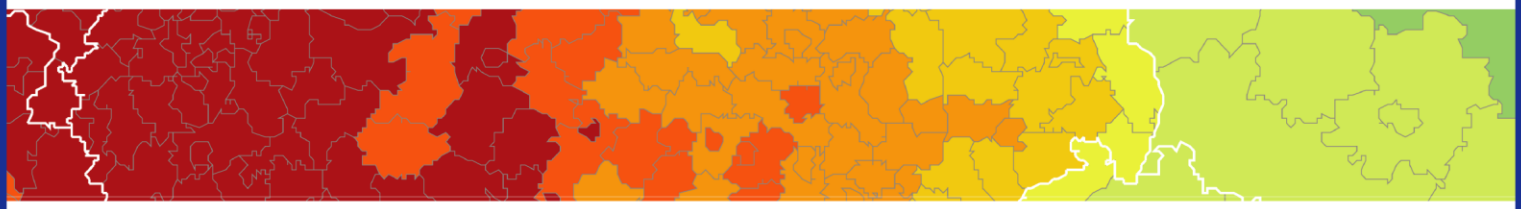

ESPON QoL – Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology

Annex 13 to the Final Report

Case study: Latvia

Applied Research

Final Report

30th October 2020

Final Report

This applied research activity is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

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Annex 13 to the Final Report

Case Study 10:

Latvia

ESPON QoL – Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology

30th October 2020

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Abbreviations

CSB	Central Statistical Bureau
MEPRD	Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development
NDP	National Development Plan
OWB	Objective Evaluation of the Well-Being
OWBI	Objective Well-Being Index
QOL	Quality of Life
RIDM	Regional Development Indicators Module
SPI	Social Progress Index
TDI	Territorial Development Index
TQoL	Territorial Quality of Life

Introduction

This is one of the 10 case studies of the ESPON study “Quality of Life Measurements and Methodology”. The purpose and results of the study, including the definition and application of a territorial quality of life measurement methodology, the synthesis of all case study findings, targeted policy recommendations, ideas for fostering cooperation between ESPON, EUROSTAT, OECD and the UN and recommendations for further research, are illustrated in the Final Report, to which this case study report is annexed.

The purpose of the case studies is twofold:

A) to collect good practices that can be adopted in other European regions, and

B) to make use of the methodology developed and allow for adjustments through testing in case studies.

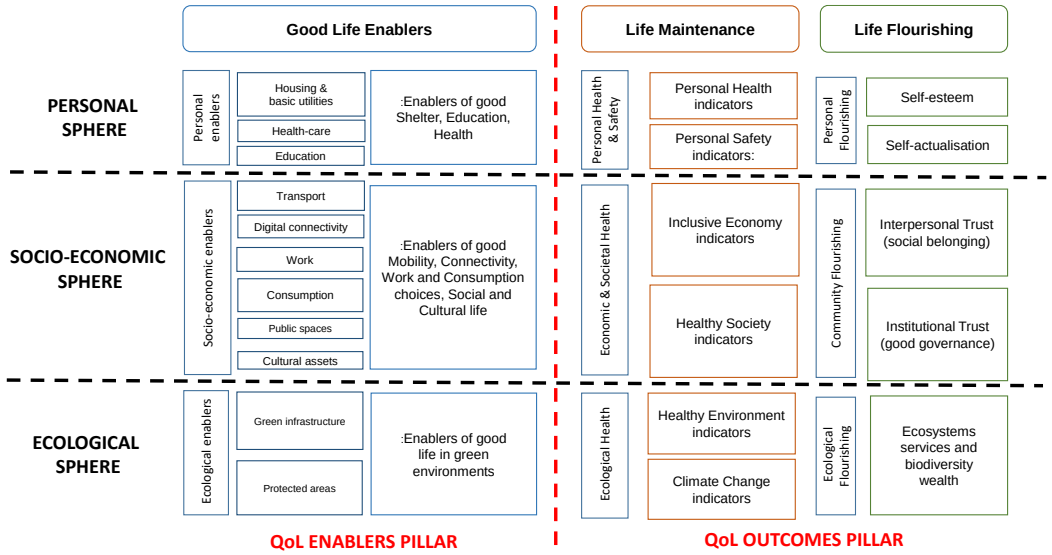
Each case study provides examples of application of the concept of quality of life (QoL) in a specific region. This complements the conceptual model and the research done at European level. The reasons why this region has been chosen forms part of Section 1.

For objective A) the case study report explores the policy context, in which QoL is used and measured in the region (Section 2). It is important to understand for which purpose the concept has been established, in which policy fields it is being used, how different levels of government are involved and which success factors and obstacles can be identified. Section 3 explains the indicators, measurement methods and data that are used for measuring QoL.

Objective B) is covered in Section 4. The study defines and tests a methodology to measure QoL at territorial (sub-national) level and offers guidance to policy makers at different levels – local, regional, national, European – on how to integrate QoL in policy processes and in territorial development strategies. We have applied to the case studies the methodology developed in the main report. This includes the Territorial Quality of Life (TQoL) measurement system and the system for coding indicators.

