



Fifth National Open Government Partnership Action Plan of Latvia 2022–2025

Information on Four-Year Refresh (Annex to the Plan)

1. On the need to update the plan

The Fifth National Open Government Partnership Action Plan of Latvia 2022–2025 (hereinafter – the Plan) is a policy planning document, the development of which is based on Latvia's international commitments arising from its membership of the *Open Government Partnership* (OGP).

The Plan includes Latvia's six commitments:

1. Strengthening public participation framework and raising awareness of effective participatory processes,
2. Promoting opportunities for public participation, including the involvement of youth and NGOs,
3. Strengthening the representation of society and dialogue with society in decision-making processes in every sector,
4. Understandable and clear communication between the State and public, explaining the decisions and complex issues by highlighting the benefits,
5. Promotion of data accessibility and clarity, increasing the opportunities for use of data by the public and promoting data-based solutions,
6. Promotion of openness and public involvement and participation in local governments.

According to the OGP National Handbook,¹ Member States can develop two-year or four-year National Action Plans. Latvia chose a four-year action plan. In this case, it is mandatory to go through a process of updating the plan (*mandatory refresh period*) in the middle of the implementation of the plan.

The essence of the update process is to assess the plan against current realities and needs and, if necessary:

- revise commitments (e.g. by adding new actions or performance indicators); or
- include new commitments.

Either the refreshed action plan or an annex to the action plan (document about the update) must be submitted to the OGP Support Unit within six months of the two-year mark.

At the same time, the Latvian legal framework provides for the possibility to update such policy plans only if the circumstances that gave rise to the inclusion of specific activities in the planning document have changed significantly and new policy objectives or lines of action need to be identified. A policy planning document shall be updated following the same procedure,

¹ The OGP National Handbook - Rules and Guidance for Participants (2024), section 2.3. "Four-Year Rules Refresh". www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-national-handbook-rules-and-guidance-for-participants-2024

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in which it was approved. Moreover, an initial impact assessment shall be carried out in relation to the changes envisaged.²

The Plan was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers (hereinafter - the Cabinet) by Order No 78 of 10 February 2022. The development took place over a long period of time and involved a number of public participation events, a process of coordination and consideration by the Cabinet.

In conclusion, in the case of Latvia, amending the Plan would not be an appropriate solution - it cannot be assumed that circumstances have changed significantly and that new, substantially different courses of action from the existing ones would be required. Also, the drafting of amendments to the Plan would entail significant resources from the institutions involved. It would therefore be neither in line with current practice nor proportionate.

In view of meeting the OGP requirements, following the State Chancellery's proposal, the Plan is updated as follows: supplemented with three measures, and attention is drawn to the full implementation of the measures already included in the Plan.

2. Plan updates and next steps

As discussed at the Supervisory Board meeting on 30 April 2024, three measures are added to the Plan:

- 1) organising **training on high-value datasets** (Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development³,
- 2) Developing a **new open data strategy** (Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development),
- 3) availability of **comparative socio-economic data on local governments** (Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development and the Public Policy Centre PROVIDUS).

According to the Plan's mid-term assessment⁴, a number of actions have not yet started to be implemented or there is insufficient information about the implementation. Hence, in the remaining period (until the end of 2025), particular attention should be paid to the implementation of the following activities in the Plan:

- A framework document on public participation and civic dialogue,
- Training on "Effective and meaningful public participation",
- Digital platform for public participation (developing digital participation opportunities),
- informing citizens on the implementation of their proposals (effective and modern public participation approaches for informed and quality decision-making in every sector: informing citizens on the implementation of their proposals),
- creation of a deliberative discussion model, the initial discussions and further development of deliberative forms in Latvia,
- Compilation and dissemination of methodological materials helping to improve communication with the public,
- Sectoral Open Governance Dialogues – "Understanding Complex Issues: Understand the benefits for you and get involved!" (a campaign planned in 2025),
- exchange of experiences among local governments on public participation,

² Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 737 of 2 December 2014 "Regulations on the elaboration and impact assessment of development planning documents" (paras 37, 45 and 47).

³ From 1 July 2024, previously Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

⁴ Open Government Action Plan 2022-2025: Mid-term Report, State Chancellery, 2024.

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- Commitment 6 "Promote openness and citizen involvement and participation in local government" (overall need to gain better impression about implementation of this commitment).

