

WSIS+10: OVERALL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WSIS OUTCOMES WSIS 10 Year Country Report by LATVIA

Section I: Executive summary

Introduction

WSIS as a platform has had an important role for fostering changes and promoting common goals for building inclusive and fundamental knowledge society worldwide and in the context of national level since 2003 in Latvia.

Latvia during 2006 – 2013 planning period achieved the following in the *“Information Society Development Guidelines for 2006 – 2010”* set activities and operational performance indicators:

Achieved political outcomes and performance indicators

Performance indicator	Planned indicator	The actual indicator ¹			
	2005	2009	2013	Latvian indicators	EU average indicators
Proportion of individuals (age of 16-74) regularly using Internet	36%	50%	70%	73% (2012)	74% (2012)
Including rural areas	15%	40%	60%	66% (2011)	<i>Not measured</i>
Proportion of households with a broadband Internet access	15%	40%	59%	67% (2012)	73% (2012)
Proportion of employees using computers and Internet on a daily basis ²	16%	35%	55%	73% (2012)	74% (2012)
ICT sector proportion in GDP	6%	7,5%	9%	3,3% (2011)	5%
Proportion of companies engaged in e-government transactions	3%	20%	40%	72% (2010)	76% (2010)
Proportion of individuals who use distance learning services	8,7%	17%	25%	38% (2010)	34%
Proportion of population engaged in e-health transactions ³	0,1%	1%	5%	38% (2011)	38% (2011)
The turnover of sales on the Internet	0,46%	8%	15%	7% (2012)	15%
Proportion of population who shop online	3%	20%	35%	18% (2011)	35% (2011)

¹ Eurostat database

² Not measured, replaced by Proportion of individuals (aged 16-74) who regularly use the Internet.

³ Not measured, replaced by a pointer "People who are looking for online health information"

According to the core list of ICT indicators below have shown available statistics of Latvia in the following areas:

Indicator	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Infrastructure and access								
Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants ⁴	32.82	N/A ⁵	N/A	26.59	N/A	24.9	24.32	N/A
Mobile cellular subscribers per 100 inhabitants	84.02	N/A	N/A	109.05	N/A	111.36	112.11	N/A
Computers per 100 inhabitants ⁶	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	70	N/A
Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants	46	N/A	N/A	66.84	N/A	71.68	74	N/A
Broadband Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants ⁷	2.73	N/A	N/A	20.69	N/A	22.06	23.35	N/A
International Internet bandwidth per inhabitant ⁸	1.208.4 bits/pe rs.	3.536.8 bits/pe rs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of population covered by mobile cellular telephony	97,17	97,17	101,21	98,9	102.4	N/A	N/A	N/A
ICT access and use by households and individuals⁹								
Proportion of households with a mobile cellular telephone	16.3	29.7	19.9	19.6	16	N/A	N/A	N/A
Proportion of households with a computer	32.3	49.2	56.7	60.1	62.8	64.3	69.5	71.7
Proportion of individuals who used a computer (from any location) in the last 12 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	70.4	71.1
Proportion of households with Internet access at home	30.5	50.5	52.8	58.0	59.8	63.6	68.7	71.6
Proportion of individuals who used the Internet (from any location) in the last 12 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	70.3	71.2
Location of individual use of the Internet in the last 12 months:								
(a) at home;	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	92.7
(b) at work;	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	34.4
(c) Place of education;	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	11.6
(g) others							N/A	28.8

⁴ <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁵ N/A – Data not available

⁶ <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>

⁸ <https://timetric.com/index/intrnt-intrnt-bndwdth-bts-pr-prsn-latvia-wb/>

⁹ <http://www.csb.gov.lv/statistikas-temas/informacijas-tehnologijas-datubaze-30129.html>

	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
• Getting information:								
<i>(a) about goods or services;</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	63.2	52.2
<i>(b) related to health or health services;</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	37.3
<i>(c) from government organizations/public authorities via websites or email; and</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	45.7	34.3
• Communicating	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	54.4
• Purchasing or ordering goods or services	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.7	21.3
• Internet banking	-	-	-	-	-	-	47.1	54.9
• Education or learning activities	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	30.9
• Dealing with government organizations/public authorities	-	-	-	-	-	-	16.5	12.6
• Leisure activities:	-	-	-	-	-	-	38.6	N/A
<i>reading/downloading electronic books, newspapers or magazines;</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	64.3	63.8
ICT access and use by enterprises								
Proportion of businesses using computers	N/A	N/A	N/A	93.5	95.1	95.4	95.4	97.4
Proportion of employees using computers	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.7	28.7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Proportion of businesses using the Internet	N/A	N/A	N/A	86.8	90.6	92.2	90.7	94.2
Proportion of employees using the Internet	N/A	N/A	N/A	23.3	25.6	38.1	39.0	40.5
Proportion of businesses with a Web presence	N/A	N/A	N/A	42.1	48.4	53.4	53.0	55.7
Proportion of businesses with an intranet	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet	N/A	N/A	16.3	17.2	23.6	23.1	21.6	N/A
Getting information:								
<i>(a) about goods or services</i>							N/A	N/A
<i>(b) from government organizations/public authorities via websites or e-mail</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	75.5	89.2	88.6	90.1	N/A
Dealing with government organizations/public	N/A	N/A	62.3	72.4	89.0	88.6	92.5	N/A

authorities	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
ICT sector and trade in ICT goods¹⁰								
Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector	N/A	N/A	189000	17360	17316	18337	20725	N/A
Value added in the ICT sector (as a percentage of total business sector value added) – milj.EURO	N/A	N/A	2625	1820	2067	2275	2773	N/A
ICT goods imports as a percentage of total imports	N/A	N/A	633.0	369.0	527.6	584.2	736.2	N/A
ICT goods exports as a percentage of total export	N/A	N/A	287.7	287.3	384.7	549.2	604.2	N/A
ICT in education								
Learners-to-computer ratio	16	14	12	11	9	9	8	6
Proportion of schools with Internet access	96.3	97	99.6	99.7	100	99.5	100	100

**The missing indicators are not measured*

Section II: WSIS and MDG Implementation at National Level, including national ICT strategies towards and beyond 2015

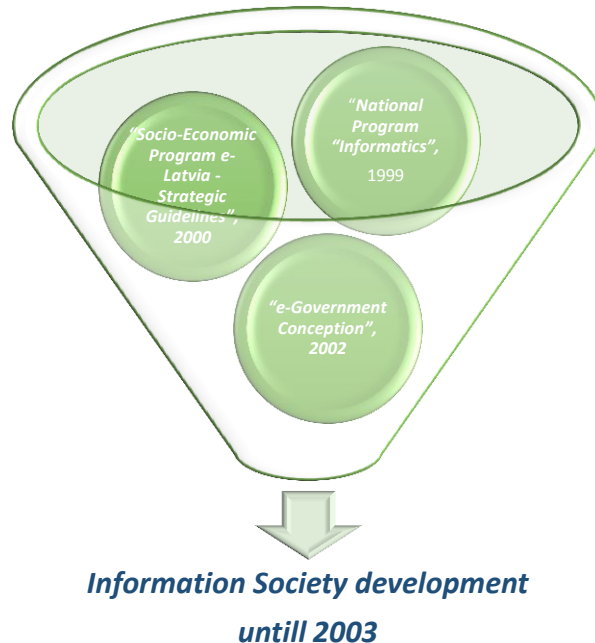
In September 2000 heads of State and Government, including the President of Latvia, signed the “United Nations Millennium Declaration”, recognizing their collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. Based on the “Millennium Declaration”, eight Interconnected **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** were formulated:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Latvia has elaborated 21 target and a number of indicators to apply the globally declared goals to the situation of Latvia.

¹⁰ <http://www.csb.gov.lv/statistikas-temas/informacijas-tehnologijas-datubaze-30129.html>

Coordinated development of information society in Latvia begins in 1999, when the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the **National Program "Informatics"** which covered the period 1999-2005.



Since **2003**, **Latvia** has participated in the WSIS processes and has developed and implemented principles approved during the WSIS. It has made a significant impulse for solving challenges and promoting objectives in a range of the policy documents and programs of Information Society in Latvia:

- ✓ The Government adopts the **"Latvian e-Government Development Program 2005-2009"** on 29 September 2005

- ✓ In October 2005, the Government adopts **"The Concept of the Electronic Procurement System"**, aimed at the completion of an e-Enabled public procurement system streamlining public purchases, reducing bureaucracy and the risk of corruption.

- ✓ In June 2005, the Government signs an agreement for the introduction of **qualified digital signatures**.

- ✓ In 2006, the Cabinet of Ministers adopts the **"Information Society Development Guidelines for 2006 – 2013"**. They were aimed at complying with the EU Lisbon Strategy objectives and the European initiative i2010. This document targeted the achievement of a "vision", according to which all Latvian citizens and businesses are able to fully access and use ICT-based information resources, as well as public services that are tailored to their needs. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the State administration will become increasingly efficient, while dramatically cutting its administrative costs.

- ✓ **The "National Development Plan for 2007-2011"** aimed to facilitate a balanced and sustainable development of Latvia, as well as to ensure an increase in its competitiveness. Development of ICT infrastructure and the efficient use of opportunities enabled by ICT facilitate the social and economic growth and competitiveness of Latvian regions, as well as raise the living standards.

- ✓ The **"e-Government Development Plan for 2010-2013"** was adopted as a short-term development planning document primarily based on the "National Development Plan 2007-2013". It introduces 192 actions which aim to boost e-government, to strengthen state policy and to complement regulatory actions in a wide range of domains (e.g. e-Skills, broadband access, e-Identification, e-Procurement, e-Invoice, e-Justice, e-Health, mobility and social security) by taking into account the priorities of the EU Ministerial Declaration on e-Government policy and the EU Digital Agenda for Europe.

- ✓ The **"National Development plan for 2014-2020"** was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on

20th December, 2012 which constitutes the main instrument for medium-term development planning and is a component of the Latvia 2030 sustainable development strategy. The Plan pinpoints activities in the public ICT sector relating to digital content, e-services, infrastructure and e-skills.

✓ In 15th January 2013 by the Cabinet of Ministers the “**Concept of Public ICT management organizational model**” was approved. The implementation of the concept will frame public ICT strategies, principles and scenarios that will ensure strategic coordination of public ICT development and maintained through partly centralized management: competence and responsibility in ICT management will be shared between the national and sectorial levels. To achieve the aim of optimal ICT management, both public and private sector resources will be used, providing effective cooperation focusing on benefits for the public and creation and maintained of convenient and user –friendly e-government solutions.

✓ The main aims of the WSIS has been integrated in the “**Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014 -2020**” (*Guidelines*) adopted in October, 2013 and was elaborated to continue development of existing policies and to determine the priorities in the area of *ICT*.

Section III: Financial mechanisms in place for meeting the challenges of ICT for development

Implementation of the Guidelines and ICT development in general is planned from the State and Local Authority’s budget as well as with attracting the EU Structural Funds (*ESF*) and other foreign financial instruments, Non-Governmental organizations (*NGO*) and private funding.

