

## TARGETED ANALYSIS //

# METRO

The role and future perspectives of Cohesion Policy in the planning of Metropolitan Areas and Cities

Annex XI // Riga Metropolitan Area case study



RIGA CITY COUNCIL  
CITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

This Targeted Analysis is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States the United Kingdom and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinions of members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

#### **Authors**

Zaiga Krišjāne, Jānis Krūmiņš, Guido Sechi, Toms Skadiņš, University of Latvia (Latvia)

#### **Advisory group**

Stakeholders: Francesca Cattaneo, Claudia Fassero, Mario Lupo, Irene Mortari, Valeria Sparano, Metropolitan City of Turin (IT) | Clémentine Dubois, Odile Huiban, Lyon Metropolitan Area (FR) | Agata Blacharska, Joanna Bogdziewicz-Wrblewska, Aleksandra Fijałkowska, Joanna Jaworska-Soral, Metropolitan Area of Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot (PL) | Filipe Ferreira, Lisbon Metropolitan Area (PT) | Alfredo Corbalan, Sandrine De Meyer, [perspective.brussels](http://perspective.brussels) (BE) | Katrīna Sudare, Jānis Ušča, Riga City Council (LV) | Soňa Raszková, Brno City Municipality (CZ) | Alessandra Barbieri, Manuela Taverniti, Municipality of Florence (IT) | Xavier Estruch Bosch, Xavier Tiana Casablanca, Carlota Roses, Barcelona Metropolitan Area (ES) | Dorthe Nielsen, Pietro Reviglio, EUROCITIES | Guillaume Berret, Metropolis.

ESPON EGTC: Senior Project Expert: Piera Petruzzi, Financial Expert: Stefania Rigillo

#### **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the interviewees and to the members of Riga City Council and Riga Planning Region.

#### **Information on ESPON and its projects can be found at [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu).**

The website provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

ISBN: 978-2-919795-65-9

© **ESPON, 2021**

Published in December 2021

Graphic design by BGRAPHIC, Denmark

Printing, reproduction or quotation is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and a copy is forwarded to the ESPON EGTC in Luxembourg.

Contact: [info@espon.eu](mailto:info@espon.eu)

## TARGETED ANALYSIS //

# METRO

The role and future perspectives of Cohesion Policy in the planning of Metropolitan Areas and Cities

Annex XI // Riga Metropolitan Area case study



RIGA CITY COUNCIL  
CITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

# Table of contents

<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Foreword by Edvards Smiltēns .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 Case study area contextualisation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3 Metropolitan governance structure and cooperation activities .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Institutional framework .....	16
3.1.1 Other forms of cooperation .....	17
3.2 Evolution of metropolitan cooperation .....	20
3.3 Metropolitan development goals .....	21
3.3.1 Coherence with national and regional goals .....	23
3.3.2 Coherence with municipal goals .....	24
3.4 Metropolitan development and planning instruments .....	25
3.4.1 Instruments in the framework of other cooperation initiatives .....	29
3.4.2 Instrument and initiatives related to COVID-19 .....	30
3.5 Metropolitan financing and budgeting .....	31
3.6 Role of social groups and the business community in metropolitan governance .....	32
3.6.1 Social groups and the civil society .....	34
3.6.2 Business community .....	34
3.7 Participation to policy networks .....	35
<b>4 Cohesion policy governance .....</b>	<b>37</b>
4.1 EU cohesion policy institutional architecture and competences .....	37
4.1.1 The role of metropolitan actors .....	38
4.2 EU cohesion policy instruments at the metropolitan level .....	40
4.3 Involvement of social groups and the business community in the EU cohesion policy .....	45
4.4 The governance of EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency .....	46
4.5 Coordinating metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy .....	49
<b>5 Cohesion policy impact .....</b>	<b>55</b>
5.1 EU cohesion policy objectives and actions .....	55
5.1.1 Funded measures: main sectors and spatial distribution .....	60
5.2 Coherence and synergies with metropolitan objectives and instruments .....	65
5.2.1 Alignment with the goals defined in metropolitan instruments .....	65
5.2.2 Thematic priorities .....	66
5.2.3 Funding magnitude .....	67
5.3 Outcomes .....	70
5.4 The impact of the EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency .....	72
5.5 The impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation .....	73
<b>6 Main challenges and recommendations .....</b>	<b>75</b>
6.1 The role of Metropolitan Areas in the EU cohesion policy governance .....	75
6.2 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on (the achievement of) metropolitan goals .....	77
6.3 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation .....	78
<b>References .....</b>	<b>80</b>

# List of maps, figures, charts and tables

## List of maps

Map 2.1	Case study area .....	9
Map 3.1	Cooperation activities in RMA .....	19
Map 5.1	Distribution of EU funding (investments) in municipalities of the RPR .....	63

## List of figures

Figure 3.1	Examples of cooperation in RMA .....	18
Figure 3.2	Timeline of metropolitan cooperation.....	21
Figure 3.3	Tasks (goals) for organization of the Riga Metropolitan Area management process .....	22
Figure 3.4	Coordination mechanisms between the metropolitan development goals and the framework of national, regional and municipal goals .....	25
Figure 3.5	Types of public participation for Development plan of Riga Planning Region for 2021-2027 .....	34
Figure 4.1	The governance of the EU Cohesion policy in Latvia for the 2014-2020 period.....	38
Figure 4.2	The role of metropolitan actors in the EU cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period.....	39
Figure 4.3	Integrated Territorial Investments in Latvia for the 2014-2020 period.....	41
Figure 4.4	The governance of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility fund implementation in Latvia.....	48
Figure 4.5	The metropolitan governance network .....	51

## List of tables

Table 2.1	Population of Riga and surrounding areas of FUA at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups .....	9
Table 2.2	Employment and rank of the groups of economic activities in Riga and surrounding areas of FUA .....	10
Table 2.3	Population of Riga and surrounding areas of Riga Planning Region (prior to July 2021) at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups .....	11
Table 2.4	Employment (in thousands) and rank of the groups of economic activities in Riga and surrounding areas of Riga Planning Region (prior to July 2021) .....	13
Table 2.5	Population of Riga and surrounding areas of the new Riga Planning Region at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups .....	14
Table 3.1	Main planning instruments at national, regional and local level .....	26
Table 4.1	EU cohesion policy programmes and instruments in the Riga Metropolitan Area .....	43
Table 5.1	Objectives of the EU cohesion policy in the Metropolitan Area .....	55
Table 5.2	Proposed operational programme funding (2021-2027) .....	59
Table 5.3	Localisation, sector and resources of the main EUCP actions implemented in the Metropolitan Area .....	61
Table 5.4	Coherence and synergies between EUCP and metropolitan thematic priorities.....	65
Table 5.5	Amount of EU funds (investments) per sector/priority compared to the overall metropolitan budget in Riga Planning Region .....	68
Table 5.6	Share of expenses for the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance (2014-2020) .....	69
Table 5.7	Examples of outcomes of the EUCP (2014-2020).....	71

## Abbreviations

CFCA	Central Finance and Contracting Agency
CP	Cohesion policy
FUA	Functional urban area
EU	European Union
IASUD	Integrated actions for sustainable urban development
MEPRD	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoT	Ministry of Transport
NDP	National Development Plan
RCCDD	Riga City Council City Development Department
RMA	Riga Metropolitan Area
RPR	Riga Planning Region
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
SO	Specific objective

## Foreword by Edvards Smiltēns

Riga is the largest city in Latvia and, together with its metropolitan area, it forms the largest urban center in the Baltic States. Over the last 30 years, the capital region has undergone significant structural changes, which have contributed to the spatial transformation of the Riga metropolitan area, with rapid processes of change and related development challenges continuing today.

Riga metropolitan area is important for the city, as it strengthens the role of Riga as a globally oriented metropolis and promotes international competitiveness. At the same time, we have identified that sustainable mobility, access to services and integration of nature and recreation areas are topics that the municipality can most effectively address through cooperation at the metropolitan or Functional urban area level, providing tangible improvements in the quality of life for residents.

In recent years, Riga and neighboring municipalities have developed a common understanding of the need for cooperation. Under the leadership of the Riga planning region, an Action Plan for the development of the Riga metropolitan area has been developed, which sets out the priorities for the joint development of the area. Municipalities have been united in the Riga and neighboring municipalities Association of municipalities "Riga Metropolis". The aim of the Association is to promote both cooperation between local governments and cooperation with national and international institutions.

In the near future, one of the main challenges is to achieve more active involvement of national and EU level government and support for development of the Riga metropolitan area, in particular by cooperating in the implementation of priorities that also stimulate the achievement of policy objectives at other levels of government, as well as by jointly working on the development of new projects to promote the efficiency of urban and environmental management resources.

More than half of Latvia's population lives and works in the Riga metropolitan area and generates two thirds of national GDP, which forms the basis for making a significant contribution to achieving national economic, social, and environmental policy goals, as well as to implementing EU policy priorities.

The review of the formation of the Riga metropolitan area included in this ESPON METRO report marks the current process, while the proposed recommendations form a roadmap for the future development of the Riga metropolitan area. Through case studies, the study highlights the complexity, diversity, and functions of metropolitan formation in different regions of Europe. The research allows to be more clearly aware of the current development stage, significance, and further steps of the Riga metropolitan area for the implementation of a sustainably developed functional area of the capital.

The section of challenges and recommendations included in the Riga Metropolitan Area Case Study Report highlights the uncertainties and issues to be addressed jointly in the coming years regarding the management of the metropolitan area. This section of the study also provides valuable recommendations for other levels of government that are essential to promote multi-level governance for the development of the Riga metropolitan area and to promote resource efficiency in the region.



Edvards Smiltēns,

Deputy Chairman of the Riga City Council Riga City Council, Co – Chairman of the Board Union of Riga and Pierīga Municipalities RIGA METROPOLIS, Vice-Chairman of the Regional Development Council Riga planning region

# 1 Introduction

The report aims to detail the case study of Riga and its Metropolitan Area.

Metropolitan cooperation dates back to years after Latvia regained independence. Cooperation practices within the Riga region have been ongoing for about a quarter of a century; they were first established in 1996. Two years later, the public organisation “Riga Regional Development Council” was officially registered, voluntarily joining eight local municipalities of the Riga district.

The following important event concerning metropolitan cooperation was the creation of the Riga Planning Region, which was established at the end of 2006. Over the next years, several other cooperation entities have been created.

Numerous planning and strategic development documents have emphasised the importance and potential of Riga as a Northern European metropolis. They have also indicated the need to address issues related to the creation and development of the Riga Metropolitan Area, since it is one of the areas of national interest.

In recent years, considerable work has been done regarding the development and the strengthening of the Metropolitan Area. Since 2010 various documents have stressed the importance of the Riga Metropolitan Area and successful cooperation between various stakeholders, which is essential. Still, there are multiple challenges. For example, a decision has yet to be made on the territory (boundaries) of the Metropolitan Area.

Riga Metropolitan Area is at an early stage of establishment, and there are several ways to define the territory of the Riga case study. Currently, units of analysis differ in geography, the number of municipalities, and data availability. Nonetheless, each of these territorial units is home to a considerable part of the population of Latvia. While Riga has a larger population than the surrounding areas, the population in the capital city has decreased. Meanwhile, surrounding areas have tended to experience population growth.

Overall, it is important not to underestimate the impact of Riga and its surrounding areas on the economy of Latvia. In 2018 Riga's GDP alone accounted for more than 50% of the country's total. There are notable disparities between Riga and its surrounding area.

In the next chapter, the case study area is characterised. It highlights three main approaches in defining the Riga case study territory geographically. These include the functional urban area (FUA), Riga Planning Region and the new (new borders) Riga Planning Region. For the description of the mentioned territories, EUROSTAT databases and national level databases (mainly from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia) were used. The third section details the aspects of metropolitan governance structure and cooperation activities. Then, the focus shifts to cohesion policy governance, followed by a chapter on cohesion policy impact. Lastly, the main challenges and recommendations are listed.

The analysis mainly focuses on the pre–July 2021 Planning Region since it had the best overall data availability. It should also be mentioned that as a result of the administrative territorial reform there were notable changes in terms of the number of municipalities (which decreased), the areas of municipalities (which increased) and the areas of planning regions, as well as municipalities belonging to them. In this aspect, the number of municipalities of the Riga Planning Region decreased considerably, along with its area.

Along with desk analysis, several engagement activities were also performed. This included interviews with stakeholders, numerous discussions with members of the advisory group and Riga Planning Region, participation (as observers) in seminars about cooperation involving Riga and surrounding municipalities, and participation ESPON MISTA workshop.



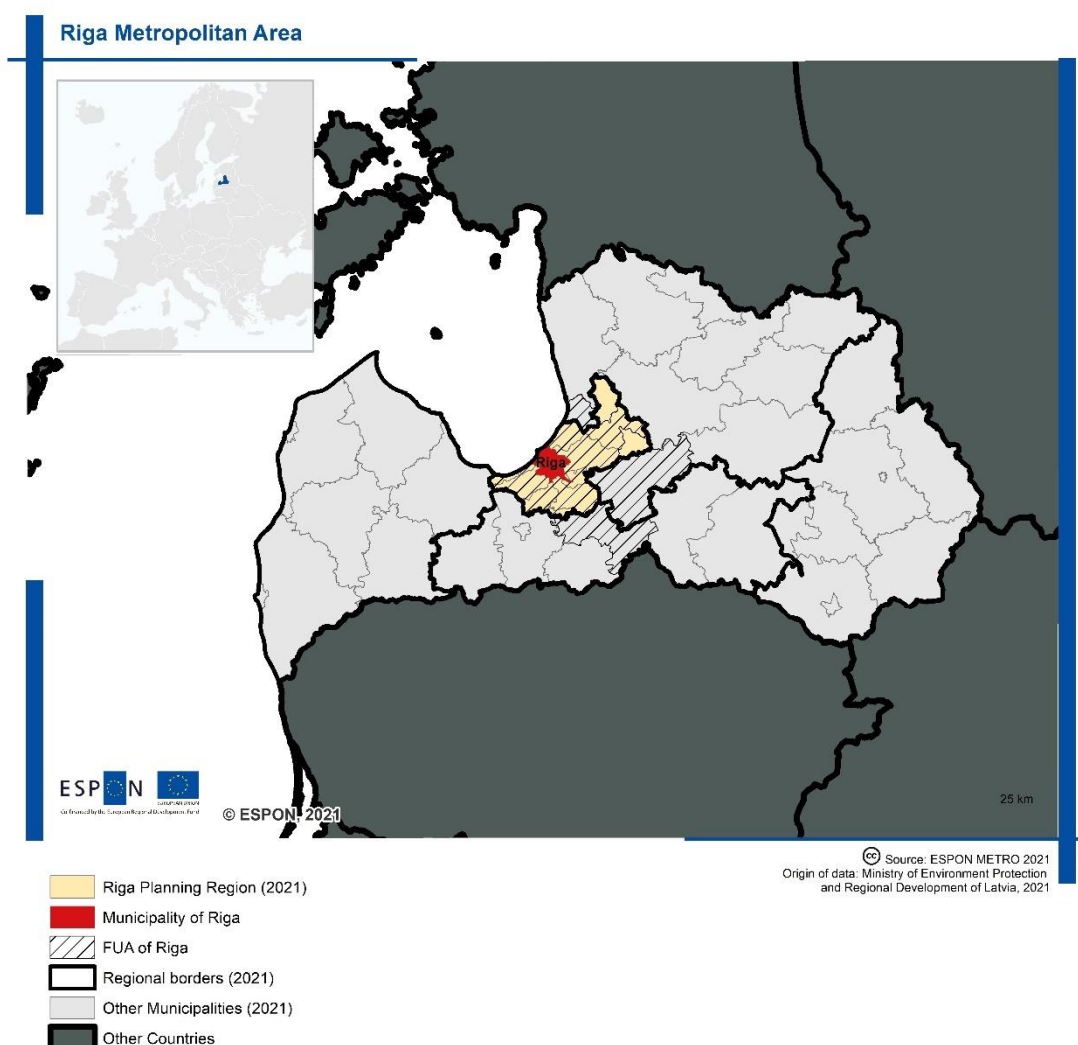
## 2 Case study area contextualisation

There are several ways to define the territory of the Riga case study. These include the Riga Planning Region, the Riga Functional Urban Area (further on referred to as FUA), Pieriga statistical region (prior to the July 2021 reform; the same extent as the Riga Planning Region, except for Riga, which is a separate statistical region) and the new territory (borders) Riga Planning Region. They are rather different in terms of geography, number of municipalities and data availability.

When analysing the Riga Metropolitan Area development, one of the most critical challenges is its territorial framework. Starting from July of 2021 territory of the Riga Planning Region will change considerably. It also differs from the FUA (having a significantly smaller area). Hence, a decision has yet to be made on the territory of the Metropolitan Area.

Territories FUA, Planning Region (until July of 2021) and new Planning Region are shown in Map 2.1.

**Map 2.1**  
**Case study area**



Source: authors' elaboration based on EUROSTAT, MEPRD and RPR data.

Twenty-three municipalities (prior to the reform, which will be completed in July of 2021) were part of the functional area. Instead of the traditional 15% threshold of employed residents commuting to the core city, a 30% one was used to delineate the Riga FUA. The total area of this territory is 6145 km<sup>2</sup>. Riga makes up 307 km<sup>2</sup>, while the ring part – 5838 km<sup>2</sup>. Overall, it makes up 9.5% of Latvia's territory (CSB, 2020a).

In 2011 Riga FUA had a population of 958 015 residents, of which 299 378 or 31.2% of the total lived in the surrounding areas. FUA was home to 46.2% of the total population of Latvia. In 2018 the number of people living in the Functional urban area had decreased to 932 595. In this case, it was caused by a rather notable decrease in population in Riga. The capital population decreased by 4.1% (from 658 637 to 632 479) during this period. Despite the decline, the share of the total population of Latvia living in the FUA increased to 48.2%. Surrounding areas experienced a population increase of up to 300 116 inhabitants (32.2% of FUA's total population).

At the beginning of 2018, Riga had a population density of 2039 people per km<sup>2</sup>, surrounding areas of the functional extent had a much lower population density of 52.4 people per km<sup>2</sup>. FUA as a whole had a population density of 151.8 km<sup>2</sup> (CSB, 2020b), (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

As for the age structure (age groups shown in Table 2.1), in both areas, the largest group was the 25-44, followed by 45-64. Those aged 65 and older were the third-largest groups in Riga, whilst for surrounding areas, it was the 0-14. This difference was also evident in the shares for these groups (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

**Table 2.1**  
**Population of Riga and surrounding areas of FUA at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups**

Area	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	>65	Total
Riga	97 690	52 061	184 434	168 162	130 131	632 479
Share (%)	15.4	8.2	29.2	26.6	20.6	100
Surrounding areas	56 764	26 304	87 438	77 968	51 642	300 116
Share (%)	18.9	8.8	29.1	26	17.2	100
Total	154 454	78 365	271 872	246 130	181 773	932 595
Share (%)	16.6	8.4	29.2	26.4	19.5	100

Source: authors' elaboration based on EUROSTAT data

EUROSTAT has provided data on several aspects of employment for the year 2018. These include economically active population and unemployment data and the number of persons employed in one of ten different economic activities (groups; Table 2.2). Riga had most of the economically active population – 341 600 or 70% of the FUA. Surrounding areas had the remaining 30% (147 000). The total economically active population was 488 600. The economic activity rate was 64% for Riga and 63% for the entire FUA (no data was available for surrounding areas). The shares were quite similar in terms of the economically active population aged 20-64 and persons employed aged 20-64. For the former, Riga accounted 69.9% of the total economically active population (323 800 out of the total 463 500), and for the latter, Riga accounted 69.5% of the total or 302 400 out of 434 900 (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

As for the total number of persons employed, the dominance of Riga was even more notable. In Riga, 466 125 people were employed, which accounted for 78.7% of the total, 592 395. Surrounding areas of the FUA had 126 270 (the remaining 21.3%) (EUROSTAT, 2021a). The employment and rank of the groups of economic activities in Riga and surrounding areas of FUA are shown in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2****Employment and rank of the groups of economic activities in Riga and surrounding areas of FUA**

Economic activities	Core	Rank	Surrounding areas	Rank	Total	Rank
Employment (jobs) in agriculture, fishery (NACE Rev. 2, A)	1 777	10.	2 728	9.	4 505	10.
Employment (jobs) in mining, manufacturing, energy (NACE Rev. 2, B-E)	42 483	4.	22 930	3.	65 413	4.
Employment (jobs) in construction (NACE Rev. 2, F)	33 680	5.	10 035	5.	43 715	5.
Employment (jobs) in trade, transport, hotels, restaurants (NACE Rev. 2, G to I)	142 188	1.	41 561	1.	183 749	1.
Employment (jobs) in information and communication (NACE Rev. 2, J)	30 372	6.	2 560	8.	32 932	7.
Employment (jobs) in financial and insurance activities (NACE Rev. 2, K)	15 741	9.	1 052	10.	16 793	9.
Employment (jobs) in real estate activities (NACE Rev. 2, L)	18 064	8.	4 105	7.	22 169	8.
Employment (jobs) in professional, scientific and technical activities; administrative and support service activities (NACE Rev. 2, M and N)	63 661	3.	10 614	4.	74 275	3.
Employment (jobs) in public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities (NACE Rev. 2, O to Q)	97 544	2.	25 933	2.	123 477	2.
Employment (jobs) in arts, entertainment and recreation; other service activities; activities of household and extra-territorial organizations and bodies (NACE Rev. 2, R to T)	20 615	7.	4 752	6.	25 367	7.

Source: authors' elaboration based on EUROSTAT data

The leading group of sectors of economic activity in Riga FUA is trade, transport, hotels, and restaurants, followed by public administration, education, human health and social work activities. Their rank is also uniform for the core and surrounding area. Scientific and technological activities in Riga's information and communication sector have a higher position (third vs fourth) than in the surrounding regions. This is just one of the examples that shows that there were no notable differences in ranks of sectors of economic activity for all of FUA, core and surrounding areas.,

While Riga had a much higher number of employed people, it also had a much higher number of unemployed people – 22 300 to 7 600 (a total of 29 900 for FUA). Unfortunately, the unemployment rate (the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force) data is available only for the core and the whole FUA. These were 7% and 6%, respectively (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

GDP for the whole FUA was 18 655 460 000 euro (EUROSTAT, 2021a). Since CSB also provides data on the Gross domestic product, it was possible to calculate the GDP for the surrounding areas by subtracting the GDP of Riga (14 483 156 000 euro; provided by CSB) from the total value (CSB, 2020c). Hence, the GDP for the surrounding areas was 4 172 304 000 euro, nearly three times smaller than for Riga. Overall, the GDP of FUA accounted for more than 50% of the country's total, which was 26 962 896 000 euro.

All of the municipalities of the FUA have at least 30% of their working-age population working in (commuting to) Riga. In 2017 the share of journeys to work by public transport (rail, bus or tram) was 27.9%, while the

share of trips to work by bicycle was just 4.1%. Unfortunately, the precise allocation of journeys to work by personal car or motorcycle is unavailable, though it is clear that they made up the majority (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

Another RMA definition is the Riga Planning Region, which comprises 30 (prior to July 2021) municipalities. Its area is 10 192 km<sup>2</sup>. It is also considered a Metropolitan region by the European Commission (Urban Data Platform Plus, 2021). It makes up 9.5% of Latvia's total area (CSB, 2020a).

Both in 2011 and 2018, the RMA population was larger than for Riga FUA. In 2011 a total of 1 030 064 people lived in the territories making up the Planning Region. 371 427 people (36%) lived in the surrounding area. 49.8% of the total population of Latvia lived in the territories of RPR. In 2018 (compared to 2011), the population had decreased similarly to the FUA case (down to 999 887). The shrinkage of Riga mostly caused this; however, in this case, the surrounding areas had also lost population. Again, despite the decrease, the share of the RPR population had increased, as 51.7% of the total population lived in the territories of RPR. Population density was 98.1 people per km<sup>2</sup> (CSB, 2020b).

The age structure (Table 2.3) was comparable to the case of FUA. The difference relates to the shares and number of people for the youngest and oldest groups in surrounding areas. When comparing data of FUA, the distribution is more similar (CSB, 2020b), (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

**Table 2.3**

**Population of Riga and surrounding areas of Riga Planning Region (prior to July 2021) at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups**

Area	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	>65	Total
Riga	97 690	52 061	184 434	168 162	130 131	632 479
Share (%)	15.4	8.2	29.2	26.6	20.6	100
Surrounding areas	66 597	33 300	104 374	96 835	66 302	367 408
Share (%)	18.1	9.1	28.4	26.4	18	100
Total	164 287	85 361	288 808	264 997	196 433	999 887
Share (%)	16.4	8.5	28.9	26.5	19.6	100

Source: authors' elaboration based on CSB and EUROSTAT data

According to CSB data, the economically active population in the Planning Region was 508.8 thousand residents aged 15-64. For the surrounding areas, it was 183.1 thousand, whilst for Riga – 325.7 thousand. The economic activity rate for the Planning Region, surrounding areas, and Riga was 80.6%, 79.5% and 81.2%, respectively. Surrounding areas had a total of 174.3 thousand persons employed, whilst Riga had 304.2 thousand. The entire Planning Region accounts for a total of 478.4 thousand (CSB, 2020d)

CSB also provides data on employment in Riga and the surrounding areas of the Riga Planning Region (for 2018). However, no comparison can be made between this territory and FUA because, as can be seen in Table 2.4, the groups of economic activities mainly differ from the EUROSTAT data. It should also be mentioned that this data does not cover the 15-64 age group but provides the total number of employed people (in thousands). Hence, the Planning Region accounts for 498.7 thousand employed people. Riga, however, accounts for 316.5 thousand and the surrounding areas – for 182.2 thousand employed people (CSB, 2020e).

**Table 2.4****Employment (in thousands) and rank of the groups of economic activities in Riga and surrounding areas of Riga Planning Region (prior to July 2021)**

Economic activities	Core	Rank	Surrounding areas	Rank	Total	Rank
(NACE Rev. 2. group A) Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Less than 1	10.	10.1	9.	10.1	10.
(B-E) Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, other industry	37.1	4.	29.1	3.	66.2	4.
(F) Construction	24	5.	18	4.	42	5.
(G, I) Trade, accommodation and food service activities	70.2	1.	40.2	1.	110.4	1.
(H, J) Transportation, storage, information and communication	52.5	3.	17.5	5.	70	3.
(K-N) Financial, insurance, scientific and administrative activities; real estate activities	54.6	2.	20.8	2.	75.4	2.
(O) Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	18.6	8.	10.7	8.	29.3	8.
(P) Education	23.9	6.	14.7	6.	38.6	6.
(Q) Human health and social work activities	15.7	9.	11.4	7.	27.1	9.
(R-U) Other services	19.9	7.	9.7	10.	29.6	7.

Source: authors' elaboration based on EUROSTAT data

Those employed in trade, accommodation and food service activities were the highest-ranked group, followed by financial, insurance, scientific and administrative activities and real estate activities. The rank was uniform for the core, surrounding areas and all of the Planning Region. For other groups, the difference was more pronounced than in the FUA case.

CSB also provided data on unemployment. The number of unemployed persons and unemployment rate in Riga from the national dataset differs from EUROSTAT data – 21.6 thousand (unemployment rate of 5.4%) compared to 22 300 and 7%. The difference in the unemployment rate can be explained by the fact that CSB calculates it not as the share of unemployed persons to the labour force but as a share of the active population. In the surrounding areas' of the Planning Region unemployment rate was 3.8% (8.8 thousand), while the entire Planning Region had 30.4 thousand unemployed persons and an unemployment rate of 4.8% (CSB, 2020d).

The average net salary in Riga was 829 euro (2018), whereas, for the Pieriga region, it was 705 euro. For the whole Planning Region, it was 802 euro. None of the other regions surpassed the 700 euro mark, with the Kurzeme region having the lowest average salary of 641 euro (CSB, 2020f).