The TQoL framework defines the system and its main elements (pillars, spheres, sub-domains) to measure QoL facets with reference to territorial entities identified. This is shown in the TQoL framework in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 The TQoL framework



The system for **coding indicators** to represent and monitor adequately the different QoL domains, defined in the TQoL framework, is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Coding of the indicator system in the TQoL framework

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	Definition
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	
		Health	
		Education	
	Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	
		ICT connectivity	
		Work opportunities	
		Consumption opportunities	
		Public spaces	
		Cultural Assets	
	Ecological enablers	Green infrastructure	
		Protected areas	
Life Maintenance	Personal Health and Safety	Personal health indicators	
		Personal safety indicators	
	Economic and Societal Health	Inclusive economy indicators	
		Healthy Society indicators	
	Ecological Health	Healthy Environment indicators	
		Climate change indicators	
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	
		Self-actualization	
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	
		Institutional Trust (good governance)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	

Both, the TQoL framework and the coding system are applied in all case studies (Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

The methodology developed in this report includes further elements - a dashboard, the latent clustering approach and the citizen-centric approach - that are applied in the case studies, if sufficient data or information have been available. These elements are as follows:

- The indicators coded for local or sub-regional territorial units are presented in a **dashboard** (in an Excel-based tool). In the dashboard different points in time or objective and subjective indicators can be included and compared at territorial unit level. The specific indicators used to monitor the QoL domains are different in each case, as they take into account specific local circumstances that influence the selection of indicators (e.g. availability of data, local priorities and practices).
- In the case studies that cover a large number of territorial units the **Latent Class clustering model** helps to analyse underlying patterns and spatial differences of territorial QoL. However, the number of case studies falling in this category is small.
- A descriptive element of the TQoL approach identified in this applied-research project is the **"citizen-centric" approach**, where citizens are engaged in co-design, implementation and fact-checking activities ("factfulness" tests), to make the measurement of territorial QoL more responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens to improve their everyday life. This can be promoted, recommended, and applied within the different case study contexts highlighting in particular any existing local practice of citizen engagement that could be adopted as a concrete example of the approach.

These methodological elements are considered in the case studies which were carried out to investigate and compare noteworthy experiences of territorial QoL measurements against the TQoL framework that has been developed with the aim of drawing lessons for further adjusting and fine tuning the methodology, which will eventually allow for its practical and widespread use for measuring QoL across territories in Europe.

1 Description of the region

1.1 Characteristics of the region

Latvia is a Northern European Country located at the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The population is about 1,9 Million with constant decrease. The metropolitan area of Riga accounts for nearly half of the population and has generated nearly 70% of the GDP growth from 2000 to 2016 (OECD, 2019). Latvia is a country with one of the highest levels in regional disparities.

Another remarkable feature is the dynamic of growth: Latvia is a very fast-growing country, with a very turbulent development over the past two decades: After the independence of Latvia the economy faced a sharp decline in the early 1990ies. Growth only picked up since 1995. In order to ensure further growth a planning system has been introduced, that involved all levels of the state government systems (Karnitis E., Kucinskis M., 2008). Most relevant stakeholders and experts were involved in this system. A number of planning instruments were designed, all to serve the growth model for Latvia "People First". This defines a knowledge-based human-centred development. Until the years of the financial crisis Latvia's economy grew steadily, with annual growth rates of more than 10% in the years 2006 and 2007. Still, disparities between the regions have been high, so were inequalities within the society.

With the crisis Latvia entered into a severe recession until 2009, where economic recovery picked up speed since 2010. In 2012 Latvia reached the highest growth rate in Europe. However, Latvia has recovered at a macro-economic level (esp. in the growth of exports and the increase of industrial production). What has been left behind is the quality of life: the QoL index, which goes back to 2003, peaked in 2007 and reached its lowest point in 2009. The NDP2020 states, that "the economic and fiscal problems have resulted in a considerable deterioration of the people's capacity to act, therefore individual solutions (emigration, the grey economy) prevail over collective solutions (payment of taxes. participation, social entrepreneurship), deepening the crisis in the society".

1.2 Rationale for selecting the case study

Latvia has put QoL at highest priority of national growth in the National Development Plan 2007-2014 and put significant effort in measuring quality of life since 2003. To monitor the implementation of the NDP, quantitative criteria have been established to measure the actual change of QoL in the country. During the late 2000s a number of analytical studies have been conducted to analyse the determining factors for the QoL (Karnitis E., Kucinskis M., 2008).

As spatial inequalities are very high, this makes developing territorial QoL indexes a relevant measurement and policy issue in the country. In Latvia, similarly in other European countries, the degree of urbanisation is high – approximately 68% of all inhabitants of the country are living in cities, though cities cover only 11% of the whole territory of the country. Although settlement structure is formed by rather evenly dispersed network of small and medium-size cities and rural populated areas, capital-oriented monocentric settlement and traffic infrastructure, as well as concentration of social and economic activities in the functional zone of Riga is characteristic to Latvia, and this tendency is becoming stronger. As a result, in Latvia there are substantial differences in the standard of living between Riga and the remaining territory of the country. Migration of inhabitants is still continuing not only from the countryside to cities, but also from small towns to larger and stronger cities. While the proportion of urbanised territories is increasing, concurrently adequate attention is not paid to the quality of urban environment and renovation of declined territories.