Section IV: Reporting on Each Action line C1 to C11:

C1. The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs

The availability of information regarding regulatory documents and Government's decisions plays an important role in ensuring the freedom and access to information.

✓ **The sittings of the Cabinet of Ministers** have been open since 2000, and NGOs have the opportunity to participate and express their opinions. Since 2013, the Government **sittings** have been **broadcasted live** on the Internet.

✓ All draft regulatory documents submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers, including accompanying documents (*e.g. impact assessments etc.*), as well as viewpoints (*opinions*) received on these documents are also available on the Internet.

✓ All public administration institutions accept electronically signed documents for more than 10 years now.

✓ Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Cabinet of Ministers, a draft legal act can only be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers after consultations with the relevant NGOs, except when there is a reasonable explanation provided why such consultations are not conducted. Amendments to legislation were made in 2013 to stipulate that procedures for civil society engagement should be applied not only when producing development planning documents but also in drafting legislation. Moreover, all legislation and development planning documents will have to be published on the website of the relevant institution, thus practically introducing the so-called discussion papers – publicizing the

concepts of development planning documents and draft legislation at least 2 weeks before the announcement prior to their promulgation at the State Secretaries' Meeting.

✓ Specific consultative mechanisms have been developed in order to ensure the involvement of Government's social partners and NGOs, as well as timely and effective informing of the civil society and social partners on the draft regulatory documents, which are in the process of drafting.

To this end, the **National Tripartite Cooperation Council (NTCC)** was formed in on July 12, 1996. The NTCC acts independently in conformity with laws and regulations, International Labor Organization's (ILO) conventions ratified in the Republic of Latvia and the by-law of the NTCC. NTCC's membership is based on parity by representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers (*Government*), the representatives of trade unions and employers' organizations. The main task of the NTCC is to ensure and promote cooperation of the Government, employers' organizations and employees' organizations (*trade unions*) (*parties*) at national level with the objective to ensure such endorsed solutions to the respective issues of social and economic development that meet needs of the society and the state by elaborating and implementing strategy, programs and laws and regulations on social and economic issues which would guarantee social stability and increase co-responsibility of social partners for the adopted resolutions and their implementation. Over the past 10 years, the structure of the NTCC has been supplemented with the following sub-councils in the ministries: the Social Security Sub-council, the Health Care Sector Sub-council, the Transport, Communications and Information Technologies Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council, the Environmental Protection Affairs Sub-council; and Regional Development Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council; the Labor Affairs Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council; the Vocational Education and Employment Tripartite Cooperation Sub-council, the Social Security Sub-council. All minutes of the NTCC and sub-councils will have to be published on the website of the relevant institution.

✓ Other NGOs are involved through an innovative mechanism – the Council for Implementation of the **Cooperation Memorandum (Memorandum)** between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers. The Cooperation Memorandum has been developed with the aim of facilitating the operation of an efficient public administration system that meets the interests of the society by ensuring involvement of the civil society in the decision making process. The memorandum was signed on June 15, 2005. The aim of the Council is to promote the implementation of the objectives and principles of the Cooperation Memorandum between Non-governmental Organizations and the Cabinet of Ministers in public administration, and to facilitate the operation of an efficient public administration system that meets the interests of the society by ensuring involvement of the civil society in the decision-making process at all levels and stages in public administration, thus promoting development of the civil society.

✓ All **minutes** and **protocol decisions** have to be **published on the website** of the Cabinet of Ministers.

✓ NGOs are also involved in public administration through participation in working groups, which develop draft legal acts and in various consultative councils in all ministries. For instance, in 2013, 135 consultative councils, involving 750 representatives of NGOs, were active, that is indicative of considerable transparency of the process of drafting the regulatory documents and development/implementation of national policies. This is also evidenced by the fact that 188 public consultations and 120 public discussions on draft legal acts were held in 2013. All minutes and protocol decisions of the consultative councils will have to be published on the website of the relevant institution.

✓ In July 2013 the State Chancellery established a Twitter account "**Participation**" to strengthen communication by the Memorandum Implementation Council, to inform the public about emerging possibilities of contributing to the government decision-making process and events related to public participation, as well as enabling a more active response to NGO discussion with respect to public participation.

✓ One of the priorities of the public administration in 2013 was reducing the administrative burden in close cooperation with the public, NGOs and entrepreneurs. In 2013, the State Chancellery implemented campaign "**Pass to have a Better Result!**" Within its framework, two new instruments were launched, which are intended to promote the cooperation with the society in order to reduce

administrative burden and disproportionate bureaucracy – a special website www.mazinamslogu.gov.lv and a mobile application "**Football in Public Administration**". On the website www.mazinamslogu.gov.lv the questions and proposals from entrepreneurs, NGOs and residents are received, which are considered, and as a result the decisions are made to reduce administrative burden.

✓ During the implementation of the "*Information Society Development Guidelines for 2006-2013*", Latvia has made a number of significant events that have influenced the development of the information society - organized regulatory basis (*See section II*), the Internet has become more widely available, introduced a secure e-signature, created the Latvian State portal www.latvija.lv gradually increased the number of e-services. Implementation of such measures have been possible largely due to the opportunities of structural funding. Overall, the Latvian citizens and entrepreneurship have become available a larger range of ICT facilities and improved public e-skills.

✓ In April, 2007 **Web-based document flow system** (DAUKS) was launched by state authorities. This electronic processing and assignment Control system has been in operation and in use by the Public Administration since 1st September, 2008. The objective of adopting it for the state institutions is to switch to a new, fully-automated electronic system permitting the standardised and automatic circulation of documents between the State Chancellery and the ministries. DAUKS allows the simple and secure transfer of data to other systems and offers an external XML-based interface which enables the exchange of documents between various local systems.

✓ In Latvia's experience involving the society in the decision-making processes, has been organized through ICT also by creating unique **community initiative platform** in www.ManaBalss.lv (*My Voice, translated into English*) in 2013. This is a 100% legitimate community initiative platform where any citizen of Latvia starting from 16 years can propose and electronically sign an initiative. Any initiative signed by at least 10,000 citizens is placed on the agenda of the Parliament and discussed.

✓ To achieve the goals of development of Information society in Latvia there is a **National coalition for e-skills and jobs** established in March, 2013 as Latvia's response to EU Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs initiative.

✓ There has been signed the **Memorandum of cooperation** on "**E-skills partnership**" by the representatives of government, non-governmental organizations and entrepreneurs. There has been made an agreement to cooperate in four main areas:

- ICT training for the labor market needs;
- Youth involvement in ICT;
- Modern and interactive learning process;
- Awareness raising about importance of e- Skills for wider society.

C2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for the Information

✓ National policy "**Guidelines on Electronic Communications Sector 2004 – 2008**" addressed to the problem of a lack of Internet access in the rural areas. Latvia has implemented a project „Development of Broadband Communications Infrastructure in Rural Areas” to develop broadband network access in rural territories. As a result of this project connection possibilities to Internet with a minimum speed of 256/128 Kbps were available in the all territory of the Republic of Latvia.

✓ The Cabinet of Ministers on 7th December, 2012 approved the concept of the **Next Generation Access Network (NGAN)** which provides for significantly enhanced broadband availability through a step change in speed and quality of service. The concept will help to achieve the aim of Europe's "Europe 2020" growth strategy enhancing Europeans access to fast to ultrafast Internet. NGAN implementation will foster the use of different services and make an increasing number of public and non-public services more readily available in a digital environment.

✓ "**National broadband plan 2013 – 2020**" foresees that "Digital Agenda for Europe" targets for broadband are met. To achieve this, further development and establishment of fiber backhaul

infrastructure (*the "middle mile"*) for wholesale broadband services in rural areas (*which are not covered and where there are no plans for development of a next generation network in the near future*), a state aid program, co-financed by the EU, is currently being implemented. According to this program, the completion of its first phase, done by 2015, will ensure establishment of approximately 165 new points for a wholesale broadband access. The second phase will follow with the establishment of at least 200 new points for a wholesale broadband access.

At the same time, mobile operators are investing in the development of 4G (LTE) Internet access. LTE services have been offered since 2013. Mobile broadband coverage (3G) is 99% and LTE - 21.8% of the territory of the Republic of Latvia.

✓ As a result of these policies, Latvia has been constantly ranked among the top countries in the world in measurements of the Internet speed (*for example, reports and indexes by "Akamai Technologies", "Ookla"*). The rate of ultrafast broadband (*at least 100Mbps*) penetration in Latvia is 4.9%¹¹ which is the second highest rate in the EU.

✓ In accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.684 "**Regulations of the national Numbering Strategy**" in 2008 is amended. Six –digit format numbers that start with "116" (116XXX) are reserved for the EU electronic communication services.

✓ On 6th October, 2009, Latvian Government adopted the Cabinet of Ministers "**Regulations No.1151 on the radiofrequency spectrum usage general conditions**".

✓ There are made amendments in the **National Radio frequency plan**, providing band available for wireless broadband services. Decision 2010/267/EU must be transposed into national law, which includes the designation of the 800 MHz band for terrestrial electronic communications services in national legal

Documents such as the National Frequency Allocation Table (NFAT).

✓ Coordination of compatibility issues between broadcasting and mobile service has been undertaken with an objective not to prevent use of different services in neighbouring countries Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the 800 MHz band during transition to the mobile service. In this coordination due account is taken of the CEPT Report 29 "Guidelines on cross boarder coordination issues between mobile services in one country and broadcasting services in another country", developed in context with the mandate of the European Commission (EC). A coordination meeting between administrations of the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia was already held in 2012 with positive results (*suppression of use by 2013 of a Latvian 800 MHz channel at the Estonian boarder was agreed, early change of another channel was proposed by network operator and suspension of further development of SFNs in three allotment areas was imposed*). Cooperation of administrations is continuing.

✓ **Frequency Band 790-862 MHz (or 800MHz band)** or "digital dividend" resulting from free-up spectrum for the switching from analogue switch-off to digital television. Analogue switch-off (ASO) concluded in Latvia by 1st June, 2010. Long Term Evolution, or LTE, which is referred as "4G" technology intended for fourth-generation mobile communications and which can be used in the 800 MHz band or in the "digital dividend". This technology can help to develop data services, including Internet TV, providing opportunities for wireless data transmission of up to 100 Mbit / s. Decision 2010/267/EU of 6 May 2010 on harmonized technical conditions of use in the 790- 862 MHz frequency band for terrestrial systems capable of providing electronic Communications services in the European Union. Decision 2010/267/EU requires to EU Member States to make the band available for mobile broadband systems to provide access to the Internet, especially in rural areas. According to the Geneva Agreement (GE06, 2006) its transition to a digital broadcasting ends on June 17, 2015. There are External issues: requests for derogations. Two bordering non-EU countries for use of our digital plan according to the Regional Agreement GE06 until June 16, 2015.

