

# Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Implementation Report 2017–2019

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## Executive Summary: Latvia

Latvia's third action plan saw significant improvements in open data, access to budget information, and beneficial ownership transparency. Other commitments effected incremental, positive steps in areas including whistleblower protection, lobbying regulations for public officials, and governance of state-owned enterprises. Latvia's fourth action plan will cover several of the same areas from the third plan, like lobbying transparency, as well as several new areas, such as open government at the local level and anticorruption in the healthcare sector.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Latvia joined OGP in 2011. Since, Latvia has implemented three action plans. This report evaluates the implementation of Latvia's third action plan.

### General overview of action plan

Most of the commitments in Latvia's third action plan were fully or substantially completed. This was partly the result of the inclusion of small-scale but achievable activities for most commitments.

The plan resulted in noticeable improvements in the areas of open data, access to budget information, and beneficial ownership transparency. During its implementation, the number of datasets available on Latvia's open data portal increased considerably (Commitment 3) and detailed budget information is now published in interactive and reusable formats (Commitment 5). Also, detailed information on Latvian enterprises is now available for free (Commitment 11).

#### Table 1. At a glance

Participating since: 2011  
Action plan under review: Third  
Report type: Implementation  
Number of commitments: 12

#### Action plan development

Is there a multistakeholder forum: Yes  
Level of public influence: Involve  
Acted contrary to OGP process: No

#### Action plan design

Commitments relevant to OGP values: 11 (92%)  
Transformative commitments: 0  
Potentially starred: 0

#### Action plan implementation

Starred commitments: 0  
Completed commitments: 9 (75%)  
Commitments with Major DIOG\*: 2 (17%)  
Commitments with Outstanding DIOG\*: 0  
Level of public influence: Involve  
Acted contrary to OGP process: No

\*DIOG: Did it Open Government



**Table 2. Noteworthy commitments**

<b>Commitment description</b>	<b>Status at the end of implementation cycle.</b>
<p><b>3. Open data portal</b>                      Prioritize datasets for release in open data formats, increase the number of datasets on the open data portal, and expand the circle of institutions that release data.</p>	This commitment significantly increased the number of datasets published on Latvia's open data portal as well as the number of publishing public institutions. During implementation, data users and the government collaborated on choosing which datasets to open.
<p><b>5. Interactive budget tool</b>                      Develop an interactive tool to improve navigation of budget information and data.</p>	The Ministry of Finance now publishes in reusable and interactive format detailed information on the proposed and approved budget as well as the expected results. This is a significant improvement, as previously, budget information was mostly published in PDF format. This information is now available in open format for analysis.
<p><b>11. Transparency on Latvian enterprises and their beneficiary owners</b>                      Develop a new Enterprise Register (ER) with information on beneficial ownership of private enterprises and link its data to the EU Justice portal.</p>	Starting in December 2019, detailed information on Latvian enterprises that previously required a fee for viewing is now available for free on the new Enterprise Register. These improvements are significant as previously, individual searches were needed for obtaining detailed information.

### Five Key IRM Recommendations

The IRM key recommendations are prepared in the IRM Design Report. They aim to inform the development of the next action plan and guide implementation of the current action plan. In Latvia's (2017–2019) Design Report, the IRM recommended the following:

Ensure greater involvement of the Council of Memorandum during the development of the next action plan and publish feedback during consultations.
Continue improving lobbying transparency with the involvement of Parliament.
Continue strengthening whistleblower protection by improving channels and mechanisms for reporting.
Include more ambitious commitments that address transparency in the financial sector, such as beneficial ownership, and making Enterprise Register information publicly accessible.
Continue improving systems for public consultations and promote open government locally.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Zinta Miezaine** is a policy analyst and board member of the Workshop of Solutions Association. The association promotes public participation and decision making at local, national, and EU levels by joining decision makers with their constituents.

**The Open Government Partnership (OGP)** aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.



## I. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. Action plan commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Civil society and government leaders use the evaluations to reflect on their own progress and determine if actions have made an impact on people's lives.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism of OGP has partnered with Zinta Miezaïne from Workshop of Solutions Association, who carried out this evaluation. The IRM aims to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments. For a full description of the IRM's methodology please visit <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/independent-reporting-mechanism>.

This report covers the implementation of Latvia's third action plan for 2017–2019.

As reported in the IRM Design Report, Latvia continues to perform well on key OGP eligibility criteria, including public access to information and civic participation. Latvia's previous plans led to major improvements in open data, online participation, and the governance of state-owned enterprises (particularly transparency in selecting board members). The third action plan carried forward many initiatives from the second plan, including open data, e-participation, whistleblower protection, and transparency of state-owned enterprises. It also included new topics such as budget transparency, bureaucracy reduction, and beneficial ownership transparency.

During the third action plan period, Latvia passed the Whistleblower Law in October 2018, the country's first comprehensive whistleblower protection legislation, which was closely related to Commitments 6.<sup>1</sup> In connection to Commitment 7, Latvia passed the Code of Ethics in November 2018, which regulates conflicts of interest and gifts, relations with lobbyists, and professional conduct for civil servants. However, there remains room for improvement in the country's anticorruption reform efforts, particularly in financial and lobbying transparency. In February 2018, during the third action plan period, Latvia's third largest bank, ABLV Bank, was forced to shut down amid allegations of institutionalized money laundering and high-level corruption.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Latvia has yet to pass standalone legislation on lobbying or develop a lobbying register, a situation that could change under the new parliament elected in October 2018.

Latvia's fourth action plan (2020–2021) continues to address several policy areas from the third plan, including public procurement transparency, open data, lobbying transparency, and corruption prevention. New areas in the fourth action plan include promoting open government at the local level and piloting anticorruption measures in the healthcare sector.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edgars Kupčs, "Saeima passes whistleblower protection law" (ism.lv, 11 Oct. 2018), <https://eng.ism.lv/article/politics/saeima/saeima-passes-whistleblower-protection-law.a295636/>.

<sup>2</sup> Leta, "USA imposes sanctions against ABLV for money laundering schemes" (Baltic News Network, 14 Feb. 2018), <https://bnn-news.com/usa-imposes-sanctions-against-ablv-bank-for-money-laundering-schemes-180013>.

<sup>3</sup> See the Fourth National Open Government Partnership Action Plan of Latvia at: [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latvia\\_Action-Plan\\_2019-2021\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latvia_Action-Plan_2019-2021_EN.pdf).

## II. Action Plan Implementation

The IRM Implementation Report assesses “Completion” and “Did it Open Government?”. These two indicators are based on each of the commitment’s implementation progress at the end of the action plan cycle. This report does not re-visit assessments for “Verifiability,” “Relevance,” or “Potential Impact.” The former are indicators assessed in IRM Design Reports. For more details on each of the indicators please see Annex II in this report.

### 2.1 Overview

Most of the commitments in Latvia’s third action plan were fully or substantially completed. This was partly the result of the inclusion of small-scale but achievable activities for most commitments. Commitment 3 led to significant increases in the availability and usability of open data. The number of datasets on the open data portal increased significantly, as did the number of public institutions that publish datasets on the portal. The commitment also saw constructive collaboration between the government and open data users in order to determine the most useful datasets to be opened. As a result of Commitment 5, the Ministry of Finance now publishes in reusable and interactive format detailed information on the proposed and approved budget as well as the expected results. This is a major improvement, as previously, budget information was mostly published in PDF format. Additionally, under Commitment 11, Latvia’s new Enterprise Register (ER) now provides access to data on all entities registered with the ER free of charge and in open format, starting in December 2019.

Furthermore, while Commitment 10 resulted in only marginal improvements to transparency of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), newly adopted amendments to the Law on State Owned Enterprises are expected to further improve transparency in 2020. These amendments will require enterprises to disclose on their webpages information on possible conflicts of interest of board and advisory board members, particularly regarding political affiliations. Lastly, Commitment 8 notably reduced unnecessary bureaucracy for citizens and businesses through various e-services.

While a few other commitments addressed important policy areas, the scope of the planned activities in the action plan were limited. During the action plan period, Latvia adopted comprehensive whistleblower protection and approved a Code of Ethics, a legally binding document that sets out common values and main ethical principles in the public administration. The Code of Ethics also includes a section on relations between public officials and lobbyists, an issue that will be addressed further in the fourth action plan. While these two initiatives were closely tied to Commitments 6 and 7, the activities mainly involved raising awareness among public officials. Also, Commitment 4 importantly addressed lobbying transparency, but activities were limited to holding focus groups for stakeholder views on lobbying. Legislative amendments needed for a lobbying register have yet to pass.

## 2.2. Commitments

### I. Effective Public Participation

#### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Veicināt efektīvāku sabiedrības līdzdalību valsts institūciju un pašvaldību darbā un lēmumu pieņemšanas procesā, tajā skaitā – izmantojot tehnoloģijas:

- informēt par sabiedrības līdzdalības iespējām valsts institūciju un pašvaldību darbā un lēmumu pieņemšanas procesā, tajā skaitā e-vidē un izmantojot NVO kā resursu informācijas izplatīšanai;
- apkopot sabiedrības līdzdalības labās prakses piemērus un izvērtēt sabiedrības līdzdalības atbilstību starptautiski atzītiem principiem un labai praksei;
- uzlabot sabiedrības informētību un iesaisti valsts pārvaldes darbā, ieviešot vienotu tiesību aktu projektu izstrādes un saskaņošanas portālu (sasaiste ar plāna 2. apņemšanos) un valsts un pašvaldību iestāžu tīmekļvietņu vienoto platformu;
- nodrošināt sabiedrības līdzdalību publiskojamo atvērto datu kopu izvēlē. Veicināt sabiedrības informētību par publiskotām atvērto datu kopām un to izmantošanas iespējām (sasaiste ar plāna 3. apņemšanos);
- popularizēt un paplašināt valsts pārvaldes pasākumu tiešraīžu izmantošanu;
- izmantot datus, tajā skaitā atvērtos datus, un pierādījumus tiesību aktu izstrādē un izvērtēšanā un sekmēt tiesību aktu izstrādes laikā radīto datu pieejamību sabiedrībai;
- paplašināt reģionālo NVO koordinātoru funkcijas ar uzdevumu nodrošināt aktivitātes pilsoniskās izglītības un konsultācijas līdzdalības veicināšanas jomās;
- sniedzot valsts finansējumu nevalstiskā sektora attīstībai, prioritāri atbalstīt sabiedrības iesaisti un līdzdalību lēmumu pieņemšanas un demokrātiskos procesos;
- sadarbības partneriem veicināt sabiedrības līdzdalību lēmumu pieņemšanas procesā Saeimā (portāla ManaBalss.lv projekts “ParVaiPret”).