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia publishes data on GDP for the entire country, statistical regions and cities of the Republic, somewhat enabling comparison between core and ring and comparison with the nationwide situation. The latest data on GDP is available for the year 2018; however, since data on FUA provided from EUROSTAT is for 2017, selected data from CSB is also from that year. Riga had a GDP of 14 483 156 000 euro, whereas Pieriga statistical region had nearly 3.3 times smaller GDP - 4 307 947 000 euro. Riga's GDP alone accounted for more than 50% of the country's total (56%, to be precise). The Planning Region had a larger GDP than for the FUA - 18 791 103 000 euro compared to 18 655 460 000 euro. Other regions had a notably smaller GDP. Vidzeme, Latgale and Zemgale regions all had a GDP under 2 billion euro, and only the Kurzeme region surpassed the 2 billion mark (2 519 158 000). These disparities were also evident per

capita - Riga was notably ahead of the other regions. GDP per capita in the capital was 25 820 euro, and it was the only region that surpassed the national value of 15 129 euro. Pieriga region had the second largest GDP (11 193 euro). As for the other regions, only in Kurzeme, the GDP value was above 10 000 euro (CSB, 2020c).

The last two paragraphs highlight the disparities between the core and surrounding areas and between these two territories and the rest of the country.

EUROSTAT has also provided data on added value (gross added value at basic prices) for 14 sectors for the whole Riga Planning Region. Most of these sectors match the employment mentioned earlier sectors, with four sectors resulting from sectors being merged. The total added value was 16 281 100 000 euro. The top 2 non-merged sectors were trade, transport, hotels, restaurants (4 428 500 000 euro; 27.2%) sectors and the sector of public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities (2 385 610 000 euro; 14.7%). The added value for the sector of mining, manufacturing, energy was the third highest with 2 180 260 000 euro (13.4%). Out of the remaining sector groups, professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service sector and information and communication sector surpassed the billion euro mark (EUROSTAT, 2021b).

Mobility wise, the Planning Region has strong commuting ties to Riga. In 2016 (on average), 49.3% of working-age people from urban areas and 51.1% of working-age people from rural areas were work commuters to Riga. Outbound commuters (again on average) made up 17.9% of all the employed people in urban areas and 16.4% in rural areas (Skadins et al., 2019).

The boundaries of Planning Regions (NUTS3) were reassessed. Nine municipalities (after the administrative territorial reform) form the new Riga Planning Region (CoM, 2020). All these municipalities are subject to closer cooperation activities. The total area of this territory is 3051.5 km<sup>2</sup>; this is excluding Riga, its area is 307 km<sup>2</sup> (thus, the whole area is 3358.5 km<sup>2</sup>). It makes up approximately 6% of Latvia's total area (CSB, 2020a).

In 2011 (based on census data), the new Riga Planning Region had a population of 888 696, of which 658 637 or 74.1% lived in Riga, and 230 059 or 25.9% lived in the surrounding areas. The population in this territory was smaller than for both the Planning Region and FUA. The total population of the region made up 42.9% of Latvia's population (CSB, 2020b).

In 2018 the number of people living in the new Riga Planning Region was down to 869 941. This was again caused by a rather notable decrease in population in Riga. Still, those living in Riga made up the majority of the population, 72.7% to be exact. Meanwhile, municipalities making up the surrounding areas experienced an increase and had a population of 237 462. The region's total population made up 45% of Latvia's population (so again, a growth of share, despite a decrease in absolute numbers for the entire area). Surrounding areas had a population density of 77.8 people per km<sup>2</sup>, while the population density for the whole of the new Riga Planning Region was 259 people per km<sup>2</sup> (CSB, 2020b).

Age structure for this territory (Table 2.5) was comparable to the FUA (CSB, 2020b), (EUROSTAT, 2021a).

**Table 2.5**

**Population of Riga and surrounding areas of the new Riga Planning Region at the beginning of 2018 divided into age groups**

Area	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	>65	Total
Riga	97 690	52 061	184 434	168 162	130 131	632 479
Share (%)	15.4	8.2	29.2	26.6	20.6	100
Surrounding areas	45 860	20 243	70 363	61 382	39 614	237 462
Share (%)	19.3	8.5	29.6	25.8	16.7	100
Total	143 550	72 304	254 797	229 544	169 745	869 941
Share (%)	16.5	8.3	29.3	26.4	19.5	100

Source: authors' elaboration based on CSB and EUROSTAT data \* - new borders from July 1st, 2021.

Unemployment rate data provided by the State Employment Agency of the Republic of Latvia (SEA) shows that the unemployment rate was calculated by dividing the registered unemployed by the number of working-age (15 to 64) population. For the four municipalities, which will not be merged, the unemployment rate was taken directly from the SEA website. For the remaining five, the unemployment rate had to be calculated. This was done using the combined number (for the old municipalities making up the new ones) of the registered and combined working-age population. Since data was available only on a municipal level, there were some limitations. Notably, data for Īncukalna municipality was excluded since the two territorial units making up this municipality will end up in two different administrative units. Overall, 17 820 unemployed people were in the new Riga Planning Region, and the unemployment rate was just 3.4%. These were considerably lower than for the functional urban area (NVA, 2020).



## 3 Metropolitan governance structure and cooperation activities

### 3.1 Institutional framework

Over the years, many development planning documents have highlighted the importance of the Metropolitan Area:

- Among the main developments Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, coordinated cooperation between local authorities, regions, and public authorities is highlighted. It is necessary to ensure harmonised planning for transport infrastructure, public transport and urban (building) development. It is also essential to ensure the preservation and functioning of green areas and ecological corridors between urbanised areas (CSCC, 2010).
- Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 has also defined the Riga Metropolitan Area as an area of national interest with great value and importance for the sustainable development of the country, preservation of identity and includes strategic resources vital for the country's development (CSCC, 2010);
- Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 has emphasised that a unified economy of the Riga Metropolitan Area is the basis for the residential wellbeing of the entire area. There is also a necessity for active cooperation of municipalities in the agglomeration, the Riga Planning Region and state administration institutions (RCCDD, 2014).

Extensive work towards the Riga Metropolitan Area governance began on March 16th, 2018, when a decision was made by the Riga Planning Region (RPR) to start work on the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2018a). This action plan was approved on January 10th, 2020 (RPR, 2020a). It was also decided to support and facilitate the cooperation and increase of competencies between all of the territories involved in the development processes of the Metropolitan Area. This is an essential step to achieve the main goal of the action plan – a harmonised development of the Riga Metropolitan Area, coordination of processes within it. This should be done utilising an integrated approach and complex solutions to reconcile the interests of the state, Riga, municipalities and residents of the Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2020b).

These initiatives indicate that the input to establish metropolitan governance was generated through a top-down approach. However, there is also a bottom-up aspect, namely due to several cooperation organisations of municipalities in the vicinity of Riga (highlighting the fact that they do want to cooperate). Municipalities are involved in metropolitan cooperation in a broader sense through the Riga Planning Region, an organisation responsible for creating the Riga Metropolitan Area. In accordance with the region's status and functions specified by the Regional Development Law, the Riga Planning Region was established at the end of 2006 as a derived public entity. The Planning Region has been one of the main initiators and coordinators for promoting cooperation in the Riga Metropolitan Area. In addition to this, the organisation ensures regional development planning, coordination, cooperation of local governments and other public administration institutions and creation of planning specialists' cooperation network. A total of 30 municipalities (before July 2021 reform) made up the Riga Planning Region. After the reform a total of 9 municipalities make up the planning region (RPR, 2020b).

The Riga Planning Region Development Council had 35 members (again, before July 2021 reform; no information on changes is available). In accordance with the decision of the general meeting of October 13th, 2017, the Development Council consisted of six representatives of the Riga City Council and one representative each (either mayor or vice-mayor) from the other municipalities, Riga Planning Region. The Riga Planning Region Development Council members, based on the Regulations of the Riga Planning Region and the decisions of the Development Council, represent the interests of the region in working groups, monitoring committees, and commissions established by various state institutions. In 2012 the RPR Development Council created Pieriga Municipalities Cooperation Committee to promote cooperation between RPR municipalities whose administrative territories border with the city of Riga, thus contributing to the socioeconomic growth of the area (RPR, 2020c) (URBACT, 2015). It also provides coordination and cooperation with the institutions at the national level and RPR itself for activities that support regional development. Within



the Planning Region, there is also a development planners' workgroup. This group plays an influential role in decision making about various thematical questions. Cooperation can also include municipalities outside the Planning Region.

### 3.1.1 Other forms of cooperation

There are several other forms of cooperation between municipalities. Among them is the Pieriga Municipalities Association, which unites the local governments whose administrative territory is located in the Riga Planning Region. This cooperation is voluntary. It was established in October 2015 and included 14 municipalities (prior to July 2021 reform), and has four main goals:

- to realise and implement local protection of legal interests of Riga region municipalities;
- to promote cooperation between local governments of Riga region municipalities and organisations;
- to promote cooperation with the institutions and organisations in the Republic of Latvia and the international arena and promote local economic and social development in the Riga region.

This association is not provided with a specific budget; rather, it attracts funds (PMA, 2015). On January 11th, 2021, it was announced that it would become the Association of Riga and Pieriga Municipalities "Riga Metropolis." 9 municipalities (post July 2021 reform) are a part of Riga and Pieriga municipalities "Riga Metropolis." Decision-making in the association will be based on the principle of equality and unanimity, respecting the views and interests of both Riga and Pieriga municipalities (Riga.lv, 2021).

New directions and goals of the organisation "Riga Metropolis" set by the members of the association include:

- Promoting mutual collaboration between Riga and Pieriga local governments and with institutions and organisations of the Republic of Latvia, international and other countries;
- Promoting economic and social development of the Riga Metropolis;
- Increasing the competitiveness of the metropolis in the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea region, creating a more attractive environment for investment;
- The organisation of the provision of joint municipal services to the population, promoting their accessibility and quality;
- Promoting progress of joint development projects for the residents of the Riga Metropolis;
- Creating a common understanding in society about the Riga Metropolis;
- Promoting the establishment and provision of research and analytical base;
- Promoting the establishment and implementation of high-quality cooperation management mechanisms.

Members of the association also agreed on the following tasks of the association:

- Determining and developing the Riga Metropolis as a development space of national interest;
- Establishing a platform for coordination of opinions and political lobbying of the members of the association and their authorised persons;
- Defending and representing the interests of its members;
- Cooperation with state and local government institutions, political parties, and other legal and private persons;
- Submitting proposals to state and local government institutions, political parties, and other legal and private persons.

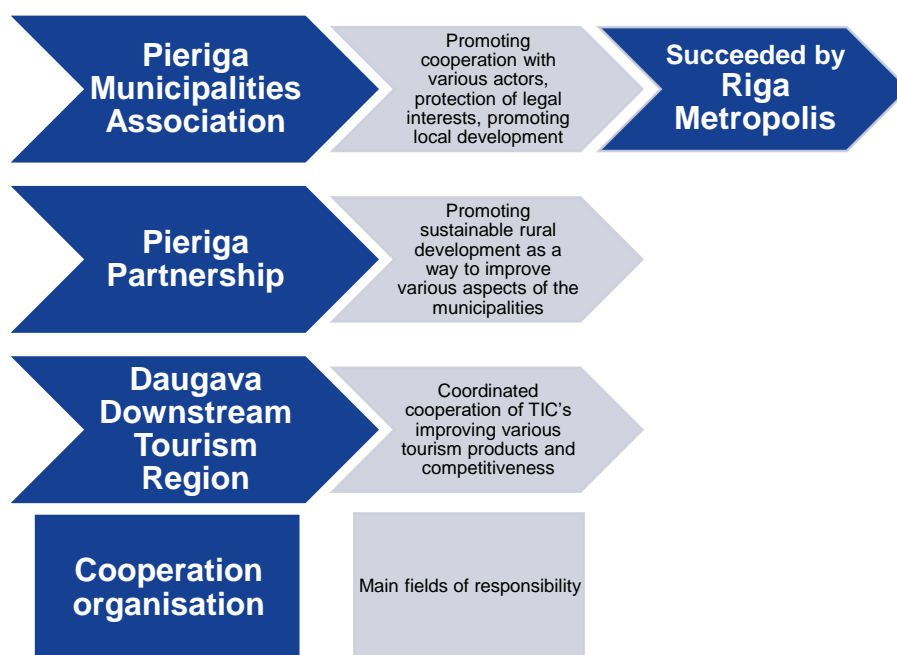
Pieriga Partnership is another example of cooperation. It was established on August 12th, 2009. This partnership is an association of legal entities and individuals on a voluntary and equal basis. Its main aims are to promote the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of Babīte, Olaine and Marupe counties (*novadi* in Latvian; one of the two types of municipalities, along with national-level cities; after the July 2021

reform Babite and Marupe counties were merged and became the Marupe municipality) by promoting sustainable rural development. Activities include both the increase of economic and social action and the improvement of the area's environment and sustainable use of existing resources. This association is not provided with a specific budget; however, it has attracted funding for the development of its municipalities. For instance, using the LEADER approach, during 2010-2014, the association has drawn 1 085 617.04 euro for regional development under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and 591 026.30 euro under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) (Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2018); (Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021a).

Daugava Downstream Tourism Region (*Daugavas Lejteces Tūrisma Reģions*) is yet another example. This partnership is created by six municipalities (prior to the July 2021 reform) and is running since July 2014. It ensures even closer and more coordinated cooperation of tourism information centres (TIC's), to strengthen the image of the region's tourism products and to improve the quality, to work on joint industry development projects and, lastly, to create a more competitive region (Vidzeme.com, 2014).

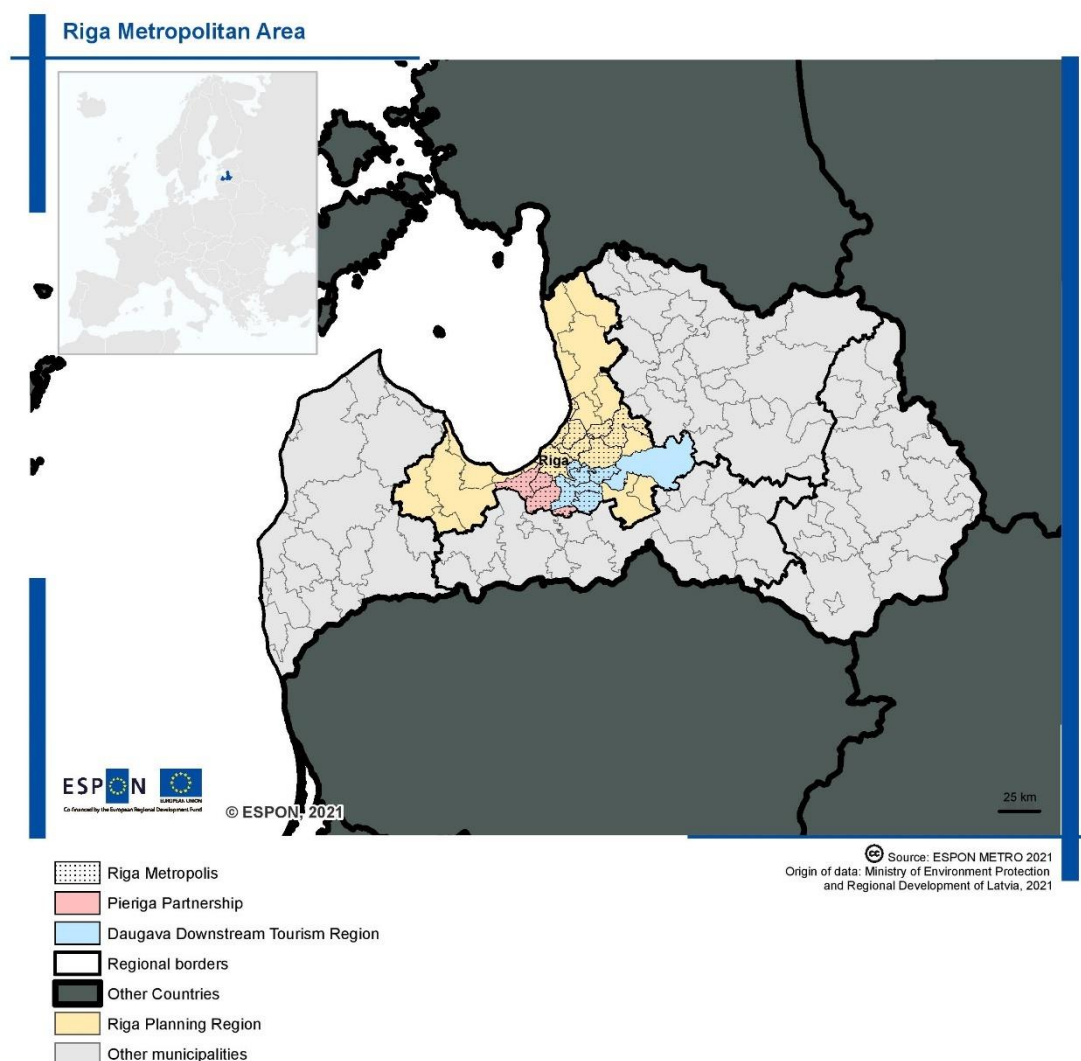
These examples of cooperation in the Metropolitan Area are summarised in Figure 3.1 and shown in Map 3.1. It should be noted that Map 3.1 shows the pre-July 2021 municipal borders, as they relevant in the context of this section.

**Figure 3.1**  
**Examples of cooperation in RMA**



Source: authors' elaboration, based on Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021a, PMA, 2015, Riga.lv, 2021, Vidzeme.com, 2014

**Map 3.1**  
**Cooperation activities in RMA**



Source: authors' elaboration, based on Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021a, Riga.lv, 2021, Vidzeme.com, 2014

Apart from these organizations, delegated contracts should be mentioned. Municipalities can delegate particular tasks which are within their competence areas. Examples of this include municipal police, libraries, construction boards and orphanage court. This is done to increase capacity. The subject of the delegation may be only an administrative task arising from the competence of the local government specified in an external regulatory enactment. The administration task is an activity in the field of public law, while the activities performed by the local government in the field of private law (e.g., property management) cannot be the subject of delegation (MEPRD, 2021a).

## Challenges and critical elements

- Over the years, many strategic planning documents have highlighted the importance of the Riga Metropolitan Area as an area of national interest. One of the main challenges faced when describing RMA is different approaches to defining it.
- In recent years considerable work has been done regarding the governance of the Riga Metropolitan Area. Still, there are many uncertainties regarding the functions and size of territory (boundaries), limiting the planning process.
- Currently, the institutional capacity of RMA is based predominantly on the Riga Planning Region. Riga Metropolis association is a bottom-up initiative of involved municipalities.

### 3.2 Evolution of metropolitan cooperation

In the mid-1960s (1966 to be exact) the territory of Riga agglomeration was for the first time identified (defined) in planning documents. Agglomeration was delineated based on labour commuting intensity and included territories at a radius of 50 to 60 kilometres from Riga. These areas formed a functional and spatial system. The development of the agglomeration and the functional structure of its territory were influenced by the economic planning typical of the Soviet period. Until 1991, the economic structure of the Riga agglomeration consisted of various industries. Several lower-ranking industrial companies were established near Riga. These included, for example, the chemical, mechanical engineering, and light industries. Starting from the 1960s, it was widespread to set up branches of Riga companies in territories of agglomeration. In most cases, they were set up in urban areas, facilitating development (Filimonenko, 1991).

Cooperation among municipalities within the Riga region has been ongoing for about a quarter of a century, as the Riga region was established in 1996 in collaboration between Riga and Jurmala and the Riga district. This was done to create a common platform for development planning as well as harmonised action. Two years later, the public organisation "Riga Regional Development Council" was officially registered, voluntarily joining the eight local municipalities of the Riga district (RPR, 2020b).

The following important event associated with metropolitan cooperation was the creation of the Riga Planning Region, which was established at the end of 2006. The Planning Region ensures collaboration between local governments and other state administrative institutions (RPR, 2018b). It has been the main initiator and coordinator for promoting cooperation in the Riga Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2020b). The subsequent cooperation institution was Pieriga Partnership which was established in August 2009 (Perigaspartneriba.lv, 2018). Afterwards, in 2010, the need to develop the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area was determined for the first time with the approval of the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 (CSCC, 2010). Such documents as regional policy guidelines for 2013-2019 (published in 2013) and the Latvian National Development Plan for 2014-2020 (CSCC, 2012), emphasising the importance and potential of Riga as a Northern European metropolis, also indicated the need to address issues related to creation and development of the Riga Metropolitan Area. The spatial development perspective of the RPR Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030 (RPR, 2015) also included a vision for the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area, and the development program for 2014-2020 (RPR, 2018c) had issues that need to be addressed. In 2014 Daugava Downstream Tourism Region (Vidzeme.com, 2014) emerged, whilst a year later Pieriga Municipalities Association was founded (PMA, 2015).

After all of these developments, work on the Riga Metropolitan Area commenced in March of 2018, when the Riga Planning Region made a decision to begin work on the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2018a). At the end of October 2019, the Riga City Council and Pieriga Municipalities Association signed a memorandum of cooperation, "On the Establishment of the Cooperation Framework for the Riga Metropolitan Area" (RCCDD, 2019). This was a very key step in terms of facilitating cooperation and establishing the association of Riga metropolis.

The action plan was approved in January 2020, along with a decision to support and facilitate the cooperation and increase of competencies between all territories involved in the development processes of the Metropolitan Area. The development of the plan was initiated by the Riga Planning Region (RPR, 2020b). The newest development regarding Metropolitan cooperation took place in January of 2021; at the general meeting of the members of the Pieriga Local Government Association, new statutes of the organisation were adopted, which means that in the future, it will be called the Association of Riga and Pieriga Municipalities "Riga Metropolis" (Riga.lv, 2021). The timeline of main events concerning the evolution of metropolitan cooperation are presented in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2**  
**Timeline of metropolitan cooperation**

<i>National level</i>		<i>Local level</i>	
		1996	Riga region is established
		1998	"Riga Regional Development Council" is officially registered (eight municipalities)
	2000		
Riga Planning Region is established	2006		
Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 highlights the need to develop the Action Plan	2010	2009	Pieriga Partnership is established
		2014	Daugava Downstream Tourism Region is created
		2015	Pieriga Municipalities Association is created
		2018	Work starts on the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area
		2019	Riga City Council and Pieriga Municipalities Association sign a Memorandum of cooperation
		2020	Action Plan is approved
		2021	The successor to Pieriga Municipalities Association, Riga Metropolis is formed

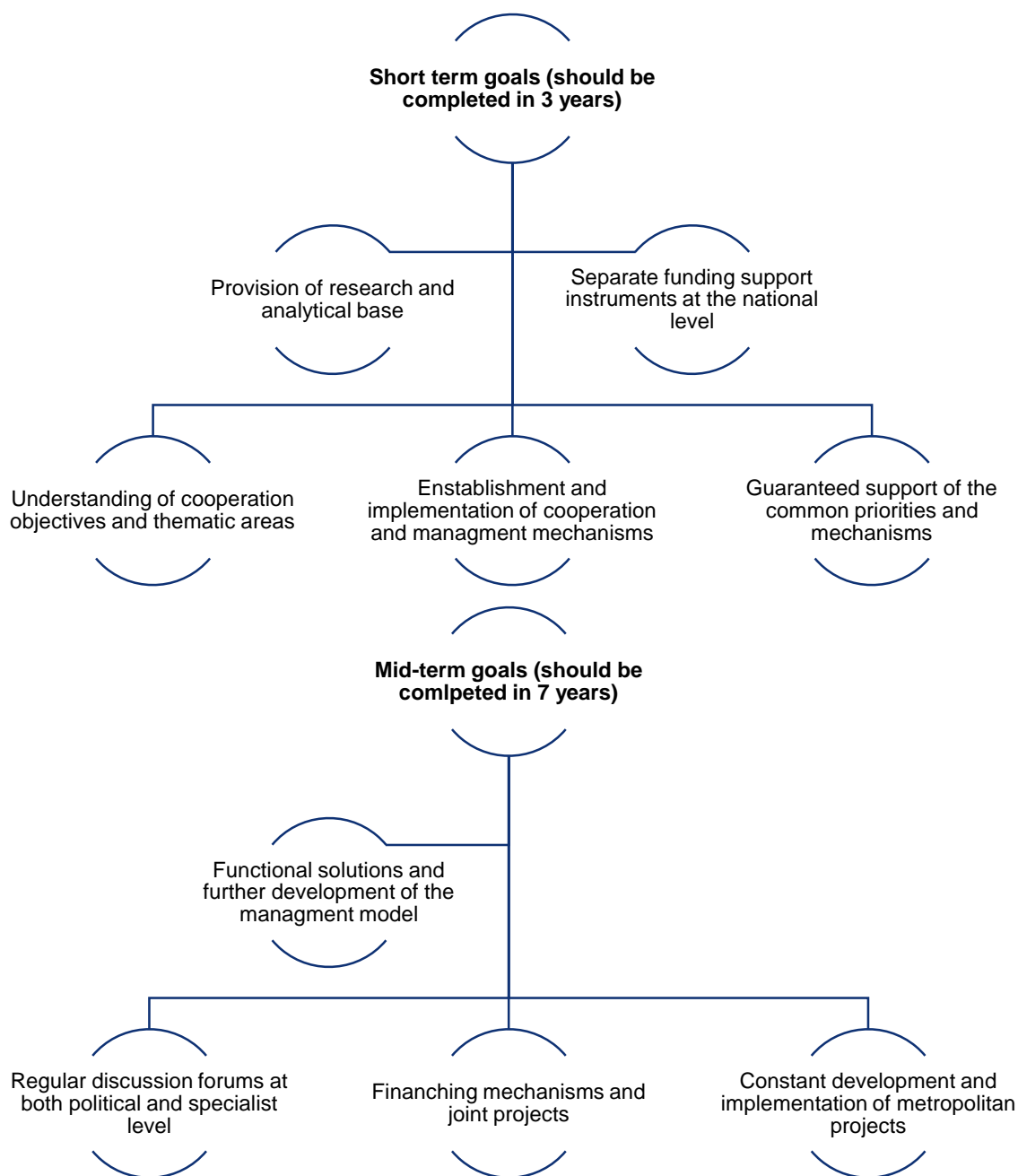
## Challenges and critical elements

- There are different approaches to define and characterise the Riga Metropolitan Area.
- Participation of the capital city in the Association of Riga and Pieriga Municipalities "Riga Metropolis" will foster cooperation processes. The involvement of Riga and shared understanding will facilitate the planning process and cooperation. This would also have helped to achieve main metropolitan goals and to elaborate the planning documents.
- Riga Planning Region and FUA of Riga cover different geographic areas; besides, the access to and availability of statistical data differ.

## 3.3 Metropolitan development goals

Some Metropolitan development goals are highlighted in both National and Regional level development documents. For example, the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 has a section devoted to the Riga Metropolitan Area (CSCC, 2010). In this document, it is emphasised that Riga Metropolitan Area is one of the areas of national significance.

Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2020b) is the document in which the tasks and goals related to the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area are defined. Several functions and goals devoted to the Riga Metropolitan Area management process organisation have been defined. Since the Riga Metropolitan Area governance process organisation includes some critical steps and serves as a basis for planned development of the Metropolitan Area. Adequate area governance is an essential prerequisite for carrying out development ideas (RPR, 2020b). These goals are shown in the two diagrams of Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3****Tasks (goals) for organization of the Riga Metropolitan Area management process**

Source: authors' elaboration, based on RPR, 2020b

Implementation of short-term goals should create a shared understanding of the Riga Metropolitan Area and a possibility to monitor the development processes taking place in the Metropolitan Area, spot trends, and identify the best solutions. It should also result in inter-municipal cooperation projects as examples of successful cooperation and substantiation for the further need for area cooperation. Last but not least, it should result in actions to be implemented and projects to be adequately adapted to local development needs and in separate funding for the introduction of joint Riga Metropolitan Area projects in the next programming period (RPR, 2020b).

Achievement of mid-term goals should lead to functional solutions for the Metropolitan Area governance model and establish a governance model. It should also lead to an annual review of the Riga Metropolitan Area development process, address current issues and more successful cooperation between state and local authorities at the regional level. It should enable the organisation of financial management - taxes and

contributions, interterritorial (two or more administrative territories) development project financing and coordination, and constant development and implementation of joint projects at the Metropolitan Area level (RPR, 2020b).