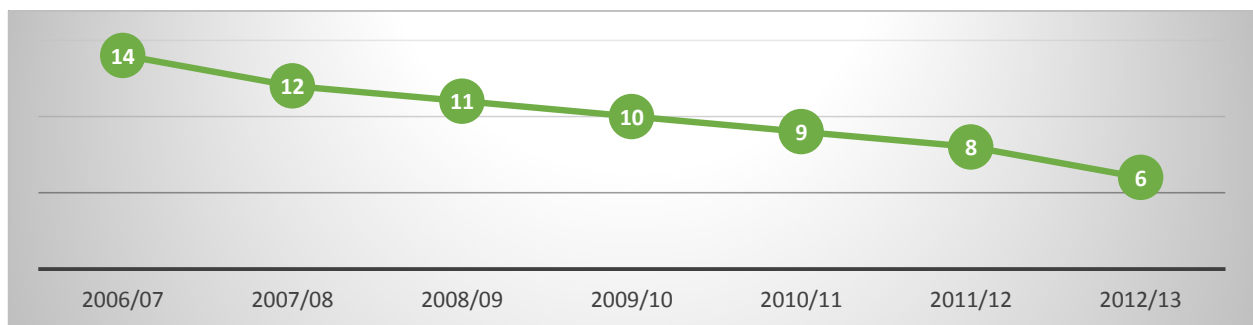
✓ Since the commencement of Wi-Fi network expansion works Lattelecom Ltd has gradually launched more than **3700 free of charge Wi-Fi** hotspots throughout Latvia, including 20 hotels, 148

¹¹ Subscriptions as a % of population on July 2013, source: European Commission

educational establishments, and outdoor areas and parks of Latvia's major cities and towns, and other outdoor areas. There are more than 3000 Lattelecom Ltd. free public Internet hotspots, as well as the hotspots which are installed in association with such companies as Statoil, SEB, DNB, Nordea, Atletika, etc. From 2015 onwards Lattelecom Ltd will continue to launch new public Internet hotspots, and will keep upgrading the existing technology solution so as to enable users to enjoy easier connection to free Internet.

✓ In Latvia the ICT **infrastructure in education** is based on a set of workstations, computer classes and network infrastructure (including data transfer bandwidth). Unlike the educational content, the infrastructure is shared competence between the Ministry of Education and Science and local governments as the major founders of the network.

Average number of students per 1 PC used for learning process



The average number of 5 years or newer workstations at schools in 2012 /2013 is about 60%. The average number of workstations that are connected to the Internet at school is 95%. It should be emphasized that finances for ICT infrastructure in education in approx. 95% is based on European Structural Funds.

✓ In Latvia **public library network** offers the most accessible facility for no-cost information and communication services. There has been considerable transition to no-cost Internet services in the public libraries of Latvia in recent years. Starting from the time when the first Internet access in the libraries of Latvia was established within the comprehensive **State Unified Library Information Network (SULIN)** launched in 2001 the government of Latvia has consistently endeavored to ensure as equal as possible conditions for access to information for the inhabitants of the entire country. The sharpest move on the way to free access to Internet provision to everyone in public libraries has been made owing to the project support grant to the Latvian Ministry of Culture awarded by *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation* in November 2006.

Project *“Third Father’s Son”* is the Foundation’s Library Public Access Computing Program in Latvia, an initiative of the Global Libraries with the goal to expand no-cost access to computers and the Internet in Latvia’s public libraries and provide the necessary training and technical support to users and librarians.

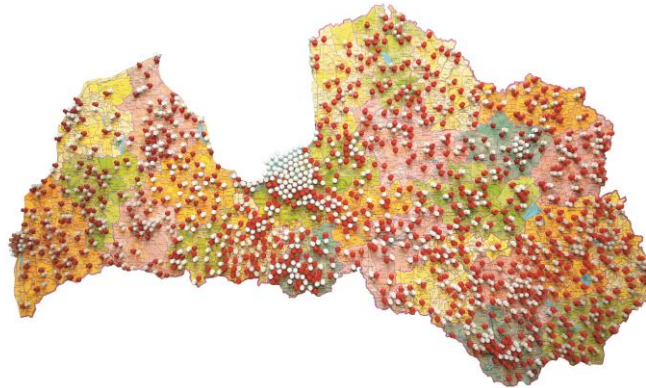
In Latvia, where almost all of **874 public libraries** (except 17 small rural libraries):

- already connected to the Internet during the SULIN project, the Third Father’s Son provided resources to connect all Latvian public libraries to the Internet with broadband connections;
- build a Wi-Fi network for library users for 24/7 wireless access;
- offer basic computer training to library users;
- provide training to all nearly 2,000 public library librarians in Latvia;
- Inform the public about new resources available in libraries.

Project *“Third Father’s Son”* has purchased around 4,000 new computers that were installed in all library buildings throughout Latvia in spring 2008. On average, there are three new computers per library now, distributed based on the population of the area. 17 libraries have been connected to the Internet for the

first time, in 853 libraries the Internet connection has been upgraded but in 874 wireless accesses to the Internet has been installed, which allows visitors with personal laptop computers use the Internet at the library **free of charge**.

Light net in the 874 public libraries



✓ All the public libraries are connected in unified virtual private network, which is the widest intranet facility in Latvia. This advanced infrastructure allows centralized publishing of content as well as internal communication among librarians.

✓ Project also *aims to attract new library visitors* that could benefit from the new technologies. “Third Father’s Son” *focuses on inclusion of various socially disadvantaged groups* into the beneficiaries of this project. One of the project activities is devoted entirely to the visually impaired people. The project provides *special computer equipment* not only to the Library for the Blind in Riga and its 7 branches throughout Latvia but also has delivered a similar set of equipment that will include a computer, a monitor and a printer for visually impaired to all major regional libraries (28) so that people who need this equipment could use it as close as possible to their place of residence.

✓ An outstanding success has been financial support from the government to local municipalities in provision of *free Internet in public libraries*. In 2005 in order to meet the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s requirements of application for the grant as well as to solve the no-cost access in the whole library system Ministry of Culture prepared amendments in the law on Libraries that clearly defined that paying for Internet subscription in libraries was the duty for the owners of libraries (*state and municipal institutions*). However, in order to ensure that no-cost computing and high-quality Internet access would be provided in long term, starting from January 1, 2007, amendments to the Library Law prescribe that the government partly reimburses expenses connected with providing free access to the Internet, electronic information resources and using of public computers in libraries to local municipalities that hold public libraries in Latvia. As a result, libraries have no need or legal right to charge the library users for the use of computing, local network and the Internet.

✓ Both the SULIN and the Third Father’s Son projects are implemented to give Latvian residents no-cost access to computers and the Internet in the libraries across the country, as well as no-cost training in the use of information technology. Most importantly, the project has enabled residents of remote communities to connect and communicate with the outside world and to give residents the possibility of accessing information that previously was unavailable to them.

C3. [Access to information and knowledge](#)

The Action Line C3 contains the information of Action Lines C1 and C2.

Latvia has been among the leaders in the area of ICT development over the last 10 years – through the speed of its Internet, which has been assessed as the 4th fastest in the World and the fastest in Europe; with its people, of whom 73% use the Internet daily; with the business environment which has been recognized as the 21st best in the world and with its society, which demands that communication with

the government takes place electronically whenever possible. ICT has made government much more accessible and closer to the people, providing required information, as well as support and services without complex and time-consuming processes. In developing the state administration's e-services, the focus has to be placed on fast and convenient service, security and the accessibility.

✓ According to the *Regulation No. 171 "Procedures by which institutions place Information on the Internet"* approved on March, 2007 of the Cabinet of Ministers, is provided that the regulations prescribe the procedures by which institutions place information on the Internet, in order to ensure its availability. The regulations require that information for posting online website set up by each institution in accordance with the requirements and have to be responsible for the contained information. In order to promote national and local services, more and more institutions offer requests and receive services electronically or using e-services.

✓ Annually, E-services are used by more than 400,000 individual users on Latvia's unified **state and municipality services portal** www.latvija.lv and the number of e-services we have served has passed one million. And that, with the population of roughly 2 million.

✓ Citizens and entrepreneurs have an access to approximately 2,000 state and local government offered public services provided through more than 900 locations throughout the Latvia. It is expensive and inefficient, both from the public and public opinion, so in 2014 has been launched the implementation of the pilot project, which makes it possible to examine how to combine more effectively and more convenient to provide government services for residents. If the project is successful, there is a chance that in the future will be developed the **National Integrated Customer Service Centre** (NISC) net. Five NISC state authorities pull together already and provide services in one place.

✓ **Public libraries** provide most accessible training network for inhabitants. During the "Third Father's Son" project, nearly all librarians were undergoing information technology, innovative work methods and customer service skills training. Also many library users around Latvia were trained in computer and Internet use skills as a part of this project. Besides computer skills, librarians also received other training, for instance, customer service skills, marketing and public relations skills and others. Librarians were among the first who learned to use electronic signature in Latvia – in many cases they can train their local municipality leaders to use it. All training was taking place near the workplace of librarians – 10 regional training centres were established all over Latvia to serve this purpose. These training centres continue to operate as lifelong learning centres for librarians and local communities also after the completion of the project, thus granting sustainability of this project activity.

✓ Since 2010 there has been organized an annual Informative campaign "**European E-skills Week**" with an aim to popularize and to rise a public interest in knowing more about the possibilities to learn e-skills. The most important aim of the "E-skills Week" is to inform the society about the e-skills empowerment and its obtaining possibilities, ICT solutions. It also gives an opportunity to spread an information about state e-services and encouraging to use them. The main target groups of "European E-skills week" are small, micro and medium enterprises, government and public sector workers, teachers, parents, children and youngsters, seniors, unemployed people, work searchers as well as a part of the society who has never used ICT before. The Informative campaign covered all regions of Latvia reaching on average more than 30 000 people every year. There also was a great and close cooperation between more than 200 governmental, non-governmental institutions every year that contributed such a great response among the population.

✓ "**Connect Latvia**", a project of free computer education for seniors (50+), is being conducted for the 5th year by Lattelecom Ltd, the largest electronic services provider in Latvia. The goal of the "Connect Latvia!" project is to minimise the digital divide in society and prevent the social exclusion of seniors aged over 50 by promoting computer and digital skills. It is the only project of this scale in Latvia carried out by a private sector company, offering free computer training to one of the most vulnerable groups in society – seniors.

In 2012 honouring the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations target was to educate at least 6000 seniors aged 50 and older, from whom more than 80% continues to

use gained e-skills after end of the project. From April to November in 2012 more than 6600 seniors have been trained (*it is at least a third of all high school graduates who graduate high school in one year*). In 2013 already more than 7000 applications has been received, 52% of them starts training with no e-skills, including even turning on/off of the computer. But what is the most effective way of training for such large number of seniors, who are located all over Latvia? The answer is – to ensure training access throughout the country, Lattelecom Ltd created a training scheme involving volunteer teachers who work at local schools, digital centres, libraries and other institutions with computer classes. At the beginning of the project teachers undergo a training course designed by Lattelecom Ltd, so that they can in turn teach the program to seniors.

C4. Capacity building

The Action Line C4 contains the information of Action Lines C3, C5 and C7.