#### Milestones:

I.1. Stiprināt interešu aizstāvības kapacitāti nevalstiskajā sektorā un to NVO attīstību, kas veic sabiedrības līdzdalības funkciju valsts programmas „NVO fonds” ietvaros

I.2. Izvērtēt sabiedrības līdzdalības atbilstību OECD vadlīnijām “Labās prakses principi ieinteresēto pušu iesaistei”. Apkopot un popularizēt sabiedrības līdzdalības iespējas un labās prakses piemērus, tajā skaitā rīkojot apmācības politiku izstrādātājiem valsts un pašvaldību institūcijās

I.3. Izstrādājot sabiedrības integrācijas politikas plānu 2019.–2025. gadam, reģionālo NVO koordinātoru funkcijas paplašināt ar uzdevumu nodrošināt aktivitātes pilsoniskās izglītības un konsultācijas līdzdalības veicināšanas jomās”

Start Date: 1 July 2017

End Date: 30 June 2019

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Civic participation</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Substantial</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>
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Under this commitment, the government aimed to fund capacity-building programs for NGOs involved in advocacy work, assess opportunities for public participation, disseminate information on good practices, and train local government officials on public participation. It also committed to assign new advocacy-consulting functions to regional NGO coordinators through a policy document.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the action plan, this commitment saw substantial implementation. The NGO Fund financed two grant competitions in 2018<sup>2</sup> and 2019<sup>3</sup> and the Ministry of Culture allocated EUR 120,000 annually to support NGO projects in the country. The State Chancellery conducted two surveys among government institutions and NGOs on public participation. The survey results were presented at a conference in August 2018 and were published on the webpage of the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>4</sup>

The Ministry of Culture developed an official National Program for Integration, as well as a budget for its implementation, which the government accepted on 18 July 2018.<sup>5</sup> The Ministry also detailed a long-term program to strengthen civil society involvement, but it was not adopted within the action plan period.

Overall, this commitment marginally improved public participation in Latvia. While the budget for public participation increased (from EU 855,909 to 1,279,484), the policy document (the National Program for Integration) does not state explicitly that increased funding would go to regional coordinators. This means that NGOs will have to continuously monitor implementation of the regulations, as well as funding decisions by the Ministry of Culture, in order to ensure that the budget is allocated in accordance with policy intentions agreed upon in the action plan.

<sup>1</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 18, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Society Integration Fund, “NVO Fonds’ 2018” (accessed Jun. 2020), [https://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=414&Itemid=127&lang=lv](https://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=414&Itemid=127&lang=lv).

<sup>3</sup> Society Integration Fund, “NVO Fonds’ 2019” (accessed Jun. 2020), [https://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=422&Itemid=30&lang=lv](https://www.sif.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=422&Itemid=30&lang=lv).

<sup>4</sup> Jānis Citskovskis, “Kā veidot efektīvāku sabiedrības līdzdalību valsts un pašvaldību institūciju darbā?” [How to create more effective public participation in the work of state and local government institutions?] (Cabinet of Ministers, 29 Aug. 2018), [https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/attachments/2\\_i\\_dala\\_janis\\_citskovskis.pdf](https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/attachments/2_i_dala_janis_citskovskis.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, “Par Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas īstenošanas plānu 2019.-2020. gadam” [On the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Implementation Plan 2019-2020], Order 345 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 18 Jul. 2018), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/300483-par-nacionalas-identitates-pilsoniskas-sabiedribas-un-integracijas-politikas-istenosanas-planu-2019-2020-gadam>.

## 2. Portal for Law drafting and Public Hearings

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

- MK lēmumu pieņemšanas procesa modernizēšana, nodrošinot efektīvāku un ātrāku valsts pārvaldes TAP izstrādes, saskaņošanas, apstiprināšanas un kontroles procesu.
- Uzlabot sabiedrības līdzdalības vidi tiesību aktu jaunrades procesā, tādējādi iedzīvinot atvērtās pārvaldības principu un iniciatīvas un nodrošinot atbilstību Informācijas sabiedrības attīstības pamatnostādņem 2014.–2020. gadam.

Rezultāta rādītāji (sasniedzamā vērtība trīs gadus pēc projekta beigām):

- 165 institūcijas (organizācijas), kas izmanto koplietošanas risinājumu “Vienotā tiesību aktu projektu izstrādes, saskaņošanas, apstiprināšanas un kontroles vide”, t. sk. 115 valsts pārvaldes institūcijas un 50 NVO (t. sk. valdības sociālo un sadarbības partneru organizācijas);
- tehnisko (neautomatizēto) darbību īpatsvars TAP sagatavošanas un saskaņošanas procesā sasniegs 33 % no esošajiem 100 %;
- trīs atkalizmantošanai un koplietošanai pieejamās saturiskās datu kopas, kas tiek publicētas Latvijas Atvērto datu portālā;
- publiskā elektroniskā pakalpojuma “Tiesību aktu projektu sabiedriskā apspriešana” izmantošanas pieaugums līdz 85 % no visiem iesniegtajiem viedokļiem.

Iznākuma rādītāji:

- četri pilnveidoti darbības procesi;
- ieviests TAP portāls;
- ieviests publiskais e-pakalpojums “Tiesību aktu projektu sabiedriskā apspriešana”.

### Milestones:

2.1. Vienotā TAP izstrādes un saskaņošanas portāla izstrāde un ieviešana

2.2. Vienotā TAP izstrādes un saskaņošanas portāla lietošanai nepieciešamo normatīvo regulējumu izmaiņas

2.3. E-pakalpojuma “Tiesību aktu projektu sabiedriskā apspriešana” izstrāde un ieviešana

2.4. Darbības procesu uzlabošana

2.5. Datu kvalitātes pilnveide un datu atkalizmantošanas nodrošināšana, sagatavojot atkalizmantojamo datu kopas un publicējot tās Latvijas Atvērto datu portālā

Start Date: 1 July 2017

End Date: 31 December 2020



IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information, Civic participation</li> <li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion:</b> Limited</li> <li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Did not change</li> </ul>

Although Latvia requires consultations on documents of public interest, the public often faces challenges in tracking planned amendments, new policies, and laws. This commitment aimed to develop a new portal for legal and policy drafting, including e-participation, to help citizens proactively participate in planning policy. The portal would make legislative drafts and public comments accessible on a single online source, thus simplifying public participation.

By the end of the action plan period (July 2019), the State Chancellery had elaborated technical specifications for the portal and ensured a budget for the project. It also contracted a company to develop the portal. However, since there is no publicly available trial version of the portal, the implementation of this commitment was incomplete. There were no consultations with NGOs during implementation of this commitment, though they are scheduled following the software development.

Eventually, the project was presented to the Council of Memorandum after the third action plan period, on 25 September 2019. The government plans to finish the portal by April 2021 and involve NGOs like the Civic Alliance of Latvia and Providus in its testing.<sup>1</sup> Since the portal was not finished by the end of the action plan period, this commitment has not improved public consultations.

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<sup>1</sup> Viktors Sidorenkovs, "TAP portāls (Vienotais Tiesību Aktu Projektu izstrādes un saskaņošanas portāls)" [TAP portal (Single Portal for Drafting and Coordinating Legislation)] (Cabinet of Ministers, 25 Sept. 2019), [https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/Lidzdaliba/20190925\\_tap\\_memoranda\\_padome.pdf](https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/Lidzdaliba/20190925_tap_memoranda_padome.pdf).

### 3. Open Data Portal

#### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Izveidot efektīvu Latvijas valsts un pašvaldību iestāžu Atvērto datu portālu [www.data.gov.lv](http://www.data.gov.lv) un veicināt datu atvēršanu:

- lai veicinātu publiskās pārvaldes datu atvēršanu, izstrādāt un izskaidrot datu publicēšanas formātus, standartus, metodiku;
- iestrādāt grozījumus normatīvajos aktos, nosakot Latvijas Atvērto datu portāla darbību, ievērojot personas datu aizsardzības prasības un principus;
- identificēt pieprasījumu pēc konkrētām datu kopām, tajā skaitā:
- izvērtēt ieguvumus un iespējas, mainot datu finansēšanas modeli;
- kopā ar sadarbības partneriem apkopot prioritāri atveramo datu kopu sarakstu, kuru atvēršana ir sabiedrības interesēs.

Rezultāta rādītāji (sasniedzamā vērtība trīs gadus pēc projekta beigām):

- palielinās datu apjoms Atvērto datu portālā (ieguldījums publiskā sektora vidējā informācijas atkalizmantošanas indeksā (2015.g. – 0 punkti, trīs gadus pēc projekta beigām – 100));
- apkopots prioritāri publicējamo datu kopu saraksts un vērtīgu datu atvēršanas ieguvumi;
- īstenots vajadzību monitorings, pastāvīgi analizējot un uzraugot situāciju valsts pārvaldes iestādēs;
- apzinātas sabiedrības vajadzības pēc datiem, noskaidrots to izmantošanas apjoms un apmierinātība ar pieejamajiem datiem.