2 Policy context

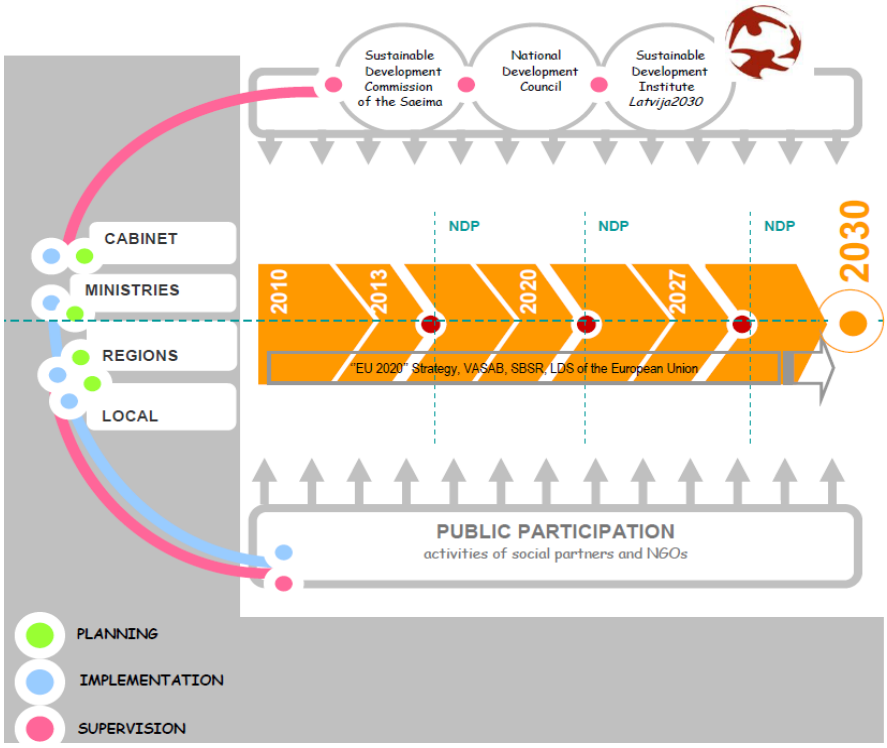
2.1 Governance levels and the use of QoL in a policy context

2.1.1 National Strategic Planning of Sustainable Development

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 - the hierarchically highest planning document - was set in 2010 as a challenge for the next 20 years not only for politicians, public management, economically active and organised civil society. As an early manifestation of "people/citizen-centric" approach, *Latvija2030* addresses every household, every person who will be the main winners in case of successful implementation of the strategy. The first and most significant precondition for implementation of the agenda is joint work of the society and responsible, co-ordinated action - expanding the main idea of the conceptual document "Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place" approved by the Parliament (Saeima) of the Republic of Latvia, that the development of the society is directed by desire of every person to live better and think about better life for their children, improving the quality of life in different ways of its expression.

So, improving quality of life is explicitly mentioned as one of the main goals of sustainable development in *Latvija2030*: "Within the scope of the sustainability model, the only possibility of successful response to global challenges is to create such development policy where there is a balance between the necessity to promote the economic growth and to improve the quality of life of each member of the society, the necessity to ensure social unity and safety, as well as the necessity to preserve the ecological environment for future generations." (Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, 2010). Thus, one of the basic goals of socioeconomic development in Latvia is to increase the quality of life throughout the country. Since the Parliament approval of the *Latvija2030* Strategy in 2010, the following model has been adopted for governing its implementation:

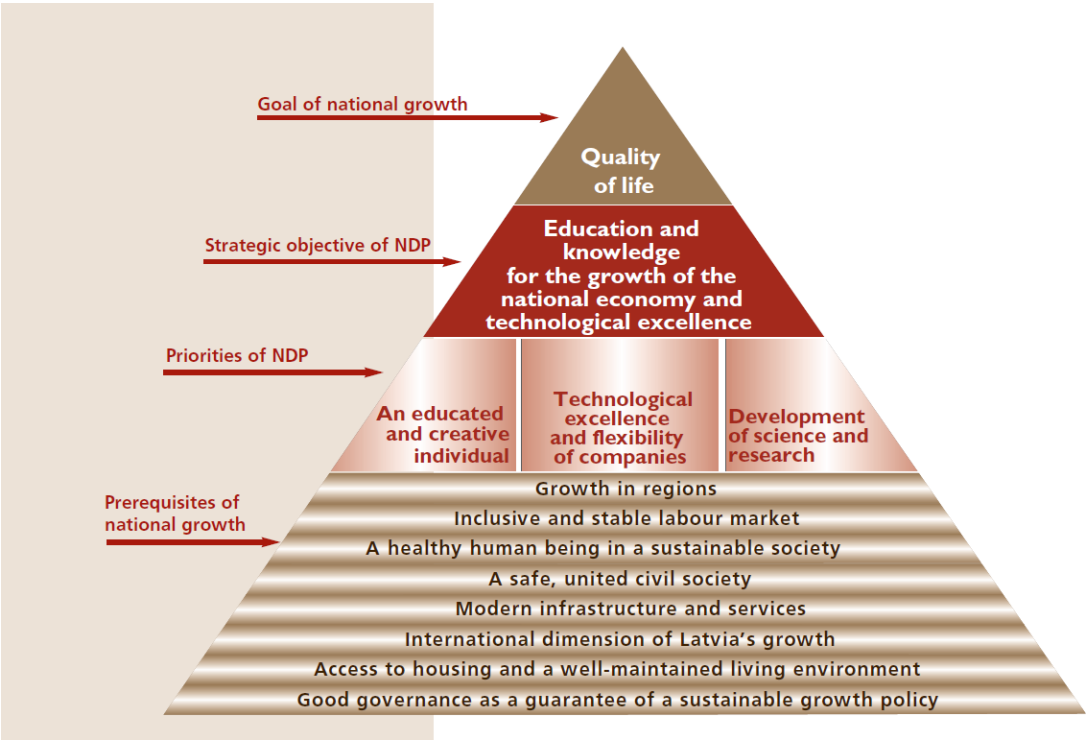
Figure 2 Latvia Sustainable Development Strategy – Implementation Model



Source: Saeima (2010)

Since the beginning, QoL was the main policy target in the first NDP 2007-2013. This policy document was a strategic document that highlighted the mid-term goals and priorities for growth and welfare. Quality of Life was the strategic goal for national development.