✓ Over the past decade, ICT has developed rapidly, and its role in public education has changed from the acquisition of ICT basic skills to e-skills, from traditional offer of e-resources to the development of interactive e-resources, from the traditional forms of learning to e-learning, etc. The development of Latvian e-learning and lifelong learning concepts is linked with EU guidelines. To build information and knowledge society, they are seen as the integration of ICT applications (*learning, teaching and education*) on different levels of education: formal, non-formal and informal.

✓ Social inclusion and poverty reduction has to be achieved by introducing flexible and appropriate to the situation of the labour market lifelong learning and active labour market policies, as well as contributing to the effective participation and the promotion of equal opportunities in the labour market for persons at risk of poverty. Within the area of employment and social inclusion policy the component of ICTs skills is a significant part of the measures aimed to the improvement of the competitiveness of the unemployed, job seekers and people at risks of social exclusion and accessibility of them to labour market.

During the process of Latvia's accession to the European Union the **Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion** of Latvia was developed and signed (*Brussels, 18 December, 2003*), in which *Facilitating participation in employment and E-inclusion* has been determined as areas of development for the prevention of the risks of social exclusion. In the Memorandum medium-term and long-term actions, as well as the most immediate priorities have been appointed, for instance:

- Increase funds for active labour market measures, especially as regards training and retraining;
- To provide opportunities for acquiring modern knowledge and training possibilities – language learning, ICT, management;
- To develop a lifelong-learning system (*e-learning inclusive*);
- School computerisation programmes should be continued and aimed at full computer literacy obtained in all schools, all schools should also be connected to the Internet;
- To plan and develop online services in national, municipal and private services;
- All groups of residents should have opportunities to learn and to work with the new information technologies.

✓ There has been developed **“Lifelong Learning Guidelines for 2007 – 2013”** with the following aims: To provide availability of lifelong learning to all people in Latvia irrespective of their age, previous education, place of residence, income level, ethnic identity, social status, functional disorders; Create quality education offer for adults that would ensure sustainable competencies for work, active citizenship, personality development and would facilitate progress of high competencies based, competitive knowledge economics and democratic society in Latvia; Establish synchronized system of regulatory documents and efficient resource (*including finance*) administration, based on the principles of shared responsibility and interaction of sector policies for development of common lifelong learning system.

✓ According to the **“Latvian Strategic Development Plan 2010 to 2013”** in order to ensure the implementation of the action *Continuous employee improvement of competitiveness (available*

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=208079>) the system of lifelong learning, expanding adult education activities, particularly for vulnerable groups, was improved. Adults in educational activities offered to acquire professional development programmes, as well as non-formal education programmes in all EU accepted key areas, including digital competence.

✓ The action plan also determined the action **“Population e-skills improvement and 100% ensuring access to Internet”**, noting, that “E-solutions in the public and private sectors play an important role of potential users’ level of knowledge, or the e-skills, which ensures full use of the e-product. Therefore, in order to ensure the wholesomeness of e-administration and e-services, the need to improve people e-skills (*training and information activities*)”.

✓ Registered unemployed and job-seekers, particularly those who are exposed at risk of social exclusion - young people, people with disabilities, older persons of pre-retirement age, after maternity leave, are provided with training in ICT skills within the following active labour market policy measures:

- **Vocational training, requalification and qualification improvement** (*training programmes are implemented by applying a method of training vouchers*). In 2013, the number of unemployed and job seekers started training in ICT programmes was 4806, 972 of them found a job within 6 months after training was completed;

- **Non-formal training** (*training programmes are implemented by applying a method of training vouchers*). In 2013, the number of unemployed and job seekers started training in programmes with computer literacy learning was 6452, 1094 of them found a job within 6 months after training was completed);

- **Lifelong learning programmes - training programmes for employed persons aged over 25** (*from 2010 to 2013 within the measure in ICT skills training programmes were involved 1532 persons, 1124 of them were women and 408 were men*);

- **Measures for Increasing Competitiveness** – courses “E-service use” and “Create home page yourself”. In 2013, the number of unemployed and job seekers started training was 564, 160 of them found a job within 6 months after training was completed.

✓ On March 18, 2013 there a **Memorandum of cooperation on “e-Skills partnership”** in Latvia was signed. The memorandum shall provide education on the labour market, including the implementation of lifelong learning and training activities, based on the demand of employers, including the unemployed and job seekers re-training and re-entry, evaluation of knowledge and career advice.

✓ The analysis shows that the main interventions teachers ICT digital skills development is particularly ESF project **“Continuing education for general education teachers”**. Performance indicators point out the need for sustained interest in the ICT competencies of professional development opportunities and the continuing need to improve the skills regularly. From 2006-2007 teachers mention that foreign language and digital literacy, modern ICT solutions are one of the most critical factors for improving learning process. Trends have not changed since.

Accordance with the national sectorial priorities, most significant promotion for ICT human capacity is targeted particularly in higher education, where the state directly provides a significant proportion of the national budget study places for this sector.

C5. **Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs**

✓ In order to be able to recognize the person in the electronic environment, you need to have an electronic identity. Electronic identification provides personal recognition in the electronic environment and allows you to receive personalized services. In Latvia there are available access to such personal identification (*authentication*) types:

- the institutions maintained authentication systems;
- online banking authentication;
- Mobile ID;

- E-signature authentication, which is now one of the safest forms of the authentication in the electronic environment.
- From the April, 2012 in Latvia there have been introduced an Identity Card or an Electronic Identity Card (*eID*), confirming the holder's identity and legal status. eID is used in the electronic environment for e - services and the use of e-signatures contained in contact with the state and local authorities.
 - ✓ By the decision of Government, Ministry of Defence (*MoD*) is the leading institution in Latvia coordinating and implementing policy tasks in the field of cyber security. MoD took leading role after changes in the **National IT Security Law**, which was first introduced in 2010. MoD oversees *national CERT unit* and leads the work of *National IT Security Council*, which consists of 17 key institutions. The main challenge is to improve the inter-agency cooperation, level of understanding of cyber issue and division of labour.
 - ✓ Recently, government adopted national **Cyber Security Strategy 2014-2018**, which defines key areas of work, where education, governance of ICT resources, rule of law in the cyber space, crisis management and international cooperation are top priorities. In order to achieve the main goals and aims, strong cooperation with private sector is recognized very critical, therefore, strengthening of partnership between private and public sector will be among top priorities in the future as well. Currently, almost all non-governmental organizations representing interests both of private sector and society, could be perceived as strong and reliable partners for the public sector. Expertise and knowledge of professionals from private sector is partially gathered in recently established *Cyber Defence Unit*.
 - ✓ Regional cooperation at political and practical level (information sharing, best practice, common exercise) with partners from Baltic and Nordic countries is the key to build international cooperation and is perceived a platform to establish broader cyber security cooperation. Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian cyber security experts held regular meetings, at least once a year, to exchange information, share latest news in the field of cyber and develop mutual cooperation.
 - ✓ **CERT.LV** - the Information Technology Security Incident Response Institution of the Republic of Latvia has been operational since 1st of February 2011. CERT.LV mission is to promote information technology security in Latvia. CERT.LV operates under the MoD and is regulated by the Information Technology Security Law. CERT.LV main tasks are to maintain and update information on IT security threats, provide support in the case of an IT security incident, advise governmental institutions, organize informative and educational activities for the government employees, IT security professionals and general public. CERT.LV handles about 5000 high-priority incidents and 250000 low-priority incidents yearly. Thanks to a good cooperation with Latvian ISPs in the framework of the initiative "Responsible ISP" CERT.LV is able to deliver information about infections to approximately 70% of infected end-users.
 - ✓ Education and information is very crucial in order to achieve confidence in the use of ICT. CERT.LV is heavily engaged in the education of various groups of users including those responsible for the IT security in their organisations, employees, managers, students and pupils as well as general public. CERT.LV organises and participates in about 50 events yearly reaching out to more than 3000 people. It is planned to increase this capacity in 2014.
 - ✓ CERT.LV has a portal www.esidross.lv ("*be safe*") which writes about IT security for non-IT professionals. This portal also checks the IP address of the visitor against the data base of infected IP addresses and informs the user in case his/her computer might be infected. This service is appreciated by many portal visitors.
 - ✓ **Latvian Safer Internet Centre** works towards more informed and educated children, adolescents, teachers and parents; reports about illegal content and breaches online; and ensures helpline. There is developed a web page www.drossinternets.lv (*safe Internet*).

C6. **Enabling environment**

The Action Line C6 contains also the information of Action Lines C3 and C5.

- ✓ The electronic environment **requires identification and assurance** that services are being provided for the proper person, accordingly – an electronic identity is being required. In a

communication process between an institution and a person information can be exchanged not only by using paper documents, but also electronically – by using electronic documents. In order to identify the signatory of an electronic document and to protect the content of the document against unauthorized changes after person signs the document, a *secure electronic signature* is being used.

✓ There are a centralized **State Information Systems (SIS)** Integrator (*standardized interoperability platform based on open standards*) created in Latvia. Considering that SIS store the information, which contains personal data or other classified information, one of the most important instruments for the institutions is a security of the SIS. SIS are registered in the State Information Register.

✓ In Latvia, to receive the e-services, individuals uses different methods of confirmation their identity. There is **Personal Electronics Identification Law** projects under development. The right to use the e-ID cards as identification tools is defined in the Personal Identification Documents Law and e-signature **Electronic Documents Law**. There is no thus legal framework that regulates the usage of different identification tools in an electronic environment. The identification process applies only to individuals (*excluding legal persons*).

✓ Latvia has following activities related to Internet governance. Latvia has discussed issues regarding the Internet governance with stakeholders in order to enhance cooperation and elaborate a common understanding about steps to be taken to address policy issues remaining unresolved.

✓ Latvia has designated the incumbent operator to handle obligations of the **universal service** in the electronic communications sector. The scope of the universal service is the following: a provision of access at a fixed location, directory inquiry services and directories; special measures for disabled users; one alternative tariff plan for low income users. Currently, the universal service is financed from the State budget. The fully distributed cost methodology is applied for calculating the universal service net costs.

✓ Since 2004 Latvia has implemented several EU directives regarding to consumer rights protection in e-environment, also legal framework and national laws have been amended and improved to ensure high level of consumer protection, Information society and alternative dispute settlement systems. There has been carried out different activities such as conferences, annual awarding, etc. to promote e-Commerce and motivate entrepreneurs to develop their business in Internet.

✓ Variety of activities has been implemented and is continued in Latvia with the aim to support innovative companies, including from the ICT sector. These activities include support both for promotion of cooperation between companies and research sector for carrying common industrial research and new product development projects, as well as for new product and technologies introduction into production. Activities have been realized to support companies in their efforts to expand in foreign markets and to involve in cluster organizations. Additional activities have been put in place in Latvia to support start-up companies at different development stages (*awareness building, training, mentoring and coaching, seed and venture capital, business incubation*).

✓ By assessing the important role of the ICT sector in Latvia, in summer 2012 various government institutions and other partners has signed the ICT Charter, prepared by the Latvian Information and Communications Technology Association (*LIKTA*). The ICT Charter summarizes all urgent tasks to promote the business activity – these are both activities for implementation of the modern e-government model in Latvia and measures to improve the business environment.