Iznākuma rādītāji:

- publicētas 120 datu kopas Atvērto datu portālā;
- izstrādāta metodika datu publicēšanai Atvērto datu portālā;
- veikts vajadzību monitorings.

#### Milestones:

3.1. Atvērto datu portāla publicēšana

3.2. Datu kopu publicēšana Atvērto datu portālā

3.3. Datu publicēšanas metodikas izstrāde

3.4. Datu publiskošanas izmaksu un ietekmes uz valsts budžetu izvērtējums (informācijas sniegšana Ministru kabinetam)”

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jun. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information, Civic participation</li> <li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Moderate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li> <li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Major</li> </ul>

Latvia's second action plan (2015–2017) led to the creation of an open data portal as well as new open data guidelines. Under this current commitment, the government aimed to prioritize new datasets for release on the portal and expand the circle of institutions that release data. It also planned to promote the available data to end users.

This commitment was fully implemented. By the end of the action plan, the open data portal included 250 new datasets from 50 institutions.<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet of Ministers accepted amendments on privacy protection to the “Rules of publishing data on Internet by public institutions.”<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD) developed a methodology for data publishing.<sup>3</sup> MEPRD consulted two professional IT associations, the Latvian Information and Communications Technology Association (LIKTA) and the Latvian Open Technologies Association (LATA), on which priority datasets should be opened. It also surveyed other stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> Based on the results, MEPRD submitted to the government a list of priority datasets, including:<sup>5</sup>

- information from the State Treasury on government spending,
- statistics from the Ministry of Interior on criminal cases (cases, demography of victims and persons needing legal defense in court),
- data from the Rural Support Service on land use and government subsidies,
- data from MEPRD on waste and planned waste disposal,
- data from the Central Election Committee on election results,
- data on car traffic on public transportation,
- data from the Center of Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology on air and water quality.<sup>6</sup>

MEPRD included in its report the costs and benefits of opening this data for free in cases where institutions previously charged fees. MEPRD also submitted to the government an Open Data Strategy for Latvia which encompasses the principle of “open by default.” To enhance usability of the portal, data enthusiasts developed innovative visualizations, such as data on parliamentarians' votes<sup>7</sup> and income and state expenditures.<sup>8</sup> Experts are developing data visualizations for roads, road accidents, waste, area codes, and meteorological data.<sup>9</sup>

Overall, this commitment has led to a major increase in the availability and usability of data. The number of datasets on the open data portal increased from 32 datasets to 250 and the number of public institutions that have published datasets increased from 12 to 50. The commitment also saw constructive collaboration between the government and open data users in determining which datasets to open. As a next step, MEPRD has prepared an analysis to restructure the financing system for data that is still not available for free.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Open data portal of the Republic of Latvia: <https://data.gov.lv/lv>.

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, “Kārtība, kādā iestādes ievieto informāciju internet” [Procedures for Institutions to Post Information on the Internet], Rule 611 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 25 Sept. 2018), 28, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301865#p28>.

<sup>3</sup> Latvian Open Data Portal, “Vadlīnijas, standarti un rīki” [Guidelines, standards and tools] (State Regional Development Agency, Aug. 2019), <https://data.gov.lv/lv/publicetajiem>.

<sup>4</sup> Latvian Open Data Portal, "Iesaki datu kopu" [Recommend a dataset] (State Regional Development Agency, accessed May 2020), <https://data.gov.lv/lv/iesaki-datu-kopu>.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development, "The Latvian Open Data Portal will be supplemented with 21 new data sets" (17 Jul. 2018), [http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/aktual/preses\\_relizes/?doc=26251](http://www.varam.gov.lv/lat/aktual/preses_relizes/?doc=26251).

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, "Tiesību aktu projekti: Informatīvais ziņojums "Par prioritāri atveramajām datu kopām, kas ir valsts iestāžu rīcībā" [Draft legislation: Information report "On priority data sets held by public authorities"] (Cabinet of Ministers, 17 Jul. 2018), <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?dateFrom=2018-01-01&dateTo=2018-12-10&text=Par+priorit%C4%81ri+atveramaj%C4%81m+datu+kop%C4%81m%2C+kas+ir+valsts+iest%C4%81%C5%BEu+r%C4%ABc%C4%ABb%C4%81&org=0&area=0&type=0>.

<sup>7</sup> Aivis Brutāns, "Balsošanas statistika: 13. Saeimas deputātu balsojumu dati līdz 2019. gada 7. Novembrim" [Voting statistics: Voting data of the 13th Saeima deputies until November 7, 2019], (Infogram, 2019), [https://infogram.com/saeima\\_13th\\_votes3-1h7j4d3jxv7v2nr?fbclid=IwAR2cAS63NOUwrju0JA17bDollaD\\_BSyjwn5R6cWgmi-17JG\\_UOPQWIPsGw](https://infogram.com/saeima_13th_votes3-1h7j4d3jxv7v2nr?fbclid=IwAR2cAS63NOUwrju0JA17bDollaD_BSyjwn5R6cWgmi-17JG_UOPQWIPsGw).

<sup>8</sup> "2019.gada valsts budžeta ieņēmumu un izdevumu sadalījums" [Distribution of state budget revenues and expenditures in 2019] (accessed May 2020), [https://aivisb.shinyapps.io/Budget\\_shiny/?fbclid=IwAR0eYe5eZnaU0ihrny69GvlsT3Sjsl5Tx6WJgv4aulVeHaUZL7sVN-rpq00](https://aivisb.shinyapps.io/Budget_shiny/?fbclid=IwAR0eYe5eZnaU0ihrny69GvlsT3Sjsl5Tx6WJgv4aulVeHaUZL7sVN-rpq00).

<sup>9</sup> Responses to an inquiry by IRM researcher on an internet forum for data enthusiasts of Latvia on Facebook @datuskolasforums, 10 January 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD), email exchange with IRM researcher, 9 Oct. 2019.

## 4. Transparency of decision-making and lobbying

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Veicināt lēmumu pieņemšanas procesa valsts institūcijās un lobēšanas atklātumu:

- identificēt galvenās ar lobēšanu un tās atklātības trūkumu saistītās problēmas likumdošanas un izpildvaras institūcijās un apzināt dažādu iesaistīto pušu redzējumu par to risinājumu;
- veicināt izpratni par atklātību lēmumu pieņemšanas procesā, lēmumu un to pamatojuma izskaidrošanu sabiedrībai, ieviešot vienotas vērtības un ētikas principus valsts pārvaldē.

### Milestone

4.1. Organizēt fokusa grupu diskusijas par lobēšanas atklātību

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jul. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Civic participation</li> <li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li> <li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li> </ul>

While decision-making in Latvia generally is transparent, ministry officials and parliamentarians do not have to reveal meetings with special interest groups. This commitment aimed to introduce a joint understanding of ethics in public administration and gather stakeholder input on lobbying.<sup>1</sup>

The Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (CPCB) fully implemented this commitment. The CPCB developed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of Parliament which were supported by the Legal Committee of the Parliament on 14 November 2017. The amendments call for:

- disclosing proposals and amendments to draft laws by parliamentarians as well as information on which interest groups or individuals were consulted during the construction of each proposal or amendment;
- publishing committee agendas, committee guests (NGOs, experts, etc.), and any documents received prior to committee meetings (letters, opinions on drafts, parliamentary proposals, etc.);
- ensuring equal opportunities to participate in consultations for all formal and informal groups, as well as and individuals, and providing information on consultations; and
- providing the Committee of Mandates and Ethics the right to initiate cases on unethical behavior which requires parliamentarians to inform their committees of potential conflicts of interest they might have regarding draft laws.

The CPCB also submitted amendments to the law “On eliminating conflicts of interest of Public Officials” which requires parliamentarians to inform their committees of potential conflicts of interest they might have regarding draft laws.<sup>2</sup> However, neither of these amendments passed by the end of the action plan period.<sup>3</sup>

Within the framework of this commitment, Delna and the Parliament Committee on Defense, Interior and Corruption Prevention organized a discussion on 10 December 2018 about the need for a lobbyist register and regulations for lobbying. Also, 13 parliamentarians signed Transparency International's International Declaration against Corruption.<sup>4</sup> The Committee voted for the concept to develop lobbying regulations in spring session of 2019. It established a working group to develop draft law. The group consists of parliamentarians from all the political factions elected in Parliament.<sup>5</sup>

This commitment marginally improved participation due to the focus groups. However, it did not lead to any changes in lobbying transparency because the proposed amendments are not yet in force. As a result, Latvia still lacks an open data lobbyist register.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the new parliament, which was elected during the implementation of the commitment (16 October 2018) plans to adopt the amendments during its term. Furthermore, the parliament committee for Defense, Internal Affairs and Corruption Prevention participated in developing the fourth action plan (2019–2021), which includes a commitment on lobbying transparency.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, it should be noted that the results achieved under Commitment 7 (Code of Ethics) in the current plan also relate to lobbying regulations but are analyzed separately with that commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 27, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (CPCB), email exchange with IRM researcher, Oct. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Parliamentarian Inese Voika, June 19, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Antonio Greco, *Open data and the fight against corruption in Latvia, Sweden and Finland: Latvia* (Delna, Open Knowledge International, Nov. 2018), 23, [https://delna.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OD4AC\\_LV\\_Final7.pdf](https://delna.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OD4AC_LV_Final7.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Government of Latvia, *Fourth National Open Government Partnership Action Plan of Latvia 2020–2021* (OGP, 11 Feb. 2020), 17–20, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latvia\\_Action-Plan\\_2019-2021\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Latvia_Action-Plan_2019-2021_EN.pdf).

## 5. Interactive Budget

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

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Sākot ar 2017. gada valsts budžetu un turpmāk ik gadu, interaktīvā veidā tiks atspoguļota informācija par gadskārtējo valsts budžetu FM tīmekļvietnē.