Figure 3 Goals for Latvia national growth in the NDP 2007-2014



Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government of the Republic of Latvia, 2006, Latvian National Development Plan 2007-2013

Despite the relatively successful implementation of the NDP 2007-2013, there were serious socio-economic complications in Latvia in 2013. Because of low base, planned as well achieved relative improvement of the QoL does not mean significant absolute increase; in addition, the economic crisis was a strong weakening factor. The QoL gap with the most developed countries did not shortened; for instance, differences between the Human Development Index of Latvia and that of the European leaders remained on the level of 2006-2007 (E. Karnitis, M. Kucinskis (2015). There was still a sharply decreasing population and poor quality of health, unemployment and insufficient retraining of people, low income level per household member and monetary inequality, probability of social cleavages, declined GDP and expanded grey economy instead of innovation. In such a situation, further accelerated growth of the QoL becomes inseparably linked to the recovery of the national economy, as it was acknowledged in the second National Development Plan 2014-2020 (CCSC, 2012) - developed and approved under the motto *Economic Breakthrough – for the Greater Well-Being of Latvia*.

The NDP2020 is currently the hierarchically the highest national-level medium-term planning document. It sets the most important medium-term objectives, priorities and performance indicators, areas of action, outcomes and responsible institutions. NDP2020 guiding principle "economic breakthrough" and its three priorities: "Growth of the National Economy", "Human Securitability" (a form of resilience) and "Growth for Regions" form a mutually effective and unified system that fits the sustainable planning approach and structure defined in Latvia 2030. The plan was agreed among the government, with the social and cooperation partners of the

government, the planning regions and local governments. It is the basis for public investments by the State and local government and for European Funds from Cohesion Policy and CAP.

The emphasis on the Quality of Life is confirmed. One of the core objectives of the NDP2020 is indeed to develop towards “A society that is self-confident, prepared for challenges, cooperative and benevolent will be able to bring about and improve the quality of life in all of Latvia”. The NDP2020 states, that the competitiveness of the country is inseparably linked to the quality of life of its inhabitants[1]. At the same time, it emphasizes the relevance of preserving the territorial cohesion within the country: “There is inequality between regions and local municipalities in terms of income and economic activity, as well as access to services – which produces pronounced disparities in the quality of life of residents of different regions. This situation encourages the outflow of economically active people from less to more developed territories, which, together with the low level of productivity, further reduce the prospects of growth and available jobs in the less developed territories.” (CSCC, 2012). Finally, the third priority of the NDP2020 is to reinforce “Human Securitability” and restore a society where people are healthy and have a high level of well-being. This is another wording for improving the quality of life for everyone in Latvia. One third of the NDP2020 is devoted to strengthening human security.

2.1.2 Regional Development Planning needs and implementation

The need of regional development planning in Latvia is fully acknowledged, but its implementation is weak for historical reasons.

The current administrative division of Latvia has existed since 1 July 2009. According to the *Administrative territorial reform of Latvia*, Latvia changed its administrative divisions from two-tier municipalities (the districts were the first-level municipalities, while towns, town's countryside territories and parishes were the second-level municipalities) to one--tier municipalities - districts were abolished, while towns/cities, and towns' rural hinterland and parishes were merged into 110 municipalities, while 9 larger cities got the status of republic cities with their own city council and administration.[2]

On 10 June 2020, the Parliament (Saeima) approved a municipal reform that will reduce the 110 municipalities and 9 cities to 42 local government units. In future Latvia will be divided into so-called "state cities" and local governments.[3] The legislative changes are not completely over: in order to implement the common functions of the state and local governments, it is planned to establish the administrative regions of Kurzeme, Zemgale, Riga, Vidzeme and Latgale on a legal basis.

This administrative reform was highly needed to improve the governance and performance of municipalities, too fragmented in the current subdivisions of 119 municipalities. The first meetings of the newly elected municipal councils are scheduled for July 1 2021. But before that the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development must develop a methodology for local governments to start operating new municipalities by 30 September 2020. This reform is not without problems: Particularly in rural areas, there is a fear that the

[1] Based on the Gap Analysis of the NDP2020 and the National Competitiveness Report (2012)

[2] Municipalities are mostly subdivided into further territorial units: municipal parishes (rural areas) and municipal towns (centres), however, there are municipalities without any subdivision.

[3] The status of a state city has been determined for Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Ogre, Rēzekne, Rīga, Valmiera and Ventspils. It is also expected that from July 1 of next year Koknese and Iecava will acquire the status of a city, while Ādaži, Mārupe and Ķekava will become cities from July 1, 2022.

reforms will lead to job losses in the public sector, increased centralization and dominant towns and cities sucking in resources. However, if the changes do lead to the creation of more efficient networks of education, health care, social assistance, transport and utility infrastructure, plus increased investment, then opposition to the reform will surely subside.

In any event, it is an important historical moment for Latvia. Although the Law of Local Government in Latvia does not directly set out the role of the local government – the municipalities - in promoting the well-being of the public, it implicitly and clearly defines its functions with regard to employment and local budgeting. The functions of local government in public services, territory administration, education, culture, health and social care, etc. are closely linked to the well-being of local residents. In this respect, the administrative reform gives the opportunity to enhance the role and capabilities of the local authorities to govern their sustainable development and quality of life policies, cooperating with the higher statistical (NUTS3) and planning regions that, although still not established as administrative units on legal basis, are in charge of regional development planning in Latvia.[4] The administrative reform envisages a legislative duty for the local authorities to take in charge the responsibility of quality of life improvements by means of public participation tools and improved accountability.

