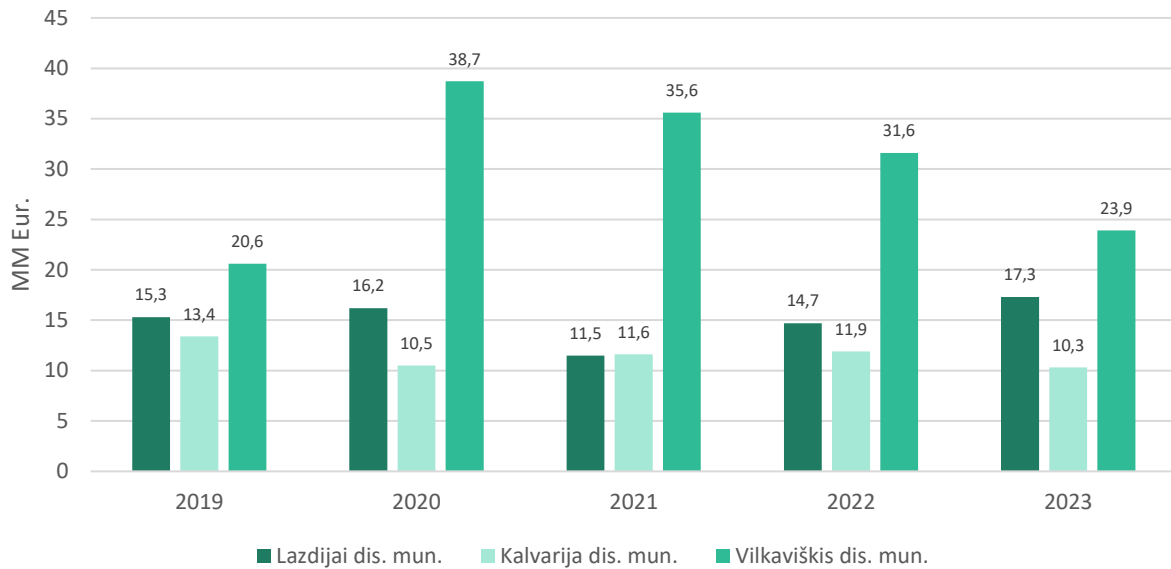


Figure 17. Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone material investments, million EUR.

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data

The average per capita tangible investment in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone is EUR 914. The municipalities of Lazdijai dist. and Kalvarija stand out, with 991 Eur and 1052 Eur per capita respectively of material investments. Meanwhile, Vilkaviškis dist. municipality has the lowest investment per capita. Thus, the distribution of tangible investments in the EGTC zone municipalities of Lithuania does not correspond to the total amount of tangible investments per municipality.