The main strategic issues are related to the promotion of the international competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area. To achieve this, it is vital to work on critical issues such as settlement structure, transport and mobility, regional competitiveness and coordinated development and promotion of business infrastructure, public services (education, health, culture, etc.) and the natural environment. These, along with Metropolitan Area governance (detailed above), make up the major tasks and goals (RPR, 2020b). These are listed in detail below:

- **Settlement Structure.** This goal includes management and development solutions for degraded areas and unused buildings. Support and strengthening of local communities, planning neighbourhoods and villages, based on initiatives by local residents and active groups of society is vital. This goal also includes the review of the status of populated areas due to changes in the settlement structure, limiting urban sprawl and convergence of the urban areas, harmonisation of population structures and building areas, along with building intensification measures;
- **Public Services.** This goal includes the improvement of infrastructure of educational establishments, accessibility of educational facilities of various levels. It also includes work on developing the public-private partnership for the efficient, appropriate provision of public services. Actions should also focus on institutions related to safety and sports and cultural establishments;
- **Transport and Mobility.** Solving transport and mobility issues is key to ensuring the full potential of the other metropolitan functions. Fast and efficient accessibility is crucial for daily mobility and access to services. It is also vital internationally to strengthen competitiveness. The creation of an intermodal traffic hub and various mobility points is also essential;
- **Natural Environment and Energy.** This includes energy planning and adaptation to climate change and coordination of energy planning at the regional level, promoting renewable energy sources. Other essential aspects are the use of natural resources for recreation and development of the circular economy;
- **Regional and International Competitiveness.** This includes identification of smart development areas and facilitating development, location of industrial and manufacturing sites in the Metropolitan Area. Provision of the related infrastructure (engineering supplies) according to the specialisation and uniform planning of the area and the creation of the necessary complementary service facilities is also essential. Other vital aspects are marketing and branding of the Riga Metropolitan Area, development of infrastructure for international transport hubs and lastly, development of a complex regional tourism offer and hosting of events in sport and culture.

### 3.3.1 Coherence with national and regional goals

Riga Metropolitan Area action goals (related to transport and mobility, natural and environment and energy and Metropolitan Area governance, coordinated cooperation and planning) are mentioned in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 within a section devoted to the Riga Metropolitan Area. In the Development Strategy, they are referred to as Development Directions ensuring the integrated and sustainable development of the Riga Metropolitan Area. It is necessary to implement coordinated cooperation between local governments, planning regions and state institutions. It is needed to ensure coherent transport infrastructure, public transport and ensure the preservation and functioning of green areas and ecological corridors between urban areas (CSCC, 2010).

Coordinated development of the spatial structure of the Riga Metropolitan Area and coordination of the processes taking place there must be achieved by developing an integrated spatial development perspective (thematic planning) and using an integrated approach and complex solutions to reconcile the various interests of Riga, surrounding municipalities, state and residents (RPR, 2018b).

At the regional level, the integration of the city of Riga and Pieriga is essential. They create an administratively and economically fragmented but functionally uniform space, where joint coordinated development planning and cooperation is required (RPR, 2015).



Several of RMA development goals are similar to the development priorities of the Riga Planning Region, which are mentioned in its Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030. These are related to competitiveness, transportation, and municipalities as drivers of development, particularly cooperative municipalities' ideas, inclusive, flexible and modern governance (RPR, 2015).

While there are some common goals, it should be emphasised that national and regional level documents and programmes have numerous substantial goals and priorities at a wider variety.

### 3.3.2 Coherence with municipal goals

The Riga Sustainable Development Strategy states that the precondition for the development of the entire Riga agglomeration (or Metropolitan Area) is a close and constructive cooperation between local governments. One of the main principles of strategy implementation would be that Riga City Municipality not only implements permanent cooperation with the public, but also actively cooperates with municipalities belonging to the agglomeration (or Metropolitan Area), with other municipalities, with the Riga Planning Region, with state authorities. Cooperation would include both formalized action, with the parties agreeing on the scope, type and other issues of cooperation, and operational action, jointly solving problems or using opportunities (RCCDD, 2014). However, similarly to national and regional level documents and programmes, the Riga Sustainable Development Strategy has a wider variety of goals.

As for relation between metropolitan development goals and the goals defined by other groups of municipalities of the Metropolitan Area there is some coherence. Cooperation with actors of various levels and improvement of environment are also among of the main goals of the Pieriga partnership organization (Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2018), (Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021a). In relation to goals of Daugava Down-stream Tourism Region (Vidzeme.com, 2014), the common aspect is the work on improving and diversifying the tourism offer.

In the case of newly founded association of Riga and Pieriga Municipalities "Riga Metropolis" there are somewhat similar aims (Riga.lv, 2021). These include Cooperation in various ways, increasing the competitiveness of the metropolis in the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea region, as well as promoting the establishment and provision of a research and analytical base.

Municipalities are required within regulation to submit planning documents for evaluation to higher governance levels. Whilst most documents are primarily evaluated by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, the regions have regulated responsibilities and influence on municipal level planning. This is detailed in Section 11 (Competence of a Planning Region) of Spatial Development Planning Law. Namely, planning regions shall provide opinions on the conformity of the draft local government development strategies and development programmes with spatial development planning documents and the requirements of laws and regulations and coordinate and monitor the developing of sustainable development strategies, development programmes, spatial plans and local plans of local governments (Likumi.lv, 2011).

The strategic aims of the municipal territorial development planning documents of municipalities in the vicinity of Riga have mainly been similar to metropolitan development goals. This includes aspects of mobility, environment and international competitiveness (RPR, 2018d).

Coordination mechanisms between the metropolitan development goals and the framework of national, regional and municipal goals is shown in Figure 3.4.



**Figure 3.4**

**Coordination mechanisms between the metropolitan development goals and the framework of national, regional and municipal goals**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

RPR ensures the connection between the national and local levels (municipalities) of governance through coordination. In this way, the region can cover the issues that exceed the borders of one local government. At the same time, it defines the demand for spatial solutions at national and international levels (ESPON, 2021a).

## Challenges and critical elements

- Numerous planning and strategic development documents have emphasised the importance and potential of Riga as a Northern European metropolis. They have also indicated the need to address issues related to the creation and development of the Riga Metropolitan Area, since it is one of the areas of national interest. There is some coherence between metropolitan development goals and goals of municipalities of the Metropolitan Area.
- Riga Metropolitan Area is an administratively and economically fragmented but functionally uniform space, where joint coordinated development planning and cooperation is essential.

## 3.4 Metropolitan development and planning instruments

The programming documents for the European Union and other foreign financial instruments for the 2014–2020 and 2021–2027 periods are in progress and based on the priorities and objectives defined in the National Development Plans. These documents determine budgeted distribution rather than the basic budget. The instrument for implementing it is the State and local government budget funds, cohesion policy and Common Agricultural Policy funds, investment from other European Union budget instruments, European Union and other foreign financial assistance instruments and private funding (CSCC, 2012). Main financial instruments at the national, regional and local level are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1****Main planning instruments at national, regional and local level**

Instrument	Level	Type	Type (2)	Type (3)	Main Goals	Budget (if any)
Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 (Latvia 2030)	National	Strategy	Mandatory	Binding	Main tasks of the state and society to achieve balanced and sustainable development.  7 development priorities (development of culture space, investment in human capital, change of paradigm in education, innovative and eco-efficient economy, nature as future capital, perspective of spatial development, innovative government, and participation of society)	
National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020 (NDP2020)	National	Hierarchically highest national-level medium-term planning document	Mandatory	Binding	3 priorities: Growth of the National Economy, Human Securability (a form of resilience) and Growth for Regions	11.7 billion euro
National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 (NDP2027)	National	Hierarchically highest national-level medium-term planning document	Mandatory	Binding	4 four strategic objectives - Productivity and Income, Equal Opportunity, Social Trust, Regional Development and 6 priorities	14,5 billion euro
Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2030	Regional	Long-term spatial development planning document, laying down the vision, objectives, priorities of the Planning Region long-term development and spatial development perspective;	Mandatory Approved by decision of Planning region Development council	Binding	3 strategic objectives:  Socially involving cohabitation in prosperous communities,  Knowledge-based green, innovative and flexible economics  Ecologically tolerant way of living and areas  8 priorities:  Vital natural movement and migration  Communities and their self-sufficiency  Flexible and excellent education  Globally competitive industries  Quality traffic and logistics  Municipalities - drivers of development  Sustainable living environment  Smart development	

Instrument	Level	Type	Type (2)	Type (3)	Main Goals	Budget (if any)
Riga Planning Region development programme 2014-2020	Regional	Mid-term spatial development planning document, laying down mid-term priorities and the set of measures for implementation of long-term strategic goals set out in the Planning Region	Mandatory Approved by decision of Planning region Development council	Binding	3 strategic objectives 8 priorities Both are in line with the ones for Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2030	
Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030	Local	Long-term spatial development planning document, laying down the vision, objectives, priorities of the local government long-term development and spatial development perspective;	Mandatory Approved by decision of Riga City Council	Binding	Compact, resource-saving, and smart; Multi-cultural and tolerant; Pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport friendly; To provide with modern and customer-orientated management; Provided with good cooperation within the agglomeration; Provided with diverse, accessible, and high-quality housing; Provided with an excellent cultural environment and creativity of the city's inhabitants; Provided with vital localities and preserved cultural landscape; Provided with diverse and high-quality natural territories, green corridors, and accessible waterfronts; Provided with well-considered industrial policy; and Provided with a successful port that complies with environmental quality Four long term development objectives	

Instrument	Level	Type	Type (2)	Type (3)	Main Goals	Budget (if any)
Development Programme of Riga for 2014-2020	Local	Mid-term spatial development planning document, laying down mid-term priorities and the set of measures for implementation of long-term strategic goals set out in the municipality	Mandatory approved by decision of Riga City Council	Binding	19 action directions and 111 tasks	
Action plan for Riga Metropolitan area development	Regional	Action plan	Approved by decision of Planning region Development council	Not Binding	Priorities: Settlement Structure Public Services Transport and Mobility Natural Environment and Energy Regional and International Competitiveness Metropolitan Area Governance.	
Regional Policy guidelines 2021-2027	National	Midterm planning document for regional policy	Mandatory approved by decision of Cabinet of Ministers	Binding	To create preconditions for development of economic potential of all regions and for reduction of socio-economic disparities by increasing internal and external competitiveness. It is essential to ensure development of Riga Metropolitan Area by making the most of Riga Metropolitan Area's potential to strengthen competitiveness in the Baltic Sea region and development of the Latvian economy, moving towards a knowledge-based and productive economy	2.19 billion euro. Of which 1.105 billion euro will be financed by EU policy instruments and other foreign sources
Development Planning System Law	National	Law	Statutory	Binding	Determination of the development planning system	
Spatial Development Planning Law	National	Law	Statutory	Binding	Principles for spatial development planning, determination of spatial development planning levels and documents, competence of public institutions in spatial development planning	

Source: Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020, National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027, Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, *Rīgas plānošanas reģiona attīstības programma 2014-2020*, Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 and Development Programme of Riga for 2014-2020, Development Planning System Law, the Spatial Development Planning Law, *Rīcības plāns Rīgas metropoles areāla attīstībai, Reģionālās politikas pamatnostādnes 2021.-2027.gadam*.

### 3.4.1 Instruments in the framework of other cooperation initiatives

Riga Planning Region takes part in numerous Interreg (Baltic Sea Region, Central Baltic, Europe and Estonia-Latvia) Programme projects (RPR, 2021). These include:

- Remote Baltic Marinas as Drivers for Sustainable Coastal and Maritime Tourism Development (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project) - the main goal of the project is to use the potential of marinas to promote their development as sustainable tourist destinations in the Baltic Sea region and to strengthen cooperation between stakeholders by integrating marinas into the region's tourism development and linking recreational sailing with other tourism sectors;
- Sustainable urban mobility and practical aspects of everyday mobility (SUMBA+ project; Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project) - SUMBA+ is a continuation of the SUMBA project, which sought solutions to make suburban and urban mobility more diverse and sustainable. The project aims to facilitate the implementation of the mobility solution plans developed in the SUMBA project;
- Improved marina infrastructure and port network development in Estonia and Latvia (Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme project Harbors) - a project aimed at creating a network of small ports with quality services on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga in Estonia and Latvia, and promoting it as an attractive destination;
- Energetic small ports in Central Baltic region (Interreg Central Baltic Programme projects) - project aims to develop the provision of environmentally friendly services in the yacht ports of the Central Baltic region by making investments in increasing energy efficiency and establishing a network of yacht ports in the Central Baltic region for joint marketing activities;
- Co - creation of community renewable energy projects and co-financing (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project Co2mmunity) – a project with an aim to increase community capacity and knowledge of community energy project development to ensure community capacity for energy security, sustainability and competitiveness, increase the ability of policymakers and energy planners to support renewable energy in community energy projects and promote more significant and more efficient use of renewable energy for energy security in the region.;
- Virtual urban environment (Interreg Central Baltic Programme project Augmented Urbans) – project to improve integrated urban planning by introducing and developing new methods, approaches and tools (including the application of new technologies to augmented, virtual and mixed reality technologies);
- Regional development by promoting coastal fishing the potential of cultural heritage in Europe (Interreg Europe Programme project CHERISH) – project to improve regional policy to promote the development of coastal fishing communities and the protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of fisheries;
- Cities accelerating the implementation of sustainable and intelligent urban lighting solutions (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project LUCIA) - The project is based on the idea of supporting municipalities in the economic and environmentally friendly use of energy by providing local authorities with a carefully analysed and up-to-date body of knowledge on the design and development of energy-efficient urban lighting systems, taking into account factors such as natural environment, urban environment, technological context, economic efficiency and attitude of the population;
- Long-distance cross-border hiking route "Forest Trail" (Interreg Central Baltic Programme project) – a project with an aim to creating a marked long-distance hiking route, which winds through the forests of Latvia and Estonia for about 1050 km, from Riga to Tallinn - the capitals of two countries whose historical centres have UNESCO status;
- Baltic Loop (Interreg Central Baltic Programme project) – a project with an aim to reduce travel and freight times while also reducing CO2 emissions in the three corridors of the Central Baltic region

defined by the project (North, Central and South), making them attractive for new businesses and innovations;

- Strengthening authentic cultural tourism in cities with a rich cultural heritage (Interreg Europe Programme project Local Flavors) – a project with an aim to improve support policies for places that are relatively unable to exploit the potential of local cultural heritage fully;
- Latvian-Estonian Common Military Heritage Tourism Product (Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme project) – a project aimed to develop the potential of military heritage tourism in the territory of Latvia and Estonia. By creating an attractive and common military heritage tourism product for local and foreign tourists.

Several municipalities participate in URBACT Networks (projects). The city of Riga stands out since it is a part 13 network. In contrast, other territories (in this case, three - cities of Jurmala and Sigulda, as well as the municipality of Kekava) take part in only one network. Within these networks, they work on, for example, challenges related to the revitalisation of their cultural heritage, improving municipal strategies and local plans, alternative strategies in central and historic districts of cities and growth of innovative forms of solidarity and commitment at a local level (URBACT, 2021).

European Economic Area (EEA) and Norwegian grants should also be mentioned. Riga Planning Region has received funding for the project "Business support measures in the Riga Planning Region." Overall, these grants tend to support countrywide projects or local projects for certain urban areas (EEA grants.lv, 2021).

### 3.4.2 Instrument and initiatives related to COVID-19

Decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have been made for the entire country. Nevertheless, some stricter measures were effective in some municipalities where the number of cases had notably increased in a short period. One of them (Olaive municipality) is part of the Metropolitan Area. These stricter measures are related to various events not being held on-site and the number of people being present at indoor event sites (Likumi.lv, 2020a).

Municipalities were able to apply for state loans for the implementation of investment projects under Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 456 of July 14th, 2020 (Likumi.lv, 2020b) "Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Issuing a State Loan to Local Governments for Reducing and Preventing the Impact of an Emergency Situation in Relation to the Spread of COVID-19."

On February 11th, 2021 these regulations were replaced by Regulations on Criteria and Procedures for Evaluating and Issuing State Loans to Municipalities for Mitigation and Prevention of the COVID-19 Crisis. These are applicable to achieving the objectives referred to in these Regulations for local government investment projects, which are not projects co-financed by European Union funds and other foreign financial assistance. There is one exception for achieving the objective referred to in subparagraph 3.1.11 of the regulations (construction projects). For this, the planned projects co-financed by the European Union funds, projects co-financed from other foreign financial assistance and projects co-financed from additional financial resources are also included (Vestnesis.lv, 2021).

Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Issuing a State Loan to Local Governments for Reducing and Preventing the Impact of an Emergency Situation in Relation to the Spread of COVID-19 have impacted budgets. Riga City Municipality has received a state loan within the following areas (as provided by Riga City Council City Development Department):

- Increase energy efficiency measures of municipal buildings (reconstruction or renovation). By ensuring compliance with the minimum permissible level of energy efficiency of buildings and the building energy certificate. The costs for planned construction work for reducing annual primary energy consumption do not exceed 4 euro per kilowatt-hour. Riga City Municipality received support to increase energy efficiency measures for about 70 municipal institutions for the total amount of 11.54 million euro;
- Development of municipal transport infrastructure (streets, roads, bicycle lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, smart solutions for traffic safety and organization, and utilities and parking lots. Suppose they are connected to the street or road included in the relevant investment project and other transport infrastructure types. In that case, the costs of the planned construction work on the transport infrastructure per 1 km do not exceed 1 million euro. Riga City Municipality was supported

in eight project applications to improve transport infrastructure (including the construction of bicycle lanes and reconstruction of streets) for the total amount of 13.7 million euro;

- Development of new ways of providing municipal services if one of the existing services is replaced by a new contactless or autonomous solution that reduces the need for face-to-face communication, not exceeding 1 million per investment project. Six project applications for the development of new municipal services for the total amount of 3.77 million euro were supported.

These regulations have strengthened the municipal economy and provided job opportunities during the COVID-19 crisis. From June 1st to December 1, 2020, investment projects with loans amounting to 99 519 609.26 euro were approved by the CoM (Cabinet of Ministers). Meanwhile, with municipal co-financing, the total amount of investment projects was 134 568 309.58 euro. In 2020, 56 458 436 euro were allocated to municipalities. The new regulations (approved on February 11th, 2021) provide that 150 000 euro will be available for municipal loans in 2021. To quote Minister of MEPRD Artūrs Toms Plešs: “To minimize the COVID-19's negative impact on the economy, MEPRD continues to implement a national lending programme for municipal investment projects to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the economy. Public loans will be eligible for high-readiness projects, thereby providing job opportunities for entrepreneurs and residents. In addition, in 202 we have significantly extended the criteria for the implementation of projects that municipalities may receive from the State loans, both in terms of the availability of residential space in the regions, and in terms of investment projects for the development of social care centres in line with hygiene requirements, including the restriction of COVID-19” (MEPRD, 2021b).

On June 1st, 2021 it was announced that the Cabinet of Ministers had approved the draft order of MEPRD “On Supported High Readiness Local Government Investment Projects for Allocating State Budget Funding Related to COVID-19 Crisis Management and Economic Recovery”. In 2021, more than 27 million euro will be available to local governments for high-readiness investment projects. A total of 21 projects will be supported. Three municipalities of the Planning Region had their projects approved (one in each case) and will receive funding (MEPRD, 2021c).

On May 28th, 2020, the European Commission (EC) proposed an ambitious European recovery plan to address the economic and social damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, stimulate European recovery and protect and create jobs. A significant part of European recovery funding will go to the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), a new EU centrally managed budget program. The purpose of the facility is to support reforms and investment, particularly in the transition to a green and digital economy and reduce the social and economic impact of the crisis (Esfondi.lv, 2021a). Further information on RRF is detailed in section 4.4.

### 3.5 Metropolitan financing and budgeting

Currently, there is no set Metropolitan Area budget. However, as mentioned in the Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan, it is planned to create a regional financial fund. In developing this regional fund, the municipal financial cohesion system should be seen as a joint package. In the case of the Riga Metropolitan Area, the municipalities of the area are the main contributors to the municipal financial equalisation system, which provides support to other local governments in Latvia. Contributions to the new regional fund will not stimulate mutual motivation, as provided in the Guidelines, unless a partial recovery of the amount paid is ensured. The municipal financial equalisation system aims to promote the development of joint projects of the Riga Metropolitan Area, including providing that the municipal financial cohesion system is not an additional burden on municipal budgets (RPR, 2020b).

To ensure quality support for entrepreneurship, it is necessary to find new financial instruments and sources of income in the municipal budget, which are directly related to business taxes. The Riga Metropolitan Area could actively represent the transfer of a part of the business-related tax, such as corporate income tax, to the municipal budget, thus promoting the interest of specific municipalities to promote business development in their territory. At the same time, the potential role of business-related taxes in setting up a regional fund should be considered (RPR, 2020b).

The Riga Planning Region is a derived public person. Its decision-taking institution is the Planning Region Development Council. RPR has its budget, partly funded by the municipalities that are a part of it. In 2019 it received state budget funds from several sub-programmes of the MEPRD to implement functions in 2019 (RPR, 2020d). These were:

- 31.00.00 Support for the Planning Region - 326 960 euro;



- 31.00.00 Main activities of Riga Planning Region (including business centre activities) - 206 960 euro;
- 31.00.00 Pilot project in municipalities to promote remigration. Regional Remigration Coordinator - 30 528 euro;
- 31.00.00 Priority event for 2019 - 2021 Diasporas for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Law (Support Measure for the Promotion of Remigration - Regional Remigration Coordinator) - 89 472 euro;
- 30.00.00 National Development Assistance Instruments - 10 853 euro;
- 30.00.00 Financing of business promotion measures Riga Planning Region - 4 653 euro;
- 30.00.00 Funding for maintaining the results of completed EU projects Riga Planning Region - 6 200 euro;
- 31.08.00 - From the Ministry of Transport Public transport provision of services - 43 000.

Funding was also provided for projects dedicated to ensuring Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes, Projects and Measures (2014-2020). The total amount of funding was 573 323 euro in 2019 (RPR, 2020d).

Every municipality has its budget. The procedure for preparing and executing local government budgets in the Republic of Latvia is stipulated by the law on local government (municipality) budgets. It envisages the conditions for forming independent budgets of the cities and counties (municipalities) of Latvia. At the initial stage of preparation of budgets of municipalities, the Cabinet of Ministers coordinates the total amount of the state budget of the planned financial year and its distribution among local governments. This is based on calculations describing the share of local government budgets in the consolidated general budget and the need for state budget grants in connection with the overall assessment of state budget resources and local government functions. Budget revenues of municipalities of Latvia consist of deductions from state taxes and fees, local government fees, state budget grants and earmarked grants, grants from local government financial equalisation funds. Municipalities can take short-term and long-term loans and make long-term commitments based on the decision of the council. The decision of the local government council by which the local government undertakes long-term obligations also envisages the sources of financing for the fulfilment of such obligations. To provide local governments with similar conditions for the performance of their functions, a local government financial equalisation fund has been established (likumi.lv, 2019). This is an aspect to bear in mind when it comes to budgets for numerous municipalities in the vicinity of Riga. It affects their budget since they contribute to the local government financial equalisation fund from personal income tax revenues. These territories have the highest personal income tax revenues (main revenue for municipalities), which is why they are the ones that have to contribute to this local government financial equalisation fund (Likumi.lv, 2020c).

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- Currently, there is no set Metropolitan Area budget. However, as mentioned in the Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan, it is planned to create a regional financial fund. This idea is undoubtedly welcome. It could be utilised for a regional-scale project, and it could also facilitate and enhance cooperation.
  - However, this budget poses a specific challenge – namely, the distribution of the funds. Some interviewees highlight this as the biggest challenge for metropolitan cooperation. This aspect is closely related to the harmonisation of interests between actors at various levels (national, regional and local).
- 

### 3.6 Role of social groups and the business community in metropolitan governance

Two laws and one regulation regulate the procedure for public participation in Latvia. These are:

- State Administration Structure Law;
- Development Planning System Law;



- Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of August 25th, 2009 No. 970 "Procedures for the Public Participation in the Development Planning Process".

Institutions obliged to hold a public consultation on issues of public importance. To achieve the purpose of State Administration Structure Law, institutions shall involve representatives of the public (representatives of public organizations and other organized groups, certain competent persons) in their activities by including them in working groups, advisory councils or requesting opinions. The Head of an institution shall decide on the involvement of society representatives in the institutions' activities and the type thereof unless otherwise provided by a regulatory enactment. When ensuring public participation in its activities, the institution may also use other types of public involvement specified in other laws regulations. (Likumi.lv, 2021).

As stated in the Development Planning System Law, "the participation principle shall be followed in development planning. This means that (all) stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in drawing up the development planning documents (Likumi.lv, 2014).

This is detailed in the Procedures for the Public Participation in the Development Planning Process. Public participation is carried out by formal (associations, foundations, trade unions, employers' organizations, religious organizations) and informal (unregistered initiative groups, interest groups) public groups, as well as physical persons. Public participation is possible in various stages of the development planning process. Those are:

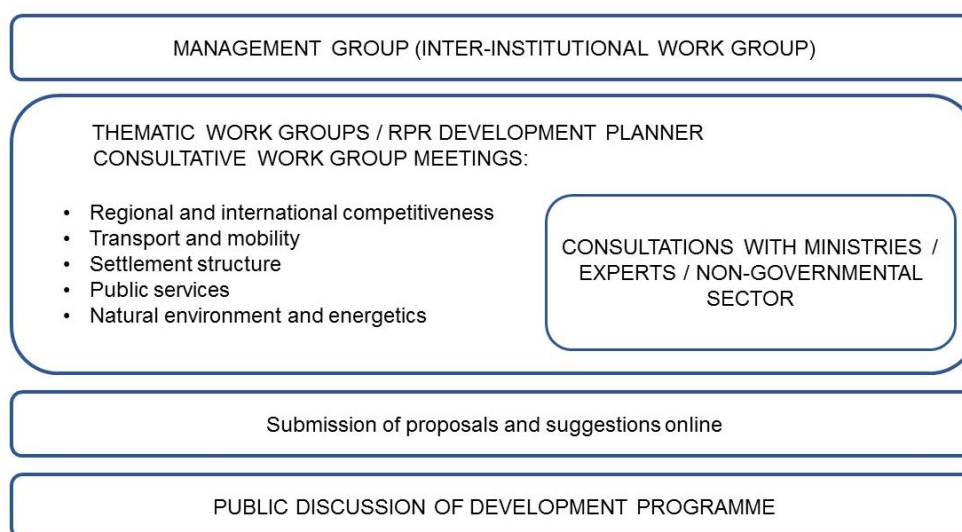
- initiating the development planning process (including identifying problems and identifying policy alternatives);
- development planning document development;
- in the decision-making process under the procedures specified by the decision-making body;
- implementation of the development planning document;
- monitoring and evaluating the performance of the development planning document;
- in the updating of the development planning document (Likumi.lv, 2013).

Representatives of the public can also participate in development planning:

- participating in inter-institutional working groups and advisory councils;
- by participating in the public discussion;
- by getting involved in public consultation;
- by getting involved in discussion groups, forums and other participation activities. These include video conferences and public opinion polls;
- by submitting (in writing) an opinion on a development planning document during its drafting stage;
- by preparing an opinion on a development planning document before deciding according to the procedures stipulated by the decision-making institution. These include institutions of direct administration as well as local governments and other institutions;
- by providing objections and proposals according to the procedures stipulated by the decision-making institution (again including institutions of direct administration as well as local governments and other institutions) during the decision-making process;
- by participating in the introduction of policy in accordance with the procedures laid down in the State Administration Structure Law (Likumi.lv, 2013).

Institutions shall select public representatives via an open procedure by posting information on creating a working group or advisory council and the possibilities of applying. A particular institution may determine the criteria (with justification) to which the public representatives must conform. The development stage of a development planning document means that the institution has a conceptual idea of a possible solution to the problem, or an initial draft of the development planning document has been developed. Public participation in the development planning document or draft legislation is being assessed and reflected in the development planning document or the initial impact assessment report of the legislation (Likumi.lv, 2013).

Figure 3.5 presents an example of the forms of public participation for the Development Plan of the Riga Planning Region for 2021- 2027.

**Figure 3.5****Types of public participation for Development plan of Riga Planning Region for 2021-2027**

Source: authors' elaboration based on Development plan of Riga Planning Region for 2021- 2027.