3. Consultation on additions to the Plan

In accordance with the OGP Handbook, this document was made available for a **two-week public consultation** from 2-16 July 2024. The document was publicly available at [Atvērtā pārvaldība | Ministru kabinets \(mk.gov.lv\)](https://atverta.parvaldiba.gov.lv). The public was given the opportunity to send comments and suggestions. Comments could be sent to inese.kuske@mk.gov.lv and zane.legzdina@mk.gov.lv until **16 July 2024**. The document was also sent to the Plan's Supervisory Board for comments and suggestions.

During the consultation and agreement process, proposals were submitted by:

- Ministry of Finance (the Treasury); and
- Latvian Youth Council.

Proposals:

Author	Substance of the proposals	How the proposals have been taken into account
Ministry of Finance (the Treasury)	<p>The Treasury asks to clarify in the Mid-term assessment information on specific datasets the Treasury publishes on the state budget, as well as on the local government budget execution.</p> <p>The Treasury requests that the following be deleted from this document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- information on the use of municipal budget data and public access to national budget data.	<p>The State Chancellery took note of the information provided by the Treasury.</p> <p>It can be noted that the Treasury regularly publishes data on the state and local government budget execution on the Internet, using three websites: Open Data Portal, the Treasury's website and RAIM.gov.lv.</p> <p>The information in the Mid-term assessment has been updated accordingly.</p> <p>Given that extensive and regular information is already available on the implementation of the central government budget and on local government budgets and that information has not been collected on exactly what additional data should be published, given this creates administrative burden and personal data concerns, we agree not to highlight this measure as one where particular attention should be paid during the remainder of the Plan.</p> <p>The sentence "information on the use of municipal budget data and public access to national budget data" has been deleted from this document.</p>
Latvian Youth	3 suggestions in relation to actions 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5	

<p>Council (Katrīna Leitāne)</p>	<p>1) Communication on participation opportunities in the work of public administration (Action 2.1.)</p> <p>It would be valuable to continue the Dialogues⁵, but targeting young people in cooperation with youth councils, school councils, youth centres, youth organisations etc., because I think the very foundation is trust, without which engagement/participation is very difficult.</p> <p>2) Youth skills for participation in decision-making in Latvia and at European level (Action 2.4.)</p> <p>The European Youth Dialogue should be mentioned, and I would also recommend the Ambassador Schools programme of the European Parliament Office in Latvia⁶. The Summary of the 2023 Dialogues (https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/media/17583/download?attachment) states: "Firstly, as young people pointed out in the conversations, their views are not heard or are even ignored: <i>"I took part in the Youth Congress. Young people worked well together; we took important decisions. They were passed on to the Parliament. But it is clear that nothing we say is happening, there is no sign that the proposals of the Youth Parliament are being taken into account."</i> Secondly, the motivation of young people to get involved in politics is low but, as other participants pointed out, <i>"if there are no young people, then the same [old] people change "colour" and have their say again"</i>. It is particularly important to ensure feedback from the Youth Parliament, as well as to ensure that proposals are examined, for example in the Memorandum Council, within the</p>	<p>1) Proposal is taken into account. The Dialogues will continue in 2024 and young people are one of the target groups. The concrete suggestions will be incorporated into the process.</p> <p>2) The proposal has been assessed and is scheduled to be further discussed by the Oversight Council in October 2024.</p> <p>3) The proposal has been assessed and is scheduled to be further discussed by the Oversight Council in October 2024.</p> <p>The forms of participation set out in the Local Government Law⁷ are promoted under Area 3 of the Plan "Openness of local self-governments and opportunities for citizens to participate in the work of their local self-government". We will draw the attention of the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments to the need to inform young people from the age of 16 about the new opportunities for participation opened by the Local Government Law.</p>
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⁵ Dialogues on Trust in 2023. [Dialoga apli par uzticēšanos | Ministru kabinets \(mk.gov.lv\)](https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/media/17583/download?attachment)

⁶ [Piesakies Eiropas Parlamenta Vēstnieku skolu programmai! | EP Birojs Rīgā | Eiropas Parlaments \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu)

⁷ Local Government Law (2022). <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/336956-local-government-law>

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	<p>State Chancellery's work or an equivalent framework. Progress on the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities needs to be clarified. Piloting Youth Test can be added.</p> <p>3) Introducing participatory budgeting principles in schools (Action 2.5) Other participatory tools available to young people from the age of 16, as set out in the Law on Local Governments, could be added to 2.5.</p>	
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4. Monitoring the implementation of additions to the plan

In 2026, the State Chancellery will include information on the implementation of the additional measures in the final report on the implementation of the Plan. This will be available on the Cabinet's website <https://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/atverta-parvaldiba>.