Aņņemšanās mērķa grupa ir sabiedrība – ikviens interesents.

Sabiedrībai būs iespēja uzskatāmā un saprotamā veidā uzzināt un izsekot, kādās jomās un kādā apmērā tiek ieguldīta nodokļu maksātāju nauda un kādi rezultāti sagaidāmi.

### Milestone:

5.1. 2018. gada valsts budžets atspoguļots interaktīvā veidā FM tīmekļvietnē 2018. gada 1. pusgads

Start Date: 1 Jan. 2018

End Date: 31 Dec. 2018

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Moderate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Major</li></ul>

This commitment aimed to increase transparency and public awareness of the state budget. To do so, the Ministry of Finance (with the Latvian anticorruption movement *Atkrāpies!*) planned to develop an interactive tool to improve navigation of budget information and data. The Ministry also planned to publish data on all state budgets to its webpage starting in 2018 onwards, and to transfer the data to an open data portal where it will be available in reusable formats.

The Ministry of Finance reports that it has fully implemented the commitment.<sup>1</sup> It has rebuilt the budget data section on its webpage,<sup>2</sup> providing information on the development of the state budget, as well as the planned financial inputs and expected policy results. The new tool includes information on preparing the budget for the next fiscal year, including its timeline, related decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers, and the final document submitted to Parliament.<sup>3</sup> The public can also follow budget news using the hashtag #Budžets2020 on Twitter.

Starting in April 2018, anyone can now review how much funding is distributed to certain policy goals and which institutions are using public resources to achieve these goals. The policy areas included in interactive infographics are health, education, social security, defense, culture and recreation, economy (e.g., transportation, agriculture), and general government functions like foreign policy.<sup>4</sup> Each section provides subsections, responsible institutions, policy goals, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. For example, the social security section includes subsections on pensions, social protection during health problems, support to families with children, social protection for the unemployed, and social protection for persons with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>

The Ministry of Finance also began publishing open budget data on the open data portal using three levels of information:

1. The planned percentage of the budget in nine areas: social security, defense, economic activities, internal affairs and security, health, general government functions, education and science, and recreation and culture;
2. Information on budget inputs in subsections in each of these areas and the sources of income for these purposes; and
3. Information on planned outcomes for each area, available as an interactive infographic in Excel format.<sup>6</sup>

Overall, this commitment resulted in major improvements toward budget transparency. The Ministry of Finance's new infographic provides NGOs, researchers, the media, and the public with access to much more detailed information on the proposed and approved budgets, as well as expected results. Before the action plan, Latvia's budget was published on the Ministry of Finance's webpage in a format that made it difficult to identify how much money was earmarked for certain policies. For example, the budget, tax amendments, and related laws were published in PDF format, limiting the information's reusability and hindering data searches. Also, the tables of figures did not give information on the planned results.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this commitment, this information is now available in open format for analysis and reuse. Statistics show that budget data have been accessed more than 200 times within six months after publishing.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Finance, email letter to IRM researcher, Oct. 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance, "Valsts budžets" [State budget] (31 Jan. 2018), [http://fm.gov.lv/lv/sadalas/valsts\\_budzets/](http://fm.gov.lv/lv/sadalas/valsts_budzets/).

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Finance, "#budžets2020" [#budget2020] (5 May 2020), [https://fm.gov.lv/lv/sadalas/valsts\\_budzets/valsts\\_budzeta\\_izstrade/budzets2020/](https://fm.gov.lv/lv/sadalas/valsts_budzets/valsts_budzeta_izstrade/budzets2020/).

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Finance, "Valsts budžets 2020" [State budget 2020] (accessed May 2020), <https://www.fm.gov.lv/valstsbudzets/>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Finance, "Finanšu ministrija: atrastas 4 datu kopas" [Ministry of Finance: 4 datasets found] (State Regional Development Agency, accessed May 2020), <https://data.gov.lv/dati/lv/organization/finansu-ministrija>.

<sup>7</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 28, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> State Regional Development Agency "Datu kopas: atrastas 8 datu kopas: budžets" [Datasets: 8 datasets found: "budget"] (accessed May 2020), <https://data.gov.lv/dati/lv/dataset?tags=bud%C5%BEets>.



## 6. Support mechanism for protection of whistleblowers

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

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Veicināt efektīva trauksmes celšanas un trauksmes cēlēju aizsardzības mehānisma ieviešanu:

- veikt informatīvus pasākumus, kas veicina izpratni par trauksmes celšanu un trauksmes cēlēju aizsardzību;
- popularizēt iespējas celt trauksmi kompetentajām iestādēm;
- veicināt efektīva vienotā trauksmes celšanas mehānisma izstrādi un ieviešanu;
- izpētīt labo praksi, kā efektīvāk nodrošināt trauksmes cēlēju aizsardzību.

### Milestones:

6.1. Biedrības “Sabiedrība par atklātību Delna” informatīva kampaņa izstāde par trauksmes celšanu

6.2. Starptautiska konference “Trauksmes celšanas veicināšana un trauksmes cēlēju aizsardzība”

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jul. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Public accountability</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>

Latvia adopted a Whistleblowing Law on 11 October 2018, the country’s first comprehensive whistleblower protection legislation.<sup>1</sup> This commitment aimed to promote best practices in this area and encourage individuals to report abuses of power in businesses and government. It entailed two activities: conducting an exhibition and information campaign on whistleblower protection and hosting an international conference on whistleblower protection.

Both activities were completed. On 9 October 2017, the State Chancellery, together with the State Administration School, Parliament of Latvia, and the Corruption Preventing and Combating Bureau organized an international conference on the promotion of whistleblowing and whistleblower protection. The conference included international experts,<sup>2</sup> as well as representatives from local governments, NGOs, and businesses.<sup>3</sup> The video recordings are available on Parliament’s webpage.<sup>4</sup> After the conference, the State Chancellery published a report<sup>5</sup> with recommendations to Parliament on how to improve the draft law, ensure anonymity of whistleblowers, and develop internal procedures for handling reported cases within government institutions.

Transparency International Latvia (Delna) and the anticorruption movement *Atkrāpies!* organized an exhibition on whistleblowing at the National Library in Riga from 25 September to 27 October 2017. It showcased nine international stories on how whistleblowing initiated positive changes. Afterward, the exhibition moved to the Ministry of Finance and the State Revenue Service, and an electronic version of the exhibition is still available on Delna’s webpage.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after the conference, in December 2017, Parliament created a working group to develop the draft law. Latvia’s Whistleblowing Law took force on 1 May 2019 during the current action plan’s

implementation. The law requires organizations to adopt internal whistleblower protections that ensure anonymity, prohibits retribution against whistleblowers, and places the burden of proof for the reported facts on the employer. The law also requires mediation by the State Chancellery. The State Chancellery established a point of contact for whistleblowing in April 2019 and developed a new website on whistleblowing.<sup>7</sup> The website contains instructions on how to define corruption and identify the responsible institution, as well as explaining how whistleblowers are protected. A key feature of this website is the list of competent authorities, their reporting channels, and the contact persons for whistleblowing.<sup>8</sup>

The awareness raising under this commitment were important for adoption of the law, since the newly elected parliament organized the committee that promoted and voted for the draft law. However, the ultimate impact of the activities on changing government practice was marginal as they were one-off events.

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament of Latvia, "Trauksmes celšanas likums" [Alert Lifting Law] no. 2018/210.2 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 11 Oct. 2018), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/302465-trauksmes-celsanas-likums>.

<sup>2</sup> Experts came from France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, the United States, and the OECD.

<sup>3</sup> Saeima Press Service, "Saeimā starptautiskā konferencē diskutē par trauksmes celšanas veicināšanu un trauksmes cēlēju aizsardzību" [The Saeima is discussing the promotion of raising awareness and the protection of whistleblowers at an international conference] (Parliament of Latvia, 9 Oct. 2017), <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/26221-saeima-starptautiska-konference-diskute-par-trauksmes-celsanas-veicinasanu-un-trauksmes-celeju-aizsardzibu>.

<sup>4</sup> See [http://cdn.tiesraides.lv/saeima.lv/20171010151949\\_saeima\\_l](http://cdn.tiesraides.lv/saeima.lv/20171010151949_saeima_l).

<sup>5</sup> Government of the Republic of Latvia, *Starptautiska konference "Ceļā uz atklātību, atbildību un labāku pārvaldību: Trauksmes celšana un cīņa pret korupciju"* [International conference "Towards openness, accountability and better governance: Raising awareness and fighting corruption"] (National Development Plan 2020 and The European Union, Oct. 2017), <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/trauksmes-celeju-konferences-zinojums-2017.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.celtrauksmi.lv/?fbclid=IwAR29VW-YuDIou\\_soVx0fi0hYlsydGLRkVVVIXzOH4zdWw74APpDjwCfzfz8ss](http://www.celtrauksmi.lv/?fbclid=IwAR29VW-YuDIou_soVx0fi0hYlsydGLRkVVVIXzOH4zdWw74APpDjwCfzfz8ss).

<sup>7</sup> Trauksmesceļš.lv, "Kas ir trauksmes celšana?" [What is an alarm?] (accessed May 2020), <https://www.trauksmesceļš.lv/>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.trauksmesceļš.lv/kur-celt-trauksmi>.

## 7. Code of Ethics

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

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Veikt mērķtiecīgus ieviešanas pasākumus, lai veicinātu izpratni par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem:

- apstiprināt vienoto valsts pārvaldes vērtību un ētikas principu kodeksu;
- izstrādāt metodisku materiālu par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem un izplatīt to valsts pārvaldē;
- organizēt visās ministrijās, piedaloties to padotības iestādēm, skaidrojošus pasākumus par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem;
- izstrādāt e-apmācību kursu par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem;
- valsts pārvaldes iestādēs veicināt nodarbināto izpratni un diskusiju par vērtībām un ētikas principiem un tiem atbilstošu rīcību.