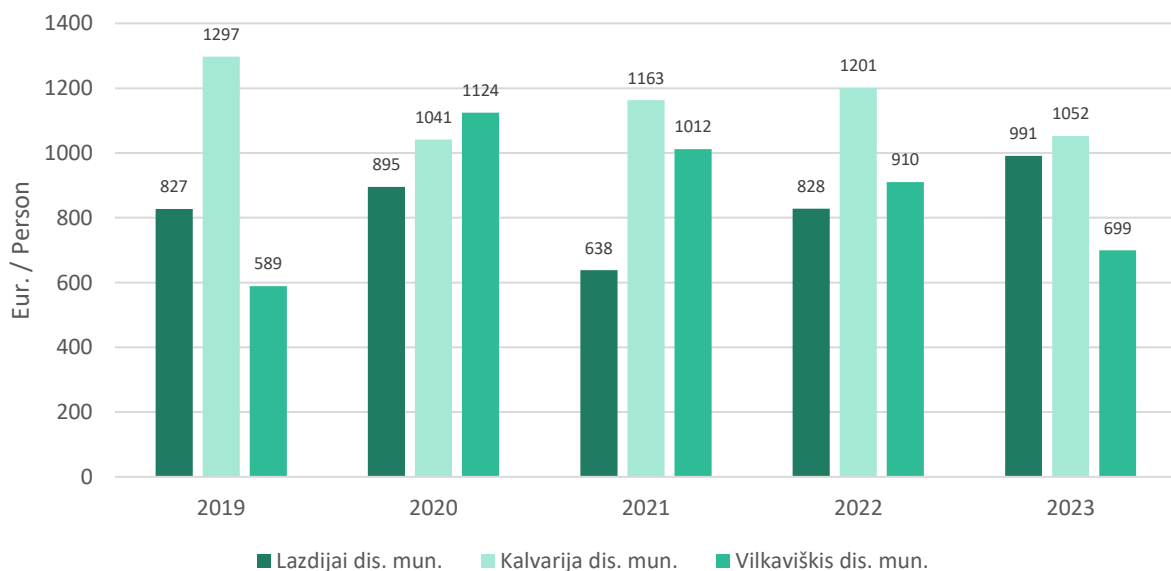


Figure 18. Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone material investments per person, EUR

Source: prepared by the Consultant on the basis of the State Data Agency data



Summarising the investment potential, it can be noted that the investment received by the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone correlates with employment indicators - as investment has increased, the share of the working-age population in Lithuanian municipalities has also increased by up to 2 percentage points since 2019 or has remained stable. Thus, the investment potential is increasing, albeit in a slight and uneven way. More attention needs to be paid to partnerships between different regions and municipalities to promote entrepreneurship and employment.

SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMPANIES. Looking at the innovation and technological potential of the municipalities in the EGTC zone of Lithuania, the predominance of very small or small enterprises is evident, both in terms of annual revenues and number of employees. The distribution of medium-sized enterprises is very sparse, and large enterprises are not present at all. The investment potential is therefore also low, as there are no incentives to invest in the region. The following are the types of enterprises according to annual turnover/total annual balance sheet total and number of employees.

Types of enterprises by annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total during the reporting year:

- Microenterprises – annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 million;
- Small enterprises – annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 10 million;
- Medium-sized enterprises – annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 50 million;
- Large enterprises – EUR 50 million and above.

Types of enterprises by average number of employees during the reporting year:

- Microenterprises – less than 10 employees.
- Small enterprises – less than 50 employees.
- Medium-sized enterprises – less than 250 employees
- Large enterprises – 250 employees and more.

In the Lithuanian municipalities analysed in 2024, micro-enterprises with up to 9 employees dominate (86-88.5%).

In Lazdijai dist. municipality, due to the small number of industrial enterprises, the municipality's GDP is low. Lazdijai dist. municipality is dominated by wholesale and retail trade, beauty salons, and service industries.

Micro-small enterprises with up to 9 employees in Kalvarija municipality accounted for 81.4% of the active enterprises at the beginning of 2024. Enterprises with between 10 and 99 employees accounted for 17.73% of the total number of employees. There are two enterprises with more than 100, but not more than 150 employees in the municipality of Kalvarija.

Micro-enterprises operating in Vilkaviškis accounted for 82.9% of the total number of operating enterprises at the beginning of 2023. Enterprises with between 10 and 99 employees account for 9.24% of the total number of enterprises in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality. There are 4 enterprises in Vilkaviškis dist. municipality with 100-149 employees, 2 enterprises with 150-249 employees and one large enterprise with 250-499 employees. This is the VŠĮ Vilkaviškis hospital (305 employees).

Thus, the prevalence of micro-enterprises in the whole territory of the EGTC zone in Lithuania shows that there are no incentives for the creation of larger businesses or projects in the territory, which could also attract more investment.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE – THE POTENTIAL OF THE RAILWAY. The EGTC zone is crossed by strategically important railway lines, including the Rail Baltica route, which provide opportunities to develop the investment potential of the zone based on the railway infrastructure of Lithuanian municipalities.

