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LIFE Platform meeting FOCUS ON WATER RESILIENCE STRATEGY

LIFE Strategic Integrated Projects
implementing River Basin Management Plans
practices

Day 2.
Workshop FINANCES Complementary funding
strategies, water pricing, finances and
investments

IEVA POCIUNIENE



14-15 October 2025

Brussels

This meeting is
organised by



LIFE STRATEGIC INTEGRATED PROJECT | 2025

Integrated Water Management in Lithuania

Project Manager Ieva Pociuniene
15 October 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

Ministry of
Environment
Republic
of Lithuania



LIFE SIP
Vanduo

EU LIFE Program - LIFE strategic integrated project

Integrated water management in Lithuania

LIFE22-IPE-LT-LIFE SIP Vanduo

LOCATION: Lithuania

BUDGET INFO:

Total budget: 19 797 486. 54 EUR

Complementary funds: 825 945 211 EUR

DURATION – 10 years:

Start 01/01/2024 -

End 31/12/2033

PARTNERS:

Coordinating Beneficiary: Environmental Projects Management Agency

Associated Beneficiarys: 16 participants consortium of ministries (2), government institutions (4), scientific bodies (4), non-governmental organizations (3), municipality (1) and a private water company (1) + 2 AP.

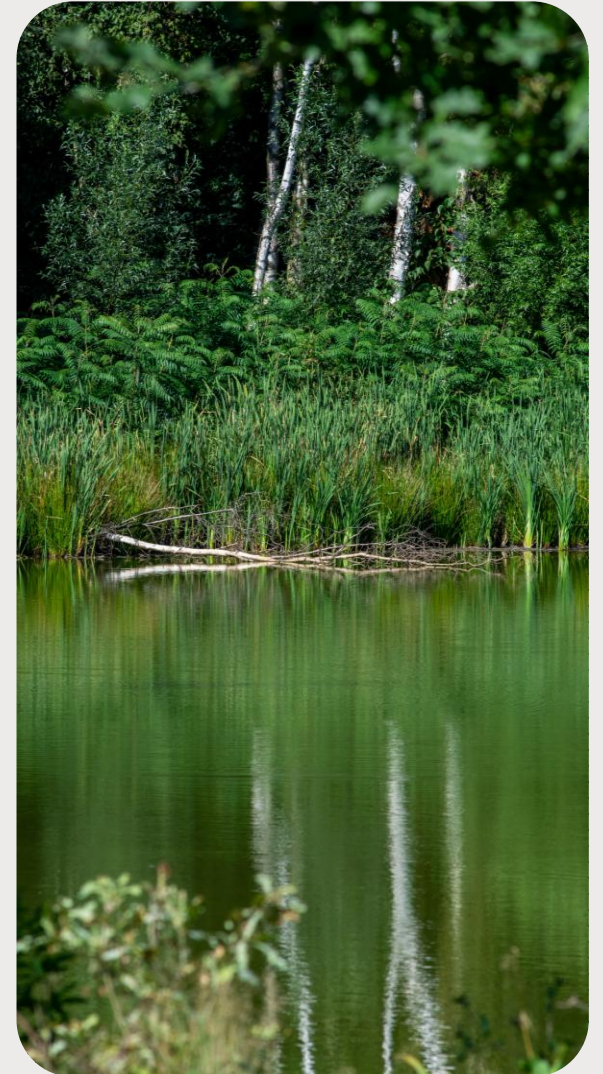
LIFE strategic integrated project „Integrated water management in Lithuania“ - LIFE SIP Vanduo