### 3.6.1 Social groups and the civil society

Social groups and civil society have had numerous opportunities to participate in public discussions about various Riga Planning Region documents. Examples include a general discussion of draft Riga Planning Region spatial development planning documents (RPR, 2014a) and public talks on the Riga Planning Region deinstitutionalisation plan for 2017-2020 (RPR, 2018e). These discussions tend to take place in various municipalities of the region. People can also submit their ideas and suggestions. One example is the invitation to submit proposals to improve draft regional development planning documents, such as the Riga Planning Region development programme 2014-2020 (RPR, 2014b).

Representatives of territorial communities and neighbourhood associations included in the Riga Metropolitan Area and non-governmental organisations thematically relevant to the Metropolitan Area's development are involved in the public participation process (RPR, 2018f).

For the Pierīga partnership, the involvement of social groups and the civil society has led to a community-led local development strategy (*Sabiedrības virzītas vietējās attīstības stratēģija*). This strategy envisioned the partnership area as an economically and socially strong area with an orderly and high-quality environment for rest and living. It had three main aims - developed and competitive economic environment, diversification of social and public services and an orderly and attractive living and leisure environment. This strategy was developed based on the needs indicated by the residents taking part in the information seminars and the research "Pierīga Partnership Strategies 2009-2013 evaluation and promotion of the quality of business and public life in the partnership area". A survey of the public and project implementers was conducted during the research, and meetings of interest groups (associations, entrepreneurs, social service providers and young people) took place (Pierīgaspartnerība.lv, 2021b).

### 3.6.2 Business community

Business community stakeholders are involved in the development of strategic planning documents. On certain occasions, specialists from a particular area are invited to provide valuable information to RPR Development Council. Business actors are also involved in public participation procedures. These are usually the associations representing specific business areas and the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. These actors provide an overall detailed outlook on the situation. Another benefit is that they highlight practical issues which are not as evident, but which are essential. They could have a more influential (more permanent) role for the new (post July 2021 reform) Riga Planning Region.

## Challenges and critical elements

- Wider engagement of representatives from the business community and various social groups in metropolitan governance processes is essential.
- Currently, there is a higher level of activity since public discussions take place online and are therefore more accessible. If after the pandemic there will be a return to meetings taking place in the traditional way, this level of involvement might decrease.

### 3.7 Participation to policy networks

Since 2002, Riga City Municipality has been a member of the European network of large cities called EUROCIITIES, and since 2014 representatives of Riga have been participating in the EUROCIITIES Metropolis Working Group (RPR, 2020b). To support the development and implementation of the "Action Plan for the Riga Metropolitan Area Development, "RPR is involved in ESPON. RPR, together with European metropolises Vienna, Berlin, Oslo, Stuttgart, Turin and Warsaw, were the study areas in a project called "Metropolitan Industrial Spatial Strategies & Economic Sprawl (MISTA)" on the prospects for the future development of Metropolitan Areas (RPR, 2020b). The case study report manufacturing in the city region was characterised, followed by the future workshop's data-driven SWOT analysis and outcomes (EUROSTAT, 2021a). The final report focused on exploring the case studies, the role of the public sector (and four policy scenarios), inspirational cases and policy recommendations (ESPON, 2021b).

Another cooperation network in which the city of Riga has been actively involved is the European Network of Metropolitan Regions (METREX). This network provides a platform for exchanging knowledge, expertise and experience on metropolitan development, governance and joint action on issues of interest. The information obtained within the framework of such a study will allow better planning of economic activities and industrial areas in the Riga Metropolitan Area, determining the most suitable locations for business and production areas and, consequently, the main job concentration points daily mobility flows. The research results will significantly help in the process planning in terms of land use, population structure, service location and transport infrastructure. It will also provide a comparative picture of the level of economic development of the Riga Metropolitan Area among solid European urban regions (RPR, 2020b).

Since 2002, Riga City Municipality has been a member of the European network for large cities, EUROCIITIES, and since 2014 Riga representatives have been participating in the EUROCIITIES metropolitan group. EUROCIITIES is a strong lobbyist in the European Union, drawing on documents/mission strategies developed within the working groups and defending interests during thematic documentation for the European Union programming periods. Riga municipality participation in the group of cooperation networks in the metropolitan working group has contributed to the discussions about the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area. In 2016, Riga City Municipality, together with Environmental Protection and Regional Development, the Ministry organised an international conference, "Competitiveness through Cooperation: New Strategic and Governance Solutions for Riga Metropolitan Area." Experts from the network's working group took part in this conference. As part of the international conference and the survey of the Riga Metropolitan Area, experts provided recommendations for the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area. Two years later, the international partners of the working group were invited to participate in the ESPON workshop "Support for the establishment of the Riga Metropolitan Area action plan", which was organised by the Riga Planning Region. In 2018 and 2019, participation in the working group contributed to the Riga Planning Region and the City of Riga taking part in two ESPON projects that will support successful research and management of the Metropolitan Area. As part of the working group, the City of Riga received a collaborative offer from the Faculty of Architecture and Energy of the University of Biberach to research the development of the cross-border administrative project for Riga and Pieriga. In the summer of 2019, the first research visit took place to identify research areas for the Riga Metropolitan Area (RPR, 2020b).

Riga Planning Region has taken part in URBACT, the European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. This has created an urban transformation action plan for Riga Metropolitan Area (URBACT, 2015). As was mentioned in section 3.4.1., several municipalities participate in URBACT Networks. (URBACT, 2021).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explicit decisions on the territories included in the Riga Metropolitan Area would facilitate the planning process and cooperation and achieve main metropolitan goals. This would also be essential for the elaboration of planning documents.
- Whilst clarity on the size of territory is vital, a degree of flexibility would need to be maintained. When necessary, municipalities from outside of the Metropolitan Area would be involved in planning and cooperation.
- It is essential to promote the competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area by using the potential of cooperation and joint projects. Common positioning of the Riga city and Riga Metropolitan Area would strengthen Riga's position in the international environment as one of the main Centres in the Baltic Sea Region. Overall a unified Riga Metropolitan Area competitiveness strategy would enhance the development of the whole region.
- Improve coherent coordination between Metropolitan Area municipalities and decision-making mechanisms.
- More systematic involvement of stakeholders in the planning and programming process in the Riga Metropolitan Area is necessary.
- There is a necessity to clarify possible governance mechanisms and to implement them considering the following questions: who will be in charge and to what extent (the division of responsibilities is fundamental), what role will be played by the Riga Metropolitan Area and which municipalities will belong to Riga Metropolitan Area, what will be the primary sources of funding? How will the funding be divided? These are the questions of utmost importance.
- Support from the national level to strengthen the governance mechanisms will be critical for the successful functionality of the Metropolitan Area.
- Specific funding instruments are needed to solve common problems related to the development of RMA. That would facilitate cooperation and governance as well as improve the competitiveness of RMA.
- Facilitate a capacity building of planning regions, municipal administrations, and other stakeholders involved in territorial development planning, including civil society groups, providing methodological support for developing mutually agreed territorial development planning documents and implementing initiatives.

## 4 Cohesion policy governance

### 4.1 EU cohesion policy institutional architecture and competences

Cohesion policy objectives in Latvia are implemented through three major funds - European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund. These are also the most extensive financial instruments within the framework of which Latvia receives financial assistance. Meanwhile, the contribution to the agriculture and fisheries sectors is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Support Service (Esfondi.lv, 2020a).

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for monitoring the implementation of these tools and, in cooperation with the responsible authorities and in consultation with social, non-governmental and regional partners, as well as for developing the planning documentation, thus ensuring compliance with the partnership principle in the preparation of planning documents and cross-sectoral coordination of EU funds. Ministries responsible for ERDF management in Latvia are the Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development. In Latvia, institutions responsible for European Social Fund management are the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice, and State Chancellery. Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development are the ministries responsible for cohesion fund management (Esfondi.lv, 2020a).

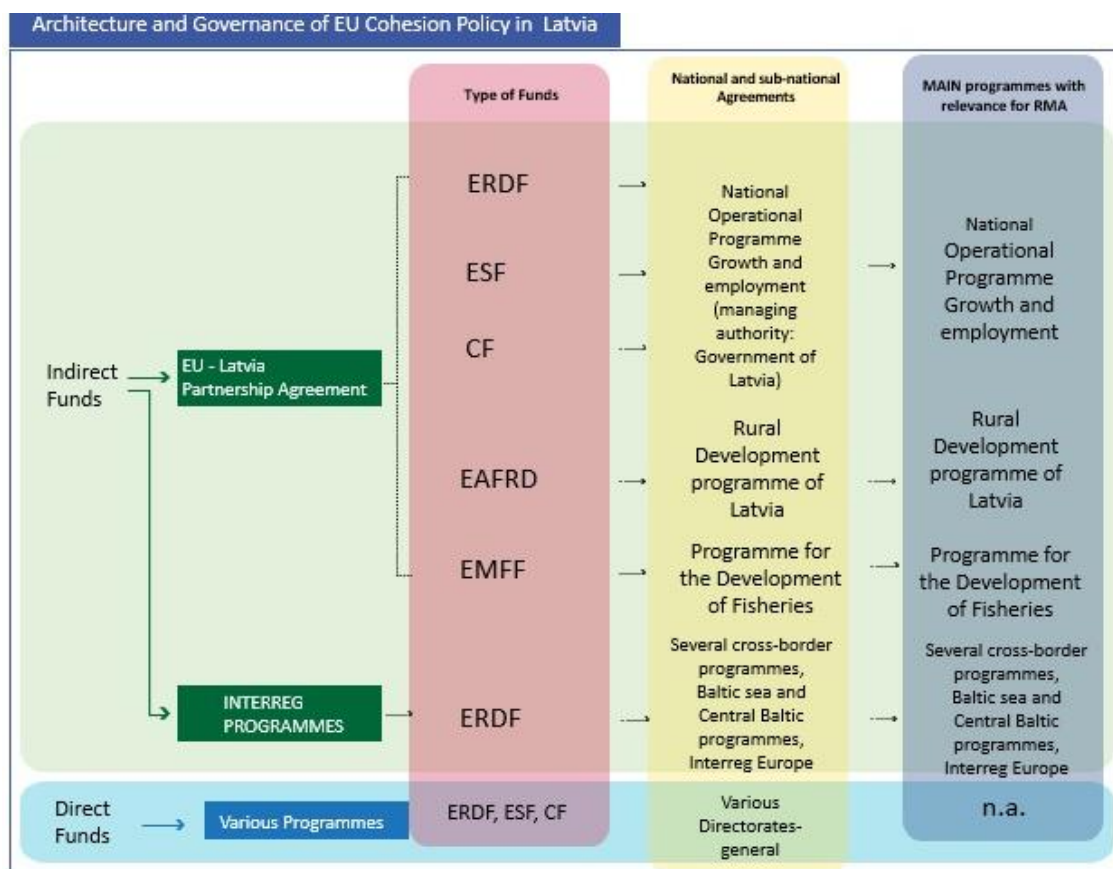
The Monitoring Committee should also be mentioned. It is the largest and most important forum in Latvia, where the most critical issues are considered. Decisions are made related to the implementation, monitoring, management system and strategy of the European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund. The Monitoring Committee performs the duties and functions specified in Regulation No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council and the Law on Management of the European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the 2014-2020 programming period (Esfondi.lv, 2013).

The Monitoring Committee was established on November 21st, 2014 (based on the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment" approved on November 11th, 2014 and the Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 661 on November 21st, 2014 "On the European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund"). Until the establishment of the Monitoring Committee, its duties were performed by the Interim Monitoring Committee (Esfondi.lv, 2013).

The head of the Managing Authority chairs the Monitoring Committee. It consists of representatives from the Managing Authority, responsible authorities, liaison body, audit authority, and a certification body, along with associations and foundations. Eight subcommittees have been set up for the Monitoring Committee (Esfondi.lv, 2013):

- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for Research, Technological Development and Innovation;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for Access to Information and Communication Technologies, eGovernment and Services;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for the transition to a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for Environmental Protection and Resource Efficiency;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for a Sustainable Transport System;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for Employment, Labour Mobility, Social Inclusion and the Fight against Poverty;
- Subcommittee on the Priority Axis for Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning.

Figure 4.1 details the governance of the EU Cohesion policy in Latvia for the 2014-2020 period.

**Figure 4.1****The governance of the EU Cohesion policy in Latvia for the 2014-2020 period**

Source: authors' elaboration, based on Esfondi.lv, 2020a, 2020b.

#### 4.1.1 The role of metropolitan actors

Riga Planning Region participated in the Consultative Programming Program of the cohesion policy Objective "European Territorial Cooperation" Program 2021-2027 in a working group chaired by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (RPR, 2020d). Riga Planning Region has also taken part in discussions regarding the National Development Plans of Latvia, the priorities and objectives of defining the programming documents for European Union (and other foreign) financial instruments. However, their involvement takes place when the documents have been produced. At that point, it is difficult to make significant changes.

Draft Order of the Cabinet of Ministers "Amendment to the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of November 21st, 2014 No. 661 "On the European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the 2014-2020 period" has been developed to ensure the inclusion of a representative of "Riga Metropolis" in the European Union Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in the Monitoring Committee of the annual programming period as a voting member. This amendment, which was accepted on August 17th, 2021, has been developed on the initiative of the Ministry of Finance, taking into account the proposal of "Riga Metropolis" made on April 1st, 2021. The key aspect in this case is the potential of Riga and Riga Metropolitan Area as one of international significance and importance as a regional partner. In order to ensure the performance of the tasks entrusted to it, the Monitoring Committee is composed of representatives from the Managing Authority, the responsible authorities, the cooperation authority, the certifying authorities, the audit authority, as well as social, non-governmental and regional partners (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

Representative of RPR is part of the National Subcommittee of European Territorial Cooperation Objective program of the European Structural and Investment Funds. This National Subcommittee has the following responsibilities (Likumi.lv, 2015a):



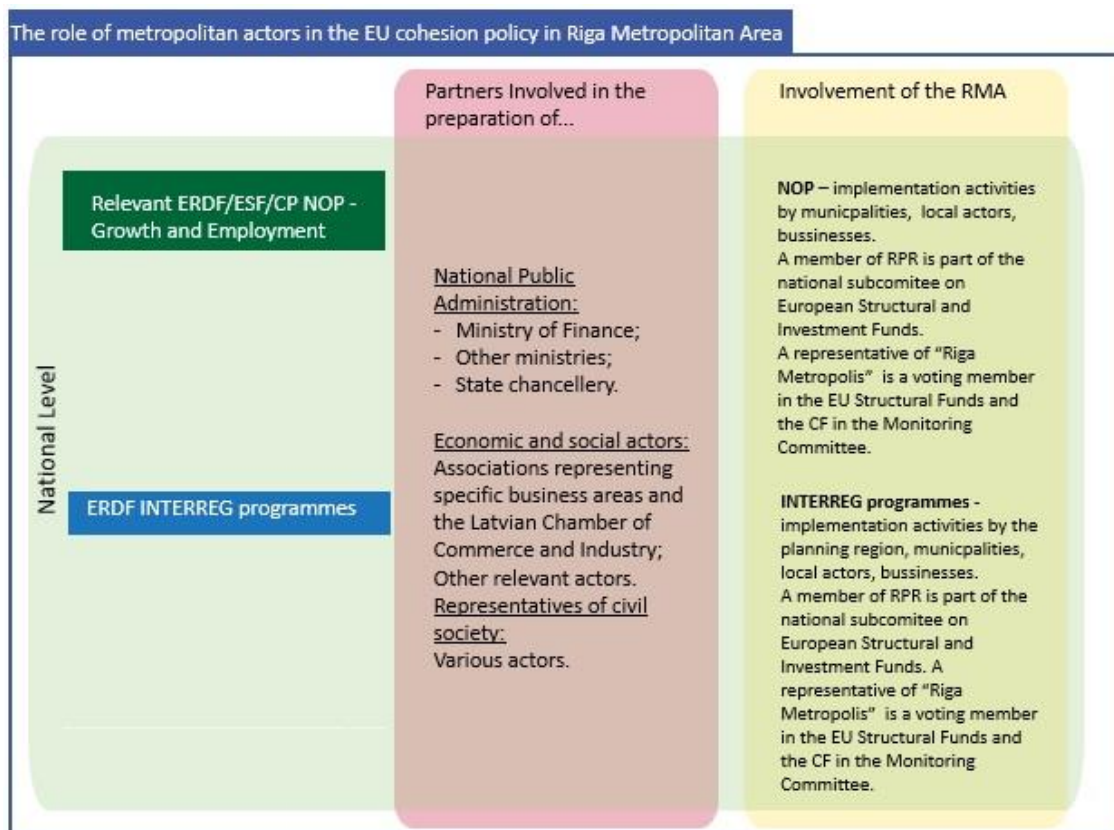
- to advise the national responsible authority for the preparation of an opinion on the implementation and monitoring of the programmes;
- at the request of the national responsible authority and on the basis of the information provided by it, to advise it on the compliance of project applications submitted by potential Latvian beneficiaries with national and regional planning documents and their priorities, as well as on the risk of project overlap with other national or international program projects;
- at the request of the national responsible authority, to provide an opinion regarding the amendments to the program proposed by the institutions involved in the management of the program;
- to promote the publicity of the programmes within the scope of its competence.

In Latvia, a regulated process of coordination of regional and local government development planning documents is ensured within the framework of which supervised and coordinated investment planning in regions and local governments is ensured. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development methodically manages and supervises territorial development planning at the regional and local level, including supervision of the organization of public consultation. It also provides opinions on the compliance of the development strategies of planning regions and local government development programmes with the national level territorial development planning documents and the requirements of regulatory enactments. The planning regions develop and approve the sustainable development strategy and development program of the Planning Region. They also coordinate and monitor its implementation. They also provide opinions on the compliance of draft local government development strategies and development programmes with the territorial development planning documents of the Planning Region and the requirements of regulatory enactments (Likumi.lv, 2011). These documents are partly related to EU cohesion policy.

Figure 4.2. shows the role of metropolitan actors in the EU cohesion policy. It highlights the fact that decision making (regarding implementation) is centralised, while various actors (both in general and related to RMA) have a role in terms of implementation.

**Figure 4.2**

### The role of metropolitan actors in the EU cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period



Source: authors' elaboration based on Likumi.lv, 2011, RPR, 2018c, RPR, 2020d, Esfondi.lv, 2021b.

The new programming period envisages an increase in the role of the regions, particularly regarding the distribution and coordination of investments at a regional level. Regional projects will be extended to sites located or serving the territories of several municipalities, which can be assessed by the number of customers received or the number of employees in the company and projects for the development of a regional innovation system. Regional-scale projects should be identified in regional development planning documents under the defined principles of regional-scale projects, which the MEPRD will evaluate. The planned funding for these regions would consist of the funding currently available to the planning regions and the additional planned state budget funding and by attracting local government funding (CoM, 2020).

It should be stressed that RMA is referenced in the new Operational Programme documentation. The main points of attention relate to climate neutrality, mobility and education. However, RMA is not positioned as a target area. In this aspect, there is a coherence with many planning documents that have stressed the importance of RMA.

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- Cohesion policy objectives for 2014-2020 in Latvia are implemented through three significant funds - European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund. The decision for implementation is centralised.
  - More systematic involvement of stakeholders in all planning and programming processes in the Riga Metropolitan Area is necessary.
- 

### 4.2 EU cohesion policy instruments at the metropolitan level

The programming documents for European Union and other foreign financial instruments for 2014–2020 are being developed based on the priorities and objectives defined in the National Development Plan. The National Development Plan determines the distribution of the development budget rather than the basic budget. The instrument for implementing it is the State and local government budget funds, cohesion policy and Common Agricultural Policy funds, investment from other European Union budget instruments, European Union and other foreign financial assistance instruments and private funding (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

There are no specific instruments to Metropolitan Area; as for Latvia, there is only one National Operational Programme. EU cohesion policy objectives and actions in Latvia are defined and implemented at the national level (Esfondi.lv, 2020a).

For the 2014-2020 planning period, Latvia had one National Operational Programme, called “Growth and Employment.” Latvia had nine interrelated and integrated investment priorities (Esfondi.lv, 2020a). Characteristics of the National Operational Programme are further detailed in section 5.1.

Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) should also be mentioned. This approach (funded by ERDF and State budget) was used to solve economic, demographic, social, environmental sustainability and education challenges in development centres of national significance (national level cities; Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jekabpils, Jurmala, Liepaja, Rezekne, Valmiera and Ventspils) (Esfondi.lv, 2014). Therefore, ITI in Latvia (and RMA) differed significantly from the other two case study areas of post-socialist countries since it was available for a very limited number of municipalities and (hence) its impact was limited.

To ensure selection of operations within ITI's according to the Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December, 17 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006, paragraph 4 and 5 of article 7, Managing Authority concluded a delegation agreement with every one of the nine national level cities and its cooperation institutions (intermediate body). Regional Development Coordination Council as acted as a consultative body. It included institutions involved in ITI implementation – institutions involved in ESI fund management and other institutions that were involved in implementation and monitoring of sustainable urban development management – municipalities of the cities and unions of municipalities (according to the Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of December 17, 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 paragraph 3 of article 7, as well as institutions of ESI fund management, planning regions and other organizations involved in implementation of sustainable urban development (Esfondi.lv, 2014).



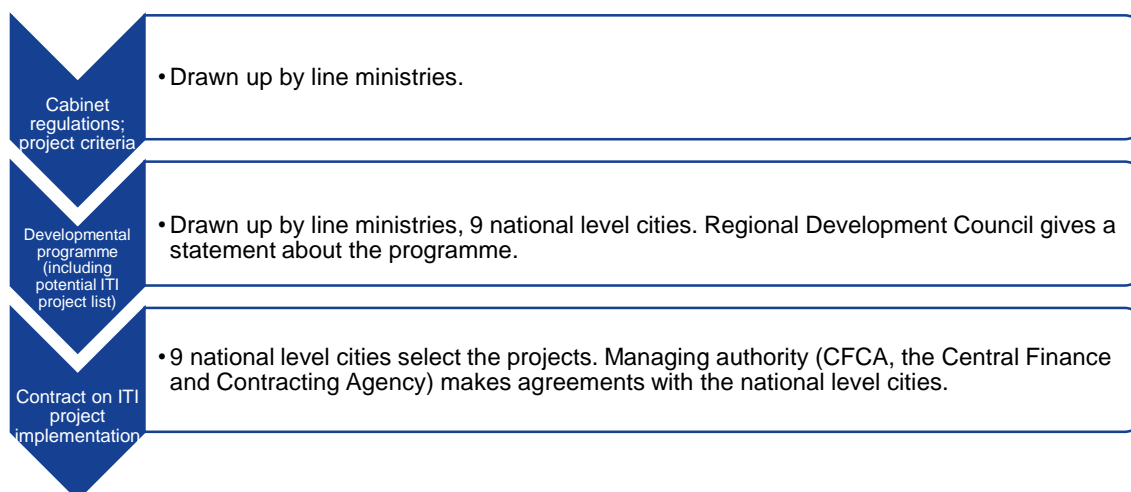
ITI implementation scheme can be divided into the following steps:

- Coordination of integrated development programmes of municipalities;
- Concluding delegation agreement between the Managing Authority, the municipality of the city and intermediate body;
- Selection of operations and evaluation of ITI supported actions.

This scheme is visualised in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3**

### **Integrated Territorial Investments in Latvia for the 2014-2020 period**



Source: Partnership Agreement for the European Union Investment Funds Programming Period 2014 – 2020

Within the first step, nine cities that are national importance development centres developed or updated and approved their integrated development programmes (strategies). With particular sections for ITI projects which included integrated measures to tackle the economic, environmental, climatic, demographic and social challenges, simultaneously consider the need to develop links between cities and rural areas. Regional Development Coordination Council coordinated development strategies and provided an opinion on the overlapping of projects with national level initiative projects (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

Within the second step, Managing Authority concluded a delegation agreement with the government of a particular national-level city and intermediate body on ITI implementation. (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

Within the third step, governments of cities within ITI develop and select ITI supported actions consistent with the previously approved development strategies and provisions of specific objectives in coordination with entrepreneurs and shall provide a transparent selection of operations within ITI (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

Within the fourth step, applicants of selected operations by the city concluded an agreement with an intermediate body on implementation and monitoring of ITI project, including setting results and the amount of available funding for the project (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

The support mentioned above also created complementarity with the investments planned in the Rural Development Programme for facilitation of the economic activity in the infrastructure of the municipalities in the rural development area, measures for support of enterprises (other actions related to the thematic objective „To improve the competitiveness of SMEs and agriculture as an industry (in relation to EAFRD) and fisheries and aquaculture industry (in relation to EMFF)“ and other investments within the framework of funding of ESI funds, state budget and additional funding (Esfondi.lv, 2014).

Projects were implemented within the following specific objectives (RCCDD, S.a.):

- 4.2.2. To promote an increase in energy efficiency in municipal buildings under the integrated development programmes of municipalities;
- 5.6.2. Revitalization of areas through regeneration of degraded areas (brownfields) under the integrated development programmes of municipalities;

- 8.1.2. To improve the learning environment of public education institutions.

The following specific objectives were implemented in Jurmala (Jurmala.lv, 2021):

- 3.3.1. To increase the amount of private investment in the regions by investing in business development in accordance with the economic specialisation of the territories specified in the municipal development programmes and based on the needs of local entrepreneurs;
- 4.2.2. To promote an increase in energy efficiency in municipal buildings in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities;
- 5.5.1. To promote regional development by promoting sustainable development cultural and natural heritage of international importance and related services;
- 5.6.2. The revitalisation of areas through regeneration of degraded areas (brownfields) in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities;
- 8.1.2. To improve the learning environment of general education institutions (in particular, the measure 8.1.2.1. To modernise the learning environment of public education institutions in development centres of national significance);
- 8.1.3. Increase the number of modernised vocational education institutions;
- 9.3.1. To develop the service infrastructure for the care of children in a family environment and the independent life and integration of persons with disabilities into society (Measure 9.3.1.1. Development of service infrastructure for the implementation of the deinstitutionalisation plan).

ITI will not be used in its current form for the next planning programme period. The reason for this is that implementation of ITI was an additional administrative burden.

Table 4.1 shows EU cohesion policy programmes and instruments in the Riga Metropolitan Area.

**Table 4.1****EU cohesion policy programmes and instruments in the Riga Metropolitan Area**

Instrument	Level (geographical scope)	Type	Program-ming	Manage-ment	Implemen-tation	Role of metropoli-tan actors
OP Growth and Development 2014-2020	National	National Operational Programme (NOP)	Ministry of Finance; Other ministries; State chancellery.	Ministry of Finance; Other ministries; State chancellery.	Implementation activities by national administration, planning regions, municipalities, local actors and businesses.	No specific instruments for Metropolitan Area; For Latvia, there is only one National Operational Programme. EU cohesion policy objectives and actions in Latvia are defined at the national level. Implementation activities by the planning region, municipalities, local actors and businesses.
OP Growth and Development OP 2014-2020	National (9 largest cities)	ITI	National level authorities	National cities Riga and Jurnala Managing Authority included a delegation agreement with every one of the nine national level cities and its cooperation institutions	Applicants of selected operations by the city concluded an agreement with an intermediate body on implementation and monitoring of ITI project, including setting results and the amount of available funding for the project	National cities Riga and Jurnala implement the projects

Source: authors' elaboration, based on esfondi.lv data

Action plan for evaluating and improving EU funds support instruments for resource-efficient urban and environmental management in the City of Riga, and the Riga Metropolitan Area is a key document for the 2021-

2027 planning period. The importance of integrated actions for sustainable urban development is stressed in this plan. Examples of good practices (which are detailed in the plan) show that integrated actions for sustainable urban development (IASUD) can be successfully implemented in different ways. And formal mechanisms (e.g., ITI, specific operational programmes, specific priorities of operational programmes, community-led local development) are not as important as cooperation between all stakeholders. To implement integrated sustainable urban development, it is necessary to ensure collaboration between stakeholders, which can be realised, for example, by establishing a metropolitan association or an association of municipalities. The ability of stakeholders to communicate with each other and solve common problems and reduce competition between metropolitan municipalities is the basis of a successful IASUD strategy (RCCDD, 2021).