### Milestones:

7.1. Metodisks materiāls par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem un izplatīt to valsts pārvaldē

7.2. E-apmācību kurss par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem

7.3. Skaidrojoši pasākumi par valsts pārvaldes vērtībām un ētikas principiem ministrijās ar padotības iestāžu līdzdalību

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jul. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Unclear</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>

During its second action plan (2015–2017), Latvia drafted a Code of Ethics for public sector employees to address conflicts of interest and gifts, relations with lobbyists, and professional conduct for civil servants. The government approved the Code of Ethics on 21 November 2018 during the implementation of the current, third action plan.<sup>1</sup> This commitment aimed to raise civil servants' awareness of the code through a methodology, an online course, and other educational activities.

The State Chancellery, Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (CPCB), and the State Administration School held trainings on professional ethics for 5,662 public officials and for state-owned companies. The State Administration School developed a training course on ethics and training courses were conducted at universities for around 400 students. The CPCB conducted 48 educational seminars for 2,615 students from central and local government institutions.<sup>2</sup> Overall, the communication activities of this commitment marginally improved the regulation of lobbying in Latvia.

The Code of Ethics is a publicly available document regulating interactions between government officials and lobbyists and asking for disclosure of meetings with lobbyists in the public annotations attached to draft laws and regulations. It requires government officials to equally release to interested parties any information that is disclosed to lobbyists. It also includes guidance on operating ethics committees within public institutions and offers good practices for resolving difficult situations.<sup>3</sup> Not obeying the Code of Ethics can lead to disciplinary cases for civil servants.

While the Code of Ethics is a positive step toward better lobbying regulations, Latvia still lacks a publicly available lobbying register which would significantly improve transparency (explained in Commitment 4). Proposed legislative amendments for lobbying transparency were not passed by the end of the third action plan period, but this policy area is continued in Latvia's fourth action plan (2019–2021).

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament of Latvia, "Valsts pārvaldes vērtības un ētikas pamatprincipi" [Basic values and ethics of public administration] no. 2018/235.12 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 21 Nov. 2018), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303328-valsts-parvaldes-vertibas-un-etikas-pamatprincipi>.

<sup>2</sup> CPCB, email exchange with IRM researcher, Oct. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 32, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

## 8. Towards “Zero Bureaucracy”

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

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Virzīties uz “nulles birokrātiju”:

- mazināt administratīvo slogu iekšēji valsts pārvaldē;
- mazināt administratīvo slogu uzņēmējiem un iedzīvotājiem, iesaistot sabiedrību; • izstrādāt Latvijas labāka regulējuma politiku.

### Milestones:

8.1. Veikt aptauju “Mazinām slogu kopā” (par administratīvo slogu noteiktās jomās) vismaz reizi gadā

8.2. Izvērtēt administratīvo slogu iekšēji valsts pārvaldē un sniegt priekšlikumus tā mazināšanai, kā arī uzsākt šo priekšlikumu ieviešanu

8.3. Izstrādāt Latvijas labāka regulējuma politiku, vienlaikus izvirzot mērķi “nulles birokrātija”

Start Date: 1 July 2017

End Date: 30 July 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Civic participation</li><li>• <b>Potential</b> Minor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>

In recent years, Latvia has steadily reduced bureaucratic burdens for citizens and enterprises. The State Chancellery created two interactive tools where people can submit problems from government interactions: “Let’s reduce burden together” (*Mazinām slogu kopā*)<sup>1</sup> and the mobile application “Football” (*Futbols*)<sup>2</sup> where people can give feedback on institutions that provide services.<sup>3</sup> Under this commitment, the State Chancellery aimed to conduct an annual survey on how to further reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. It also planned to analyze interinstitutional burdens in public administration to identify solutions.

Building on the “Let’s reduce burden together” platform, the State Chancellery implemented “Pass once and hit the goal” between June–September 2018 to find situations where government institutions ask for citizen information despite already possessing it. The survey received 110 cases. The State Chancellery analyzed the information and created a Change Management working group, inviting experts from NGOs and Laboratory of Innovations to solve the reported issues. Results of “Pass once” and other surveys shaped the client-oriented training programs at the State Administration School. Currently, three innovation laboratories are developing ways to solicit input from social groups during policy formation.<sup>4</sup>

This commitment reduced bureaucracy. Less documents are needed for residency permits and linking Latvia’s e-portal to e-services from other countries, which are available to Latvians. The State Revenue Service modernized its portal and processes, thus shortening the time needed for citizens and enterprises to deal with tax obligations. For example, citizens can now upload receipts from health expenditures for tax refunds. The Rural Support Service modernized its application system for government support. Applicants now receive clearer guidance when filling out applications, which

has reduced submission mistakes by six times.<sup>5</sup> The Ministry of Welfare introduced e-services for obtaining unemployed status, which improves access to government social services such as unemployment allowances and training courses. Before the action plan, people had to visit the agencies in person to register for these social services. Several agencies of the Ministry have established one-stop agencies in regions, thus lessening the bureaucratic burden for citizens who wish to inquire about multiple services.

Finally, based on the results of “One pass” and other research, the State Chancellery prepared, and the Cabinet of Ministers approved, a report on the introduction of the “zero bureaucracy” principle for drafting new legislation.<sup>6</sup> The decision states that, starting from 1 November 2019, all draft laws must be examined for bureaucratic burden. If a client is required to perform more obligations toward the state, other obligations must be reduced.

Through this commitment, the State Chancellery effectively used data gathered through public participation to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy for citizens. However, the changes to open government itself from this commitment have been marginal.

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<sup>1</sup> State Chancellery, “Piespēlē vienreiz, trāpi vienmēr!” [Pass Once, Hit Always] (Mazinām slogu kopā!, accessed 9 Nov. 2018), <https://mazaksslogs.gov.lv/slogs/sakums/>.

<sup>2</sup> State Chancellery, “Par precīzām piespēlēm valsts pārvaldē!” [For Exact Passes in Public Administration] (Mazinām Slogu Kopā, accessed 9 Nov. 2018), <https://mazaksslogs.gov.lv/futbols/sakums/>.

<sup>3</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 34, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> State Chancellery, *Latvijas Trešais Nacionālais Atvērtās Pārvaldības Rīcības Plāns* [Latvia’s Third National Action Plan Self-evaluation] (Cabinet of Ministers, Feb. 2019), [https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/Valsts\\_kanceleja/ogp\\_3\\_vidusposma\\_izvertejums.pdf](https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/Valsts_kanceleja/ogp_3_vidusposma_izvertejums.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> State Chancellery, “Informatīvais ziņojums "Par "nulles birokrātijas" pieejas ieviešanu tiesību aktu izstrādes procesā”” [Information report on the introduction of a “zero bureaucracy” approach in the legislative process] (Cabinet of Ministers, 20 Aug. 2019), <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40476165&mode=mk&date=2019-08-20>.

## 9. Openness in Public Procurement

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Uzlabot atklātumu un efektivitāti iepirkumu jomā:

- ieviest pasākumus un izvērtēt papildu pasākumu nepieciešamību, lai veicinātu atklātību un sabiedrības informētību publisko iepirkumu jomā, ņemot vērā 2017. gada izmaiņas publisko iepirkumu tiesiskajā regulējumā;
- veicināt atklātības nodrošināšanu zemsliedzīgu iepirkumos, izvērtējot iespējamus risinājumus;
- izvērtēt nepieciešamību un iespējas valsts iestāžu noslēgtos iepirkumu līgumus publicēt vienuviet un vienuviet publiskot arī līguma grozījumus. Izvērtēt līguma publikācijas kā tā spēkā stāšanās nosacījuma ieviešanu;
- veicināt VRAA Elektronisko iepirkumu sistēmā izveidoto e-pasūtījumu un e-konkursu plašāku izmantošanu. Nodrošināt informāciju par iepirkumiem atklāto datu veidā;
- izvērtēt iespējas izstrādāt valsts un pašvaldību institūciju iepirkumu efektivitātes kritērijus un metodiku, kā arī risku analīzes rīkus, lai varētu veikt noteiktu iepirkumu efektivitātes, lietderības un saimnieciskā izdevīguma izvērtēšanu. Efektivitātes kritērijus un metodiku kā pilotprojektu izmēģināt konkrētā nozarē;
- valsts institūcijām sadarbībā ar nozaru organizācijām izstrādāt un popularizēt ieteikumus saimnieciski visizdevīgākā piedāvājuma vērtēšanas kritērijiem dažādu nozaru iepirkumu organizēšanai, lai veicinātu orientāciju uz labāko cenas un kvalitātes attiecību publiskajos iepirkumos, mazinot cenas kritērija dominējošo ietekmi;
- izvērtēt nepieciešamību izstrādāt atbilstības plānošanas dokumentu iepirkumu jomā un veicināt iepirkumu regulējuma ietekmes izvērtēšanu uz tautsaimniecību.

### Milestones:

9.1. ESPD integrācija Elektronisko iepirkumu sistēmas e-konkursu apakšsistēmā 2017. gada 2. pusgads

9.2. Elektronisko iepirkumu sistēmas e-izziņu un ESPD savstarpēja integrācija 2017. gada 2. Pusgads

9.3. Saimnieciski visizdevīgākā piedāvājuma vērtēšanas kritēriju ieteikumu sagatavošana un publicēšana galvenajās iepirkumu jomās

9.4. Elektronisko iepirkumu sistēmas datu publicēšana Atvērto datu portālā 2017. gada 2. pusgads

9.5. Informatīvā ziņojuma par risinājumiem atklātības nodrošināšanai “zemsliedzīgu” iepirkumos un Elektronisko iepirkumu sistēmas funkcionalitātes nepieciešamajiem pielāgojumiem izstrāde

Start Date: 1 July 2017

End Date: 30 July 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Moderate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>

This commitment aimed to improve access to public procurement data in Latvia. Specifically, it called for:

- Integrating EU procedures into the Electronic Procurement System and integrating e-references
- Providing stronger guidelines for procurement criteria when price is not the main criterion, and
- Providing policy options for regulating procurements under the reporting threshold.