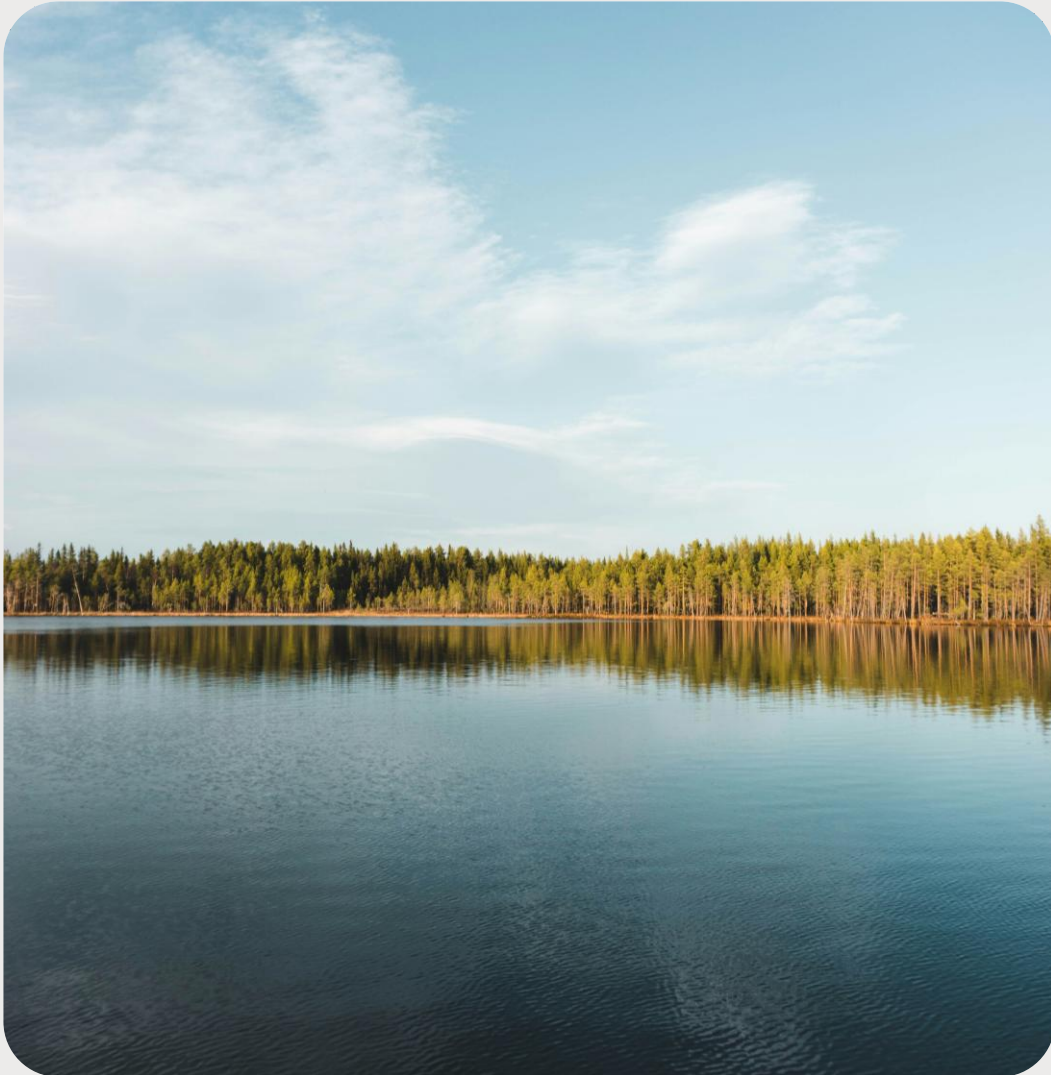
Aims at improving the status of surface water bodies in Lithuania:

- by reducing pollution of rivers and lakes
- restoring water-related ecosystems
- ensuring sustainable management of water resources

Objective of the Project

- to help implement the National Water Plan for 2022-2027
- to improve the status of surface water bodies
- increase the efficiency of the water resources management system






Within the scope of the Project

- Increasing the efficiency of water resource management in the country.
- Implementing practical measures that enhance the status of surface water bodies and reduce.
- **Additional funding mobilized for the National Water Development Plan 2022-2027.**
- A strategic document for the water sector for 2028–2033 is being prepared based on the results of the project.