The identified integrated territorial development projects could be implemented by attracting funding from several specific objectives (SOs; depending on the provisions of the CoM regulations):

- SO 2.1.3. Promote adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and resilience to disasters;
- SO 2.2.1. Promote sustainable water management;
- SO 2.2.3. Improve nature protection and biodiversity, green infrastructure, especially in urban areas, and reduce pollution;
- SO 2.3.1. Promote sustainable, diverse mobility in cities;
- SO 3.1.1. Develop a sustainable, climate-resilient, intelligent, secure and multimodal TEN-T infrastructure;
- SO 3.1.2. Develop and improve sustainable, climate-resilient, intelligent and intermodal mobility at national, regional level, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility;
- SO 5.1.1. Promotion of integrated social, economic and environmental development of the local territory and cultural heritage, tourism and security (RCCDD, 2021).

Another aspect mentioned about the 2021-2027 planning period for the FUA's will have one specific objective explicitly created to facilitate their development. The Purpose of the objective 5.1.1 "Promotion of Integrated Social, Economic and Environmental Development of Local Territories and Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Security in Functional Urban Areas" is planned to be implemented by applying the mechanism of the sustainable urban environment "Functional urban areas". The functional city territory will be the development centres of national and regional significance in accordance with the Strategy "Latvia 2030" and their surrounding areas, between which there is daily labour migration or a shared network of services (Esfondi.lv, 2020b).

Within the framework of SO 5.1.1., integrated, complex investments for the promotion of balanced regional development are to be supported, providing such components as (Esfondi.lv, 2020b):

- Entrepreneurship promotion;
- Development of infrastructure and public outdoor solutions;
- Capacity building of local governments;
- Smart solutions (Smart municipalities).

Eligible investments for business development in the regions are related to investments in public infrastructure in accordance with the demand of businesses and based on the priorities specified in the territorial development planning documents. The arrangement of industrial territories necessary for attracting investments is also supported. This also includes road infrastructure (RCCDD, 2021).

The promotion of the availability of cultural services should be supported, paying special attention to measures for improving the operation of existing cultural objects and increasing their operational efficiency. Investments in architectural, archaeological, historical and urban monuments with the aim of improving the services provided at the facility, as well as creation of new services by expanding the content offer of cultural and natural heritage should also be supported (RCCDD, 2021).

Integrated investment in public outdoor space should be supported, identifying priority areas where investment can provide the greatest return, increase public security or promote multifunctional infrastructure solutions to improve the quality of life, which may include green and blue infrastructure solutions (RCCDD, 2021).

In order to adapt to changes after the implementation of the administrative-territorial reform, SO 5.1.1 supports investments in improving the efficiency of planning regions and municipalities, including the development of new and innovative solutions, administrative services, public transport, public safety, education, utilities and other services by combining infrastructure investment with ICT solutions (RCCDD, 2021).

One of the activities of SO 5.1.1, where the aspect of integrated planning and implementation within the functional territories of cities is emphasized, is the activity “Smart municipalities”. The aim of the activity is to stimulate local governments to integrate smart solutions in the implementation of projects in areas related to the implementation of local government functions and provision of local government services in order to streamline the services provided by the local government and modernize the way they are provided. These solutions will focus on the sustainable development and competitiveness of the municipality (RCCDD, 2021).

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- There are no instruments specific to the Riga Metropolitan Area (for the whole area). That is a challenge in terms of budget and collaboration.
  - ITI (Integrated Territorial Investments) was used to solve economic, demographic, social, environmental sustainability, and education challenges in development centres of national significance (i.e. national level cities Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jekabpils, Jurmala, Liepāja, Rezekne, Valmiera and Ventspils). ITI was available in two national-level cities (Riga and Jurmala) of the Riga Metropolitan Area, but not for the whole Riga Planning Region or FUA's of these cities
  - ITI projects facilitated the receipt of planned investments in municipal development programmes for the priority needs of municipalities in Latvia. The implementation of the ITI created a significant administrative burden for local governments.
  - During the programming period 2021-2027, there will be a focus on regional projects. The role of functional urban areas for the implementation of regional projects will increase. However, some interviewees have expressed concerns over the sufficiency of this measure.
- 

### 4.3 Involvement of social groups and the business community in the EU cohesion policy

The National Development Plan for 2021-2027 is the main medium-term national development planning document. The priorities and objectives of which, as mentioned before, are being used to define the programming documents for European Union (and other foreign) financial instruments) was created with wide-scale public participation in discussions with sectoral, experts, researchers and academicians, NGOs, national-level public administration and local government officials, business community and politicians in all regions of Latvia (CSCC, 2021).

Once approved by the *Saeima* (the Parliament of Latvia), it is to be implemented by all ministries when planning their sectoral policies and institutional strategies. Citizens can achieve the goals through personal initiative (CSCC, 2021).

To make decisions favourable to the Latvian population and various social groups at the European Union (EU) level on EU legislation within the competence of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry invites citizens and non-governmental organisations to provide comments and proposals on them, thus participating in the EU policy planning process (MoF, 2021). Therefore, social groups and the business community have the opportunity to be involved in discussions about the EU cohesion policy, particularly related to funding. For instance, in 2020, from August 10th to September 9th, every potential implementer and interested party of the European Union (EU) fund projects could get acquainted with the draft EU funds operational program for 2021–2027 and express their opinion in the public consultation organised by the Ministry of Finance. Thoughts and comments on the prepared draft operational program have been sent by more than fifty social and cooperation partners, local governments, non-governmental organisations of various sectors, companies and interested citizens (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

As part of the public discussion, the Ministry of Finance also organised six thematic meetings. The social and cooperation partners could remotely get acquainted in detail with the draft operational program, listen to the ministries, make suggestions for necessary clarifications or changes. The thematic meetings were attended by representatives of almost a hundred different organisations. To ensure optimal involvement of partners in various planning stages, after consultation with the European Commission, the Ministry of Finance plans repeated discussions on the Operational Program with social and cooperation partners in the format of EU funds Monitoring Committee / subcommittees, as well as regular information on current processes (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

Social groups and the business community were also able to submit comments and proposals regarding the Recovery and Resilience Facility plan. Another opportunity for the involvement of these actors is the ability to send proposals/feedback on the Environmental Report. The draft Environmental Report developed in the process of the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Recovery and Resilience plan will also be the subject of public discussion (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

Based on discussions, questions and comments, the Ministry of Finance clarifies the situation and makes decisions. Adjustments and changes are made too. For example, the content of the specific objective 1.2.1. (Strengthening research and innovation capacity and introducing advanced technologies) has been edited to include support activities for clusters (innovation and export). Other changes include additions made to the following specific objectives - 1.3.1. Reap the benefits of digitalisation for citizens, businesses and governments, 2.1.1. Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, 2.1.2. Promotion of renewable energy sources and many others (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

As part of the public consultation, the Ministry of Finance also organized six thematic meetings, where the social and cooperation partners could remotely learn more about the draft operational program (for 2021–2027), hear the views of line ministries, and make suggestions for clarifications or changes. The thematic meetings were attended by representatives from almost a hundred different organizations (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

In order to ensure comprehensive involvement of partners and the public, the Ministry of Finance, in cooperation with the responsible line ministries (policy makers) organized thematic discussions on the investments planned in the operational program within the framework of the public discussion of the EU funds 2021–2027 programming period. A separate discussion session was planned for each policy goal. This was done to ensure that the quality of discussions was as high as possible. Given the epidemiological situation, to facilitate the involvement and participation of all interested parties as much as possible, the discussions were organized remotely, on the MS Teams platform (Esfondi.lv, 2021b).

It should be noted that these activities do not have a direct affiliation with the Riga MA, they rather reflect close links to the relevant sector and thematic groups.

While the involvement of social groups and the business community is undoubtedly evident, some interviewees pointed out that participation is rather selective. Also, the involvement tends to be formal, taking place after the documents have been produced. These interviewees suggested that participation should take place during the creation of these documents. Consequently, the involvement would have a more significant impact.

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- Final two paragraphs of this chapter highlight the fact that there is a need to facilitate a more active involvement of the representatives of regions and metropolitan areas in EU Cohesion Policy planning and programming.
- 

### 4.4 The governance of EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency

Next Generation EU is a 750 billion euro temporary recovery instrument designed to help address the direct economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic. At the heart of Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the Next Generation EU instrument, with loans and grants totalling 672.5 billion euro. These funds are available to support reforms and investment by EU countries. The aim is to reduce the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic and make the European economy and society more sustain-

able, resilient, and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transformation challenges and opportunities. To have access to the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, Member States shall establish their Recovery and Resilience Plans (European Commission, 2021).

A single approach is planned for all EU Member States to allocate the funds from the European Union Recovery and Resilience Facility. Namely, national economic recovery plans must include the objectives and the necessary reforms for achieving the goals, investments for the implementation by which it is intended to achieve these objectives. (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

The total amount of RRF funds available is 4.3 billion euro. Grants make up a total of 1.82 billion euro. Grants are awarded and will not have to be repaid. The available sum of loans is 2.48 billion. The use of this type of funding will be decided in the summer of 2021 at the earliest. It will be used only if the loan conditions (interest rates, terms, investment thresholds, etc.) will be more favourable than for other financial instruments available to Latvia (Esfondi.lv, 2021c).

Work on the implementation of the RRF is organized in six areas: climate change and resilience, digital transformation, economic transformation and productivity reform, health, reduction of inequality and the rule of law. According to EC recommendations, 20% of RRF funds are planned to be invested in digitalization, and 37% - in achieving climate goals. It is intended to allocate 330 million euro (20% of RRF funds) to reduce inequality, 181.5 million euro (11%) to health sector projects, 165 million euro (10%) to economic transformation and productivity reforms, 33 million euro (2%) to strengthen the rule of law and another 33 million for the field of culture and media (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

Significant investments are planned in the field of energy efficiency - in the insulation of apartment buildings and in increasing energy efficiency throughout Latvia. Investments in electricity networks and infrastructure are also planned, potentially allowing consumers to reduce the price of electricity by 3% - 5%. Significant investments are also planned to increase companies' energy efficiency, enabling entrepreneurs to create energy efficiency projects for business infrastructure with the help of financial instruments (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

Significant support will be provided for the training of digital skills of the Latvian population at all levels, from children and seniors to adults. Investments are also planned for the digitalization of processes in companies, such as the modernization of management, accounting and internal resource management systems. Support in the form of financial instruments for the digitalization of businesses is provided, providing support for developing and digitising internal resource management and logistics tools (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

Support will also be provided for the promotion of innovation and private investment in research and development, in addition to investing in the Cluster Programme. The latter would create new, scientifically innovative products, promote cooperation between entrepreneurs, scientists and universities. Funds will also be directed to the reform of university governance and support for science and research and the renewal of the scientific potential of doctoral studies (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

Significant investments are planned in the development of roads of national and regional significance. With the help of industrial zones, it is intended to ensure the creation of well-paid jobs in the regions. It is also planned to increase housing availability in the regions by developing the rental housing stock. Increase support for social and employment services by increasing funding for deinstitutionalisation measures is also planned. (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

As part of the hospital levelling reform, investments are planned to develop outpatient and inpatient services, strengthening the infrastructure of at least 10 large hospitals and 40 secondary outpatient service providers and access to the environment (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

Investments are planned to strengthen the capacity to investigate economic crimes, to train law enforcement officers, from police officers to Supreme Court judges (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

The Cabinet of Ministers established an effective, transparent and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management monitoring procedures for the implementation of the European Union budget program European RRF in order to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European Union (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

The CoM will delegate the coordinator and audit functions to the MoF (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).



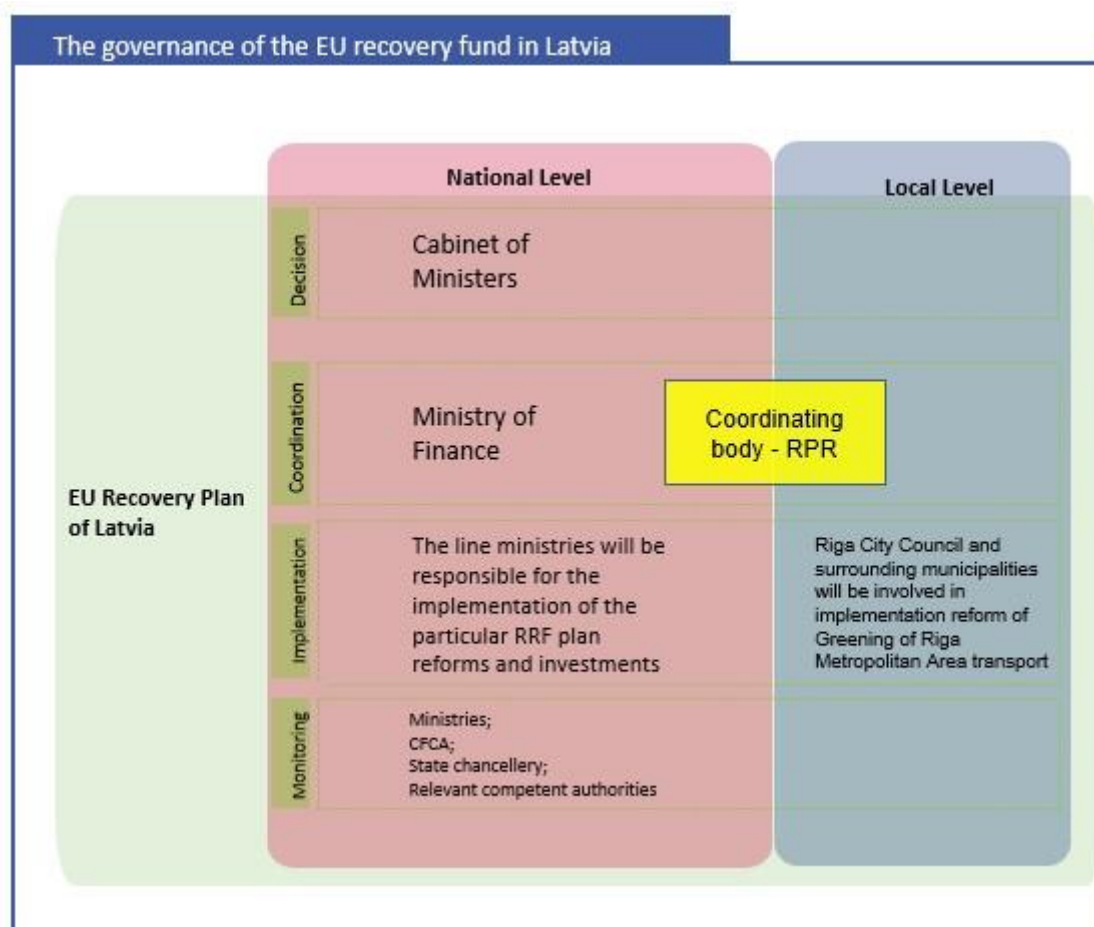
The implementation resources of the involved institutions are planned to ensure the implementation of investments and reforms included in the RRF plan. The involvement of the involved institutions in the implementation of the RRF plan mainly takes place within the framework defined by their core activities and core functions (Esfondi.lv, 2021a).

The line ministries will be responsible for the implementation of the particular RRF plan reforms and investments. Each line ministry will also be responsible for providing the necessary monitoring capacity. The line ministries envisaged the possibility in the conditions for the implementation of components that the beneficiary will have the opportunity to plan the involvement of an independent auditor / internal auditor within the project in order to confirm the achievement of the objective and the justification of costs. Central Finance and Contracting Agency (CFCA; abbreviated as CFLA in Latvian) will conduct risk-based inspections in accordance with the institution's internal control system. The process of monitoring, control and verification of the results of the implementation of the reforms specified in the RRF plan will be ensured by the line ministries in cooperation with the CFCA within their core functions, by State chancellery, as well as by attracting and cooperating with the relevant competent authorities and relying on their assessment of compliance. The process of implementing and monitoring reforms will be the responsibility of the line ministry. The CFCA will monitor the investment project monitoring process (Esfondi.lv, 2021a). Planning regions will be the coordinating bodies.

Figure 4.4 shows the governance of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility fund implementation in Latvia. It highlights the fact that (similarly to the case of EU cohesion policy) decision making (regarding implementation) is centralised. The difference here is that implementation will be considerably more centralised.

**Figure 4.4**

**The governance of the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility fund implementation in Latvia**



Source: authors' elaboration based on Esfondi.lv, 2021a data.

The Ministry of Transport ensured public participation in the development of the RRF within the established working group, which included representatives from the Riga City Council and the Riga Planning Region

(POLSIS, 2021). Riga City Council and surrounding municipalities will be involved in implementation reform of Greening of Riga Metropolitan Area transport.

Section 5.4. details the impact EUCP for RMA during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, it details how the RRF funding will help implementing the reform of greening of Riga Metropolitan Area transport.

## Challenges and critical elements

- Representatives from the Riga City Council and the Riga Planning Region were a part of the working group of the RRF. Riga City Council and surrounding municipalities will be involved in implementation reform of Greening of Riga Metropolitan Area transport. The implementation of such a large and important project will be a challenge.

## 4.5 Coordinating metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy

The coordination and integration of objectives, priorities and targets of metropolitan governance and cooperation activities that occurs within and outside the EU cohesion policy framework involves a network of various public and private (further on referred to as nodes). A preliminary list of nodes of the metropolitan governance was created by research team, followed by fine tuning based on comments of the stakeholder. Table 4.2 shows the nodes of the metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy network, it includes all the nodes from Figure 4.5. It also provides the acronyms used in Figure 4.5.

**Table 4.2**  
**Nodes of the metropolitan governance and EU cohesion policy network**

Institution's name (id for Figure 4.5)	Status	Scale	Sector
Riga Planning Region ( <b>RPR</b> )	Public	Regional	Territorial development and spatial planning
Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre ( <b>CSCC</b> )	Public	National	Territorial development and spatial planning
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development Regional Development ( <b>MEPRD</b> )	Public	National	Territorial development and spatial planning
Association of Latvias' Large Cities ( <b>LLPA</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Riga City Council Development Department ( <b>RCity</b> )	Public	Local	Territorial development and spatial planning
Riga City Council Project Department ( <b>RCity</b> )	Public	Local	Economic development
Latvian Association of Spatial planners ( <b>LASP</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
University of Latvia ( <b>U_Latvia</b> )	Public	National	University
Central Finance and Contracting Agency ( <b>CFLA</b> )	Public	National	Other
Ministry of Finance ( <b>MF</b> )	Public	National	Other
Ministry of Transport ( <b>MT</b> )	Public	National	Infrastructure, transport, communication

Institution's name (id for Figure 4.5)	Status	Scale	Sector
Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry ( <b>LCCI</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Ministry of Economics ( <b>ME</b> )	Public	National	Economic development
Ministry of Welfare ( <b>MW</b> )	Public	National	Social cohesion
Ministry of Education ( <b>MEd</b> )	Public	National	Education
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development Environmental Protection ( <b>MEPRD</b> )	Public	National	Environment
Ministry of Agriculture ( <b>MA</b> )	Public	National	Rural development
Latvian Employers Confederation ( <b>LEC</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Latvian Association of Local Governments ( <b>LALG</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Riga Metropolis ( <b>RMetro</b> )	Non-Profit organization	Metropolitan	NGO, civil society
State-Owned Limited Liability Company Latvian State Roads ( <b>LSR</b> )	Public	National	Infrastructure, transport, communication
Investment and Development Agency of Latvia ( <b>LIAA</b> )	Public	National	Other
Other planning regions of Latvia ( <b>O_Reg</b> )	Public	Regional	Territorial development and spatial planning
The Rural Support Service ( <b>LAD</b> )	Public	National	Rural development
Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea ( <b>VASAB</b> )	Public	European	Territorial development and spatial planning
Ministry of Culture ( <b>MC</b> )	Public	National	Other
Latvian Rural Forum ( <b>LRF</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Road Transport Administration ( <b>RTA</b> )	Public	National	Infrastructure, transports, communication
Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation ( <b>LAPAS</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Municipalities ( <b>Municips</b> )	Public	Local	Territorial development and spatial planning
Tourism association of Pieriga ( <b>TAP</b> )	Non-Profit organization	Regional	NGO, civil society
Private company SIA "CSE COE" ( <b>CSE_COE</b> )	Private	Local	Business
State Regional Development Agency ( <b>SRDA</b> )	Public	National	Territorial development and spatial planning
Rīgas pilsētas "Rūpju bērns" - a community organization that cares for people with intellectual disabilities ( <b>R_pil</b> )	Non-Profit organization	Local	NGO, civil society
Social services in Municipalities ( <b>SSR</b> )	Public	Local	Social cohesion
ZELDA - Resource Centre for People with Mental Disability ( <b>ZELDA</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
SUSTENTO - Latvian Umbrella Body For Disability Organisations ( <b>SUS-TENTO</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society
Apeirons Organization of people with disabilities and their friends ( <b>Apeirons</b> )	Non-Profit organization	National	NGO, civil society

Source: authors' own elaboration

The identified actors establish relations with many other actors in the metropolitan area for EUCP and non-EUCP purposes. The interviewees were asked fill in a roster questionnaire, specifying the main actors with which they establish relations and what is its purpose (EUCP or non-EUCP relations).

To ensure the maximum comparability across case-studies, the team decided to apply the following procedures:

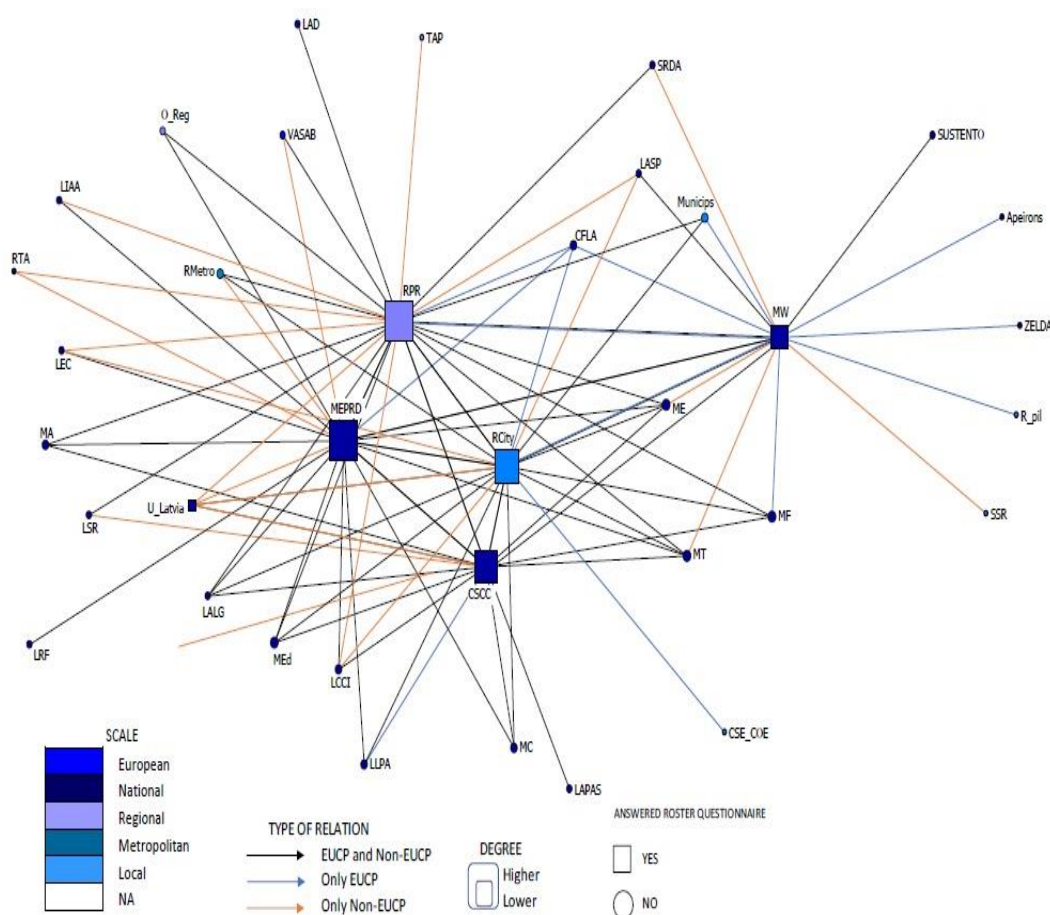
- No consideration of roster questionnaire answers from local authorities, except if they are the city that originated the metropolitan area, as it may unbalance / bias comparative analysis across case studies;
- No consideration of intensity of relations because it is difficult to ensure all organisations have a common criteria /understanding on different levels;
- No analysis of intra-organization relations in each institution.

We use the UCINET software package (Borgatti et al., 2002) to elaborate the matrices of dichotomous relationships between the actors and we use the NetDraw module to draw the networks of relationships. The following steps were applied:

- Dataset consolidation;
- Computation of binary symmetrical matrixes (UCINET);
- Elaboration of one network per case study (NetDraw);
- Networks include the type of relation (EUCP, non-EUCP), scale of intervention of actors (European, National, Regional, Metropolitan, Local), and the degree of each node (the number of nodes adjacent to a given node in a symmetric graph measures the network activity).

In the case of Riga Metropolitan Area, the research team received and validated 7 answers from the selected institutions (CSCC, MEPRD (regional development section), RPR, RCity Development and Project departments, U\_Latvia and MW; these are acronyms used in Figure 4.5 and shown in Table 4.2). Figure 4.5 presents the metropolitan governance network.

**Figure 4.5**  
**The metropolitan governance network**



Source: provided by IGOT

This exercise requires caution in its analysis due to the limited number of actors who responded to the roster questionnaire, although relevant institutions such as the Riga City Council Development and Project Departments, Riga Planning Region and Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development Environmental Protection responded to it. Also, despite the limited response, there is a fairly large number (36 to be exact) of nodes. Bearing these things in mind, it is obvious that RMA (RPR) relates with various stakeholders in the metropolitan area, in a formal or informal way, aiming at articulating strategies and actions in several policy domains. It is evident that in vast majority of cases the relations were either only non-EUCP or both EUCP and non-EUCP.

Among other most relevant actors in the metropolitan governance processes related to the EUCP are the CSCC, MEPRD (Regional Development and Environmental Protection sections), two departments (Development and Project) of Riga City Council and Ministry of Welfare. MEPRD is a very important institution, as it has a large number of relations and in many cases the intensity of these relations is medium-high and the interaction is policy based. CSCC is another important national level actor, since it is responsible for developing and monitoring the highest national development planning documents: National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020, National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 and the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, and implementation of national development planning documents in relation to the EU. That is also a reason why a representative from this organisation was interviewed. Riga City Council Development and Project Departments are the most relevant local level actors. They interact with a smaller number of institutions than RPR or MEPRD and the level and type of interaction varies considerably. Nevertheless, they certainly are important actors in terms of Riga Metropolitan Area. Ministry of Welfare has relations with all other most relevant actors and in every case the EU CP dimension is present. In this case

it is evident that for several institutions it is the only “main player” with which they have a relation. Representative of the Ministry of Welfare was interviewed because of the role it plays in the deinstitutionalisation project of RPR (see section 5.3 for more information on this project).

University of Latvia as a research facility, which provides consultations, is important, however its relation to main stakeholders is mostly non-EUCP and the level of interaction varies. Riga Metropolis has both EU CP and non-EUCP related relations with Riga Planning Region and the two Riga City Council departments, as well as non-EUCP related relations with MEPRD. In all of these instances the interaction is consultative, though the interaction level varies, as the interaction level with MEPRD is low. Other ministries (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture) need to be mentioned too, as, in many instances, they have a medium-high level interaction with the most relevant actors (both regarding EU CP and non-EU CP matters). A number of other nodes also emerge from the network analysis, such as representatives from social groups (NGOs and civil society), the business society and other planning regions.