This commitment was completed. The State Regional Development Agency (SRDA) had integrated EU procedures and also e-references into the Electronic Procurement System. The SRDA had also insured that the data provided by the Procurement Monitoring Bureau (PMB) is available on Latvia's open data portal. The portal currently provides 22 datasets, including procurement from previous years and under-threshold contracts, daily renewed procurement notices (since 2013), data on service providers from low-tax or tax-free zones/countries, public services provided without procurement, and data on bidders excluded from procurement in accordance with law and other information. This data is now available for analysis. Interested citizens, journalists, and NGOs can now analyze trends in public procurement.<sup>1</sup> However, the PMB already provided most of this information in open data format on the PMB's website [iub.gov.lv](http://iub.gov.lv) (MS Excel) and on the PMB's open data service [open.iub.gov.lv](http://open.iub.gov.lv) (XML) before the implementation of the action plan. Therefore, overall, this commitment has marginally improved accessibility of information on public procurements.

The PMB worked with professional associations on guidelines for procurement in the construction sector (April 2017),<sup>2</sup> the recommendations of the Latvian Insurers' Association for the procurement of insurance services (June 2017) and in the information and communication technologies sector (November 2018).<sup>3</sup> These documents provide for more transparent criteria and processes. The government also issued guidelines on under-threshold procurements on 7 May 2019.<sup>4</sup> The amendments ask for mandatory publication on the PMB's website in cases of below threshold procurement with allocation of the EU funding. In addition, on 13 March 2019 amendments to the Public Procurement Law entered into force. The amendments establish the obligation of contracting authority to publish all procurement contracts, framework agreement or the amendments that come into effect in the buyer's profile in the Electronic Procurement System.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Latvian Open Data Portal, "23 datu kopas meklējot "iepirkumi" [23 datasets found for "purchases"] (State Regional Development Agency, accessed Jun. 2020), <https://data.gov.lv/dati/lv/dataset?q=iepirkumi&organization=iub>.

<sup>2</sup> Latvijas Būvuzņēmēju Partnerība, *Vadlīnijas Saimnieciski Izdevīgākā Piedāvājuma Noteikšanai Būvniecības kā arī Projektēt un Būvēt" Iepirkumos* [Guidelines for Determining the Most Economically advantageous Tender in Construction and "Design and Build" Procurements] (Procurement Monitoring Bureau, 27 Apr. 2017), [https://www.latvijabuvnieki.lv/content/uploads/2017/07/20170531\\_vadlinijas\\_publicesanai\\_web\\_lapa.pdf](https://www.latvijabuvnieki.lv/content/uploads/2017/07/20170531_vadlinijas_publicesanai_web_lapa.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Latvian Information and Communication Technology Association, *IKT nozares rekomendācijas saimnieciski izdevīgākā piedāvājuma vērtēšanas kritērijiem iepirkumiem IT jomā* [ICT industry recommendations the most economically advantageous bid evaluation criteria for IT procurement] (Procurement Monitoring Bureau, accessed Jun. 2020), [https://www.iub.gov.lv/sites/default/files/upload/IKT\\_rekomendacijas\\_SVP\\_vert\\_krit\\_iep\\_IT\\_20181029.pdf](https://www.iub.gov.lv/sites/default/files/upload/IKT_rekomendacijas_SVP_vert_krit_iep_IT_20181029.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Procurement Monitoring Office, *Lepirkumu Vadlīnijas Sabiedrisko Pakalpojumu Sniedzējiem* [Procurement guidelines for public service providers] (25 Nov. 2019), [https://www.iub.gov.lv/sites/default/files/upload/SPS\\_Vadlinijas\\_20191125.pdf](https://www.iub.gov.lv/sites/default/files/upload/SPS_Vadlinijas_20191125.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Information received by the IRM from the PMB during the pre-publication review period for this report.



## 10. Transparency in Public-owned companies

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Lai veicinātu atklātību un atbildību publisko kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldībā un darbībā:

- turpināt informēt sabiedrību par valsts kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldību un darbību, tajā skaitā veicinot to nefinanšu rādītāju un ilgtspējas ziņojumu publicēšanu;
- veicināt papildu informācijas sniegšanas prasību valsts kapitālsabiedrībām, kas paredzētas MK 2017. gada 20. jūnijā atbalstītajos grozījumos Publisku personu kapitālsabiedrību un kapitāla daļu pārvaldības likumā, efektīvu ieviešanu;
- sekmēt atklātību un atbildību valsts un pašvaldību kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldībā un darbībā, popularizējot labās prakses piemērus;
- uzlabot un papildināt PKC tīmekļvietni–datubāzi par valsts kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldību, tajā skaitā ar valsts kapitālsabiedrību profiliem. Izvērtēt iespēju tajā izvietot arī uzņēmumu nefinanšu datus;
- veicināt sadarbību ar valsts pārvaldes institūcijām, lai nodrošinātu apmaiņu ar nepieciešamajiem datiem;
- pilnveidot ikgadējos publiskos pārskatus, nodrošinot tajos arvien plašāku informāciju par valsts kapitālsabiedrībām un to darbu sabiedrības interesēs, kā arī ietverot tajos informatīvu kopsavilkumu par katru valsts kapitālsabiedrību;
- izvērtēt iespējas, izmantojot citu valstu labo praksi, veidot ceturkšņa pārskatus par valsts kapitālsabiedrībām, lai valsts kā īpašnieks operatīvi saņemtu datus un spētu savlaicīgi reaģēt iespējamu risku gadījumos;
- veicināt vienkāršu likumdošanā noteikto atklātības prasību publiskajām kapitālsabiedrībām ievērošanu kā valsts, tā arī pašvaldību un atvasināto personu kapitālsabiedrībās, t. sk. sniedzot konsultācijas;
- apzināt, vai pietiekamā apjomā un cik kvalitatīvi normatīvajos aktos noteiktās valsts un pašvaldību kapitālsabiedrību atklātības prasības tiek ievērotas, un popularizēt labās prakses piemērus.

### Milestones:

10.1. Valsts kapitāla daļu turētāju, kas nodrošina visu likumā noteikto informācijas publiskošanas prasību izpildi, īpatsvars no visiem valsts kapitāla daļu turētājiem (rezultāts – 100 %)

10.2. Valsts kapitālsabiedrību, kuras nodrošina visu likumā noteikto informācijas publiskošanas prasību izpildi, īpatsvars no visām valsts kapitālsabiedrībām (rezultāts – 100 %)

10.3. Valsts kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldības aktuālajiem jautājumiem veltīta konference (rezultāts – 1 konference katru gadu)

10.4. Valsts kapitālsabiedrību, kas izstrādā nefinanšu ziņojumus, skaits (> 5)

**Editorial note:** For further analysis, milestones 10.1 and 10.2 are merged as one milestone since they do not have different measures or goals.

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jul. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information</li> <li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Moderate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li> <li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li> </ul>

As part of its second action plan (2015–2017), Latvia passed the Law on State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in January 2015.<sup>1</sup> The commitment in the current action plan aimed to continue increasing SOE transparency by publishing nonfinancial data, disclosing public functions of SOEs, achieving better data exchanges, publishing quarterly reports submitted by SOEs, and creating best practices.

The Cross Sectoral Coordination Centre (CSCC) reported to the IRM researcher that it had fully implemented this commitment.<sup>2</sup> According to the CSCC, all SOEs published the information requested by the Law on State Owned Enterprises on their respective webpages. The CSCC developed an annual consolidated report on all the enterprises.<sup>3</sup> Based on the information available in these reports, the CSCC will report on developments in 2019 (to be published in 2020) with more information in accordance with the new regulations. The six largest SOEs in Latvia (out of 182 total<sup>4</sup>) published nonfinancial information on their websites (Āugstspriegumu tīkls Ltd removed the information from its website).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the CSCC organized two conferences on governance of SOEs in 2017<sup>6</sup> and in 2018.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the measures foreseen in the commitment, the government approved on 3 April 2018 several principles elaborated by the CSCC to further increase SOE transparency.<sup>8</sup> Summaries of this information (returns on capital and research plans) will be published on enterprises' webpages. Webpages will also provide company bylaws, boards and advisory boards, and information on members of boards and advisory boards (such as their professional experience, education, employment in other SOEs, and terms of their service). The CSCC published guidelines on strategic planning for SOEs, entailing these principles.<sup>9</sup> Parliament amended the Law on State Owned Enterprises to require enterprises to disclose on their webpages possible conflicts of interest of board and advisory board members, particularly regarding political parties; the amendment took force on 1 January 2020.<sup>10</sup> The CSCC will publish this information in a consolidated annual report.

At the time of this report, this commitment only marginally improved SOE transparency as only some enterprises had published nonfinancial information thus far. Also, while information is now publicly available, it is not still obtainable through a consolidated source. However, the activities carried out during the action plan signal even more disclosure of important information starting in 2020.

<sup>1</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 40, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> CSCC email exchange with IRM researcher, Oct. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, "Gada pārskats" [Annual reports] (2020), <http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/lv/datu-bazes-un-gada-parskati/gada-parskati/>.