Šeštokiai and Mockava railway stations of Lazdijai dist. municipality are intermediate stations of Rail Baltica. Šeštokiai railway station is used for the international train Šeštokiai-Balstogė-Warsaw, while Mockava railway station provides passenger services to Warsaw. This provides international travel opportunities for passengers.



Due to the strategic railway lines, major investment projects are planned in Lazdijai dist. municipality. For these reasons, the railway system in Lazdijai dist. municipality can be seen as having a high potential for attracting investment and tourism. The Kaunas-Kybartai railway line runs through Vilkaviškis dist. municipality, which provides efficient connections to major Lithuanian cities and internationally, although Vilkaviškis dist. municipality does not fall within the Rail Baltica route.

Thus, the Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone have the potential to have well-developed trade routes in the future, due to the Rail Baltica railway and Via Baltica road passing through the zone, which are regionally significant and can attract a lot of investments.

INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL POTENTIAL. Based on the local development strategies of the local action groups of Lazdijai, Kalvarija and Vilkaviškis region, priority areas are being formed to increase the economic and investment potential in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone.

Overall, Vilkaviškis has the strongest economic potential due to increasing investment attractiveness, development of industrial areas and strategic investments. Both Vilkaviškis and Kalvarija territories can benefit from the tourism and economic growth opportunities of the Marijampolė Free Economic Zone region. Lazdijai is most focused on community involvement and small-scale entrepreneurial initiatives, which can promote social responsibility, but this will not be the main economic driver. There is also a need to strengthen social business in Lithuanian municipalities.

Table 18. Investment and economic potential in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2025

Potential area	Steps
Promoting entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship development through practical workshops and consultations for business creation and development. • Improvement of business support and information system, creation of business clusters, development of businesses for tourist services. • Investment potential of public spaces and industrial territories, increasing the number of business entities, creation of jobs for rural residents • Development of rural economy, promotion of consumption of local producers' products, development of bioeconomy enterprises.
Social business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting social business, involving vulnerable groups and creating social responsibility in business. • Promoting social inclusion, improving the quality of local projects, innovative solutions for the development of rural areas.
Strengthening the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of unemployed and economically inactive people in the labour market through training and mentoring. • Creation of jobs in rural areas, promotion of business establishment. • Improving employment opportunities, promotion of economic activity of local residents, strengthening labour market indicators.
Increasing the attractiveness of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of socially responsible services and products focused on community needs • Exploitation of the tourist potential of the Alytus and Marijampolė regions, creation of a common functional zone.
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving NGOs in solving social problems, strengthening volunteerism. • Increasing the activity of residents through community activities, volunteerism, and educational programs.

Source: prepared by the Consultant based on functional area plans, strategic development plans and other documents

6.2. Green growth

ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATIONS IN THE EGTC ZONE. There is almost no infrastructure adapted to electric vehicles in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, but based on the EU's common priorities for reducing the number of conventionally fuelled cars in cities by half, there is a need to develop infrastructure adapted to electric vehicles. According to Via Lietuva data, 7 electric vehicle charging stations were installed in Lazdijai district municipality by



2025¹⁷. By 2030, the municipal electric vehicle access installation plan plans to install 109 electric vehicle charging stations in Lazdijai district municipality.¹⁸ According to Via Lietuva data, there are 3 charging stations in Kalvarija municipality, and although according to Regitra data, in Kalvarija municipality there are only 10 electric vehicles in 2023, the Kalvarija municipality RES plan also sets a goal to expand this infrastructure to 9 electric vehicle charging stations¹⁹. According to Via Lietuva data, in Vilkauskis district municipality, only 3 electric vehicle charging stations are operating, but by 2030 Vilkauskis district municipality The plan for the installation of public electric vehicle charging points in the territory by 2030 also indicates their expansion - by 2030. to have 54 electric vehicle charging stations²⁰.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT. According to the data available in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone, alternative means of transport, such as public transport and bicycles, are not popular, and the transport sector is not sustainable due to both the large share of polluting passenger cars and the outdated and inefficient public transport. In Lithuanian municipalities, the share of RES in the transport sector is increasing and in 2022 reached 6,3%.²¹