Local authorities were not surveyed, but they are essential institutions, operating in various policy domains at local scale. Several institutions surveyed confirmed the relevance of the municipalities (acronym Municip) node in the governance network.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a platform for cooperation between municipalities in the territory of the RMA. The development of Riga is closely related to the surrounding municipalities; therefore, by creating a unified cooperation platform, it will be possible to plan the development of the environment, transport infrastructure, public transport and buildings in a coordinated manner.
- It is necessary to provide opportunities for local governments of other planning regions to be create regional cooperation projects.
- Raise awareness on the role of the metropolitan regions by supporting the metropolitan dimension in the EU strategic documents.
- More active involvement of the representatives of regions and metropolitan areas in EU Cohesion Policy planning and programming would improve metropolitan governance.
- The need for institutional strengthening of the metropolitan areas is essential. The current instruments would not be enough to meet the approaching challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis to support social inclusion and climate issues.
- The direct addressing of the metropolitan governance, being one of the aims of the Urban Agenda, for the EU in the further EU Cohesion policy will strengthen and develop multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation.
- More systematic involvement of stakeholders in the planning and programming process in the Riga Metropolitan Area is necessary. This would greatly help in achieving the metropolitan goals and solving its issues.
- The final recommendation of the previous chapter can also apply here. Specific funding instruments are needed in order to solve common problems related to the development of RMA. A possible solution could be creating particular objectives of the National Operational Programme for the Metropolitan Area.
- Provision of statistical data for the European metropolitan areas and observation of processes and characteristics would significantly improve evidence-based policies at the EU and at the national level.
- The dialogue on metropolises and their role has to be continued and promoted. The same applies to other types of areas (cities and towns of different sizes, rural areas, etc.) and their interactions. A balance should be found between the needs of all these territory types.
- Governance of the metropolitan areas should be included in EU Cohesion policy programming. This would be critical for the coordination of the policies and instruments of both urban and rural areas. This particularly important when it comes to housing, mobility, green infrastructure, natural environment and energy, circular economy.
- Provision of the platform for more opportunity to share the knowledge and exchange of good practice examples about EU cohesion policy governance in Metropolitan areas.
- Ensure transparency and fair decision-making processes in resource allocation.



## 5 Cohesion policy impact

### 5.1 EU cohesion policy objectives and actions

As mentioned earlier, Latvia's EU cohesion policy objectives and actions are defined and implemented at the national level, and cohesion policy objectives in Latvia are implemented through European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund. For the 2014-2020 planning period, Latvia had one National Operational Programme, called “Growth and Employment.” Within this programme, Latvia had nine interrelated and integrated investment priorities (Esfondi.lv, 2020a). These were:

- Research, technological development and innovation;
- ICT accessibility, e-government and services;
- Competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Transition to a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- Environmental protection and efficient use of resources;
- Sustainable transport system;
- Employment and labour mobility;
- Education, skills and lifelong learning;
- Social inclusion and poverty reduction;
- Technical assistance (ESF, ERDF and CF support for the implementation and management of CP funds).

In addition, three priority directions of technical assistance were identified, which would help to ensure the administration of the EU funds investment. Defining a narrower set of priority directions in the “Growth and Employment” programme for the EU funds for the 2014-2020 planning period was done to provide an opportunity to focus more specifically on addressing specific issues important for the country and society (Esfondi.lv, 2020a).

Key mid-term document related to the cohesion policy is the National Development Plan (NDP; *Nacionālais Attīstības Plāns*). The programming documents for European Union and other foreign financial instruments for 2014–2020 are being developed on the basis of the priorities and objectives defined in the National Development Plan. Many of the strategic objectives and their measures are supported by Cohesion funds. Main priorities for the 2014-2020 period were Growth of the Human Security (a form of Resilience), National Economy and Growth for Regions (CSCC, 2012).

Objectives of the EU cohesion policy in the Metropolitan Area are shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1**  
**Objectives of the EU cohesion policy in the Metropolitan Area**

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
National Operational programme 2014-2020	ERDF, ESF, CF	1. Development and innovation of research, technology	1.1.1. Improve the ability of Latvian scientific institutions to attract external funding, investing in human capital and infrastructure.
	ERDF	2. ICT availability, e-government and services	2.1.1. To improve the availability of infrastructure of electronic communications in rural areas.

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
	ERDF, CF	3. Competitiveness of small and medium enterprises	<p>3.To improve competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises</p> <p>3.1.1. Facilitate availability of funding for enterprises for the development of business in various stages of development and promote the formation of new enterprises.</p> <p>3.3.2.: To increase the amount of private investment in the centres of national and regional importance, investing in business infrastructure in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities.</p>
	ERDF, CF	4. Transition to a low-carbon economy in all sectors	<p>4.To support the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</p> <p>4.2.1. To increase energy efficiency in public and residential buildings.</p> <p>4.2.2. To promote increase in energy efficiency in municipal buildings in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities.</p> <p>4.5. To promote low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures.</p>
	ERDF	5. Protection of environment and effective use of the resources	<p>5.To promote adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and management</p> <p>5.1.1. The number of people using environmentally friendly public transportation.</p> <p>5.1.2. To reduce flood risk in rural areas</p> <p>5.5.1. To promote regional development by promoting sustainable development cultural and natural heritage of international importance and related services.</p> <p>5.6. To act in order to improve city environment, revitalise urban areas, renovate and recover derelict industrial territories (including areas where reconstruction is planned), decrease air pollution and promote noise decrease measures</p> <p>5.6.1. To promote urban revitalization, improving environmental quality and attraction of investments through sustainable investment in multifunctional public infrastructure.</p> <p>5.6.2. Revitalization of areas through regeneration of degraded areas (brownfields) in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities.</p>
	CF	5. Protection of environment and effective use of the resources	<p>5.2.1. To increase the amount of use, recycling and recovery of various sorts of waste.</p> <p>5.3.1. To develop and improve the quality of services of water supply and sewerage systems and to ensure connection options</p>

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
	ERDF, CF	6. Sustainable transportation system	<p>6.To facilitate sustainable transportation and eliminate deficiencies in the main network infrastructures</p> <p>6.1. To support a multimodal Single European Transport Area by investing in TEN-T</p> <p>6.1.1. To increase port security and improve the mobility of transportation network</p> <p>6.1.2. To increase security and compliance with the environmental requirements in the international airport „Riga”.</p> <p>6.1.3. To ensure the necessary infrastructure to the main overpasses of Riga and prevent the fragmentary nature of main streets</p> <p>6.1.4. Linking the urban infrastructure links to the TEN-T network</p> <p>6.1.5. The reconstruction of pavement of country's main motor roads, increasing the load-bearing capacity</p> <p>6.2. To develop and restore comprehensive, quality and interoperable railway system and promote noise reduction measures</p> <p>6.2.1. To ensure a competitive and environmentally friendly TEN-T railway network, enhancing its safety, quality and capacity</p> <p>6.3. To enhance regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes</p>
	ERDF	7. Employment, labour mobility and social inclusion	<p>7.To promote social inclusion and combat poverty</p> <p>7.6.1. Developing the infrastructure of services for family like care of children and persons with disability for independent life and integration into the community</p> <p>7.6.2. Improving access to quality health care, especially to population subject to the social and territorial exclusion and poverty risk, developing the health care infrastructure.</p>
	ESF	7. Employment, labour mobility and social inclusion	<p>7.1. Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility</p> <p>7.2. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</p> <p>7.3. Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change.</p> <p>7.4. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</p> <p>7.5. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.</p>

Instrument	Type of Fund(s)	Axis	Objective
	ERDF	8. Education, skills and life-long learning	<p>8.1. Investments in education and training, including vocational training, in order to ensure the acquisition of skills and lifelong learning, by developing the infrastructure of education and training.</p> <p>8.2. Improving the quality, efficiency and availability of higher and equivalent education to increase participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>8.3. Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training.</p> <p>8.4. improvement of equal availability of formal, non-formal and informal lifelong learning for all age groups, the improvement of knowledge, skills and competences of the labour and promotion of flexible education opportunities, including vocational guidance and validation of acquired competences</p> <p>8.5. increasing of the relevance of the labour market in education and training systems, promoting the transition from education to employment and improvement of vocational education and training system and their quality, including with mechanisms for forecasting the necessary skills, adapting study programmes and development of work-based learning programmes, including dual training programmes and apprenticeship schemes.</p>
	ERDF	9. Social inclusion	<p>9.3.1. Developing the infrastructure of services for family like care of children and persons with disability for independent life and integration into the community</p> <p>9.3.2. Improve access to quality health care, especially to population subject to the social and territorial exclusion and poverty risk, developing the health care infrastructure</p> <p>9.1.1. To facilitate inclusion of disadvantaged unemployed people in the labour market</p>
	ESF	9. Social inclusion	<p>9.1.3. To increase the efficiency of the re-socialization system</p> <p>9.2. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.</p>

Source: authors' elaboration, based on data about Operational Programme Growth and Development

For the 2021-2027 period, the main aims have changed (note that these are the aims for the entire EU. Based on them, it can be concluded that some changes will occur). They now include (Esfondi.lv, 2020c):

1. A smarter Europe: innovative and smart economic change (developing research and skills, supporting entrepreneurship and digitalisation; 20% of the cohesion policy funding; these investments are following the NDP of 2021–2027);
2. A greener Europe: climate neutrality, adaptation to climate change and environmental protection (22%);
3. A more connected Europe: developing safe, sustainable and accessible transport and digital connections (21%);
4. A more social Europe: equal opportunities and access to education, health care and the labour market, fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion (31%);
5. A Europe closer to its citizens - sustainable and balanced regional development (5%).

Proposed operational programme funding is shown in Table 5.2. Note that the policy goals are more detailed versions of the main aims. Also, discussions are still ongoing.

**Table 5.2**  
**Proposed operational programme funding 2021-2027**

Objectives	Priority	Fund	Available EU funding
A more competitive and smarter Europe, fostering innovative and smart economic change and regional ICT connectivity			698 130 151 (total)
	Research and skills	ERDF	229 737 786
	Business support	ERDF	312 126 311
	Digitalisation	ERDF	128 459 005
	Digital connectivity	ERDF	27 807 049
A greener, low-carbon Europe, moving towards a zero-carbon economy and sustainability by promoting clean and equitable energy conversion, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility.			774 545 533 (total)
	Climate change mitigation and adaptation	ERDF	492 646 274
	Environmental protection and development	ERDF	128 011 193
	Environmental protection and development	CF	87 482 850
	Sustainable mobility	ERDF	66 405 216
Closer Europe, by improving mobility	Sustainable TEN-T infrastructure	CF	726 589 761
A more social and inclusive Europe through the European Pillar of Social Rights			1 042 886 199 (total)
	Health promotion and care	ERDF	231 907 037
	Health promotion and care	CF	42 929 084
	Education, skills and lifelong learning	ERDF	154 325 829
	Education, skills and lifelong learning	ESF+	227 489 303
	Employment and social inclusion	ERDF	81 609 002
	Employment and social inclusion	ESF+	262 098 982
	Social innovations	ESF+	42 526 962
A Europe closer to its citizens, promoting sustainable and integrated development of all territories and local initiatives	Balanced regional development	ERDF	188 875 601
Total funding for all policy goals and priorities			3 431 027 244

Source: authors' elaboration, based on Esfondi.lv, 2020b data

On June 1st, 2021, it was announced that European Commission had approved the modification of three European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) operational programmes (OPs) and one amendment of the European Aid for the Most Deprived (FEAD) OP under REACT-EU. Latvia will use an additional 6.12 million euro from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) to deliver more food aid to people in need affected by the coronavirus crisis (ec.europa.eu, 2021).

Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) and a joint venture of the Baltic States RB Rail AS on behalf of the Ministry of Economics and Communication of Estonia, the Ministry of Transport of Latvia and the Ministry of Transport and Communication of Lithuania signed two additional cross-border Grant Agreements on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding for Rail Baltica project. The total budget of these two Agreements is 214.3 million euro, of which the CEF contribution will be of a maximum amount of 182.2 million, constituting 85% of the total eligible costs. The governments of the Baltic States will finance the remaining 15%. Together with the previously signed grant agreements, Rail Baltica has already secured around 1.12 billion euro from EU and national funds (Railbaltica.org, 2020).

The National Development Plan for 2021-2027 also differs from its predecessor. The number of strategic objectives has increased to four, and the objectives themselves have been changed. These include Equal Opportunity, Productivity and Income, Social Trust and Regional Development. The issues that to be addressed for Metropolitan Area are related to the needs (main aspects) of the 2021-2027 NDP (CSCC, 2021).

### 5.1.1 Funded measures: main sectors and spatial distribution

MEPRD provides data on funded measures of the 2014-2020 period operational programme. These include the projects where the local government, local government institution, or local government capital company is indicated as the beneficiary and projects implemented in the local government's territory. The planned source of financing for the implementation of the guidelines is the budgets of state and local governments and international funding, including the EU Structural Funds and the Norwegian Bilateral Financial Instrument. It can be linked with other funding sources, including other foreign financial assistance funding (Climate change financial instrument, etc.), as well as private capital, which can be attracted, successfully developing public-private partnerships, and other tools to raise private capital. Initially, the measures set out in the guidelines are funded within the state budget funding framework. Additional state budget allocation for the institutions mentioned in the guidelines is examined by the Cabinet of Ministers in the annual State Budget Law drafting and review process (MEPRD, 2021d).

In total, 1 518 projects were registered in the Cohesion fund electronic access system of Latvia (KP VIS) during the period from January 1st, 2014 to May 6th, 2020, with the sum of investments being 2 365 426 134 euro, of which (Esfondi.lv, 2021d) (MEPRD, 2021d):

- 1 782 125 846 euro were direct EU funding (40.3% of total available EU funding during this period);
- 583 300 287 euro were national co-funding.

Regionally, the attracted funding of the municipalities within the Riga Planning Region was considerably higher than for other regions (nearly 440 million euro; Latgale region, which had the second-largest sum, had received approximately half of that amount – 221 323 351).

The analysis of funding per capita provides an alternate overview of the relative impact of EU funding among the regions of Latvia. Riga region has the lowest registered funding per capita (439.5 euro; due to high regional GDP per capita. The largest amount of funding is allocated for the regions with the lowest regional GDP per capita); meanwhile, the regions of Kurzeme and Latgale have registered the highest – 890.1 euro and 865 euro (MEPRD, 2021d).

The regional policy of Latvia divides the country into specific spaces of national interest – (1) national and regional level development centres, (2) rural development areas (89 county municipalities), (3) Riga Metropolitan Area. Due to the specifics of data collection – substituted by Pierīga statistical region; (4) Baltic Sea coastal municipalities of Latvia; (5) Eastern peripheral areas. The analysis of investment data among regional policy spaces of national interest shows the main proportion of funding being directed towards National development centres of Latvia – 9 republic cities. However, the highest total relative funding was registered among coastal municipalities of Latvia (1206 euro per person); whereas the lowest ratios were characteristic to the Riga Metropolitan Area (399 euro per person).

Riga city has attracted the most funding among all national centres (33.3% (195 361 700 euro) of the total, which was 587 340 254.52 euro) (MEPRD, 2021d).

Pieriga region municipalities have been the most successful in attracted funding. The ones with the most funding from 2014 to 2020 were Ogre county with 22 414 484 euro, Garkalne county with 21 071 896 euro, and Stopini county with 18 302 898 euro. In contrast, there have been three Pieriga municipalities that have not registered EU funded projects directed to the municipality or its institutions. Such cases are Babite, Seja and Krimulda counties. These municipalities implemented some projects in their territories (MEPRD, 2021d).

Municipalities have mainly used project funding to improve and develop environmental protection, education and energy directly. The categorisation of nationally primarily influences the statistics of the environmental protection sector and regionally implemented EU projects with the total investment of 122.8 million euro in municipality budget by 2020 (specific objective 5.6.2. - Revitalisation of territories through regeneration of degraded territories according to municipal integrated development programmes). This specific project is classified under environmental protection, whereas its aims are rather interdisciplinary and multi-faceted with the most attention on the economic development, such as the attraction of non-financial investments and the improvement of the employment sector. Therefore, it can be considered that the most EU funding through municipality actions has been achieved in support of entrepreneurship (Esfondi.lv, 2021d).

It should be emphasized that the implementation of investments co-financed by EU funds for the current 2014-2020 programming period will continue until the end of 2023. From the beginning of the programming period until February of 2021, almost 2.5 billion euro (55.7% of the 4.4 billion euro of EU funding available in the 2014-2020 programming period) has been provided in payments to EU project implementers. Respectively, 51.6% of documents have been submitted to the EC for the reimbursement of EU co-financing for investment project expenditures made and verified in Latvia. There have been delays in the implementation of projects in 2020 due to COVID-19. An opportunity has been found to extend a number of these projects. Also, several projects had other objective implementation difficulties. Therefore, the responsible authorities have encouraged not to apply sanctions for non-compliance with the annual implementation plan, allowing the implementation of projects to continue. The institutions involved in the management of EU funds continue to take all necessary measures to ensure the investment of public funds until December 31, 2023. The CFCA proactively and by providing advice to an individual project, promoters provide advice, training, information to applicants and beneficiaries at a distance, in particular, to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of EU funded projects. State budget revenues have already received 2 billion euro.

Almost two thousand investment projects worth 3.8 billion euro, which is 85% of the total EU funding, are being implemented. Of these, 140 new project contracts for a total EU funding of almost 150 million euro were signed in the second half of 2020, and in January 2021 - 18 new project contracts for a total EU funding from nearly 50 million euro. By February 1st, 2021, 791 projects have been completed with the total support of EU funds of 863 million euro. The most significant number of projects were implemented in the fields of transport, research, development and innovation, environment, and regional development (Esfondi.lv, 2021e).

Localisation, sector, and resources of the main EUCP actions implemented in the Metropolitan Area are shown in Table 5.3. Distribution in both total numbers and per capita of EU funding (investments) in municipalities of the Metropolitan Area (prior to the administrative reform) is shown in Map 5.1, followed by a diagram showing the distribution of the total EU cohesion policy funds for municipalities of RPR. It is evident that the amount of investment is rather patterned (uneven) in the Planning Region. This is characteristic both for total numbers and per capita. It also emphasizes that Riga has attracted the most funding (out of all municipalities). The diagram shows that out of the nine interrelated and integrated investment priorities, transport and research and development dominated, receiving a combined 53.92% of the funding. The share of investment priority for education was 14.88% and for environmental issues – 12.97% of EUCP funding in RPR.



**Table 5.3****Localisation, sector and resources of the main EUCP actions implemented in the Metropolitan Area**

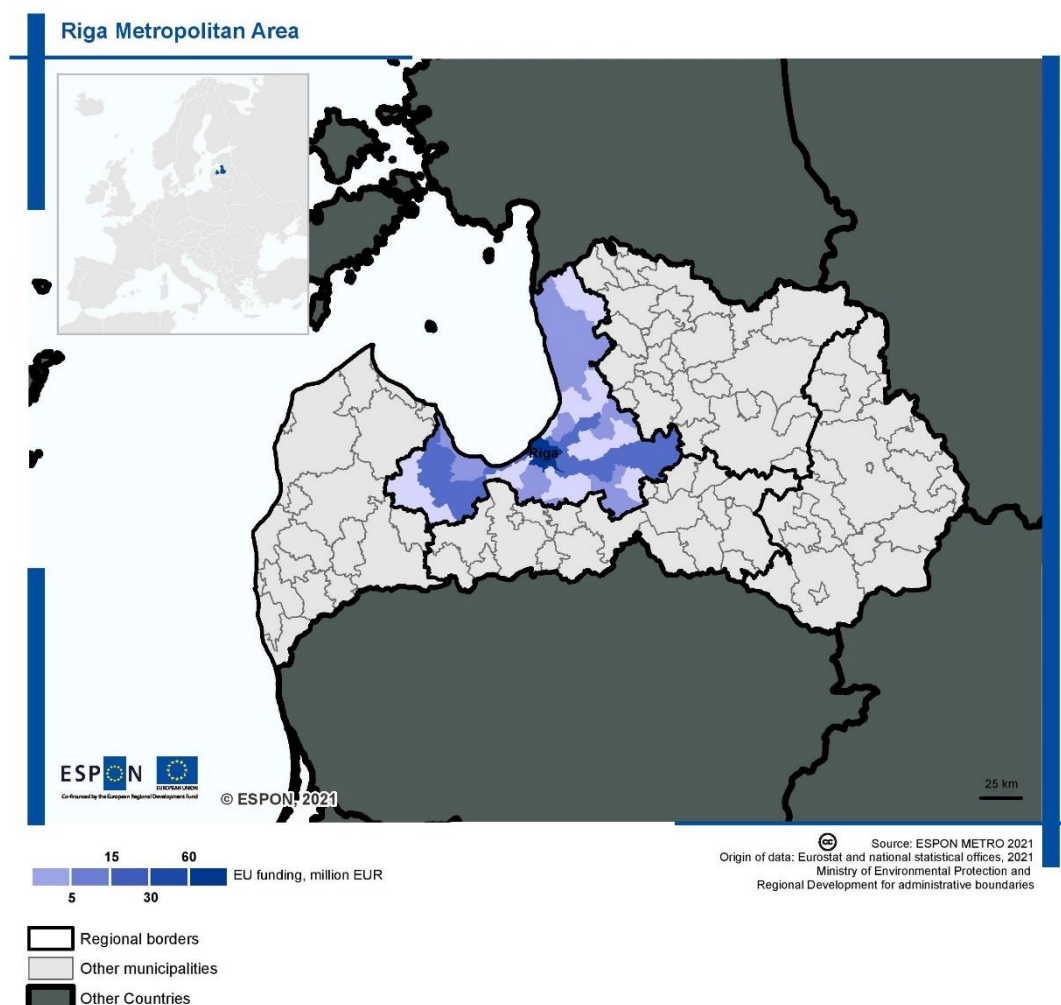
Measure	In-stru-ment	Sector	Re-sources	Localisation (core, sub-urbs ...)
To facilitate the increase of energy efficiency in municipal buildings.  Reduction of CO2 emission  to support energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in the public buildings, and in housing sector	NOP (ITI)	Urban infrastructure	CF	Riga (Core)
To support a multimodal Single European Transport Area by investing in TEN-T  To ensure the necessary infrastructure to the main overpasses of Riga and prevent the fragmentary nature of main streets  Linking the urban infrastructure links to the TEN-T network  To increase security and compliance with the environmental requirements in the international airport „Riga”.	NOP	Transport	CF, ERDF	Core and surrounding areas
To develop and improve the quality of services of water supply and sewerage systems and to ensure connection options	NOP	Environmental protection	CP	Core and surrounding areas
Revitalization of areas through regeneration of degraded areas (brownfields) in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities.	NOP (ITI)	Environmental protection and efficient use of re-sources	CP	Core
To develop and improve the quality of services of water supply and sewerage systems and to ensure connection options	NOP	Environmental protection and efficient use of re-sources	CP	Core and surrounding areas
Support for start-ups, growth of existing entrepreneurs and an increase in the proportion of the manufacturing industry in Latvia	NOP	Competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprise	ERDF	Core and surrounding areas
Support for research and development (R&D), raising capacity for innovations	NOP	Research and development	ERDF	Core and some surrounding municipalities
Support for providing qualitative and inclusive education for personal development at all levels of education	NOP	Education	ERDF	Core and surrounding areas
Investments in education and training, including vocational training, in order to ensure the acquisition of skills and lifelong learning, by developing the infrastructure of education and training.	NOP	Developing the infrastructure of education and training the infrastructure of education and training.	ERDF	Core and surrounding areas

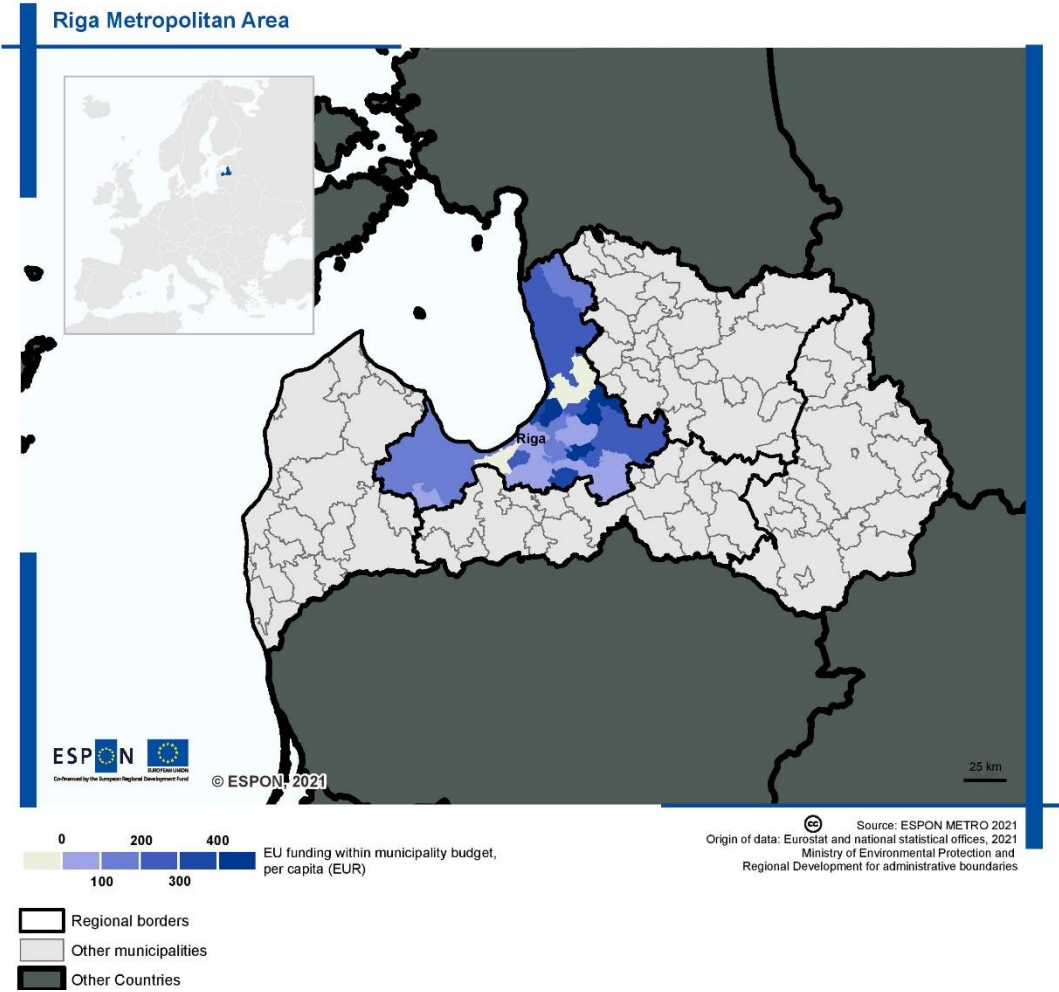
Measure	In-stru-ment	Sector	Re-sources	Localisation (core, sub-urbs ...)
Support the activation of disadvantaged people and reduce barriers to the labour market and social inclusion  Developing the infrastructure of services for family like care of children and persons with disability for independent life and integration into the community	NOP	Social inclusion	ERDF, ESF	Core and surrounding areas
Improve access to quality health care, developing the health care infrastructure	NOP	Health care	ERDF	Core (Stra-dins Hospi-tal)

Source: authors' elaboration, based on based on data about Operational Programme Growth and Development

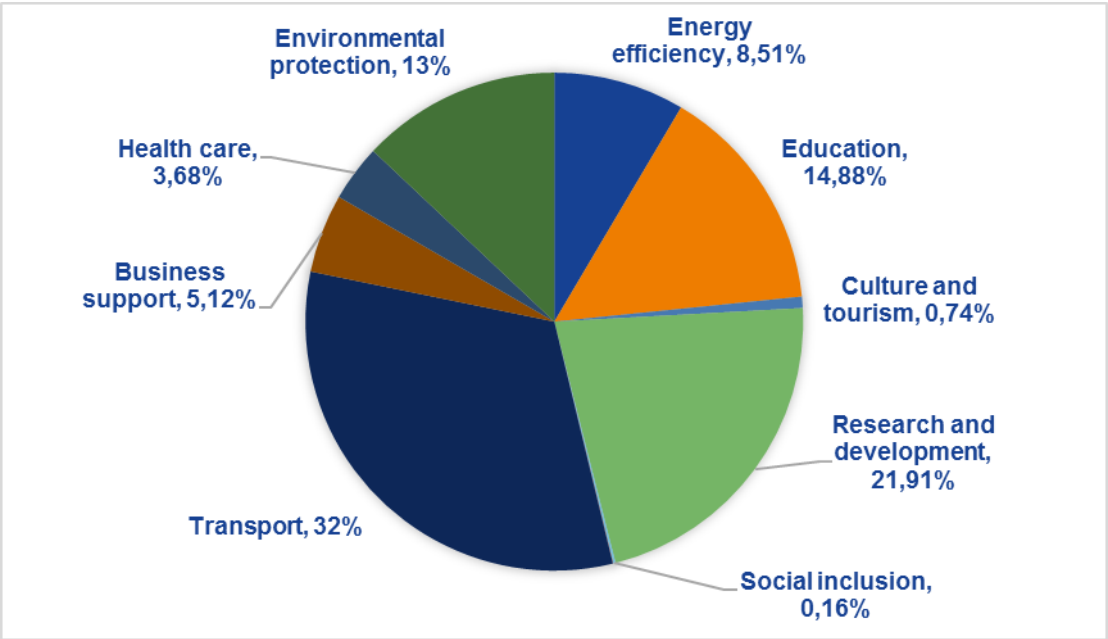
### Map 5.1

Distribution of EU funding (investments) in municipalities of the RPR. Top map – total amount; bottom map – per capita





Source: authors' calculations based on data provided by the MEPRD



Source: authors' calculations based on data provided by the MEPRD

## Challenges and critical elements

- Many of the strategic objectives and measures of the National Development plan are supported by the implementation of Cohesion funds. The number of investments for municipalities within the Riga Planning Region was considerably higher than for other regions. However, the Riga region has the lowest registered funding per capita.
- Riga has attracted the most EU cohesion funding. The amount of investment (funding) is distributed somewhat unevenly in the Riga Planning Region. There is also a notable unevenness in terms of share of funding for investment priorities.