✓ The **Action Plan for Business Environment Improvement** is the main tool to improve business environment. The Action Plan is elaborated yearly already since 1999 and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The objective of the Action Plan is "simple and high quality services in business: more e-services", and it includes actions to be taken to overcome burdensome requirements identified by entrepreneurs in such areas as business start-up and closure, tax administration, property registration, trading across borders, electronic administration and improvement of construction regulation and others. The Action Plan has been elaborated in close collaboration with the National Economic Council, the Foreign Investors Council in Latvia, the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, as well as co-liable ministries and entrepreneurs.

C7. ICT Applications: - benefits in all aspects of life

E-government

The Action Line C7 "E-government" also contains the information of Action Lines C1 and C3.

✓ There are *Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014 -2020 (Guidelines)* was elaborated to continue development of existing policies and to determine the priorities in the area of ICT for the European Union Structural Funds Programming period for 2014 – 2020.

As the goal of the Guidelines were determined to provide the opportunity for anyone to use ICT, to create a knowledge-based economy and to improve the overall quality of life by contributing the national competitiveness, increasing an economic growth and job creation. Guidelines were developed in close cooperation with ICT industry, entrepreneurs representing partners, local and public government. An analysis for needs and challenges was managed in a perspective of 360°. As result was agreement with all included partners about priorities in the area of ICT for enhancing the national competitiveness, economic growth and job creation. The Guidelines contains the current analysis and conclusions of Information Society Policy implementation.

✓ The **state portal** www.latvija.lv is launched in August 2006, constituting a central portal for Latvian state. Institutions offering a variety of e-Government services for citizens and businesses.

✓ There are about 240 governmental services has been digitized in Latvia. Until 2013 have been set up e - services in health, education, welfare and social services, has created a range of services for entrepreneurs - Electronic registration of a company and the other company registry services, e - services of the State Environmental Service, the State Labor Inspectorate e - services etc. In the state portal www.latvija.lv in January, 2014, were available 65 e - services where the most popular of which was applying for higher studies, residence Declaration, personal data in the Population Register.

✓ There is an **Electronic Procurement System**, which has constantly growing turnover (*for example, in 2012 it was 18.27 million. LVL, which is about 37 % more than in 2011*). There is also has given significant contribution in the conservation of cultural heritage, including the creation of digital libraries and other e - services. There also solutions for safe and patient-centered health care.

E-business

✓ Since 1st June, **2009** the State Regional Development Agency (*SRDA*) organizes and manages the **Electronic Procurement System**. The Electronic Procurement System was developed in order to enable state and municipal authorities to purchase standard goods and services electronically. The Latvian Electronic Procurement System is the first e-procurement system in the Baltic States, which provides to its users such possibilities as:

- Faster procurement process – shortened time from acknowledging the need till purchase of the good;
- State and municipal institutions do not have to organize procurements – procurements are organized unitary by ordering the goods with the help of the Electronic Procurement System;
- State budget resources are saved because when several orders are combined small procurements are offered better prices;
- Transparency, openness and accessibility to information about the procurement process increases – information about the procurements are public in the Electronic Procurement System;
- The procurement provided in the directives of the European Commission is being executed in Latvia as well as the positive examples of the EU countries.

✓ In order to warranty appropriate level of procurement services for all public sector users, it was decided to redesign national **e-catalogue system** (<http://www.eis.gov.lv>). The new system started to operate in November, 2010. The main benefits of the new version of the system are more flexible catalogue managements for the system supporter and huge performance improvements. At the same time the new system will bring some reengineered business processes and some valuable features like

“traffic light” method for price monitoring, enhanced shopping cart optimization mechanism, mass product import/update/export services, and interactive help for each forms of portal and integration with web services provided SIS Integrator: address retrieving and verifying from Address register and Centralized authentication services. The SRDA guarantees that the e-catalogue system operates in the 7 x 24 regime. That approach ensures flexibility for supplier in choosing of best transaction time. During working hours the Agency ensures helpdesk service and possibility to submit complaints/suggestions online. All operations are secured by usage of secure connections.

✓ There has been carried out different activities such as conferences, annual awarding, etc. to promote e-commerce and motivate entrepreneurs to develop their business on Internet.

✓ From 21st November 2012 in State Portal www.latvija.lv are available two e-services of the **Register of Enterprises** for citizens:

- Registration in registers kept by the Register of Enterprises – possibility to enter application data, add necessary documents, sign application with secure electronic signature, make payments for service online, submit documents to the Register of Enterprises for review as well as receive answer documents; Information requests from registers kept by the Register of Enterprises – possibility to request/receive information and make payment for service.

- Open data.

The Register of Enterprises data, which are classified as public, are periodically for free made in machine-readable format (*available in csv file format - <http://dati.ur.gov.lv>*); Basic information about subject is available for free in the Register of Enterprises website www.ur.gov.lv search; Under reuse license agreement is entitled to receive information held by the Register of Enterprises generated in the registration process of legal entities and legal facts.

E-services for state/local authorities – possibility for state and local authorities, through an interagency agreement/cooperation agreement, for performing their functions, receive data stored in registers of the Register of Enterprises electronically.

E-learning

The information of e-learning contains also the information in Action Lines C3 and C4.

✓ In 2005, the new strategic framework for Information Society policy - i2010¹² - identified three policy priorities: the completion of a single European information space; Strengthening innovation and investment in ICT research; and achieving an inclusive European Information Society. Education and training systems play an important role in reaching these goals. As ICT is a driver of inclusion, better public services and quality of life, all citizens need to be equipped with the skills to benefit from and participate in the Information Society. Enabling lifelong learning¹³ for citizens with the facilities that ICT can offer is an important way of fostering their competitiveness and employability, social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development. Policy actions such as the “*Education and Training 2010 Work Programme*”¹⁴ and the “*Lifelong Learning Programme*”¹⁵ have set objectives for education and support the development of learning in the knowledge society. One of the focus areas of the Lifelong Learning Programme is developing innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice in order to promote better education and training throughout a citizen’s life¹⁶.

✓ As a demand for ICT skills cuts across sectors and job types and these skills are increasingly important in all sectors, activities is ongoing to provide support for the absorption of these skills. Aid schemes have been implemented foreseen exclusively for *micro and small companies* in order to increase their productivity by raising ICT skills of their employees.

¹² “i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment” COM(2005) 229

¹³ Lifelong learning means all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.;

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index_en.html

¹⁶ <http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC42862.pdf>

✓ Numerous innovative cross-disciplinary free online e-learning solutions have been developed in Latvia. Example is multilingual *Talking Book* project (<http://pasakas.letonika.lv/>) which advances foreign language skills, cross-cultural communication and social skills of young kids. It is created by kids for kids with the support of IT experts and education professionals.

✓ Within the Third Father's Son project has developed several basic IT e-learning tools available in the library portal www.biblioteka.lv.

✓ In Latvia as in other European countries, e-learning tools is growing rapidly in the learning process. Still, in most cases they supplement or replace textbooks, including workbooks. Use of electronic learning resources depends mostly on the technical capacity of the educational institution (*interactive whiteboards, computers, tablets computers etc.*), and as well as teacher training skills. Currently there are about 20 licensed distance learning programs (*including some ISCED level 2*). This trend has been growing since 2010. Regarding MOOC development, it's important to underline that this initiative addresses a small part of the world's countries (*significant direct U.S.*) and Latvia yet doesn't see still clear further development and possible scenarios for universities and government cooperation.

✓ Latvian higher education institutions engaged in international e-learning course development and research since 1998. Since then, in international scientific journals published more than 100 articles, created successful examples of e-learning applications in regional development, high-quality open-access e-course to use e-learning environment in the development and management of university collaboration, interactive digital television, multiplatform e-learning and multimedia preparation of training materials.

In 2012 Riga Technical University, the first of the Latvian higher education institutions, has received E-excellence Associates in Quality recognition mark, which indicates that the University provides high-quality e-learning and continuously improving its e-learning system using E-excellence comparison method e-learning self-assessment.

E-health

E-health¹⁷ is a health program for more efficient use of ICT tools. The main objectives of e-health development are to: improve health, promote individual control of their health; reduce wasted time spend on patients contacts with medical institutions; increase the effectiveness of the health care, providing health care specialists with a quick access to necessary patient health data; reduce the amount of information that health care specialists need to enter into the documents; increase the amount and usability of a structured information; increase effectiveness of medical institutions; increase health care data reliability and security.

✓ Patients in Latvia can easily access care records using state e-services' portal (*authenticated with i-bank information, electronic signature*). These e-services are:

- "My state paid healthcare services";
- "My general practitioner";
- "My new-born children data";
- "My data within the diabetes mellitus patients' register".
- *E-health solution architecture is developed as modular system, which consists of three layers:*

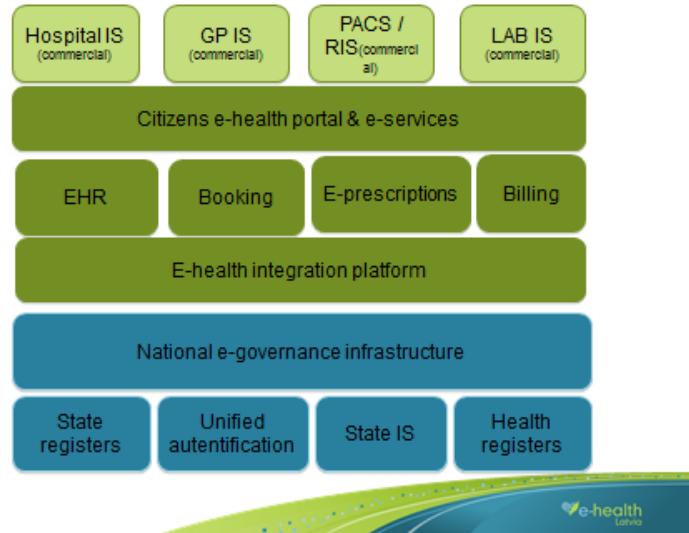
The first layer - for business users, who integrate with systems using their business systems;

The second layer - is our system which includes all core models;

The third layer - is national e-governance infrastructure for data exchange with registries.

¹⁷ <http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/en/e-health>

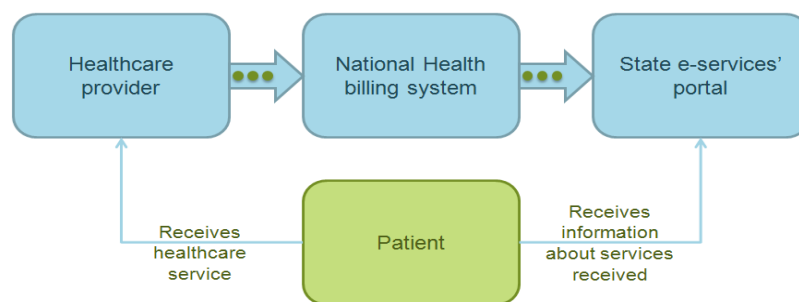
E-health solution architecture



Benefits:

- Centrally stored health records *reduces risk of faulty course of treatment.*
- Effective health service booking process allows *patient to choose health service provider using information* about waiting queues, time schedules, price of services whether paid by state, personally or by insurance companies.
- *More effective prevention activities* such as reminders of required vaccinations; invitations to preventive cancer screening tests etc.
- *More effective, safer and faster process of getting prescriptions* and medicines reducing risk of erroneous prescriptions.
- *Better supervision of the financial flow*, saved states budget by eradicating unfair practices and decreasing amount of repeated medical tests.
- *More information for evidence based decisions* in health care.
- *Open interfaces allows every software provider alter their solution* to exchange information with central e-health platform.