<sup>4</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, *Publiskais pārskats par valsts kapitālsabiedrībām un valstij piederošajām kapitāla daļām* [Public overview of the state corporations and the state owned shares] (2018), [http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/images/userfiles/Parskats\\_par\\_valsts\\_kapitalsabiedribam\\_un\\_dalam\\_2018\\_gada\\_1\\_atverums.pdf](http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/images/userfiles/Parskats_par_valsts_kapitalsabiedribam_un_dalam_2018_gada_1_atverums.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> See Children Clinical University Hospital, <https://www.bkus.lv/lv/content/parskati-un-darbibas-raditaji>; Augstspriegumu tīkls Ltd., <http://www.ast.lv/lv/content/ilgtspejas-parskati>; Latvenergo, [https://www.latvenergo.lv/files/news/LE\\_ilgtspejas\\_gada\\_parskats\\_2018.pdf](https://www.latvenergo.lv/files/news/LE_ilgtspejas_gada_parskats_2018.pdf); Latvijas Dzelzeļš, <http://parskati.ldz.lv/>; Riga Airport, [http://www.riga-airport.com/uploads/files/Rix%20gadagramata\\_2018\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.riga-airport.com/uploads/files/Rix%20gadagramata_2018_FINAL.pdf); Latloto, <https://static.latloto.lv/upload/documents/latvijas-loto-ilgtspejas-parskats-2018.pdf>; Latvijas sabiedriskie mediji,

<https://ltv.lsm.lv/public/assets/userfiles/dokumenti/2019/LTV-Ilgtspeja08052019.pdf>; and Dailes teātris, [https://www.dailesteatris.lv/userfiles/files/Gada%20Parskats\\_2018\\_2.pdf](https://www.dailesteatris.lv/userfiles/files/Gada%20Parskats_2018_2.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, "Video" (10 Nov. 2017), <http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/lv/medijiem/foto-un-video/video/70-konference-sasniegtais-un-vel-daramais-publisko-kapitalsabiedribu-parvaldibas-reformas-vertejums/>.

<sup>7</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, "PKC ar kapitāla daļu turētājiem un kapitālsabiedrībām diskutē par mērķu izvirzīšanu" [PKC discusses goal setting with shareholders and corporations] (27 Nov. 2018),

<http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/lv/uznemumu-vaditajiem-un-kapitala-dalu-turetajiem/aktualitates/11642/pkc-ar-kapitala-dalu-turetajiem-un-kapitalsabiedribam-diskute-par-merku-izvirzisanu/>.

<sup>8</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, "Informatīvais ziņojums "Efektīvas kapitāla atdeves mērķu noteikšana valsts kapitālsabiedrībās"" [Information report "Determining the objectives of effective return on capital in state capital companies"] (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 15 Jun. 2017), <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40428110&mode=mk&date=2018-04-03>.

<sup>9</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, "Vadlīnijas" [Guidelines] (2020), <http://www.valstskapitals.gov.lv/lv/vadlinijas/>.

<sup>10</sup> Parliament of Latvia, "Publiskas personas kapitāla daļu un kapitālsabiedrību pārvaldības likums" [Law on Management of Capital Shares and Capital Companies of Public Persons] no. 2014/216.1 (Latvijas Vēstnesis 16 Oct. 2014), <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=269907>.

## 11. Transparency on Latvian Enterprises and their Beneficiary Owners

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Veicināt atklātumu par uzņēmumiem, kas darbojas Latvijā:

- uzlabot un dažādot UR sniegtos informācijas izsniegšanas pakalpojumus, pilnveidojot izsniegšanas kanālus, UR tīmekļvietni un tiešsaistes meklēšanas iespējas, veicinot UR reģistros veikto ierakstu izmantošanu un nodrošinot efektīvāku publisko pieejamību tiem;
- nodrošināt Komercreģistra informācijas pieejamību Eiropas e-tiesiskuma portālā;
- pilnveidot informācijas par patiesajiem labuma guvējiem reģistrāciju un efektīvu pieejamību normatīvajos aktos noteiktajā kārtībā.

### Milestones:

11.1. Ieviesta un sabiedrībai pieejama jauna UR tīmekļvietne

11.2. Uzlabot un dažādot UR sniegtos informācijas izsniegšanas pakalpojumus, pilnveidojot izsniegšanas kanālus, tiešsaistes meklēšanas iespējas UR tīmekļvietnē, veicinot UR reģistros veikto ierakstu izmantošanu un nodrošinot efektīvāku publisko pieejamību tiem

11.3. Nodrošināt Komercreģistra informācijas pieejamību Eiropas e-tiesiskuma portālā

Start Date: 1 Jul. 2017

End Date: 30 Jul. 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> No</li><li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information</li><li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Completion:</b> Complete</li><li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li></ul>

This commitment sought to improve the searchability of publicly available information on private enterprises, and in particular their beneficial ownership, by developing a new Enterprise Register (ER) website. Additionally, the commitment planned to link data on the ER to the EU Justice portal so that EU authorities can access this data.

This commitment was completed by the end of the action plan period. The new ER portal, [www.ur.gov.lv](http://www.ur.gov.lv), went public on 1 February 2018. The new portal provides free information that was either previously unavailable or required a fee.<sup>1</sup> This additional information includes commercial pledges, legal proceedings on insolvency or legal protection, limitations for commercial activities, and information on started and completed processes of liquidation of enterprises. The portal allows identification of company representatives by name, registration number, ID code, or (for foreigners) date of birth.

On 27 March 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers approved new regulations that require the ER to provide free access to additional information on mutual liabilities between enterprises.<sup>2</sup> Since 1 April 2019, information submitted to the ER regarding beneficial ownership is publicly available on the new portal. Also, in accordance to the law, starting on 29 June 2019, newly established enterprises,

associations, and foundations are now required to provide the ER with information on beneficial owners. At the end of 2019, this information was made available online for everyone.

The ER linked basic data on Latvian enterprises to the EU Justice portal. Users of the EU Justice portal can now access information on the names, legal forms, legal addresses, and registration numbers of Latvian enterprises free of charge. It plans to link other information (such as beneficial owners) after regulations on the payment system of the EU Justice portal are adopted.

While this commitment did not specify what new information would be published, its implementation improved public access to beneficial ownership information. Before the action plan, the ER provided only general information on legal entities in Latvia for free. In order to obtain more detailed information (such as beneficial ownership) one had to conduct individual searches and pay for each request. This made it difficult for users to search for beneficial owners of companies and to determine if there were links to Latvian companies in other countries.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this commitment, detailed information on Latvian enterprises that previously required a fee is now available for free on the ER. Additionally, before the action plan, there was no category for beneficial ownership on the ER portal. Information on beneficial owners of enterprises has been publicly available, free of charge, and in open data format on the new ER portal since December 2019.<sup>4</sup>

Although the amount of information provided on the ER portal has significantly increased compared to before the commitment, most of it was already accessible for a fee from commercial companies reusing data from the ER. Also, as of the end of the action plan period (July 2019), some information on the ER is still only available for a fee. Therefore, at the end of action plan, the change was marginal.

Making remaining information free of charge is the next step.<sup>5</sup> The ER wrote, and Parliament approved, amendments to the Law on Enterprise Register that will enter into force starting 1 July 2020,<sup>6</sup> and which are already partially implemented as to May 2020.<sup>7</sup> For example, the ER website provides free current and historical information on legal entity officers, shareholders, beneficial owners, interests in other companies, collateral, commercial pledges, and insolvency. It also includes information on physical persons, such as registered matrimonial property agreements and membership in companies. However, a large part of information on the ER is still only available for a fee, such as a network of registered obligations of a person (such as debts). Upon a justified request and for a fee, one can receive non-public documents, viewing the original documents in person with or without anonymization.

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<sup>1</sup> ER, email exchange with IRM researcher, Oct. 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, "Noteikumi par Latvijas Republikas Uzņēmumu reģistra informācijas izsniegšanas un citi maksas pakalpojumiem" [Regulations on Issuance of Information from the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia and Other Paid Services] 2018/64.15 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 27 Mar. 2018), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/298070-noteikumi-par-latvijas-republikas-uznemumu-registra-informacijas-izsniegšanas-un-citiem-maksas-pakalpojumiem>.

<sup>3</sup> Zinta Miezaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), 43, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Greco, *Open Data and Political Integrity in the Nordic Region* (Delna, Transparency International, Open Knowledge Sweden, 26 Nov. 2019), 57, [https://delna.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Open-Data\\_TI-LV\\_2019.pdf](https://delna.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Open-Data_TI-LV_2019.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Enterprise Register, "Uzņēmumu reģistrs vēlas atvērt reģistrus" [The business register wants to open registers] (15 Aug. 2019) <https://www.ur.gov.lv/lv/jaunumi/aktualitates/uznemumu-registrs-velas-atvert-registrus/>.

<sup>6</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, "Grozījumi likumā 'Par Latvijas Republikas Uzņēmumu reģistru'" [Amendments to the Law "On the Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia"] 2019/240.14 (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 14 Nov. 2019), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/311001-grozijumi-likuma-par-latvijas-republikas-uznemumu-registru->

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

## 12. Availability of public sector research and data

### Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

**Editorial Note:** The Latvian government did not submit an official English translation of its 2017–2019 to OGP. Therefore, the original Latvian version as it appears in the action plan can be viewed below. For the full text of this commitment, please see the Latvia 2017–2019 action plan here: <https://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atvertas-parvaldibas-plans2017.pdf>.

Veicināt datu un pētījumu izmantošanu pierādījumos balstītai lēmumu pieņemšanai un plašākā sabiedrībā:

- attīstīt tīmekļvietni–datubāzi “Pētījumu un publikāciju datubāze”, tajā skaitā veicinot valsts un pašvaldību institūciju pētījumu nosūtīšanu PKC ieviešanai tajā un popularizējot tās izmantošanu valsts pārvaldē un sabiedrībā;
- veicināt izpratni par pierādījumos balstītu lēmumu pieņemšanu valsts un pašvaldību institūcijās un sabiedrībā un tam lietderīgiem datu, informācijas un pētījumu avotiem un to izmantošanu; atbalstīt izglītojošus seminārus un apmācības valsts un pašvaldību institūcijās un pētniekiem, lai vairotu izpratni par atvērto datu principiem, pētījumu un to datu atvērta pieeja lietderīgumu un izmantošanas iespējas;
- Latvijas Universitātei sadarbībā ar PKC izvērtēt pētījumu datu uzglabāšanas jautājumu kontekstā ar zinātnes datu repozitorija izveidi;
- izveidot oficiālās statistikas portālu, kur viegli pieejamā veidā tiks nodrošināti lēmumu pieņemšanai un plašākai sabiedrībai noderīgi oficiālās statistikas dati.