“Public choices and willingness to pay for achieving good status for Lithuania's inland surface water bodies”

Continent valuation study





The survey on Willingness to Pay (WTP) and the report was prepared within the framework of the Project "Integrated Water Management in Lithuania" (No. 101104645 - LIFE22-IPE-LT-LIFE SIP Water), funded by the LIFE Program of the European Union and the Republic of Lithuania

Objectives of the study

- The first nationwide monetary valuation of benefits of achieving the Water Framework Directive objectives, i.e. reaching good ecological status in inland surface waters.
- The study aimed to investigate how willingness to pay (WTP):
 - varies among members of the public
 - provide benefit values that can be directly used by competent institutions in cost benefit assessments, including the cost recovery calculations



(required under Article 9 of the Water Framework Directive and other economic evaluations related to achieving good ecological status.)

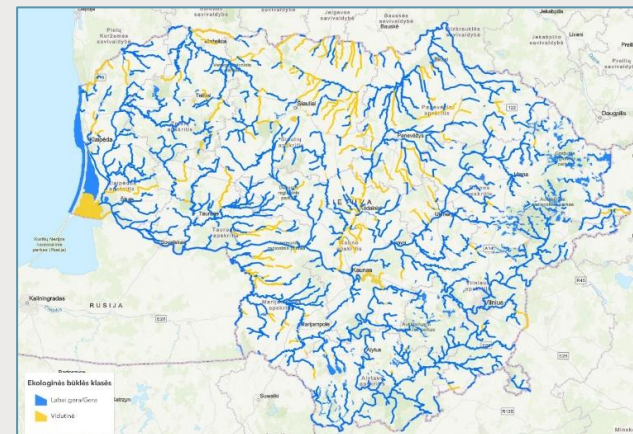
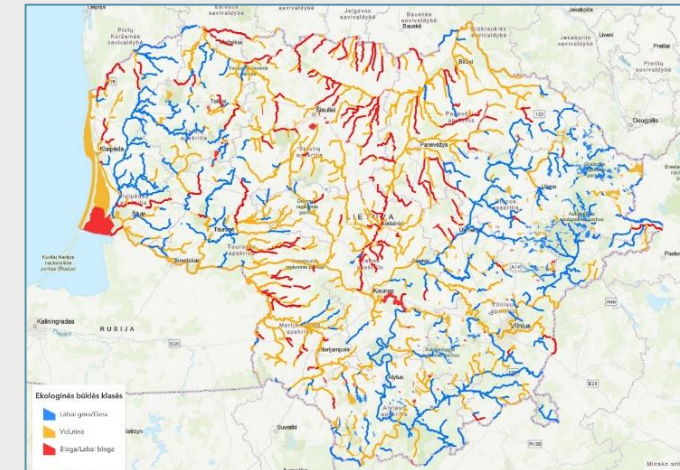


Implementation of the survey / study

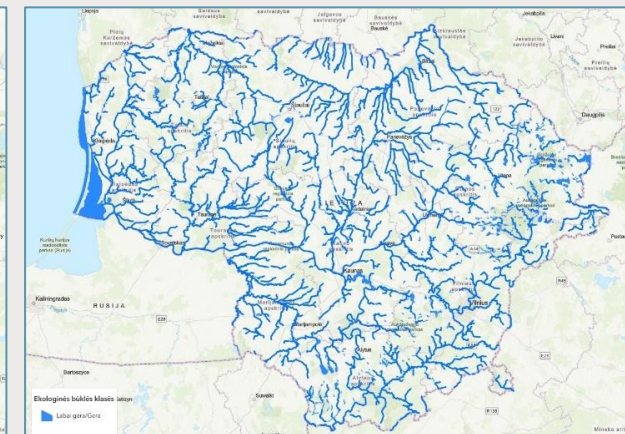
Ecological benefits—such as cleaner water, richer biodiversity, and better recreational opportunities—are typically non-market in nature, the research team used a contingent valuation (CV) method.

- Development of the questionnaire.
- Several focus group sessions to discuss the questionnaire.
- Pilot survey with 50 participants.
- Nationally representative online survey of 1500 adults conducted in February–March 2025.
- Each respondent was shown a color-coded map of current surface water status and asked how much they would be willing to contribute through a mandatory and earmarked monthly payment to support one of two alternative ecological improvement programs for the period 2025–2040.