Planning regions were established as intermediaries between the local governments (priority of local interests) and the central government (priority of national interests) in 1997. The creation of mid- and long-term strategic planning of development (principles, objectives, priorities), coordination and consistency with national trends, implementation of inter-municipal projects were determined as the major tasks for these regions. All the planning regions have set up qualitative regional socioeconomic profiles and programmes; in theory, they could become the basis for the targeted implementation of the polycentric model. Nevertheless, planning regions had not been able to show themselves as significant stakeholders of the national public administration system; their functions and responsibility are vaguely defined, funding is chaotic, coordination of activities and cooperation is weak, and their planning approaches are very different as a result.[5]

Assessment of the QoL on the scale of planning/statistical regions is essential for the implementation of polycentric development and spatial planning. Unfortunately, there are still objective difficulties to acquire the statistical data and to calculate indicators because of municipalities' small size and active migration of the population; actually, only some socio-economic information is available at municipal level in Latvia, as it shown more extensively in the next sections of this report.

However, on a positive note, the ongoing administrative territorial reform could assist in addressing the polycentric development challenge, reducing negative effects for territories on the outskirts of economic activity, and strengthening cultural and historical diversity in the new administrative territories. Coordinated national and municipal activities to stimulate the economy could provide relevant business support instruments throughout Latvia to increase

[4] There are two slightly different regional zonings in Latvia. In order to comply with the EC Regulation (EC 2003) six NUTS3 level statistical regions were set: Riga, Pieriga (vicinity of Riga), Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale and Latgale. Latvia completed the administrative territorial reform in 2009 creating five planning regions; areas of Riga and Pieriga statistical regions were integrated, but the others conform to the corresponding statistical regions (CoM 2009).

[5] Indeed, planning regions are not in charge of regional development planning, this is directly the responsibility of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. Now, within the scope of the ongoing administrative reform, the role and status of planning regions is being reviewed and redefined to optimise the allocation of governance functions among state and local authorities.

productivity and export capacity, creating preconditions for each local government to have at least one full-fledged development centre.

In this context, it is important to mention the potential role of national and regional development centres identified in the *Latvija 2030* strategy. Beside the capital city of Riga, development centres of "national significance" are the largest cities where the industry, transport, public services and social infrastructure is developed. The list includes Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Valmiera, Ventspils and Jūrmala. Development centres of "regional significance" are towns which are important culture and/or production centres of the region with developed social infrastructure and varied services – Kuldīga, Talsi, Tukums, Saldus, Dobele, Bauska, Ogre, Aizkraukle, Sigulda, Cēsis, Limbaži, Smiltene, Alūksne, Gulbene, Balvi, Preiļi, Līvāni, Ludza, Krāslava, and Madona.[6]

The potential of these cities is considerably exceeding the potential of the rest of small towns. These and, in certain cases, larger rural populated areas should fulfil the role of development centres of county significance, providing services and ensuring workplaces to inhabitants of surrounding territories. They should become a part of the joint functional network of development centres of national and regional significance, ensuring services, an attractive living environment and preconditions for economic development at local level as well.

The strategic potential of this polycentric network of national, regional and count significant centres is recognised in the Latvia Parliament (Saeima) statement accompanying the approval of the new NDP2027 plan. There, it is recommended to the Cabinet of Ministers to assess again the potential of development centres in the newly established municipalities and suggest revisions in the list of development centres specified in the *Latvija 2030* strategy.

Table 2 Overview of policy implementation context

Actor/institution	Policy context	Description of indicators and data used	Activities and processes
Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government of the Republic of Latvia	NDP 2007-2013	QoL indicators	Analysis and monitoring
Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre (CCSC)	NDP 2014-2020 NDP 2021-2027	QoL indicators	Performance monitoring

2.2 Success factors and obstacles

Not surprisingly, where the challenges lie is also where one finds the solutions and it is possible to seed the change.

Currently the main obstacle in Latvia for measuring quality of life at territorial level – regional and municipal – is the lack of data and capabilities to collect the data at local level.

However, the effort of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development (MEPRD) to build up and maintain the Regional Development Indicators Module (RIDM) is encouraging – a first signal highlighting the direction to take for localising the QoL measurement

[6] In addition to these centres, it is interesting to notice the special role of Valka – the only cross-border town of Latvia (with Estoma) and one of the six European towns which are located on the border of two countries (including also Nova Gorica/Gorizia, one of the other ESPON QoL case studies).

and the application of the National Development Plan and indicators at the level of regions and cities in Latvia.

As mentioned above, the same Ministry is now engaged to support the new municipalities to start operating by 30 September 2020. In this context, and in cooperation with the CSB and other key Ministries holding administrative data of relevance – e.g. the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Welfare – the MEPDR could provide the new municipalities with the guidance, training and technical assistance needed to build their capacity to survey and collect quality of life information.

In this process, standard questionnaires and administrative data collection procedures should be adopted that would ensure the reliability and comparability of data and computed indicators across the municipalities. Room should be given to the same municipalities for participating in the design of the QoL surveys and data collection, to take into account local needs and suggestions.

