



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

# Whole-of-society approach: Planning Societal Resilience

The Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania  
National Crisis Management Centre



# Social construction of societal resilience

## 1) Early focus: natural hazards & place-based communities

- Communities as geographically bounded units
- Short-duration, high-impact events (disasters, natural hazards)
- “Bounce back” logic; disaster preparedness/recovery focus

## 2) Shift: long-term transformative pressures

- Globalization, climate change, economic restructuring
- Slow-burn, systemic change (not a single discrete “event”)
- Emphasis on adaptation over recovery

## 3) Acceleration: COVID-19 as a field-expander

- Pandemic response measures as stress tests of society
- Cross-national comparisons and governance effects
- Focus on social cohesion, compliance, trust, inequalities

## 4) Integration into security studies

- Post-conflict/peacebuilding, humanitarian crises
- Terrorism and hybrid threats
- Resilience as a national security and societal stability concept



Let's play a Wicked game

## The impact of FIMI

1. Repeated and “leap” to the other platforms (i.e. rippling effect)
2. Public surveys (i.e. opinion polls)
3. Reflexive control (i.e. behavioural change)



**Gradual loss of  
freedom of actions  
and cognitive  
sovereignty**



What are we planning?

Societal resilience is a society's capacity to endure disruptions while preserving **core functions and social structures**.

It includes the ability to **resist**, **withstand**, and **adapt** to adverse impacts in order to minimize harm. When damage is substantial, resilience also includes the capacity to transform.

**BUT:**

Resilience implies a multi-level logic:

individual → community → society.



## How are we measuring success?

Interpretations of resilience were commonly made retrospectively by examining societal responses to damaging or threatening events.

- Resilience is most readily observed and measured during or after disruptive events.

### ONE EVENT - CONCLUSIONS

- Measurement often relies on longitudinal comparisons across time as experts assess changes in resilience as a society encounters multiple adverse events.

### TIMEFRAME – CONCLUSIONS

**In the absence of an event, there is no evidence of resilience.**



## Why planning and evaluating resilience policies is difficult

The strategic planning of resilience—and the evaluation of political interventions—faces three interrelated challenges:

- **Measurement validity:** identifying indicators that accurately capture societal resilience.
- **Intervention design:** determining the appropriate type, scale, and scope of policy action.
- **Effectiveness under uncertainty:** assessing whether interventions will perform against the parameters of anticipated security crises and mitigate plausible threats.

Resilience planning is linked to **social innovation** and efforts to strengthen resilience **factors** ahead of future shocks. This involves **intentional preventive measures** based on lessons from past crises. Yes or No?



# RESILIENCE in theory and practise

## Information (Awareness)

Information  
provided by state  
institutions

Information  
disseminated in  
the public domain

## Understanding

Ability to  
recognize  
hybrid threats

Ability to identify  
vulnerabilities that  
could lead to hybrid  
threats

## Reaction and response (resilience)

Psychological resilience

Characteristics of society

Sustainability of social  
contract

Potential for collective action  
among society members

Material readiness for extreme  
situations/crisis



## Individual-level resilience

Individual-level resilience can be conceptualised as a multidimensional construct combining affective, cognitive, behavioural, and relational capacities:

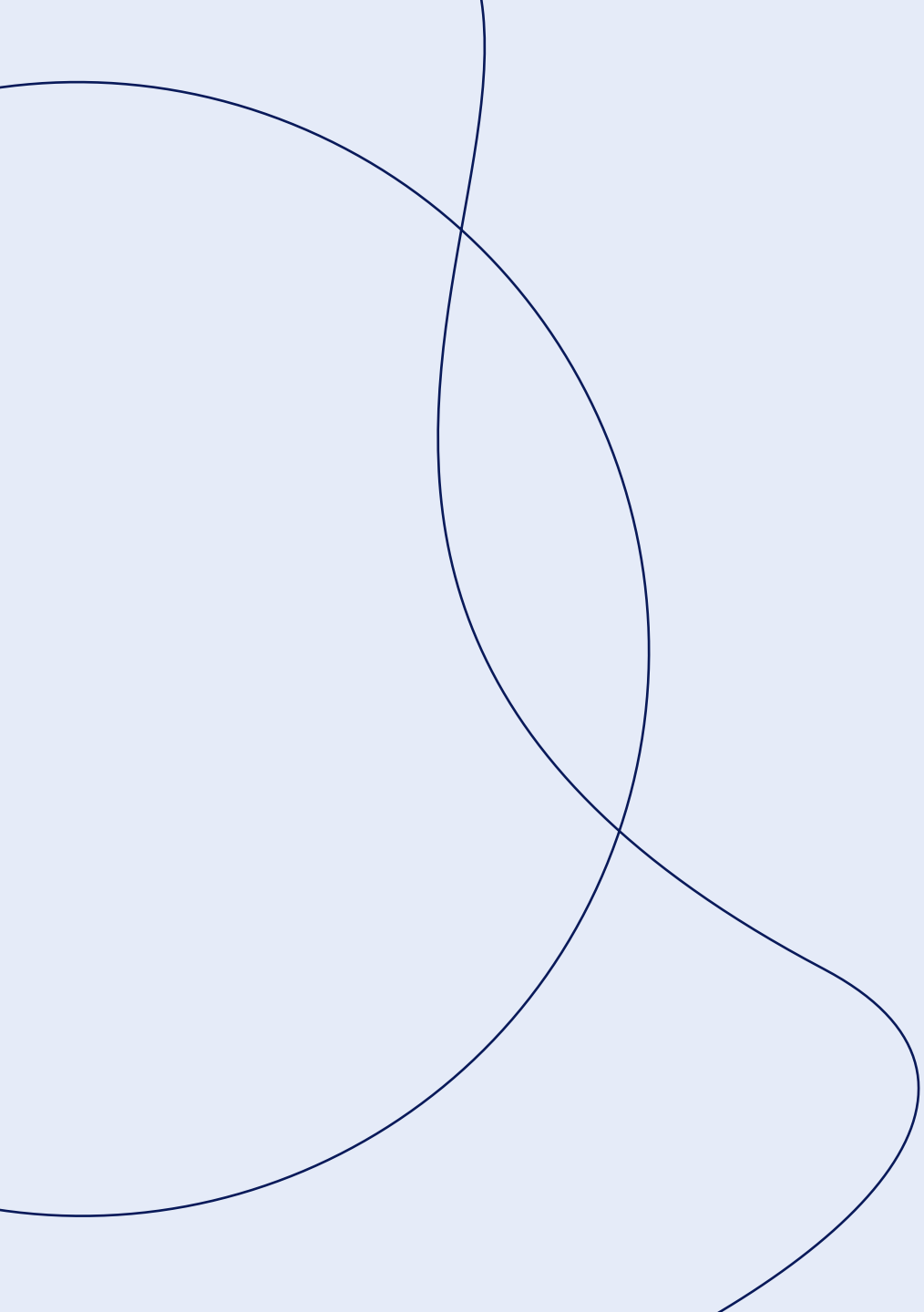
- emotions (mobilisation and regulation);
- psychological endurance;
- skills and competences;
- agency and responsibility;
- trust and relational resources,;
- and, in some contexts, spiritual supports.



## System-level resilience

- **Interpersonal trust and norms of reciprocity**
- **Collective action capacity**
  - Social capital: vertical ties (citizens–institutions) and horizontal ties (networks across groups)
  - Social cohesion: inclusion/integration and pathways for social mobility (reducing polarisation)
- **Leadership**
  - International support and anchoring
  - Political leadership and national institutional authority
  - Community leadership and local preparedness
- **Information**
  - Timely, credible, accessible, comprehensible information
  - Coherent communication that reduces uncertainty and counters manipulation
- **Learning and adaptation**
  - Community and NGO crisis experience
  - Feedback loops: lessons captured, plans updated, practices exercised





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