Lazdijai dist. municipality administration has submitted plans to develop a network of bicycle paths, which would encourage residents to choose bicycles as a means of transportation and reduce the number of harmful emissions into the environment. Lazdijai district municipality has 24 local regular bus routes, and this indicator is one of the highest among the county municipalities and is assessed as quite effectively covering the travel needs of the municipality's residents. The developed urban form of Lazdijai city ensures the accessibility of attractions and territories at relatively short distances - an average of 2-4 km, which can be covered by bicycles or on foot. However, rural areas located further from the city, where a large part of the population of Lazdijai district municipality lives, are not provided with consistently running public transport. However, reducing territorial exclusion aims to ensure accessibility through alternative means, focusing on public transport service and renovation.

The Kalvarija municipality renewable energy resources plan does not include specific goals for increasing the development and popularity of alternative modes of transport. The development of electric public transport is mentioned. The Vilkauskis district municipality renewable energy resources plan sets a goal to develop public transport using alternative fuels, but there are no more detailed goals for the development and sustainability of public transport and other alternative modes of transport.

There is no direct public transport connection between the administrative units of Lithuania and Poland – routes that would allow one to travel from the Lithuanian municipalities under consideration to the Polish gminy and vice versa. This does not increase the potential for cooperation between these regions for both economic and tourist purposes.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH POTENTIAL OF THE EGTC ZONE. In general, Lithuanian municipalities are increasingly sustainable, with the development of electric vehicle infrastructure, an increasing share of RES in energy consumption, and targets for further development reflected in their strategic plans.

¹⁷ Information system for publicly accessible charging points. Via Lietuva. Online access: <https://ev.vialietuva.lt/>

¹⁸ Plan of public electric vehicle charging points planned to be installed in the territory of Lazdijai district municipality by 2030. Online access: <https://sumin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/darnus-judumas/elektromobilumas/savivaldybese-iki-2030-m-numatomos-irengtivyvesiosios-elektromobiliu-ikrovimo-infrastrukturos-planai/>

¹⁹ Kalvarija Municipality Renewable Energy Action Plan until 2030. Online access: <https://www.ena.lt/sav-aie-planai-planai/>

²⁰ Plan for the installation of public electric vehicle charging points in the territory of Vilkauskis district municipality by 2030

²¹ National Energy Independence Strategy. Online access: <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.E151BC09AE62/asr>



Table 19. Sustainable growth potential in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2025

Potential area	Steps
Heritage-based tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strong Lithuanian presence in Poland (Punsk, Sejny, Suwałki) and Polish heritage in Lithuania can be used to develop cross-border tourism initiatives, including historical tours, festivals and cultural exchanges.
Strong bilingual education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening bilingual education programmes and cross-border student exchange initiatives can strengthen cultural ties and workforce skills in both countries.
Sustainable agricultural sector and local production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting organic farming, local markets and cross-border trade in agricultural products can increase sustainability.
Green energy and sustainable infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lithuanian municipalities that are more advanced in terms of sustainability can contribute to RES-based development in Polish municipalities. Investments in renewable energy (solar, wind and bioenergy) projects, electric vehicle charging stations and cross-border infrastructure (e.g. better roads and railway connections) can increase economic and environmental sustainability.
Eco-tourism and nature conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EGTC zone in Lithuania includes national and regional parks and protected areas and could therefore develop eco-tourism initiatives and projects to conserve biodiversity and support the local economy.