Current status



Program 1



Program 2

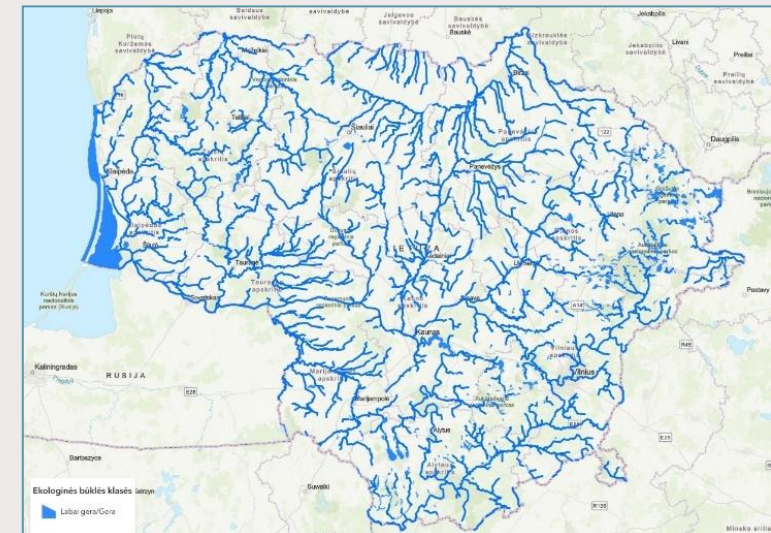
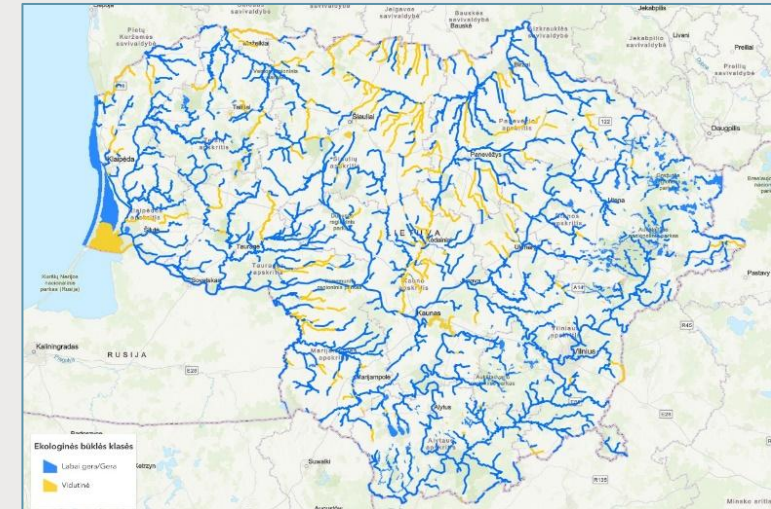
Main results of the analysis

Monthly payments:

- Programme 1 (moderate) — improving poor waters to moderate and moderate to good —the mean monthly WTP per person was €2.45 (non-parametric) and €2.87 (parametric) restoring water-related ecosystems
- Programme 2 (comprehensive) — achieving good ecological status in all waters—these figures rose to €2.81 and €3.40 respectively.

Total yearly benefits:

- The moderate programme yields about €83 million in yearly benefits
- The comprehensive programme yields about €98 million in yearly benefits



What do the results say?