The QoL measurement priorities, in turn, should be elaborated by the municipalities engaging their citizens in "quality of life conferences" – taking the form of virtual meetings open to the population – to identify and prioritize the everyday life facts and needs that the citizens themselves would like to see addressed in local development and quality of life policies. This "citizen-centric" approach is also recommended in the *Latvija 2030* strategy, as further illustrated in section 4.3.2 below.

2.3 Achievements and further plans

2.3.1 Achievements

Quality of life achievements of the first wave of National Development Plan 2007-2013 are extensively discussed in E. Karnitis, M. Kucinskis (2015). This study starts acknowledging that to evaluate the growth of the QoL it is necessary to quantify its level, and due to the multidimensional essence of the QoL a set of several indicators should be developed with the available data, together with a combined index.

A lot of closely interlinked aspects (priorities), which are essential for Latvia's population, were taken into account to develop the NDPs strategic directions, all of them influencing the objective QoL of the population and determining the subjective outcomes as well (feeling happy, being satisfied with life as a whole and with particular spheres of life). The set of the core aspects initially was based on priorities that respondents of several public opinion polls (executed by Eurobarometer, research agency Latvian Facts, Commission of Strategic Analysis in 2005) defined as the most considerable QoL aspects for the Latvian society (Karnitis E., Bela-Krumina B., Eglite P., et al., 2006): Health, Education, Security, Social Security, Economic situation, Housing, Employment, Family & children.[7]

Therefore, the study analysed the QoL trends in 2003-2013 using priorities and proportions that were defined in 2005, computing quantitative indicators and a composite quality of life index, which combines all selected indicators assigning weights to each of them. A wide range of experts - more than 80 experienced people, scholars in social, humanitarian and natural sciences, economists, entrepreneurs, politicians, representatives of various regions - was involved in the exercise of selecting and weighting the indicators for the composite index.

[7] The list of priorities, of course, is not a dogma. On the other hand, Eurobarometer polls show that the priorities of Latvia's society are quite stable, they really did not critically change even during the global economic crisis 2008-2010. Income, employment, education, health and social security were and are on the top of the list of priorities.

Eventually, 17 indicators where selected and analysed. The following table shows the base value 2005, the NDP target value 2013 and the actual performance achieved in 2013:

Table 3 Quality of Life aspects and related NDP 2007-2014 indicators and targets

QoL aspects	Indicators	Base year 2005	NDP Target 2013	Performance 2013
Demography:				
Family	Total fertility rate	1,29	1,45	1,524
Health, social security	Life expectancy at birth	71,79	74,0	74,4
Knowledge:				
Level of education in the population	% of population with completed primary education (15-74)	27,1%	23,2%	17.9%
	% of population with completed secondary education (15-74)	56,0%	57,8%	56,1%
	% of population with completed tertiary education (15-74)	16,9%	19,0%	26,9%
Learning and training	Enrolment in educational establishments, percentage of (7-23)	91,2%	95%	94,7%
	Participation in adult education within the last four weeks, percentage of population (25-64)	7,9%	8,0%	6,5%
Employment	The percentage of employed persons in the population (15-74)	57,1%	64,0%	58,2%
Material welfare:				
Direct income	Average monthly income per 1 member of household	117,84 Ls	327,26 €	353,99 €
Indirect income	Average annual income from budget (subsidies for health and social care, education, culture, sports,	790,52 Ls	1.707,45 €	2.584,18 €

QoL aspects	Indicators	Base year 2005	NDP Target 2013	Performance 2013
Inflation	etc.) per 1 member of household Annual % of inflation	6,7%	2,5%	0,0%
Physical security: Crime rate	Number of recorded crimes per 100 000 population	2.333	1.900	2.363
Number of injured and deaths by external causes	Number of those injured in traffic accidents per 100 000 population	243	195	215
	Number of deaths by external causes (traffic accidents, murder, fire, etc.) per 100 000 population	145,1	110	89,5
Dwelling	Living space (m2 per person)	24,6	28,0	36,0
Participation and inclusion	Participation in civil society organizations, informal assistance to others, religious and other kinds of participation (percentage of 10 year and over)	Not available	Not available	Not available
Leisure and recreation	Amount of free time (hours per week)	Not available	Not available	Not available

Source: Karnitis E., Kucinskis M. (2015)

The same QoL indicators have been computed for the six statistical regions: Riga, Pieriga (in the vicinity of Riga), Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale and Latgale. The regional level results are discussed in detail in E. Karnitis, M. Kucinskis (2015).