## 5.2 Coherence and synergies with metropolitan objectives and instruments

Coherence and synergies between EUCP and metropolitan objectives are shown in Table 5.4. The metropolitan objectives (which are in line with the metropolitan development goals and priorities) are derived from the RMA Action Plan, while objectives, in this case, are the five aforementioned (in Table 5.2) main objectives for the 2021-2027 planning period. It is evident that there is a coherence between EUCP and metropolitan objectives.

**Table 5.4**  
**Coherence and synergies between EUCP and metropolitan thematic priorities for 2021-2027**

EUCP objectives	Metropolitan thematic priorities
A more social and inclusive Europe through the European Pillar of Social Rights	Public Services
A more competitive and smarter Europe, fostering innovative and smart economic change and regional ICT connectivity	Regional and International Competitiveness
A greener, low-carbon Europe, moving towards a zero-carbon economy and sustainability by promoting clean and equitable energy conversion, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility.	Settlement Structure Natural Environment and Energy
A closer Europe, by improving mobility	Transport and Mobility
A Europe closer to its citizens, promoting sustainable and integrated development of all territories and local initiatives	Metropolitan Area Governance

Source: authors' elaboration based on Esfondi.lv, 2020a and RPR, 2020b data

### 5.2.1 Alignment with the goals defined in metropolitan instruments

The programming documents for European Union and other foreign financial instruments for the 2014–2020 and 2021-2027 periods are being developed on the basis of the priorities and objectives defined in the National Development Plan (CSCC, 2012). Hence, the NDP is closely related to EUCP. The goals of other planning documents (Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, Development Programme of Riga for 2021-2027 period and Riga Planning Region development programme for 2021-2027) are also in line with the five aforementioned main objectives for the 2021-2027 planning period.

It should be stressed that RMA is referenced in the new (regarding climate neutrality, mobility and education) Operational Programme documentation, but it is not positioned as a target territory. In this aspect, they are (and were not previously) coherent with many planning documents that have stressed the Metropolitan Area's importance.

### 5.2.2 Thematic priorities

Overall, thematic priorities for metropolitan cooperation are coherent with the EUCP objectives for the 2021 – 2027 period, as can be seen in Table 5.4.

An action plan for evaluating and improving EU funds support instruments for resource-efficient urban and environmental management in the City of Riga and the Riga Metropolitan Area needs to be mentioned here. For the new planning period of 2021-2027 more than two or three municipalities will be involved in integrated territorial development projects (which were characterised in section 4.2; involvement of several municipalities will be a must for these projects). These projects will require the participation of municipality representatives, experts in the particular sphere, RPR and RCCDD. During the programming period 2021-2027, there will be the focus on regional projects. The planned integrated territorial development projects must be included in the development planning documents of the project applicant and Cooperation Partners - local government development programmes, sections of the Action Plan and / or investment plans, envisaging specific achievable project outcome and result indicators (RCCDD, 2021).

Within this plan, ideas of the Riga metropolitan area municipal cooperation project are detailed. There are five priority areas (RCCDD, 2021):

- Transport and mobility;
- Environment, recreation, tourism;
- Social services, education, culture and sports;
- Entrepreneurship, competitiveness;
- Development of technical infrastructure.

Integrated territorial development projects (which) have been identified in cooperation with the following newly established (from July 2021) municipalities: Adazi, Kekava, Marupe, Ropazi and Salaspils. Once again there are five priority areas (RCCDD, 2021):

- Green infrastructure, nature, recreation and tourism development projects;
- Infrastructure development and mobility projects, including public transport development issues;
- Business development and the development of the necessary infrastructure to provide jobs;
- Cooperation for the provision of public services to the population;
- Strengthening the technical capacity of planning regions and municipalities.

Taking into account the project ideas evaluated within the framework of the analysis, it is proposed to look at the following three sustainable urban and environmental management project ideas of regional significance for further development (RCCDD, 2021):

- Development of industrial clusters. The creation of an industrial cluster can make an effective and significant contribution to the development of companies/businesses by increasing the competitiveness of companies in the local, regional and broader market, for example, by developing the Granita Street area;
- Thoughtful solution planning, management and use of green infrastructure in Riga and Pieriga in cooperation with the capital company SIA "Rigas meži", joint Riga metropolitan development projects;
- Projects that combine the development of traffic infrastructure, smart solutions, mobility points, bicycle and pedestrian connections and the creation of regional bicycle infrastructure in Riga and Pieriga, which can be implemented in cooperation with several municipalities.

The preconditions for integrated territorial development projects are (RCCDD, 2021):

- The particular project should contribute to the EU's goals of a Smarter Europe and a Greener Europe;

- Project outcome and result indicators must apply to both the project applicant (the Lead Partner) and the Cooperation Partners.

At the time of preparing the plan, the municipalities were working intensively on the development of development programmes, and the following activities could help to ensure the coherence of development projects concerning potential cooperation projects (RCCDD, 2021):

- During the public discussion of the development planning document, it may be recommended to link the project idea with the project ideas of other municipalities;
- Riga Planning Region is involved in the review of planning documents and may propose to link individual projects with development projects of other municipalities;
- The Association of Riga and Pieriga Municipalities “Riga Metropolis” is involved in the review of planning documents and may propose to link individual projects with development projects of other municipalities in order to ensure more efficient development of RMA.

The role of functional urban areas for the implementation of regional projects will increase. FUA's will have one specific objective explicitly created for them. The Purpose of the specific objective 5.1.1 “Promotion of Integrated Social, Economic and Environmental Development of Local Territories and Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Security in Functional Urban Areas.” This was detailed in subsection 4.2.

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- The available funding for the Riga Planning Region will be relatively small due to the high regional GDP per capita (the largest amount of funding is allocated for the regions with the lowest regional GDP per capita).
  - Some interviewees have expressed concerns about sufficiency of the specific objective 5.1.1, i.e. to what extent it will allow to address the main priorities of RMA?
- 

### 5.2.3 Funding magnitude

As mentioned before MEPRD provides data on total investments, including national co-financing and investments of EU funds for 119 local governments (municipalities; prior to the July 2021 administrative territorial reform), where the beneficiaries are local governments (municipalities), local government institutions, local government agencies, local government capital companies. According to this data, municipalities (including their institutions and agencies) making up the Riga Planning Region, received 119 631 884 euro for the 2014-2020 period. Notably, higher investments have been provided if the projects where the local government, local government institution or local government capital company is not indicated as the beneficiary, but which have been implemented in the territory of the local government are also included. The total sum for the 2014-2020 period is 438 995 077 euro. In both cases surrounding areas have received majority of the funds. When it comes to the case of municipalities (including their institutions and agencies) being beneficiaries, surrounding areas have received 59.3% (70 945 948 euro), whilst including all types of funds, the share of surrounding areas is 55.2% (243 633 376 euro). Nonetheless, as shown in Table 5.5. in some sectors/priorities the core has received most of the funding (the amount for the core city of Riga is given in parentheses). Investment in Riga is higher in energy efficiency, education, research and development, in areas of social inclusion and health care. This latter dataset is used to compile Table 5.5 about the amount of EU funds per sector/priority (MEPRD, 2021d).

**Table 5.5**

**Amount of EU funds (investments) per sector/priority compared to the overall metropolitan budget in Riga Planning Region (investments for the city of Riga are in parentheses)**

Policy area	Responsible body(es)	EU cohesion policy funds
Energy efficiency	Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Transport	35 884 625 (20 793 873)
Education	Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Economics	62 737 111 (41 402 282)
Culture and tourism	Ministry of Culture	3 109 817 (-)
Research and development	Ministry of Economics Ministry of Education and Science	92 374 370 (82 879 219)
Social inclusion	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Welfare,	653 846 (573 802)
Technical assistance	Ministry of Finance,	94 211 (66 413)
Transport	Ministry of Transport	134 983 923 (21 631 550)
Business support	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Justice, State Chancellery	21 572 324 (-)
Health care	Ministry of Health	15 527 076 (11 245 148)
Environmental protection	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Culture	54 693 387 (499 934)

Source: authors' calculations based on data provided by MEPRD

It is also possible to calculate the share of expenses to implement projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds. This was done based on the data provided by the Treasury of the Republic of Latvia (Treasury of Republic of Latvia, 2021). Share of expenses for implementing projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds varies considerably between the municipalities or Riga Planning Region (See Table 5.6). Still, in most cases, they make up less than 10%.



**Table 5.6****Share of expenses for the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance (2014-2020)**

Municipality	Total expenses	Expenses for the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds	Share (%) of expenses for the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds
Jurmala	554 052 521	36 119 836	6.5
Riga	6 109 885 990	490 696 770	8
Aloja county	42 474 264	3 673 642	8.7
Adazi county	133 794 660	20 211 131	15.1
Babite county	104 333 844	670 435	0.6
Baldone county	44 574 937	1 439 721	3.2
Carnikava county	102 230 923	15 687 107	15.3
Engure county	71 427 560	4 103 182	5.7
Garkalne county	101 134 450	632 396	0.6
Ikšķile county	99 161 274	5 454 694	5.5
Incukalna county	54 814 529	4 612 884	6.5
Jaunpils county	19 742 638	253 385	8.4
Kandava county	69 952 483	4 554 143	1.3
Krimulda county	38 810 869	1 719 675	6.5
Kegums county	41 963 014	995 857	4.4
Kekava county	226 950 756	2 878 285	2.4
Lielvarde county	81 822 835	1 896 836	1.3
Limbazi county	145 999 962	19 411 896	2.3
Malpils county	32 593 391	1 860 243	13.3
Marupe county	235 958 124	8 062 083	5.7
Ogre county	360 321 838	44 282 984	3.4
Olaine county	136 469 366	2 761 373	12.3
Ropazi county	52 297 900	2 939 723	5.6
Salacgrīva county	58 568 492	5 894 387	10.1
Salaspils county	171 165 040	1 076 515	0.6
Saulkrasti county	59 369 275	4 501 176	7.6
Seja county	16 582 835	984 492	5.9
Sigulda county	200 619 427	19 302 147	9.6
Stopiņi county	143 963 391	5 578 184	3.9
Tukums county	244 976 032	20 668 261	8.4

Source: authors' calculations based on data provided by Treasury of Republic of Latvia

Total ITI funding for Riga (from ERDF) was 29 028 049 euro, while for Jurmala it was 25 424 567 euro (Likumi.lv, 2015b).

The Interreg programme projects implemented in RPR receiving the following amounts (RPR, 2021):

- Remote Baltic Marinas as Drivers for Sustainable Coastal and Maritime Tourism Development (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project) - 5000 euro;
- Sustainable urban mobility and practical aspects of everyday mobility (SUMBA+ project; Inter-reg Baltic Sea Region Programme) - 79 920.50 euro;
- Improved marina infrastructure and port network development in Estonia and Latvia (Interreg Estonia-Latvia programme project Harbors) - 57 390 euro;
- Energetic small ports in Central Baltic region (Interreg Central Baltic programme project CBSmall-Ports) - 167 079.25 euro;
- Co - creation of community renewable energy projects and co-financing (Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme project Co2mmunity) – 142 500 euro;
- Virtual urban environment (Interreg Central Baltic programme project Augmented Urban) – 33 000 euro;
- Regional development by promoting coastal fishing the potential of cultural heritage in Europe (Interreg Europe programme project CHERISH) – 40 000 euro;
- Cities accelerating the implementation of sustainable and intelligent urban lighting solutions (Inter-reg Baltic Sea Region Programme project LUCIA) - 60 000 euro;
- Long-distance cross-border hiking route "Forest Trail" (Interreg Central Baltic programme project) – 35 000 euro;
- Baltic Loop (Interreg Central Baltic programme project) – 127 000 euro;
- Strengthening authentic cultural tourism in cities with a rich cultural heritage (Interreg Europe programme project Local Flavors) – 30 000 euro;
- Latvian-Estonian Common Military Heritage Tourism Product (Interreg Estonia-Latvia programme project) - 130 000 euro.

Funding for Riga Planning Region was also provided for projects dedicated to ensuring Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes, Projects and Measures (2014-2020). The total amount of funding was 573 323 euro in 2019.

Total available funding for the SO 5.1.1. (during the 2021-2027 planning period), with national co-financing will be 179 016 526 euro. Available EU funding (85%): 152 164 047 euro (RCCDD, 2021).

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- The surrounding areas of Riga have received majority of the EU funds, especially in priorities of transport and environmental protection sectors.
  - Investments in Riga are higher than in the surrounding areas in such sectors as energy efficiency, education, research and development, in area of social inclusion and health care.
  - Share of expenses for the implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds varies considerably in the municipalities or Riga Planning Region.
- 

## 5.3 Outcomes

For specific objectives 3.3.1. (Facilitate availability of funding for enterprises for the development of business in various stages of development and promote the formation of new enterprises) and 5.6.2. (Revitalization of areas through regeneration of degraded areas (brownfields) in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities) 30% of the submitted projects have been completed. Therefore, the

outcome indicators for most of the projects have not yet been reached. All outcome indicators must be achieved by December 31, 2023. A total of 308 new workplaces (in 15 municipalities of the pre-reform Planning Region; for 21 projects) have been created with the help of cohesion policy funding. Total investment for 28 projects is 39 532 197 euro. This funding has been provided to 16 municipalities, indicating that more new workplaces will be created. Some examples of successful outcomes are shown in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7**  
**Examples of outcomes of the EUCP (2014-2020)**

Action	Field	Outcome	Added value	Role of the metropolitan institution
Integrated development programmes of municipalities	Promoting climate change adaption and promoting resource efficiency  5.6.2. Revitalization of areas through regeneration of degraded areas in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities	Urban regeneration of the Skanste area	Development of degraded urban area 19 ha, street network, creating 130 new workplaces	Cities develop or updated and approve their integrated development programmes (strategies), municipalities of cities within ITI develop and select ITI supported actions consistent with the previously approved development strategies and provisions of specific objectives, in coordination with entrepreneurs and shall provide transparent selection of operations within ITI.
Integrated development programmes of municipalities	Supporting the shift to a low carbon economy  4.2.2. To promote increase in energy efficiency in municipal buildings in accordance with the integrated development programmes of municipalities	Improving of energy efficiency in educational premises	Reducing of emissions	See above
Interreg programmes	Several fields	Exchange of best practise, participation in the network activities,	Improving policy documents, elaboration of local and regional development planning documents, promoting co-operation	Elaboration of the project application, participation in the projects

Source: authors' elaboration based on esfobdi.lv data.

The Deinstitutionalisation project is being carried out with the support of the European Social Fund between 2015 and 2022 to improve access to social services close to the family environment, with community support provided at home for those with mental impairments and children in the Riga region. Thirty-four partners are involved in implementing the project: local authorities in the Riga region, national social care centres and a childcare organisation. The total cost exceeds 18 million euro, more than 16 million of which (85%) comes from the European Social Fund (WHAT EUROPE DOES FOR ME, 2021).

## Challenges and critical elements

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the projects are still unfinished. Hence, there is uncertainty about their results and impact.

### 5.4 The impact of the EU cohesion policy in the COVID-19 emergency

Taking into account the initiative of the Ministry of Transport to develop a conceptual model for reducing environmentally harmful emissions from transport in Riga and its agglomeration, creating preconditions for restructuring traffic flows, thus changing road users' habits and reducing the negative impact of transport, Riga City Municipality is currently actively working on project applications within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) developing the establishment of Baltic and regional multimodal transport hubs, development of bicycle infrastructure, mobility points, public transport services and other projects in the field of transport infrastructure development. As a result, reform of Greening of Riga Metropolitan Area transport has been created. Its aims are (MoF, 2021):

- To implement a change in travel habits in the Riga Metropolitan Area, creating a competitive alternative to private transport, including in connection with micro-mobility, restructuring of traffic flows, creation of alternative routes, transfer of passenger road transport users to public and rail transport, thus promoting reduction of transport negative impact on the environment;
- To enable the railway as the backbone of public transport in the Riga Metropolitan Area, incl. as a competitive alternative to road transport (speed, comfort, frequency, symmetry and multimodal integration with urban and regional public transport, electrification), thus reducing the role of road transport in mobility;
- To Increase the capacity and level of comfort of public transport, making it more accessible and enjoyable for citizens, so that people can switch from private cars to public transportation;
- To Increase the preference in traffic for public transport and micro-mobility modes, incl. for bicycle transport, developing public transport and main bicycle infrastructure separated from other traffic, ensuring a convenient and accessible electric transport charging network.

As part of the public transport reform in the Riga Metropolitan Area, it is planned to develop and approve an integrated public transport concept by mid-2023, including a route network development plan, ticket prices and discount policies, and an integrated timetable. It is also planned to introduce a single ticket by the end of 2023, as well as real-time passenger information systems (MoT, 2021).

By 2026, infrastructure improvements are planned in five of the 13 multimodal transport corridors in the Riga Metropolitan Area: Riga – Carnikava – Saulkrasti, Riga – Dreilini, Riga – Ogre – Jekabpils, Riga – Jelgava and Riga – Bolderaja. Investments are planned for the development of railway and urban public transport infrastructure, creating extensions of existing tram lines and electrifying separate urban and suburban railway lines. It is planned to purchase zero-emission vehicles with the funding - new electric buses, trams and battery electric trains. By developing railway traffic, the plan envisages strengthening public transport corridors from Riga to Bolderaja, Sarkandaugava and Ziemeļblazma, reducing dependence on congestion and shortening the time spent on the road. In turn, a new metro line will be built from the city centre to Dreilini and Purvciems, which will be built in Riga for the first time (MoT, 2021).

Encouraging residents to switch from private to public transport will ensure the integration of urban public transport with railway stations. The route network and timetable will be synchronized and integrated while improving connections at railway stations. These changes will make it easier for passengers to connect different modes of transport (MoT, 2021).

Investments are also planned for the development of bicycle infrastructure in Riga and Pierīga in the length of approximately 60 kilometers. It is planned to develop five main bicycle route corridors: Riga – Carnikava, Riga – Ulbroka, Riga – Kēkava, Riga – Babīte – Pīnķi, Riga – Marupe. Each route will provide a link between urban and regional bicycles (MoT, 2021).

Overall, RRF funding for this reform is the first instance of targeted support for the metropolis (it's needs). Riga City and Riga Planning Region were widely involved in developing this reform. Cooperation will be

necessary to implement this reform successfully. This case could serve as an excellent example for integrated support of RMA issues in future and will foster further cooperation between the municipalities in RMA.

This reform is a part of the climate component of the Latvian RRF. Its funding makes up 43% (nearly 295.5 million euro) of the total allotted for the climate component (POLSIS, 2021).

Establishment of infrastructure for implementation of control service functions in Kundzinsala. Improvement of the transport infrastructure and provision of a new connection to Kundzinsala is an essential part of the Eastern Highway to be established, which is defined in the strategic documents of the City of Riga - “Riga City Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030”, “Riga Development Program 2014-2020”. All planned investments are aimed at the international competitiveness of Riga, providing more favourable conditions for business (POLSIS, 2021).

It is also planned to use the funds available in the RRF mechanism to improve the infrastructure of border control services in the Freeport of Riga (POLSIS, 2021).

The association “Latvian Association of Large Hospitals”, which includes the three most prominent hospitals in Latvia - “Riga East Clinical University Hospital”, “Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital” and “Children's Clinical Hospital” University Hospital”, has agreed and publicly informed about the implementation of the Integrated Health Care Approach in clinical university hospitals. The future operation of clinical university hospitals should be oriented towards an individualized, successive and comprehensive treatment service, which includes the treatment and care of tertiary-level acute and chronic diseases, based on the principle of “one-stop shop” (POLSIS, 2021).

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- The RRF funding is important for RMA because it will help to partly achieve one of the leading metropolitan developmental goals – transport and mobility.
  - This case could serve as a good example for integrated support in the future (thus, being a critical element).
- 

## 5.5 The impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

EU cohesion policy has positively impacted cooperation between municipalities, since the provided funding has promoted cooperation and helped solve issues that probably would not have been worked on otherwise. Still, its effects on metropolitan governance and broader cooperation have been somewhat limited, as, for instance, ITI was available to a minimal number of municipalities. The effects of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and more comprehensive cooperation have been somewhat limited. The current Cohesion policy reflects investments in municipalities.

Riga City and Riga Planning Region were not involved in an early stage of drafting the Operational Programme by proactively identifying the needs of municipalities and region and engagement were limited only to commenting on already created Programme draft; as a result, there are no clear actions and no funding allocated for problematics of (the entire) Metropolitan Area.

At the end of chapter 4.2. the “Smart municipalities” activity was detailed. Within the framework of the projects of this activity, it will be necessary to establish cooperation with other local governments, local government institutions, businesses, universities, scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations. In project selection, additional points will be awarded to municipal projects that are planned to be implemented by several municipalities together (municipal functions and services are almost the same, it is economically justified for municipalities to join forces and implement joint projects covering a larger area, larger population). Such projects could have a higher maximum project financial amount (RCCDD, 2021).

---

## Challenges and critical elements

- The effects of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and more comprehensive cooperation have been somewhat limited. The current Cohesion policy reflects investments in municipalities.
-

- 
- During the programming period 2021-2027, there will be a focus on regional projects. The role of functional urban areas for the implementation of regional projects will increase. However, some interviewees have expressed concerns over the sufficiency of this measure.
- 

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Facilitate cooperation among municipalities and other stakeholders to achieve strategic goals of the National Development Plan.
- Promote cooperation benefits to Riga Metropolitan Area municipalities.
- Provide specific (diverse) instruments for the metropolitan area—coordinate the development programme of the Riga Metropolitan Area action plan with those of other planning regions.
- Specific funding instruments are needed to solve common problems related to the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area. That would facilitate cooperation and governance as well as improve the competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area.
- Simplification of requirements and shorter procedures during the project implementation process.
- The dialogue on metropolitan areas and their role should be continued and promoted. It is necessary to strengthen the role of the metropolitan regions in the governance framework of the EU Cohesion policy.
- EUCP should pay particular attention to such relevant issues (in metropolitan areas) as climate adaptation and risk management, smart economic transformation and social inclusion. Strategies across administrative and regional boundaries are needed to solve these issues.
- Ensure fair distribution of resources.

## 6 Main challenges and recommendations

### 6.1 The role of Metropolitan Areas in the EU cohesion policy governance

#### Challenges on the role of the Riga Metropolitan Area in metropolitan governance

- Over the years, many strategic planning documents have highlighted the importance of the Riga Metropolitan Area as a space of national interest. One of the main challenges faced when describing RMA is different approaches to defining it.
- In recent years considerable work has been done regarding the governance of the Riga Metropolitan Area. Still, there are many uncertainties regarding the functions and size of territory (boundaries), limiting the planning process.
- A decision on the territories included in the Riga Metropolitan Area has not been made and that has a negative effect on facilitating the planning process and cooperation. This would also have helped to achieve main metropolitan goals and to elaborate the planning documents.
- The institutional capacity of RMA is based predominantly on Riga Planning Region. Riga Metropolitan association is a bottom-up initiative of municipalities.

#### Challenges on the role of the Riga Metropolitan Area in the EU cohesion policy governance

- Cohesion policy objectives in Latvia are implemented through three major funds - European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and Cohesion Fund. Their implementation decision is centralised.
- ITI (Integrated Territorial Investments) was used to solve economic, demographic, social, environmental sustainability, and education challenges in development centres of national significance (i.e. national level cities Riga, Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jekabpils, Jurmala, Liepaja, Rezekne, Valmiera and Ventspils). ITI was available in two national-level cities (Riga and Jurmala) of the Riga Metropolitan Area, but not for the whole Riga Planning Region or FUA's of these cities.
- ITI projects facilitated the receipt of planned investments in municipal development programmes for the priority needs of municipalities in Latvia. The implementation of the ITI created a significant administrative burden for local governments.



#### Recommendations for the Riga Metropolitan Area (metropolitan level)

- Explicit decisions on the territories included in the Riga Metropolitan Area would facilitate the planning process and cooperation and achieve main metropolitan goals. This would also be essential for the elaboration of planning documents.
- It is essential to promote the competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area by using the potential of cooperation and joint projects. Joined positioning of the Riga city and Riga Metropolitan Area would strengthen Riga's position in the international environment as one of the main Centres in the Baltic Sea Region. Overall, a unified Riga Metropolitan Area competitiveness strategy would enhance the development of the whole region.
- Improve coherent coordination between Metropolitan Area municipalities and decision-making mechanisms.
- More systematic involvement of stakeholders in the planning and programming process in the Riga Metropolitan Area is necessary.
- Cooperation for competitiveness promotion in Riga Metropolitan Area the territory can create opportunities for local growth and stimulate the national economy.



- There is a necessity to clarify possible governance mechanisms and to implement them considering the following questions: who will be in charge and to what extent (the division of responsibilities is fundamental), what role will be played by the Riga Metropolitan Area and which municipalities will belong to Riga Metropolitan Area, what will be the primary sources of funding? How will the funding be divided? These are the questions of utmost importance.
- Work together with other metropolitan areas at EU level to stress the importance of metropolitan areas, as well as to exchange knowledge and work on common issues.



### Recommendations for the regional and national level

- In terms of the National Operational Programme (its elaboration), metropolitan actors should take an active part from the beginning of the planning and programming process.
- Whilst clarity on the size of territory is vital, a degree of flexibility would need to be maintained. When necessary, municipalities from outside of the Metropolitan Area would be involved in planning and co-operation.
- Support from the national level to strengthen the governance mechanisms will be critical for the successful functioning of the Metropolitan Area.
- For planning regions, enhance intermediate levels between the municipality and the national government for EU cohesion policy governance.
- Acknowledge the importance of RMA, in terms of a facilitator of economic growth. Riga metropolis should compete with other MAs of the (Baltic) region, not other parts of Latvia. Balance has to be found between interests of RMA and other regions of Latvia.
- It is essential to promote the competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area by using the potential of cooperation and joint projects. Joined positioning of the Riga city and Riga Metropolitan Area would strengthen Riga's position in the international environment as one of the main Centres in the Baltic Sea Region. Overall, a unified Riga Metropolitan Area competitiveness strategy would enhance the development of the whole region.



### Recommendations for the EU level

- Provision of statistical data for the European metropolitan areas and observation of processes and characteristics would significantly improve evidence-based policies at the EU and the national level.
- The dialogue on metropolises and their role has to be continued and promoted. The same applies to other types of areas (cities and towns of different sizes, rural areas, etc.) and their interactions. A balance should be found between the needs of all these territory types.
- Governance of the metropolitan areas should be included in EU Cohesion policy programming. This would be critical for the coordination of the policies and instruments of both urban and rural areas. This particularly important when it comes to housing, mobility, green infrastructure, natural environment and energy, circular economy.
- Provision of the platform for more opportunity to share the knowledge and exchange of good practice examples about EU cohesion policy governance in Metropolitan areas.