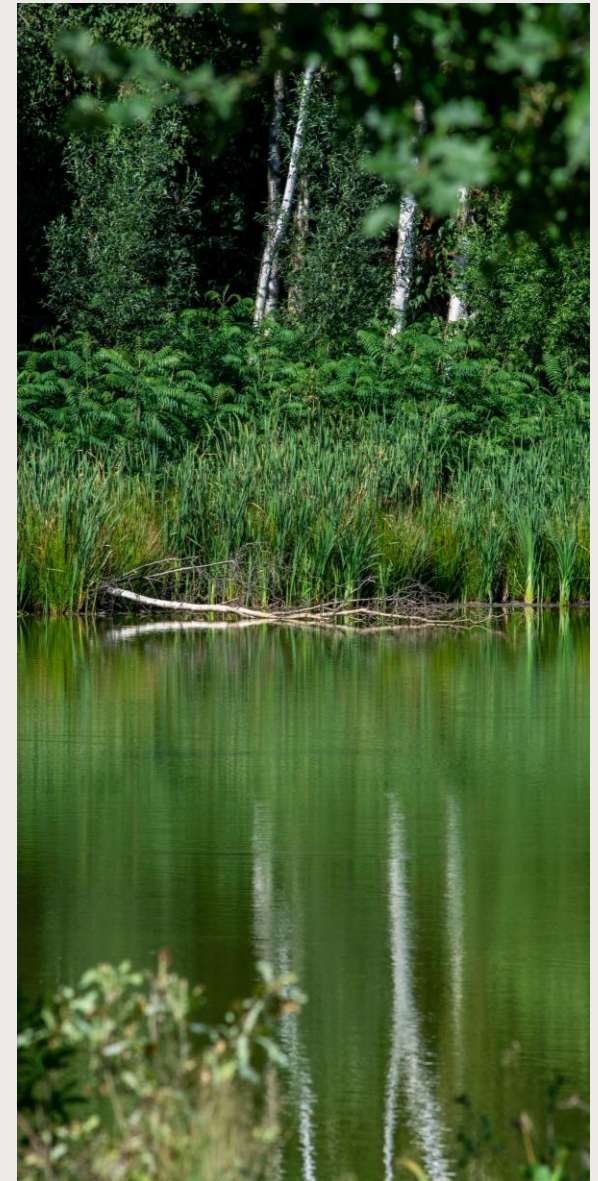
Willingness to pay increases steadily with disposable income, but trust in institutions is an even stronger driver

Payment motives were mostly altruistic and legacy-oriented:

- 78% of payers - would contribute primarily to leave healthy aquatic ecosystems for their children and grandchildren,
- while only 17% cited direct recreational benefits like swimming or fishing.

Nearly 3/4 of those who refused to pay did so:

- not because they undervalued clean water,
- they disagreed with the proposed funding mechanism or
- perceived an unfair burden between households and polluters.



Implications for Lithuanian water policy (1)

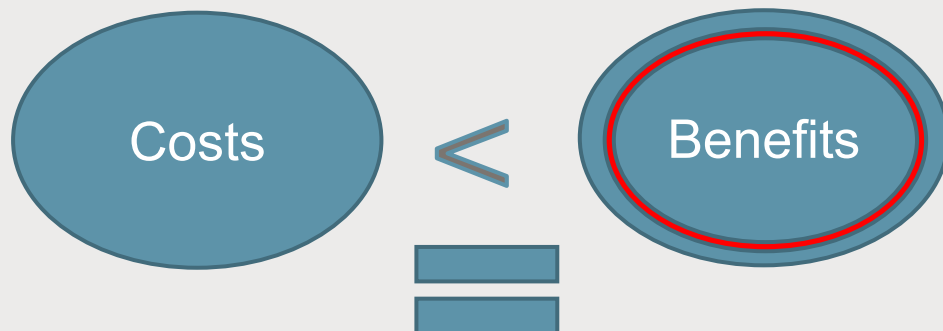
A set of measures - is likely to pass the cost-benefit test

Total implementation costs shall remain at or below €80–100 million/year — the estimated level of social benefit the public is willing to support

Mandatory, earmarked levy of around €1 per adult per month would gain majority support

Provided that:

- citizens can see where the money goes and
- that polluters pay their share



Implications for Lithuanian water policy (2)

- Equity considerations (WTP is systematically lower among lower-income households and in more remote regions).
- Addressing fairness concerns upfront helps to protect the most vulnerable and strengthens political sustainability.

- Adaptive management:
 - regular monitoring of ecological status, household incomes, and public preferences
 - combined with periodic updates of willingness to pay estimates

would allow the Ministry of Environment to adjust levy rates and investment priorities over time

Let's get in touch!

CONTACTS

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