Source: prepared by the Consultant based on RES plans and other strategic documents

Summing up the innovation and technological potential of the EGTC zone Lithuanian municipalities, Lazdijai dist. municipality is below Kalvarija and Vilkaviškis dist. municipalities in terms of the amount of FDI and material investments, but the municipality is noted as having a high investment potential due to the strategic lines of communication passing through its territory, "Rail Baltica". The Via Baltica road is mentioned as an object of further investment, which should significantly contribute to raising the potential of the region and of the EGTC zone itself. In general, there are hardly any major business or investment objects in the whole territory of the EGTC zone in Lithuania so far, although Vilkaviškis has the strongest economic potential for increasing the investment attractiveness of the municipality in terms of investments. In terms of sustainable development, especially in Lazdijai dist. municipality, there is an advanced development of infrastructure for electric vehicles, which is planned. It should be noted that increasing the potential of the EGTC zone should be carried out through cooperation between administrative units in Lithuania and Poland.

6.3. Cultural and tourism potential

In the EGTC zone, there are not many cultural exchanges and joint tourism phenomena between Lithuanian municipalities and Polish gminy. It is worth noting that in the analysed municipalities, a significant part of the population is Lithuanian, especially in the Punsk gmina, where Lithuanians make up about 80% of the population. Therefore, in most municipalities, more opportunities for cooperation can naturally be created due to common interests, for example, for educational and cultural purposes. In the Alytus functional zone plan, Lazdijai dist. municipality potential – 2022. The cultural index, assessed according to the subindex "Participation in culture and social capital", is the second largest in Lithuania. The Meteliai and Veisiejai regional parks located in Lazdijai dist. municipality attracts tourists from Lithuania and abroad and has a potential to develop tourist attraction of the EGTC zone.

Thus, Lazdijai dist. municipality is the most distinguished in the field of culture and tourism and has the most potential to develop it on a wider level in the future. However, the need to exploit the advantages of certain regions in developing tourism and cultural exchanges throughout the EGTC zone is also noted - for Lithuanian municipalities, which receive the majority of tourists in the EGTC zone, to cooperate with neighbouring municipalities and increase their awareness. Cooperation between the Lithuanian and Polish border region takes



place within the framework of Interreg projects - since the beginning of 2019, 33 projects have been recorded, supported by Lithuanian and Polish partnerships for the purposes of promoting sustainable tourism, entrepreneurship and employment, reducing social exclusion and promoting public services.

Table 20. Investment and economic potential in Lithuanian municipalities in the EGTC zone in 2025

Potential area	Steps
Cultural Heritage Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of local traditions and crafts, educational activities that foster cultural heritage. Improvement of the business support and information system, creation of business clusters, development of businesses for tourist services. Adaptation of cultural heritage objects for tourism, strengthening of local cultural identity.
Events and Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events that increase the awareness of the region, traditional festivals and local community celebrations. Organization of cultural and tourism events, involvement of communities in cultural activities. International cultural festivals between Lithuania and Poland, partnership with other European cultural institutions.
Tourism Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation of local natural objects for tourism, development of ecological and active tourism. Development of recreational areas, modernization of tourist attractions, creation of bicycle paths and hiking routes. Renovation of public spaces and historical objects, development of tourism infrastructure.
Nature and Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake and forest tourism routes, promotion of ecotourism and educational tourism. Opportunities for active recreation and tourism.
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving local businesses and communities in the development of tourism services. Developing rural tourism and educational programs. Promoting the products of local producers

Source: prepared by the Consultant, based on the LAG local development strategies

Summarizing the tourism and cultural potential of the EGTC zone municipalities in Lithuania, Lazdijai dist. municipality has a lot of potential, it pays a lot of attention to nature and ecological tourism, with an emphasis on the development of eco-tourism and traditional crafts programmes. In Lithuanian municipalities in general, strategic documents focus on strengthening cultural and rural tourism, involving communities in events and developing tourism infrastructure, adapting the area to international tourism to increase the attractiveness of the region. In the future, the aim should be to develop partnerships between Lithuania and Poland based on history and culture, and there are opportunities to exploit good practice in this area.