### Milestones

12.1. Veicināt valsts un pašvaldību institūciju pētījumu pieejamību “Pētījumu un publikāciju datubāzē”, tajā skaitā to nosūtīšanu PKC

12.2. Izveidot jaunu oficiālās statistikas portālu

Start Date: 1 July 2017

End Date: 30 July 2019

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Verifiable:</b> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Relevant:</b> Access to information</li> <li>• <b>Potential impact:</b> Minor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion:</b> Substantial</li> <li>• <b>Did it Open Government?</b> Marginal</li> </ul>

This commitment aimed to improve the availability of the Cabinet of Ministers’ database and to develop a new portal for the Central Statistical Office (CSP).

Overall, this commitment is substantially complete. Although the government facilitated publication of government research, many reports from 2018 remain unpublished.<sup>1</sup> The government conducted several technical improvements to the current database, which now allows users to find information about planned research; previously, the database only provided information on already-conducted research. The database now provides separate links to each study and indicates policy documents which benefited from the research. However, the database still does not include raw data from the research, nor are there links to other raw data depositaries where they exist in open data format.

The government developed a new government statistics portal. The new portal is user-friendly and allows users to search information by different categories.<sup>2</sup> The Central Statistics Office (CSO) also developed a data visualization tool which offers a user-friendly interface to search data on exports and imports by country and by product category.<sup>3</sup> The CSO portal includes a calendar for users to see what information will be published in the future.

Overall, this commitment marginally improved access to government research and statistics, namely through the government's new statistics portal. Data from government research has been publicly available on the Cabinet of Ministers' database since 2003, but not all government institutions and local governments published their research to the database, despite a requirement to do so. While the searchability of this research has improved, there remains no qualitative change in accessing public sector research. Additionally, there is no requirement to publish the raw research data in open data format, which would enable reuse by other researchers.

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<sup>1</sup> Interdepartmental Coordination Center, "Pētījumu un publikāciju datu bāze" [Research and publication database] (6 Aug. 2020), <http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/>.

<sup>2</sup> Central Statistics Bureau, "Izvēlēties tabulu" [Choose a table] (accessed Jun. 2020), [http://data1.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/ekfin/ekfin\\_ikp\\_IKP\\_ikgad/?tablelist=true](http://data1.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/ekfin/ekfin_ikp_IKP_ikgad/?tablelist=true).

<sup>3</sup> Central Statistics Bureau, "Latvijas ārējā tirdzniecība" [Latvia's foreign trade] (accessed Jun. 2020), <https://eksports.csb.gov.lv/en/landing>.

### III. Multistakeholder Process

The Council of Memorandum (Latvia’s multistakeholder forum for OGP) continued to meet during implementation of the third plan. Civil society was provided opportunities to contribute to and oversee the implementation, though involvement differed for each commitment. NGOs and government institutions brought commitment-specific issues to the attention of the Council of Memorandum.

#### 3.1 Multistakeholder process throughout action plan implementation

In 2017, OGP adopted the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards intended to support participation and co-creation by civil society at all stages of the OGP cycle. All OGP-participating countries are expected to meet these standards. The standards aim to raise ambition and quality of participation during development, implementation, and review of OGP action plans.

OGP’s Articles of Governance also establish participation and co-creation requirements a country or entity must meet in their action plan development and implementation to act according to OGP process. Latvia **did not** act contrary to the OGP process.<sup>1</sup>

Please see Annex I for an overview of Latvia’s performance implementing the Co-Creation and Participation Standards throughout the action plan implementation.

**Table 3.2: Level of Public Influence**

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) “Spectrum of Participation” to apply to OGP.<sup>2</sup> This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborate.”

Level of public influence		During development of action plan	During implementation of action plan
<b>Empower</b>	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		
<b>Collaborate</b>	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.		
<b>Involve</b>	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.	✓	✓
<b>Consult</b>	The public could give inputs.		
<b>Inform</b>	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.		
<b>No Consultation</b>	No consultation		

Public consultation during implementation was decentralized. Each implementing ministry involved stakeholders in accordance with standards set by law. The IRM researcher surveyed NGOs who partnered with the government in implementing commitments. Most respondents viewed the process positively. Some NGOs reported they were involved directly with implementing commitments, such as Delna which organized the exhibition on whistleblower protection under Commitment 6. However, some NGOs indicated that they had to proactively request progress information from the government.

Several issues regarding effective public participation were debated at the Council of Memorandum, Latvia’s multistakeholder forum. Although the forum meets monthly, only a few issues pertaining to the third action plan were ever discussed, depending on the priorities of the participating NGOs.



Discussions primarily focused on broader policy issues (i.e., the NGO fund) as opposed to the implementation of specific OGP commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> Acting Contrary to Process - Country did not meet (1) “involve” during the development or “inform” during implementation of the NAP (2) government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.

<sup>2</sup> IAP2, “IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum” (2014),

[http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations\\_course/IAP2\\_P2\\_Spectrum\\_FINAL.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf).

## VI. Methodology and Sources

The IRM reports are written by national researchers in each OGP-participating country. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual<sup>1</sup> and in Latvia's Design Report (2017–2019).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OGP, *IRM Procedures Manual*, (16 Sept. 2017), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.

<sup>2</sup> Zinta Miežaine, *Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Latvia Design Report 2017–2019* (OGP, 2019), [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia\\_Design-Report\\_2017-2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Latvia_Design-Report_2017-2019_EN.pdf).

## Annex I. Overview of Latvia's performance throughout action plan implementation

Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

<b>Multistakeholder Forum</b>	During Development	During Implementation
<b>1a. Forum established: There is a forum to oversee the OGP process</b>	Green	Green
1b. Regularity: The forum meets at least every quarter, in person or remotely	Green	Yellow
1c. Collaborative mandate development: Members of the forum jointly develop its remit, membership and governance structure	Green	Yellow
1d. Mandate public: Information on the forum's remit, membership and governance structure is available on the OGP website/page	Green	Yellow
<b>2a. Multistakeholder: The forum includes both governmental and nongovernment representatives</b>	Green	Green
2b. Parity: The forum includes an even balance of governmental and nongovernmental representatives	Green	Green
<b>2c. Transparent selection: Nongovernmental members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process.</b>	Green	Green
2d. High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government	Green	Green
<b>3d. Openness: The forum accepts inputs and representation on the action plan process from any civil society or other stakeholders outside the forum</b>	Green	Green
3e. Remote participation: There are opportunities for remote participation in at least some meetings and events	Green	Green
3f. Minutes: The OGP forum proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions, activities and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders	Yellow	Green

Key:

Green= Meets standard

Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)

Red= No evidence of action

<b>Action Plan Implementation</b>	
4a. Process transparency: There is a national OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the national OGP process is proactively published.	Yellow
4b. Documentation in advance: The forum shares information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process.	Red
4c. Awareness-raising: The forum conducts outreach and awareness-raising activities with relevant stakeholders to inform them of the OGP process.	Red
4d. Communication channels: The government facilitates direct communication with stakeholders to respond to action plan process questions, particularly during times of intense OGP activity.	Yellow
<b>4e. Reasoned response: The multistakeholder forum publishes its reasoning behind decisions and responds to major categories of public comment.</b>	Yellow
<b>5a. Repository: Government collects and publishes a document repository on the national OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the national OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, National Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g., links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications)</b>	Yellow

**Editorial note:** If a country “meets” the six standards in bold, the IRM will recognize the country’s process as a Starred Process.

## Annex II. IRM Indicators

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.<sup>1</sup> A summary of key indicators the IRM assesses is below:

- **Verifiability:**
  - Not specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, do the objectives stated and actions proposed lack sufficient clarity and specificity for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
  - Specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, are the objectives stated and actions proposed sufficiently clear and specific to allow for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
- **Relevance:** This variable evaluates the commitment’s relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance are:
  - Access to Information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
  - Civic Participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions or policies?
  - Public Accountability: Will the government create or improve public facing opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions?
  - Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability: Will technological innovation be used in conjunction with one of the other three OGP values to advance either transparency or accountability?
- **Potential impact:** This variable assesses the *potential impact* of the commitment, if completed as written. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
  - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
  - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
  - Assess the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.
- **Completion:** This variable assesses the commitment’s implementation and progress. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report*.
- **Did It Open Government?:** This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice, in areas relevant to OGP values, has changed as a result of the commitment’s implementation. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report*.

### Results-oriented commitments?

A potentially starred commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment design is one that clearly describes the:

1. **Problem:** What is the economic, social, political, or environmental problem rather than describing an administrative issue or tool (e.g., ‘misallocation of welfare funds’ is more helpful than ‘lacking a website’)?
2. **Status quo:** What is the status quo of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan (e.g., “26% of judicial corruption complaints are not processed currently.”)?
3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what is the targeted behavior change that is expected from the commitment’s implementation (e.g., “Doubling

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response rates to information requests” is a stronger goal than “publishing a protocol for response.”)?

### **Starred commitments**

One measure, the “starred commitment” (★), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries/entities. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- The commitment’s design should be **Verifiable, Relevant** to OGP values, and have **Transformative** potential impact. As assessed in the Design Report.
- The commitment’s implementation must be assessed by the IRM Implementation Report as **Substantial** or **Complete**.

This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report*.

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<sup>1</sup> OGP, *IRM Procedures Manual*, (16 Sept. 2017), <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>.