National health billing system collects data from all health care providers about state paid medical services. Billing and payments processes are almost fully digitized.



Benefits:

- Patients have *more information* about their health and are more involved in the treatment process.
- Process allows for *transparency and budget economy* as unfair practices are easily detected.

- *Payment process is quick and convenient.*
 - Easily gathered statistics provides means for *evidence based decisions in health care.*
- Authentication services and verification against state registers are provided by state e-services portal integration platform and are used across many e-services' portal services.
- Data flows to billing system are electronic.

E-employment

✓ There is available the **State vacancies portal** www.nva.gov for of the registration of open vacancies at the State Employment Agency for employers.

Benefits:

- Gives an opportunity to register the vacancies free of charge and to search for the required employees in the largest *CV/Vacancies data base* which includes all regions of Latvia.
- allows access to the largest database of job seekers and unemployed in Latvia and the *single European Union database of job seekers – EURES*;
- allows to quickly and efficiently send the request for employees to a specific group of jobseekers;
- helps organizing a search for employees, because the responsible employees of the Agency contact the employer at least twice a week to make sure that the service used by the employer is successfully implemented;
- gives an opportunity to receive Agency's support in arranging the first potential employees selection;
- provides an opportunity to search for suitable employees throughout Latvia, as well as upon employer's request in the European Union and European Economic Area countries and Switzerland;
- Provides an opportunity to receive Agency's support in searching for employees free of charge.

E-environment

✓ Meaning of **Green Public Procurement**¹⁸ (*GPP*) in Latvia started being recognized in year 2008 when the Ministry of Environment issued a document on promotion of **environmentally friendly procurement** in state and municipal institutions called "Recommendations on promotion of green public procurement in state and municipal institutions and recommendations on environmentally friendly construction".

✓ Another driver for GPP development was Procurement Monitoring Bureau prepared information about GPP, which is available in separate section of their web site and also e-procurement system with special "green" catalogues.

✓ Mainstreaming of GPP in Latvia started with implementation of first Climate Changes Financing Instrument internationally recognised as **Green Investment Scheme (GIS)** activities in Latvia in 2009. GIS is a state management instrument funded by financial resources obtained from emission trading scheme. The budget is intended for energy efficiency, technology conversion and development of technologies and rising public awareness tenders.

✓ So far the value of procurements with implemented requirements of "green" criteria has reached the peak level 19 % in 2012. Improvement was achieved due successful operation of GIS.

¹⁸ **Green Public Procurement (GPP)** is the process by which public authorities seek to reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services that they buy. The aim is to foster a voluntary framework to ensure the procurement of goods and services that have the least impact on the environment throughout their whole life cycle. GPP is a voluntary instrument, which means that Member States and public authorities can determine the extent to which they implement it¹⁸

At the moment Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development is working on “GPP promotion plan 2015 – 2017” which will define specific actions with an overall aim to increase the share of GPP in public procurement.

E-agriculture

✓ In Latvia there is a state administration institution - **Rural Support Service** (RSS) established on 1st January **2000** that operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture in accordance with the Law on Rural Support Service. RSS is responsible for implementation of unified state and European Union (EU) support policy in the sector of agriculture, forests, fisheries and rural development; it supervises compliance of the sector with the laws and regulations and fulfils other functions connected with agriculture and implementation of rural support policy.

✓ E-agriculture is developed and running an **electronic application system**. By using this system farmers and other persons are able to apply for support payments for agriculture and rural areas electronically. Currently, the system has more than 18 thousands of users.

E-science

✓ Latvian scientists have participated in the EU Framework Programmed research projects in e-learning research, such as the Kaleidoscope Network of Excellence for Research FP6 (*Concepts and Methods for exploring the future of learning with digital technologies*) and FP6 research project ELU (*Enhanced Learning Unlimited*), which resulted in the development new technologies and methods for interactive television to use in education. Latvian-Lithuanian cooperation project eBig3 (*Synergetic Approach with eLearning, TV and mobile technologies to Promote New Business Development*) for the first time in the world is made new, multi-platform study of large-scale trials.

✓ The statistics show preparation of the higher qualification (on Dr. Level) specialists for academic work in ICT sector in Latvian, as well as for work in ICT companies has increased rapidly during the EU Structural Fund support. As well as defended doctoral thesis in computer science (*Dr.sc.comp*) has positive dynamics in Latvia.

Defended thesis	06./07.	07./08.	08./09.	09./10.	10./11.	11./12.	12./13.
Overall	146	139	174	131	287	267	315
STEM	32	26	46	20	66	53	68
Incl. Computer sc.	10	9	11	9	4	14	21

C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content

The information contains also the information in Action Line C3.

✓ Significant advances have been made since 2003 to make the cultural heritage available online for purposes of research and education. Many cultural institutions, especially libraries, have begun to digitize and make available their collections online, however concerted efforts in this field have begun since 2006 with an establishment of a National Digital library of Latvia, led by the National Library of Latvia. From 2007 to 2013 a sizeable amount of heritage objects held by libraries, museums, archives, broadcasters and other institutions has been digitized, mostly with financial help of the EU, including most of newspapers and journals published in Latvia up to 1940, the most important items of printed and film heritage, many thousands of historical pictures, tens of thousands of hours of TV and radio broadcasts. Both the know-how in the field of digitization and the IT infrastructure necessary to digitize,

preserve and make available the items of cultural heritage has been developed and put in place. Latvian cultural institutions have been active in supporting international initiatives in the field of digital libraries, including the European digital library European and the World Digital library, developed by the Library of Congress and UNESCO and are making parts of their collections available through these resources.

✓ In 2013 a ***national strategy for digitization of cultural heritage*** was developed and will be adopted and began to be implemented in 2014.

✓ In Latvia the National Library of Latvia (NLL) has established a ***National Digital Library*** to digitize newspapers and journals, in view of the poor physical state of these items, their historical and cultural value and demand for them. NLL has digitized more than 3 million pages of newspapers and journals, more than 7000 monographs published in Latvia and deemed to be of significant historic or artistic value, many hundreds of historic maps and many thousands of historic posters, postcards, prints and other image materials, such as the *“In Search of Lost Latvia”* collection which consists of more than 25000 historic photos depicting the history of places and people in Latvia. The digitization project is being carried out in close cooperation with other Latvian memory institutions as well as with experts in Latvian history and culture. NLL is also engaged in the preservation of digitally born cultural heritage, especially through the harvesting of web recourses – it is currently selectively harvesting 3000 Latvian domains. To coordinate and strengthen digitization work in the cultural sector, NLL has indicated the development of national digital cultural heritage policy and developed a *“digitization handbook”* which serves as a de facto standard for digitization a summary of best practice in digitization and learning tool for Latvian cultural institutions.

✓ The Latvian company *Tilde* is the principal software provider in the Baltics. Together with the leading European researchers (from the Universities of Edinburgh, Uppsala, Copenhagen) it elaborates a vision on how translation technologies may ensure free information flow over national borders, assisting civil societies, governments and enterprises.

Major progress has been achieved in developing technologies for Latvian language. Translation tools for Latvian range from advanced electronic dictionaries to fully automated translation systems surpassing in quality such generic solutions as Google Translate. Style corrector allows even non-native Latvian speakers to fluently express themselves in Latvian. Latvian terminology is openly accessible in online terminology databases. Voice technologies for Latvian are in development and are already used in freely accessible solutions.

✓ In Latvia, a gateway to local content produced by public libraries is the library portal www.biblioteka.lv. The portal is integrated with other cultural information systems of state level, so that it allows unified search into all cultural resources.

C9. **Media**

✓ Latvia completed the digital switchover in 2010. The public service media have greatly improved their offer in terms of content and accessibility (*reception*). The cultural content of both public and commercial national television channels is available throughout the territory of Latvia.

Latvia ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television in 1998 but on accession to the European Union in 2004, is now bound by Directive 2010/13/EU – the Audio-visual Media Services Directive. The requirements of the Directive, including the protection of minors from harmful content, were transposed into the ***Law on Electronic Mass Media (adopted on 12th July 2010)*** that replaced the Radio and Television Law in 2010. Domestic legislation already envisages the independence and plurality of the media. Amendments to the Law on the Press and other Mass Media in 2011 introduced a new requirement for the media to disclose their true beneficiaries to the companies register.

✓ In Latvia there is the ***National Electronic Media Council (NEMC)***, an independent, autonomous institution enjoying full rights, which, within its competence, shall represent the interests of the public in the field of electronic mass media and supervise the latter so that in their operations they observe the

Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, this Law and other regulatory enactments. The Council is a derived public person. NEMC shall act in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, this Law and other regulatory enactments.

✓ There is “**National strategy of Electronic media sector developing for 2012 -2017**” has been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2012. It provides to develop Latvian democracy, rule of law and civil engagement, encouraging national consciousness, Latvian cultural identity, Latvian Regional identity and European identity. The National Media strategy aims are: The program content quality and competitiveness of Latvian jurisdiction of existing electronic media to distribute content created in Latvia; equal rules of industry; strengthening the public media and reform, increasing the role of social media; strengthening the national cultural identity and Latvian language, including Latgalian language use; assurance the information space in Latvian language and national electronic media broadcasting entire the Latvian territory, particularly in the Eastern border area; promoting diversity of Latvian jurisdiction of electronic media programs; strengthening the National (*or the European Union*) market of electronic media. The main tasks of the Strategy are to create a new public media; necessary amendments to the Law on Electronic Media; the application of the Law of Electronic media.

✓ From February 2012, one of the main issues in the media field has been the proposed merger of the two largest free to air television broadcasters. Sweden’s Modern Times Group’s company MTG Broadcasting AB (*already operating channels TV3, 3+ and TV6*) plans to take over Latvian channels LNT and TV5.

✓ On 4 October, 2012 parliament adopted the NEMC supported **amendments to the Law on Electronic Media** revoking must carry status for nation commercial television channels. The amendments allow national channels (*currently TV3 and LNT*) to charge cable operators for content delivered. The amendments also envisage that must carry status without charging for content applies only to public service television. This situation will apply from 31st March, 2013 to 1st January 2014. From the beginning of 2014 regulations are planned for determining the type of channels offered in the basic package according to Latvia’s national interests. The NEMC is currently working on this regulation.

✓ The **joint LTV and LR Internet portal** (<http://www.lsm.lv/lv/>) went live on 3 February, 2013. In the first full month (March) it had 84 300 unique visitors. The portal will be gradually developed into a unified public service media portal. The portal offers news produced by journalists of both broadcasters in text, video and audio formats. There are also diverse items of investigative journalism and analyses of events. The portal at www.lsm.lv should gradually develop into a recognized brand representing content the public needs and the gateway to the common LTV and LR Internet platform.