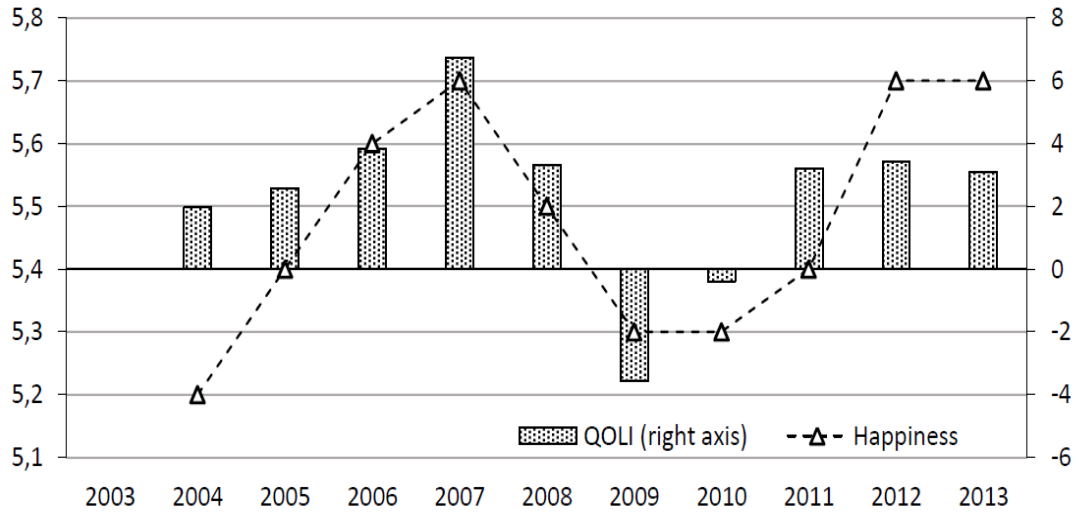
In addition, these objective QoL indicators have been compared with the subjective assessment of QoL in the Latvia statistical regions and by various breakdowns (employment status, age, education level), undertaken with a public opinion survey carried out in 2006 by the Public Opinion Research Centre SKDS (Karnitis, Bela-Krumina, Eglite, et al. 2006). The survey question was: “Please assess from 1 to 7 your satisfaction with the quality of your life, where 7 means fully satisfied and 1 – fully dissatisfied”. Respondents did not receive any description of the term *quality of life*, to let them assess the quality of life aspects that they perceive as the more important from their daily life perspective.

The total average of ratings was 3.9, that is practically a medium satisfaction level (the survey specified exact medium at 4). The average relative deviation of individual ratings is 0.39 (coefficient of variation), which shows the high heterogeneity of the QoL perception of the

Latvia's inhabitants in the different regions and for different conditions. However, it is important to note that the subjective responses reflect a near perfect correlation (0.98) with the regional values of the objective QoL indicators and the combined index mentioned above.

The subjective assessment of QoL in Latvia continued with the support of the QoL survey conducted by Eurostat (Eurostat 2013). Also, the World Database of Happiness includes an index of subjective appreciation of life-as-a-whole, as assessed in surveys studies among the general population in nations (Veenhoven, 2015). The comparison between the average happiness index of Latvians and the rates of change of the objective QoL combined index it is shown in the figure below:

Figure 4 Values of the average happiness appreciation in comparison with the Quality of Life Index



Source: Karnitis E., Kucinskis M. (2015)

The correlation between the subjective assessment of happiness (left axis, with an average value of 5,4 on a scale from 0 to 10) and the rate of change of the QoL index (right axis) is evident, showing that not only absolute levels, but the also the dynamic of QoL changes influence the subjective assessment of quality of life in Latvia.

2.3.2 Further plans

On July 2nd 2020, the Latvia Parliament approved the new National Development Plan for 2021-2027/NDP2027 (CSCC, 2020). As the former plans, it envisages the strategic objectives, priorities and measures for sustainable and balanced development of Latvia for the next seven-year planning period to achieve the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to improve the quality of life in Latvia over the next seven years. The plan evolved in an inclusive multi-stakeholder process. 6 working groups co-created the content, and public discussions took place in all regions of Latvia and on-line.

NDP2027 four strategic objectives are: Productivity and Income, Equal Opportunity, Social Trust, and Regional Development.

The six NDP2027 priorities for achieving the four strategic objectives are: Strong Families, a Healthy and Active Population, Knowledge and Skills for Personal and National Growth; Business Competitiveness and Material Well-being; Quality Living Environment and Regional Development; Culture and Sports for an Active Lifestyle and - A United, Open, Safe and Secure Society. Each priority consists of several directions for key policies. Together there are 18 directions. Each direction includes measures (a total of 124), outcome indicators and names responsible authorities.

At the outset, the NDP2027 strategic document includes the **vision for the future of Latvia 2027** co-created with the participation of the involved stakeholders, and putting equal rights, quality of life, the building of a knowledge society and responsible Latvia at the very centre of national and regional development. The vision provides a picture of the desired quality of life in Latvia in the year 2030, summarised in the box below:

Vision for the Future of Latvia in 2027 (excerpted from NDAP2027)

Quality of life

[17] People feel good in Latvia in 2027. They care for and support each other, and living conditions are decent for all. People maintain their psychological and emotional health, enjoy a good work/life balance and the richness of Latvia's cultural opportunities, and can spend their leisure time to the fullest. Quality of life is Latvia's competitive advantage.

[18] Targeted cooperation - including networking between Latvia's national and regional development centres, partnerships between cities and their surrounding town and rural areas, joint sustainable mobility projects and public-private partnerships - enhances the quality, availability and efficiency of public services in every city and region of Latvia. Urban/rural interaction contributes to achieving the national development goals, likewise, every city and region contribute to the national development goals.

[19] Municipal cooperation and the mitigation of market deficiencies contribute to balancing the economic situation in regions. This encourages return migration that improves demographics. Specific steps towards reducing strengthen society's resilience. Support to business, including to increase employment opportunities, the availability of jobs closer to home, a modern, low-emission transport system that provides people with sustainable mobility, and high-quality, safe and energy-efficient housing in areas with growing business and employment opportunities contribute to the balanced development of Latvia.

[20] It has become easier to be healthy. Citizens invest in their own health and the health of their families through healthy nutrition, active lifestyle and a work/life balance. Society generally is disapproving of harmful habits. Qualified and properly paid professionals are able to provide citizens timely recommendations to maintain health, offer modern disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and patient care. Lifelong good health is also one of the goals of targeted and personalised social services.