## 6.2 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on (the achievement of) metropolitan goals

### Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on the achievement of metropolitan goals

- Many of the strategic objectives and measures of the National Development plan are supported by the implementation of Cohesion funds. The number of investments for municipalities within the Riga Planning Region was considerably higher than for other regions. However, the Riga region has the lowest registered funding per capita.
- Riga has attracted the most EU cohesion (total) funding. There is a notable unevenness in terms of share of funding for investment priorities.
- There are no instruments specific to the Riga Metropolitan Area (for the whole area). That is a challenge in terms of budget and collaboration.
- During the programming period of 2021-2027, there will be a focus on regional projects. The role of functional urban areas for the implementation of regional projects will increase. The available funding for the Riga Planning Region will be relatively small due to the high regional GDP per capita (the largest amount of funding is allocated for the regions with the lowest regional GDP per capita; this redistribution of EU funds is based on regional policy).
- Share of expenses for implementing projects co-financed by the European Union and other foreign financial assistance funds varies considerably in the municipalities or Riga Planning Region.



### Recommendations for the Riga Metropolitan Area (metropolitan level)

- Facilitate cooperation among municipalities and other stakeholders to achieve strategic goals of the National Development Plan.
- Promote cooperation benefits to Riga Metropolitan Area municipalities.
- It is essential to ensure the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area by making the most of the Riga metropolitan area's potential to strengthen competitiveness in the Baltic Sea region and development of the Latvian economy, moving towards a knowledge-based and productive economy.
- Ensure fair distribution of resources.
- Support local public and private actors in terms of project proposals (and implementation). This could create a greater added value for the metropolis.
- Work towards capacity building (increase of capacity) is essential.



### Recommendations for the regional and national level

- Specific funding instruments are needed to solve common problems related to the development of the Riga Metropolitan Area and other spaces of national interest. That would facilitate cooperation and governance as well as improve the competitiveness of the Riga Metropolitan Area. It would also help in reaching the goals mentioned of planning documents. Coordinate the development programme of the Riga Metropolitan Area action plan with those of other planning regions.
- Promotion of cooperation needs to be understood on a national level.
- Provide an analytical research base for monitoring the development processes of the Riga Metropolitan Area, spotting trends, and identifying the best solutions.
- Simplification of requirements and shorter procedures during the project implementation process.



## Recommendations for the EU level

- The dialogue on metropolitan areas and their role should be continued and promoted. It is necessary to strengthen the position of the metropolitan regions in the governance framework of the EU Cohesion policy.
- EUCP should pay particular attention to such relevant issues (in metropolitan areas) as climate adaptation and risk management, smart economic transformation and social inclusion. Strategies across administrative and regional boundaries are needed to solve these issues.

## 6.3 Impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

### Challenges on the impact of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and cooperation

- The effects of the EU cohesion policy on metropolitan governance and more comprehensive cooperation have been somewhat limited. The current Cohesion policy reflects investments in municipalities.
- There is a need for coordinated cooperation among local governments, planning regions and state institutions.
- The institutional capacity of RMA is based predominantly on Riga Planning Region. Riga Metropolis association is a bottom-up initiative of municipalities.
- During the programming period of 2021-2027, there will be a focus on regional projects. The role of functional urban areas for the implementation of regional projects will increase. However, the available funding for the Riga Planning Region will be relatively small due to the high regional GDP per capita (the largest amount of funding is allocated for the regions with the lowest regional GDP per capita).



## Recommendations for the Riga Metropolitan Area (metropolitan level)

- Increase the role of Riga Metropolis as facilitator for cooperation and discussions.
- Strengthen the platform for cooperation between municipalities in the territory of the RMA. The development of Riga is closely related to the surrounding municipalities. Therefore, by facilitating a unified cooperation platform, it will be possible to achieving development goals in a coordinated manner. It will also allow to make decisions about action and attracting funding
- Facilitate a capacity building of planning regions, municipal administrations, and other stakeholders involved in territorial development planning, including civil society groups, providing methodological support for developing mutually agreed territorial development planning documents and implementing initiatives.
- Ensure transparency and fair decision-making processes in resource allocation.



## Recommendations for the regional and national level

- It is necessary to provide opportunities for local governments of other planning regions to take part in regional cooperation projects.

- The dialogue on metropolitan areas and their role should be continued and promoted. It is necessary to strengthen the role of the metropolitan regions in the governance framework of the EU Cohesion policy.
- Ensure transparency and fair decision-making processes in resource allocation.



#### Recommendations for the EU level

- Raise awareness on the role of the metropolitan regions by supporting the metropolitan dimension in the EU strategic documents.
- A more active involvement of the representatives of regions and metropolitan areas in EU Cohesion Policy planning and programming would improve metropolitan governance.
- The need for institutional strengthening of the metropolitan areas is essential. The current instruments would not be enough to meet the approaching challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis to support social inclusion and climate issues.
- The direct addressing of the metropolitan governance, being one of the aims of the Urban Agenda, for the EU in the further EU Cohesion policy will definitely strengthen and develop multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation.
- Provide training and manuals regarding EUCP implementation.

## References

- Borgatti, S. P., Everett, M. G., & Freeman, L. C. 2002. *Ucinet 6 for Windows: Software for Social Network Analysis*. Harvard, MA: Analytic Technologies.
- CoM, 2020. *Konceptuāls ziņojums "Par administratīvo reģionu izveidi" (Conceptual report "On the creation of administrative regions")*. [Online]  
Available at: <http://tap.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40493427>  
[Accessed 29. 10. 2020].
- CSB, 2020a. *GZG010. Latvijas Republikas ģeogrāfiskais stāvoklis (GZG010. Geographical position of the Republic of Latvia)*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/vidē/dabas-resursi-geografiskas-zinas/tabulas/drt020-latvijas-republikas>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].
- CSB, 2020b. *Pastāvīgo iedzīvotāju skaits pēc dzimuma un vecuma statistiskajos reģionos, republikas pilsētās, novados, novadu pilsētās, pagastos, ciemos un apkaimēs (atbilstoši robežām 2020. gada sākumā)*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/iedzivotaji/iedzivotaju-skaits/tabulas/rig010-iedzivotaju-skaits-pec-dzimuma-un>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].
- CSB, 2020c. *IKR\_010. Iekšzemes kopprodukts statistiskajos reģionos un republikas pilsētās (faktiskajās cenās) (IKR\_010 Gross domestic product in statistical regions and cities of the Republic (at current prices))*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/valsts-ekonomika/ikp-gada/tabulas/ikr010-iekšzemes-kopprodukts-regionos-un?themeCode=IKR>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].
- CSB, 2020d. *NBA030. Ekonomiskās aktivitātes, nodarbinātības un bezdarba līmenis reģionos (%) (Economic activity, employment and unemployment rate in regions (%))*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/darbs/ekonomiska-aktivitate/tabulas/nba030-ekonomiskas-aktivitates-nodarbinatibas>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].
- CSB, 2020e. *NBG083. Nodarbinātie pēc saimniecisko darbību veidu grupas (NACE 2.red.) reģionos. (NBG083. Employed by economic activity (NACE Rev. 2.) and statistical region)*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/darbs/nodarbinatiba/tabulas/nbl060-nodarbinatie-pec-saimniecisko-darbibu-veidu>  
[Accessed 27. 03. 2021.].
- CSB, 2020f. *DSV040m. Strādājošo mēneša vidējā darba samaksa reģionos (eiro) (DSV040m. Average monthly salary of employees in regions (euro))*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://stat.gov.lv/lv/statistikas-temas/darbs/alga/tabulas/dsv040m-stradajoso-menesa-vidēja-darba-samaksa-regionos-eiro>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].
- CSCC, 2010. *Sustainable development strategy of Latvia until 2030*. [Online]  
Available at: [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS\\_2030\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/LIAS_2030_en_1.pdf)  
[Accessed 02. 10. 2021.].
- CSCC, 2012. *National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020*. [Online]  
Available at: [https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NDP2020%20English%20Final\\_1.pdf](https://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/inline-files/NDP2020%20English%20Final_1.pdf)  
[Accessed 15. 01. 2021.].
- CSCC, 2021. *The Saeima (the Parliament) approves the National Development Plan for 2021-2027*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.pkc.gov.lv/en/node/573>  
[Accessed 28. 03. 2021.].

ec.europa.eu, 2021. *EU Cohesion policy: €225.8 million for Croatia, France, Germany and Latvia to tackle the social and economic impact of the coronavirus crisis*. [Online]

Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2021/06/06-01-2021-eu-cohesion-policy-eur225-8-million-for-croatia-france-germany-and-latvia-to-tackle-the-social-and-economic-impact-of-the-coronavirus-crisis](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2021/06/06-01-2021-eu-cohesion-policy-eur225-8-million-for-croatia-france-germany-and-latvia-to-tackle-the-social-and-economic-impact-of-the-coronavirus-crisis)

[Accessed 03. 06. 2021].

EEA grants.lv, 2021. *Projekti (Projects)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://eeagrants.lv/projekti/>

[Accessed 21. 06. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2013. *Uzraudzības komiteja (Monitoring Committee)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/uzraudzibas-komiteja-1>

[Accessed 20. 03. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2014. *Partnership Agreement for the European Union Investment Funds Programming Period 2014 – 2020*. [Online]

Available at: [https://esfondi.lv/upload/Planosana/FMPlans\\_230714\\_PA\\_updated\\_17.12.2014.pdf](https://esfondi.lv/upload/Planosana/FMPlans_230714_PA_updated_17.12.2014.pdf)

[Accessed 02. 02. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2020a. *Latvijai pieejamie ES fondi (EU funds available to Latvia)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/latvijai-pieejamie-ES-fondi>

[Accessed 01. 11. 2020].

Esfondi.lv, 2020b. *Darbības programma Latvijai 2021.–2027.gadam (Operational program for Latvia for 2021 to 2027)*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.esfondi.lv/upload/2021-2027/darbibas-programma\\_29.10.2020.docx](https://www.esfondi.lv/upload/2021-2027/darbibas-programma_29.10.2020.docx)

[Accessed 10. 05. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2020c. *ES fondi 2021 - 2027 (EU funds 2021 - 2027)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/es-fondi-2021---2027>

[Accessed 02. 11. 2020].

Esfondi.lv, 2021a. *Eiropas Atveseļošanas un noturības mehānisms (European Recovery and Resilience Facility)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/atveselosanas-un-noturibas-mehanisms>

[Accessed 01. 11. 2020].

Esfondi.lv, 2021b. *Sabiedrības līdzdalība (Public participation)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://esfondi.lv/sabiedribas-lidzdaliba>

[Accessed 08. 03. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2021c. *Infografika - Atveseļošanās un noturības mehānisma plāna projekts Latvijai (Infographics - Draft of Recovery and Resilience Facility Plan for Latvia)*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.esfondi.lv/upload/anm/anm\\_12022021.pdf](https://www.esfondi.lv/upload/anm/anm_12022021.pdf)

[Accessed 17. 01. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2021d. *Finansējuma sadalījums (Funding distribution)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/finansejuma-sadalijums-2>

[Accessed 02. 02. 2021].

Esfondi.lv, 2021e. *FM: Ir jādara viss iespējams, lai izvairītos no pārrāvumiem ES fondu investīciju ieviešanā (Ministry of Finance: Every effort must be made to avoid interruptions in the implementation of EU funds)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.esfondi.lv/jaunumi/fm:-ir-jadara-viss-iespejamais-lai-izvairitos-no-parravumiem-es-fondu-investiciju-ieviesana>

[Accessed 19. 03. 2021].

ESPON, 2021a. *ESPON / MISTA - Metropolitan Industrial Spatial Strategy & Economic Sprawl / Final Report Annex 3.3: Case study report: Riga*. [Online]

Available at:

[https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPON\\_MISTA\\_Annex\\_3.3\\_Case\\_Study\\_Riga\\_0.pdf](https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPON_MISTA_Annex_3.3_Case_Study_Riga_0.pdf)

[Accessed 10. 03. 2021].

ESPON, 2021b. *MISTA - Metropolitan Industrial Spatial Strategies & Economic Sprawl. Final Report*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPON\\_MISTA\\_Final\\_Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.espon.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/ESPON_MISTA_Final_Report_0.pdf)  
[Accessed 02. 07. 2021].

European Commission, 2021. *Eiropas atveseļošanas plāns (European Recovery Plan)*. [Online]

Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe\\_lv](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_lv)  
[Accessed 27. 03. 2021].

EUROSTAT, 2021a. *City statistics*. [Online]

Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/cities/data/database>  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021].

EUROSTAT, 2021b. *Gross value added at basic prices by metropolitan regions*. [Online]

Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/met\\_10r\\_3gva/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/met_10r_3gva/default/table?lang=en)  
[Accessed 01. 03. 2021].

Filimonenko, L., 1991. *Problemi razvitija Rizhskoi aglomeracii: analiz problem sovremenogo razvitija Rizhskoi aglomeracii*, Riga: Latviskij NII Stroitelstva.

Jurmala.lv, 2021. *Jūrmalas pilsētas domes Eiropas Savienības fondu integrētu teritoriālo investīciju projektu iesniegumu atlases un vērtēšanas komisijas nolikums*. [Online]

Available at: <https://jurmala.lv/docs/j15/d/j15d050.htm>  
[Accessed 29. 05. 2021].

Likumi.lv, 2011. *Teritorijas attīstības plānošanas likums (Spatial Development Planning Law)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/238807-teritorijas-attistibas-planosanas-likums>

Likumi.lv, 2013. *Sabiedrības līdzdalības kārtība attīstības plānošanas procesā (Procedures for the Public Participation in the Development Planning Process)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/197033-sabiedribas-lidzdalibas-kartiba-attistibas-planosanas-procesa>  
[Accessed 26. 05. 2021].

Likumi.lv, 2014. *Attīstības plānošanas sistēmas likums (Development Planning System Law)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/175748-attistibas-planosanas-sistemas-likums>  
[Accessed 26. 05. 2021].

Likumi.lv, 2015a. *Eiropas Kaimiņattiecību instrumenta ietvaros īstenojamo Eiropas Strukturālo un investīciju fondu mērķa "Eiropas teritoriālā sadarbība" programmu vadības likums*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=278739>  
[Accessed 15. 08. 2021].

Likumi.lv, 2015b. *Par integrēto teritoriālo investīciju specifisko atbalsta mērķu finansējuma kopējo apjomu katram nacionālās nozīmes attīstības centram un kopējiem rezultatīvajiem rādītājiem nacionālās nozīmes attīstības centru grupai*.

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/277740-par-integreto-teritorialo-investiciju-specifisko-atbalsta-merku-finansejuma-kopejo-apjomu-katram-nacionalas-nozimes-attistibas>  
[Accessed 15. 08. 2021].

Likumi.lv, 2019. *Par pašvaldību budžetiem (On Local Government Budgets)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/34703-par-pasvaldibu-budzetiem>

Likumi.lv, 2020a. *Epidemiological Safety Measures for the Containment of the Spread of COVID-19 Infection. Chapter XI. Special Counter-epidemic Measures in Individual Administrative Territories*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/315304>  
[Accessed 01. 11. 2020].

Likumi.lv, 2020b. *Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Issuing a State Loan to Local Governments for Reducing and Preventing the Impact of an Emergency Situation in Relation to the Spread of Covid-19*. [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/316127-noteikumi-par-nosacijumiem-un-kartibu-kada-pasvaldibam-izsniedz-valsts-aizdevumu-arkartejas-situacijas-ietekmes-mazinasanai-un->  
[Accessed 01. 11. 2020].



Likumi.lv, 2020c. *Noteikumi par pašvaldību finanšu izlīdzināšanas fonda ieņēmumiem un to sadales kārtību 2021. gadā* (Regulations on the Revenues of the Local Government Financial Equalization Fund and the Procedure for Their Distribution in 2021). [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/319463-noteikumi-par-pasvaldibu-finansu-izlidzinanas-fonda-ienemumiem-un-to-sadales-kartibu-2021-gada>

[Accessed 17. 01. 2021.].

Likumi.lv, 2021. *Valsts pārvaldes iekārtas likums* (State Administration Structure Law). [Online]

Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/63545-valsts-parvaldes-iekartas-likums>

[Accessed 15. 06. 2021].

MEPRD, 2021a. *Pārvaldes uzdevumu deleģēšana pašvaldībās*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/media/5849/download>

[Accessed 01. 06. 2021].

MEPRD, 2021b. *Plešs: Lending program strengthens municipal economy and provides job opportunities during Covid-19 crisis*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/article/pless-lending-program-strengthens-municipal-economy-and-provides-job-opportunities-during-covid-19-crisis>

[Accessed 18. 03. 2021].

MEPRD, 2021c. *Plešs: pašvaldības no valsts budžeta saņems 27 milj. augstas gatavības projektu īstenošanai*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/pless-pasvaldibas-no-valsts-budzeta-sanems-27-milj-augstas-gatavibas-projektu-istenosanai>

[Accessed 19. 06. 2021].

MEPRD, 2021d. *Unpublished data on total investments and investments of EU funds for 119 local governments*. [Online]

[Accessed 10. 03. 2021].

MoF, 2021. *Sabiedrības līdzdalība par ES un citas ārvalstu finanšu palīdzības jautājumiem* (Public participation on EU and other foreign financial assistance issues). [Online]

Available at: <https://www.fm.gov.lv/lv/sabiedribas-lidzdaliba-par-es-un-citas-arvalstu-finansu-palidzibas-jautajumiem>

[Accessed 07. 03. 2021.].

MoT, 2021. *Atveseļošanas un noturības mehānisma līdzekļus izmantos sabiedriskā transporta attīstībai Rīgas metropoles areālā* (The funds of the Recovery and Resilience Facility will be used for the development of public transport in the Riga metropolitan area). [Online]

Available at: <https://www.sam.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/atveselosanas-un-noturibas-mehanismas-lidzeklus-izmantos-sabiedriskas-transporta-attistibai-rigas-metropoles-areala>

[Accessed 04. 02. 2021.].

NVA, 2020. *Unemployment indicators and SEA activities in 2017. Number of registered unemployed, registered unemployment rate on 31. 12. 2017 and Number of registered unemployed by cities and counties*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.nva.gov.lv/lv/2017gads>

[Accessed 01. 03. 2021.].

Perigaspartneriba.lv, 2018. *Pierīgas Partnerība statūti* (Statutes of the Pierīga Partnership association). [Online]

Available at: <https://www.pierigaspartneriba.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/PP-statuti-22.03.2018.pdf>

[Accessed 15. 01. 2021.].

Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021a. *Par biedrību* (About the association). [Online]

Available at: <https://www.pierigaspartneriba.lv/par-biedribu/>

[Accessed 15. 01. 2021.].

Pierigaspartneriba.lv, 2021b. *SVVA stratēģija un MK noteikumi* (CLDS and CofM rules). [Online]

Available at: <https://www.pierigaspartneriba.lv/realize-projeku/strategija/>

[Accessed 11. 03. 2021.].

PMA, 2015. *About us ENG*. [Online]

Available at: <https://pierigasapvieniba.lv/index.php/about-us-eng>

[Accessed 01. 11. 2021.].

POLSIŠ, 2021. *EIROPAS SAVIENĪBAS ATVESEĻOŠANAS UN NOTURĪBAS MEHĀNISMA PLĀNS LATVIJA (EUROPEAN UNION RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FACILITY LATVIA)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/7065>

[Accessed 12. 05. 2021].

Railbaltica.org, 2020. *Rail Baltica project signs 214,3 million EUR Grant Agreements with INEA*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.railbaltica.org/rail-baltica-project-signs-2143-million-eur-grant-agreements-with-inea/>

[Accessed 27. 03. 2021].

RCCDD, 2014. *Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030*. [Online]

Available at: [https://www.rdpad.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ENG\\_STRATEGIJA.pdf](https://www.rdpad.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ENG_STRATEGIJA.pdf)

[Accessed 02. 10. 2021].

RCCDD, 2019. *Rīgas dome un Pierīgas pašvaldību apvienība paraksta sadarbības memorandu "Par Rīgas metropoles areāla sadarbības ietvara izveidi"*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.rdpad.lv/rigas-metropoles-areals/>

[Accessed 08. 06. 2021].

RCCDD, 2021. *Rīcības plāns Eiropas Savienības fondu atbalsta instrumentu izvērtēšanai un pilnveidošanai resursu efektīvas pilsētvides un vides pārvaldībai Rīgas pilsētā un Rīgas metropoles areālā*,

RCCDD, S.a. *ITI ieviešana (Implementation of the ITI)*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.rdpad.lv/strategija/iti-ieviesana/>

[Accessed 29. 05. 2021].

Riga.lv, 2021. *Pierīgas pašvaldību apvienība pārtop apvienībā "Rīgas metropole" (The Association of Pierīga Municipalities is transformed into the Association "Riga Metropolis")*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.riga.lv/lv/jaunums/pierigas-pasvaldibu-apvieniba-partop-apvieniba-rigas-metropole>

[Accessed 27. 01. 2021].

RPR, 2014a. *Rīgas plānošanas reģiona teritorijas attīstības plānošanas dokumentu projektu publiskā apspriešana (Public discussion of draft Riga Planning Region territorial development planning documents)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/uzsakta-rigas-planosanas-regiona-teritorijas-attistibas-planosanas-dokumentu-projektu-publiska-apspriesana/>

[Accessed 20. 01. 2021].

RPR, 2014b. *Rīgas plānošanas reģions aicina sniegt priekšlikumus reģiona attīstības plānošanas dokumentu projektu pilnveidošanai (Riga Planning Region invites to submit proposals for the improvement of draft regional development planning documents)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/rigas-planosanas-regions-aicina-sniegt-priekslikumus-regiona-attistibas-planosanas-dokumentu-projektu-pilnveidosanai/>

[Accessed 20. 01. 2021].

RPR, 2015. *RPR Ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģija 2014-2030 (RPR Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RPR-Ilgtspējīgas-attistibas-strategija\\_2014-2030.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/RPR-Ilgtspējīgas-attistibas-strategija_2014-2030.pdf)

[Accessed 16. 01. 2021].

RPR, 2018a. *Lēmums Nr.6 "Par RPR tematiskā plāna "Rīcības plāns Rīgas metropoles areāla attīstībai" izstrādes uzsākšanu" (Decision No.6 "On Commencement of the Development of the RPR Thematic Plan "Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area")*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Lem\\_6\\_Metropole.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Lem_6_Metropole.pdf)

[Accessed 02. 10. 2021].

RPR, 2018b. *RĪGAS PLĀNOŠANAS REĢIONS, TĀ FUNKCIJAS (Riga Planning Region, its functions)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/par-mums/par-iestadi/>  
[Accessed 15. 01. 2021.].

RPR, 2018c. *Rīgas Plānošanas Reģiona attīstības programma 2014 – 2020 (Riga Planning Region Development Program 2014 - 2020)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/RPR-Attistibas-programma\\_2014-2020\\_aktualizets\\_RP.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/RPR-Attistibas-programma_2014-2020_aktualizets_RP.pdf)  
[Accessed 15. 01. 2021.].

RPR, 2018d. *Rīgas metropoles areāla plāna izstrādes pamatojums (Substantiation of Riga metropolitan area plan development)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rigas-metropoles-plans\\_pamatojums.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Rigas-metropoles-plans_pamatojums.pdf)  
[Accessed 20. 01. 2021.].

RPR, 2018e. *Deinstitucionalizācijas (DI) plāna sabiedriskā apspriešana (Public discussion of the deinstitutionalisation plan (DI))*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/di-plana-sabiedriskā-apspriesana/>  
[Accessed 20. 01. 2021.].

RPR, 2018f. *DARBA UZDEVUMS RĪCĪBAS PLĀNAM RĪGAS METROPOLES AREĀLA ATTĪSTĪBAI (WORK TASK FOR THE ACTION PLAN)*. [Online]

Available at: [https://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DU\\_Metropoles-plans\\_apstiprinats.pdf](https://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/DU_Metropoles-plans_apstiprinats.pdf)  
[Accessed 18. 06. 2021].

RPR, 2020a. 10.01.2020. Lēmums Nr.1 “Par RPR izstrādātā “Rīcības plāna Rīgas metropoles areāla attīstībai” apstiprināšanu (Decision No. 1 “On approval of the “Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area”, developed by RPR). [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Lem\\_1\\_Metropoles\\_plans.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Lem_1_Metropoles_plans.pdf)  
[Accessed 02. 10. 2021.].

RPR, 2020b. *Rīcības plāns Rīgas metropoles areāla attīstībai (Action plan for the development of the Riga metropolitan area)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rigas-metropoles-areala-ricibas-plans\\_Web-1.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rigas-metropoles-areala-ricibas-plans_Web-1.pdf)  
[Accessed 02. 10. 2021.].

RPR, 2020c. *Rīgas plānošanas reģiona attīstības padome (Riga Planning Region development council)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/par-mums/par-iestadi/rpr-attistibas-padome/>  
[Accessed 02. 10. 2021.].

RPR, 2020d. *Rīgas plānošanas reģiona 2019.gada publiskais pārskats (Riga Planning Region Public Report for 2019)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RPR\\_publickais\\_parskats\\_2019-AKC.pdf](http://rpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RPR_publickais_parskats_2019-AKC.pdf)  
[Accessed 17. 01. 2021.].

RPR, 2021. *Projekti (Projects)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://rpr.gov.lv/project/>  
[Accessed 12. 06. 2021.].

Skadins et al., 2019. Delineation of the boundary of an urban agglomeration: evidence from Riga, Latvia. *Urban Development Issues*, Volume 62, pp. 39-46.

Treasury of Republic of Latvia, 2021. *Pārskatu publicēšana - pašvaldības (Publication of reports - municipalities)*. [Online]

Available at: [https://e2.kase.gov.lv/pub5.5\\_pasv/code/pub.php?module=pub](https://e2.kase.gov.lv/pub5.5_pasv/code/pub.php?module=pub)  
[Accessed 27. 03. 2021].

URBACT, 2015. *Urban transformation action plan of Riga Metropolitan Area*. [Online]

Available at: [https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/useact\\_lap\\_riga\\_planning\\_region.pdf](https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/media/useact_lap_riga_planning_region.pdf)  
[Accessed 02. 10. 2021.].

URBACT, 2021. *Interactive map*. [Online]

Available at: <https://urbact.eu/interactive-map>

[Accessed 06. 09. 2021].

Urban Data Platform Plus, 2021. *Urban Data Platform Plus*. [Online]

Available at: [https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/#/en/my-](https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/#/en/my-place?context=Default&territorialscope=EU28&level=METRO&nutsid=LV001MC)

[place?context=Default&territorialscope=EU28&level=METRO&nutsid=LV001MC](https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/#/en/my-place?context=Default&territorialscope=EU28&level=METRO&nutsid=LV001MC)

[Accessed 01. 03. 2021].

Vestnesis.lv, 2021. *Regulations on Criteria and Procedures for Evaluating and Issuing State Loans to Municipalities for Mitigation and Prevention of the Covid-19 Crisis*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2021/33.6>

[Accessed 19. 03. 2021].

Vidzeme.com, 2014. *Sešas Pierīgas pašvaldības izveido Daugavas lejteces tūrisma reģionu (Six municipalities of Pierīga have created a tourist region downstream of the Daugava)*. [Online]

Available at: [http://www.vidzeme.com/lv/jaunumi-vta/sesas-pierigas-pasvaldibas-izveido-daugavas-](http://www.vidzeme.com/lv/jaunumi-vta/sesas-pierigas-pasvaldibas-izveido-daugavas-lejteces-turisma-regionu.html)  
[lejteces-turisma-regionu.html](http://www.vidzeme.com/lv/jaunumi-vta/sesas-pierigas-pasvaldibas-izveido-daugavas-lejteces-turisma-regionu.html)

[Accessed 11. 02. 2021].

WHAT EUROPE DOES FOR ME, 2021. *#EUandMe - Riga region, Latvia*. [Online]

Available at: <https://what-europe-does-for-me.eu/en/portal/1/LV006>

[Accessed 03. 06. 2021].



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

[espon.eu](http://espon.eu)



## **ESPON 2020**

ESPON EGTC

4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Phone: +352 20 600 280

Email: [info@espon.eu](mailto:info@espon.eu)

[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States, the United Kingdom and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

### **Disclaimer**

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

ISBN: 978-2-919795-65-9