✓ On 7 January, 2013, the National Electronic Media Council (NEMC) approved **the concept of the Latvian Public Service Media** (LPSM) that envisages the creation of Latvia’s leading media in five years’ time through the merger of the Latvian Television (LTV), Latvian Radio (LR) and Internet platforms. In terms of content, the priorities are news and current affairs programs, education and science, programs for children and youth as well as culture programs. The Council envisages a gradual transition from state subsidies to independent financing through a public service media levy or charge. At the same time the PSM will retain a limited presence in the advertising market in order keep public co-financing as low as possible.

✓ On 9 April 2013 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a **regulation on tender for the provision of pay DTV broadcasting services**. It envisages the licensing of one service provider for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2021. The winner of the tender should be announced by 1 July. Although the NEMC, with the approval of the Competition Council, had proposed there be more than one licensed provider which would have increased competition for the 7% of the pay TV audience who currently only have a choice between terrestrial and satellite TV, parliament opted for the single licensed provider model.

✓ On 2013 the NEMC has initiated an annual **Radio and Television Day** that includes both a media criticism and research conference as well as the “*Celmlauzis*” (*Pioneer, Trailblazer*) Prize for creativity in

the electronic media. The prize is awarded for the most important innovation in the work and journalism in Latvia's electronic media.

✓ The NEMC has planned to begin discussions with on-demand audiovisual media service providers in Latvia in order to comply with the AVMSD and the Latvian Law on Electronic Media regarding the requirement for enterprises to register on-demand services. In real life there are considerably more providers of on-demand services than the 3 registered with the NEMC.

✓ On 2013 Parliament has asked the Ministry of Culture to examine the possibility of creating a new unit within the ministry that would be responsible for overall media policy in Latvia. Currently no one governmental institution is responsible for media policy as a whole.

C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society

✓ Latvia supports and promotes freedom of expression in both physical and virtual environments. We believe that Internet governance should be based on an inclusive, transparent and accountable multilateral model. We agree that freedom of expression is not absolute and that regulatory intervention is allowed, unless it is determined qualitatively by law, are necessary to achieve the legitimate objectives (*for example, to protect the rights of the country's democratic system, public security, territorial integrity of the country*) and is reasonable with the objective to be achieved in accordance with international human rights principles as it is embedded, inter alia, in the Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Judicature.

✓ As elected member of the Council and the Bureau of the UNESCO Intergovernmental program Information for All (IFAP) Latvia contributed to this process by chairing a working group on Information Ethics.

✓ Latvia led the work on the revision and finalization of the **Code of Ethics** for the Information Society which was adopted by the IFAP Bureau and Council. It is addressed to all stakeholder of the information society and outlines a number of universal values and principles that seek to inform behavior and decision-making in the information society. The code is not a detailed guidelines for concrete actions. Rather, it postulates a set of basic ethical principles and values regarding information society, with an aim to guide behavior and decision making of all the members of information society.

✓ Latvia organized the **Riga Global Meeting of Experts on the Ethical Aspects of Information Society** which took place in Riga, Latvia, on October, 2013. The participants reviewed progress of UNESCO and IFAP activities implementing WSIS Action Line C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society, and adopted the **Riga Guidelines on Ethics in the Information Society**. The Guidelines reflect the growing consensus that has emerged from numerous regional and international forums on the ethical dimensions of the Information Society. The guidelines re-echo the importance of enhancing equitable access and inclusive multi-stakeholder processes, respect for freedom of expression and all human rights both online and off-line. They also link the ethical dimensions of the information society to the issues of social and economic inclusion, peace and security as well as environmental sustainability thereby highlighting their relevance to the international development goals.

The document provides the basic ethical values and guiding principles and invites all stakeholders for sustainable and feasible actions to uphold ethically grounded information society. We hope that the guidelines will assist in helping to translate the societal values of the information age into principles and practices that guide individuals in their daily lives.

✓ Since 2006 in Latvia Safer Internet Centre has been educating children, youngsters, their parents and teachers regarding safe and responsible use of Internet, including ethical dimensions. The target groups have been systematically informed about netiquette, responsibilities and breaches on the Internet. Educational materials have been developed, specific websites dedicated to the subject of safety and responsibilities on the Internet: www.drossinternets.lv and www.macies.drossinternets.lv. Regularly campaigns, forums, discussions were organized to attract attention of society. Youngsters have been asked in forums and conferences to express their thoughts about ethics on the Internet. It is essential to

continue educating society especially children about ethics on the Internet to avoid serious breaches. Latvia has actively participated in the global debate on ethical dimension of the Information Society.

C11. International and regional cooperation

International and regional cooperation is vital in the advancement of the Information Society for supporting sustainable development beyond 2015.

✓ In 2013 Latvia hosted in Riga the **Northern Future Forum** - an annual, informal meeting of prime ministers, policy innovators, entrepreneurs and business leaders from the 9 nations of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. One of the two key topics at the Riga Forum was addressing the digital divide in society. Top politicians and experts concluded that the digital divide can be bridged by improved access to ICTs and better knowledge of their uses, particularly emphasizing importance of ICT tools for Competitive and Efficient Business Environment, role modern, inclusive and accessible for Everyone E-Governance and the need to empower use of languages and creative industries in the digital environment.

✓ The Ambassador of Latvia Mr. Janis Karklins, headed the **organization of the both original WSIS (in 2003 and in 2005)** in his capacity of the Vice-President of the Preparatory Committee of the Geneva Phase, and as President of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis Phase. Latvia was represented in the 2003 and 2005 original WSISs by 18 – 20 members' delegations headed by the President Ms. Vaira Vike – Freiberga.

✓ Latvia has been a member of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) (2007- 2011), re-elected for the period up to 2014.

✓ Latvia is an active member of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) since December 2012. The FOC is an intergovernmental coalition committed to advancing Internet freedom – free expression, association, assembly, and privacy online – worldwide.

✓ In October 2013 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close co-operation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia and the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO hosted the UNESCO Information for All Programs (IFAP) '**Riga Global Meeting of Experts on the Ethical Aspects of Information Society**' which adopted the 'Riga Guidelines on Ethics in the Information Society'.

✓ In January 2014 in Riga the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia together with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office organised a **Nordic Baltic (NB8)/UK/Poland Cyber Policy Roundtable**. It reinforced the understanding that like-minded countries can make a positive and important difference when it comes to ongoing international dialogue at various levels and fora.

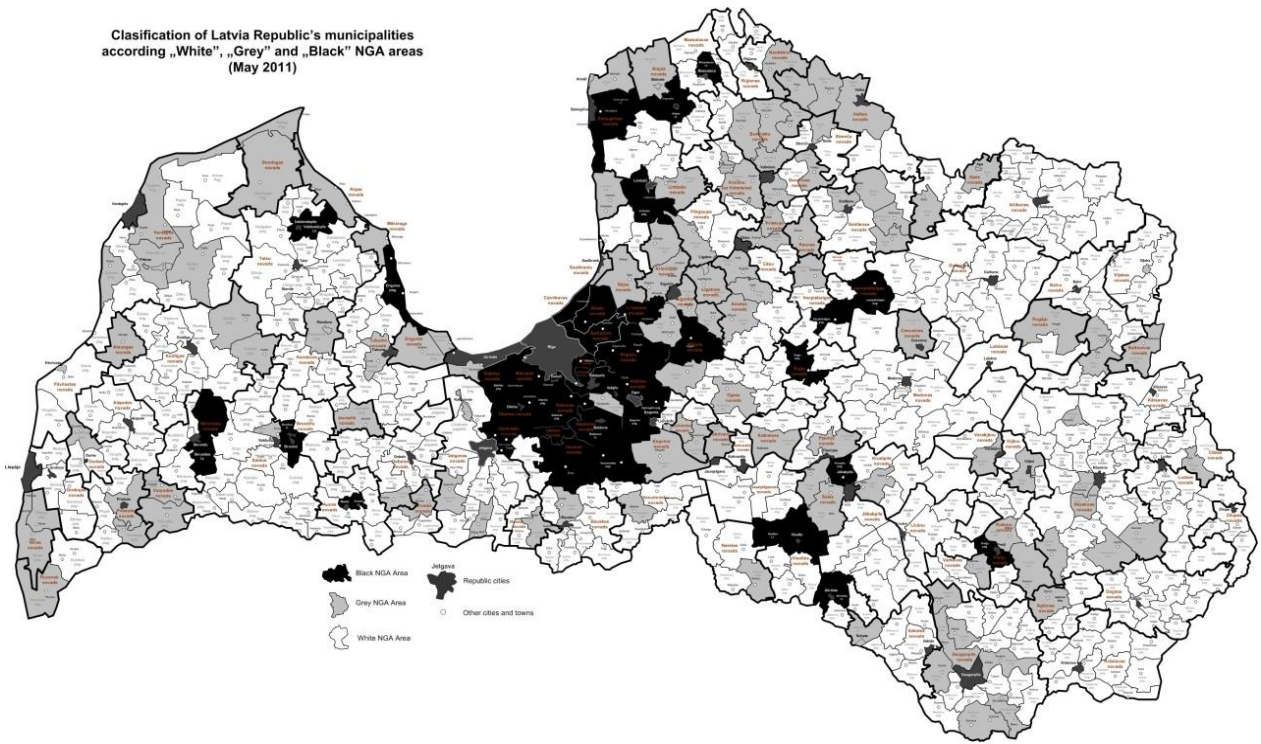
Section V: Profiles of Progress – Select Case Studies

I Broadband in Latvia

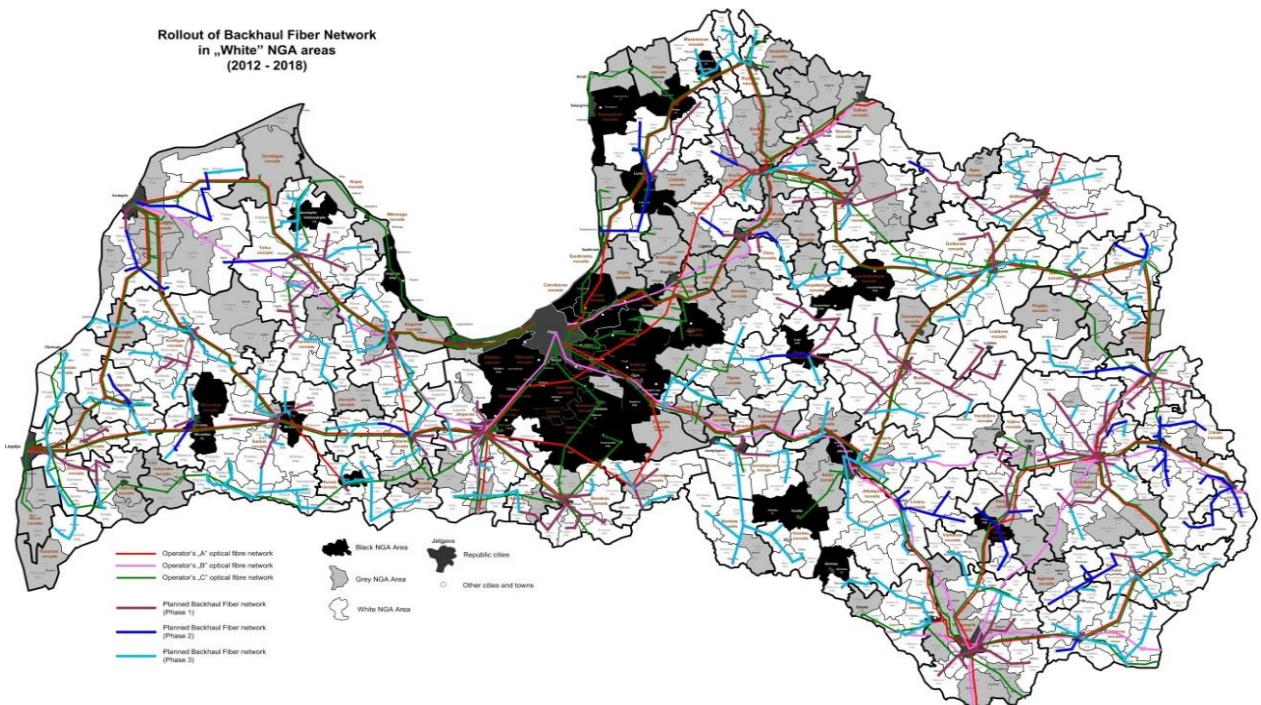
Including rural Latvia in the broadband world

Realization of the project "Next Generation Network for rural areas":

Classification of Latvia Republic's municipalities according „White”, „Grey” and „Black” NGA areas (May 2011)



Rollout of Backhaul Fiber Network in „White” NGA areas (2012 - 2018)



National broadband plan 2013 – 2020 foresees that Digital Agenda for Europe targets for broadband are met. To achieve this, further development and establishment of fiber backhaul infrastructure (*the “middle mile”*) for wholesale broadband services in rural areas (*which are not covered and where there are no plans for development of a next generation network in the near future*), a state aid program, co-financed by the EU, is currently being implemented. According to this program, the completion of its first phase, done by 2015, will ensure establishment of approximately 165 new points for a wholesale broadband access. The second phase will follow with the establishment of at least 200 new points for a wholesale broadband access.

II. Library success stories:

- ✓ [“Computers aren’t dragons”](#) – success story from Latvian library for the blind,
- ✓ [“Depression is no threat to us!”](#) – success story from Broceni public library,
- ✓ [“The Library gets closer to its user: challenges and opportunities”](#) – success story of library services for people with limited social activity,
- ✓ [“Centre of Life”](#) – a video about Jaunklidzis public library located in the rural territory of Plāni parish in Strenči district,
- ✓ [“Never say never”](#) – success story from Trapene public library,
- ✓ [“I wouldn’t swap my library for any other!”](#) – success story from Saulkrasti public library,
- ✓ [“Fight and don’t give in”](#) – success story from Berzaune public library,
- ✓ [“Businessman in the library”](#) – success story from Ogre public library,
- ✓ [“Renewing life’s rhythm”](#) – success story from Sauriesi public library,
- ✓ [“My favorite color”](#) – success story from Rusona public library,
- ✓ [“Mum, do you know that?”](#) – success story from Jekabpils public library

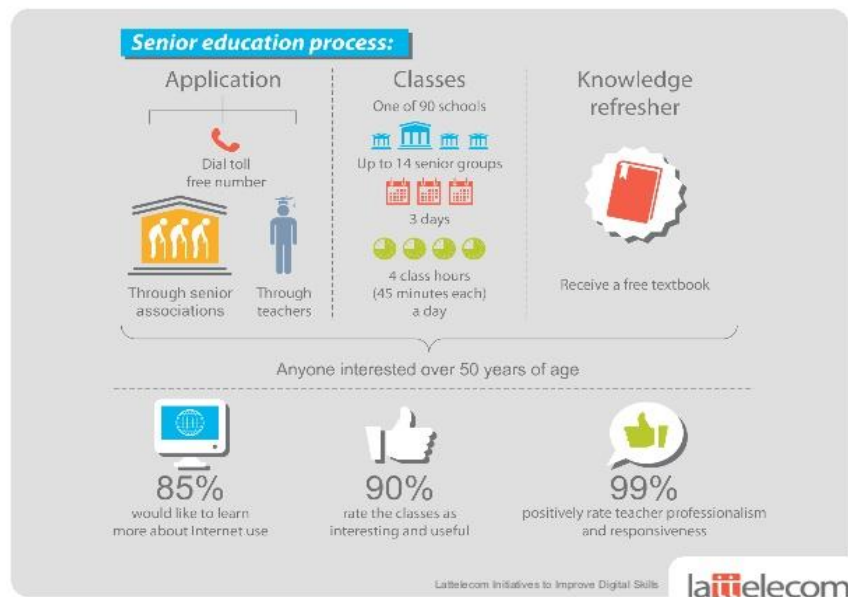
III. Computer literacy project for seniors “Connect, Latvia!”



“Connect Latvia”, a project of free computer education for seniors (50+), is being conducted for the 5th year by Lattelecom Ltd, the largest electronic services provider in Latvia. The goal of the “Connect Latvia!” project is to minimise the digital divide in society and prevent the social exclusion of seniors aged over 50 by promoting computer and digital skills. It is the only project of this scale in Latvia carried out by a private sector company, offering free computer training to one of the most vulnerable groups in society – seniors.

In 2012 honouring the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations target was to educate at least 6000 seniors aged 50 and older, from whom more than 80% continues to use gained e-skills after end of the project. From April to November in 2012 more than 6600 seniors have been trained (*it is at least a third of all high school graduates who graduate high school in one year*). In 2013 already more than 7000 applications has been received, 52% of them starts training with no e-skills, including even turning on/off of the computer.

But what is the most effective way of training for such large number of seniors, who are located all over Latvia? The answer is – to ensure training access throughout the country, Lattelecom Ltd created a training scheme involving volunteer teachers who work at local schools, digital centres, libraries and other institutions with computer classes. At the beginning of the project teachers undergo a training course designed by Lattelecom Ltd, so that they can in turn teach the program to seniors.



IV. ICT training for small and micro enterprises for raising competitiveness and productivity

LIKTA (*Latvian Information and Communications Technology Association*) project **“ICT training for small and micro enterprises for raising competitiveness and productivity”** is aimed to raise productivity and increase long-term competitiveness of small and micro-enterprises by teaching how to effectively use of ICT technologies and e-skills. It provides 16 training programs in 3 levels for SMEs in all territory of Latvia:

- 1st level training – Digital Skills and ICT Solutions for the Facilitation of Competitiveness;
- 2nd level training – The Usage of ICT Tools for Developing SME Competitiveness and Development;
- 3rd level training – The Usage of ICT Solutions for Raising Business Effectiveness and the Development of Export.

The project (No. APA/1.3.1.1.1/12/03/001) is financed by European Social Fund and supervised by Latvian Investment and Development Agency within the program sub-activity 1.3.1.1.1. “Support for trainings of employees in order to promote the business competitiveness - support for organized trainings in a partnership”. The project has been started in April 2012 and will continue for 3 years.

Section VI: The Way Forward and the Vision Beyond 2015

Latvia is determined to continue the work on building inclusive knowledge societies even in broader context, and stay open for further cooperation and collaboration in identifying challenges, defining and achieving the post-2015 sustainable development goals.

✓ There are *Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014 -2020 (Guidelines)* was elaborated to continue development of existing policies and to determine the priorities in the area of ICT for the European Union Structural Funds Programming period for 2014 – 2020.

As the goal of the Guidelines were determined to provide the opportunity for anyone to use ICT, to create a knowledge-based economy and to improve the overall quality of life by contributing the national competitiveness, increasing an economic growth and job creation.

Guidelines were developed in close cooperation with ICT industry, entrepreneurs representing partners, local and public government. An analysis for needs and challenges was managed in a perspective of 360°. As result was agreement with all included partners about priorities in the area of ICT for enhancing the national competitiveness, economic growth and job creation. The Guidelines contains the current analysis and conclusions of Information Society Policy implementation.

- Special attention in the Guidelines is devoted for implementation of an open data principle in the public administration. This principle hides so far really undervalued growth potential of the digital economy. Reforming the information resources that arise in the public administration with aim to provide the public administration functions in the new innovative business ideas and services, administration will be able to generate new economic growth.

- The other issue in the Guidelines is decreasing of administrative burdens, optimizing operating processes in the public administration and increasing its efficiency as well as simplifying delivery of public services. It is possible by using ICT and tools. Entrepreneurs could reduce the administrative burdens and costs and that allows more resources focus on its entrepreneurship.

Considering the analysis in the area of Information Society, the European Council conclusions (*October, 2013*) contained aspects of the digital single market and objectives of the European Digital Agenda, Guidelines define seven action lines.

- ✓ According to the Guidelines, it is planned to open the public administration data and transaction services for other users; it is planned to develop shared platform and services for providing public services; planned to implement of an official electronic addresses for citizens and entrepreneurs; planned to deliver and accept automated electronic invoice; actions planed for digitization and accessibility of the cultural heritage and digitization of public services; encouraging use of the Latvian language in the digital environment and an efficient implementation of e-health.

- ✓ Taking forward the improvements of the quality of involving the society and civil society organizations in decision-making processes, here are plans to develop and put into operation by the beginning of 2016 a joint portal for drafting of legislation and development planning documents. The portal is expected to enhance the transparency of the processes of document drafting and decision-making in the central government and local authorities, as well as making it easier for the society to quickly obtain transparent information on the legislation and development planning documents being drafted and engage and participate in drafting.

- ✓ According to the Guidelines activities will focus on the areas that will facilitate small and medium sized *enterprises* as well as citizens' motivation for e-skills learning. Planned actions: public information, e-skills development of citizens' and entrepreneurs', increasing the ICT competences of public administration, ICT practitioners and professionals preparation for the requirements of the labor market as well as increasing share of algorithmic thinking and information literacy in education programs.

- ✓ Latvia regards ICTs as a driver for growth, employment and development through providing enabling environment. We support a single, open, free, secure and trustworthy Internet, subject to an inclusive, transparent and accountable multistakeholder model of governance. The same laws and norms that apply in other areas of our day-to-day lives should apply also online.

- ✓ By the free movement of people, goods and services flow Latvia must be a part of the Digital Single Market. To provide cross-border cooperation in the Digital Single Market, free movement of goods and services as well as the free flow of citizen, must be provided a national e-governance solutions for interoperability with the EU solutions and must be developed content for a cross-border services and solutions for exchange of information across different sectors. It is planned to establish solutions for the cross-border e-services and data exchange solutions as well as to develop basic solutions for providing the cross-border services.

There is a need for strengthening the development of digital content, rather than infrastructure. New approach for digital skills through professional development is needed. Curriculum should provide integrated framework for ICT competencies throughout all areas. There is a need for language barrier solutions to promote Massive Open Online Course further development in higher education.