[21] People can achieve their goals in Latvia, supported by convenient government services and fair social guarantees. Business is welcome, the rules of doing business are clear and procedures are simple. Due to systemic change and digital solutions, public administration at all levels is smaller but better coordinated and more efficient. This enables people to be proactive and participate in building Latvia.

3 Measuring Quality of Life

3.1 Indicators and measurement

The practice of QoL measurement in Latvia is discussed separately for the national and territorial (regional and municipal) level.

3.1.1 QoL measurement practice at national level

The Latvia Central Statistical Bureau web-page includes a collection of "quality of life indicators" for different themes and sub-themes. This collection is presented in the table below, with the indication of the data available at which territorial level (national, urban/rural distinction, regional/NUTS3):

Table 4 Overview of the "quality of life indicators" section

Theme	**Subtheme**	**Indicators**	**Data availability (from CSB web-site accessed on 10/09/2020)**
1. Material living conditions	Income	Average equivalised disposable monthly income Share of people at risk of poverty	National National
	Consumption	Monthly consumption expenditure per a household member Expenditure for food as percent of total consumption expenditure Expenditure for recreation and culture as percent of total consumption expenditure	Not available Urban/rural Urban/rural
	Material deprivation	Material deprivation rate Severe material deprivation Share of population who could not afford: To cover unexpected expenditure A meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day To pay utility bills, mortgage repayment or loan payments on time due to financial difficulties	Regional Regional Not available Regional Not available
	Dwelling conditions	Share of population who indicated the following unsatisfactory dwelling conditions: Leaking roof, damp walls, floors, foundation, or rot in window frames or floor No bath or shower	 Not available Not available
Productive activities and work	Work conditions	Unemployment rate Share of long-term unemployed persons Part-time workers who would like to work more hours Atypical working hours – employed by type of atypical work (shift work, work in evenings, at night, on Saturdays, Sundays) Low intensity worker poverty risk index	Not available National National National National
	Occupational safety	Number of accidents at work Number of lethal accidents at work	National National

Theme	Subtheme	Indicators	Data availability (from CSB web-site accessed on 10/09/2020)
Health	Life expectancy, mortality	Life expectancy at birth	National
		Infant deaths	National
		Number of infant deaths per 1000 live births	National
		Deaths by age	Not available
	Health conditions	Self-perceived health status for persons aged 16 or over as good or very good	Not available
		Self-perceived health status for persons aged 16 or over as bad or very bad	Not available
		Persons aged 16 or over who have indicated chronic or long-standing illness condition	Not available
		Persons aged 16 or over who have indicated health problems that have limited their home, work and leisure activities for at least 6 months	National
		Share of persons who within the last 12 months did not have medical examination (except dentist) or treatment at health care provider due to lack of money, where there was such a need (in percent)	Not available
Education		Level of education (basic education, secondary education, higher education)	Not available
		Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24	Urban/rural
		Share of persons aged 25-64 who learn or attend training for four weeks per the total number of population of the respective age group	Not available
Economic and individual safety		Share of persons suffering from economic strain	Regional
		Temporary work – employees on a fixed-term employment contract	National
		Number of suicides per 10000 population	Not available
		Number of recorded crimes per 10000 population	National
		Road traffic accidents with injuries	National
		Number of road traffic accident deaths per 10000 population	National

Source:https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/social-conditions/quality_of_life/key-indicator/quality-life-indicators

However, this quality of life section of the CSB webpage seems just a way to organise information for several aspects more or less related to the quality of life of people in Latvia, and it doesn't reflect in full the availability of relevant information in the same CSB database and in the databases of Ministries connected to the statistical system. The issues arising from this are as follows:

- Many indicators in this webpage section contain just national and regional data, despite the evident availability of more territorially detailed data under other sections and themes of the

CSB database. Examples include the information available on: registered criminal offences per 10000 people, which under section Social conditions-Crime data set "Recorded crimes and crime rates by statistical region, city and country"[8] provides both NUTS3 and LAU level data; and predicted life expectancy of new-borns at birth, which in section Population-Life expectancy data set "Life expectancy in certain regions by age"[9] includes data by NUTS3 region. So, by reviewing the relevant data available under other CSB database sections[10] would allow to view NUTS3 level QoL disparities in more detail and perhaps allow to introduce at least some LAU level comparisons.

- This section does not include any subjective indicators, while CSB does collect this crucial data, despite not including it in the main quality of life indicators list. For instance:
    - In January–March 2017, CSB conducted a survey on **quality of life in cities** of Latvia under state jurisdiction except Riga: Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Valmiera and Ventspils (CSB, 2017). The survey covered 4063 respondents in total (slightly more than 500 people in each city). The survey allows to acquire information on population satisfaction with various services, for example, education, health care, urban infrastructure (streets, roads, green areas, sports and cultural objects). People expressed their opinion also about the safety issues, work of local government institutions, and their mobility habits. The survey results can be downloaded from the CSB web-page together with maps[11] that depict areas where satisfaction with infrastructure and environmental aspects is highly above or below the average indicator of the respective city (if no area is emphasised, satisfaction with the respective aspect does not differ notably among various areas of the city). Assuming that the survey can/will be replicated in the next years, it would provide a relevant variables that match with several domains of the Territorial Quality of Life framework (as it is shown in section 4.1 below).
        - ✓ **Housing**: Housing conditions mentioned as an important issue in the city; agreement with the statement that it is easy to find good housing at a reasonable price in the city.
        - ✓ **Education services**: Satisfaction with schools and other educational facilities; education and training mentioned as an important issue in the city.
        - ✓ **Transport**: Use of car/train/public transport/biking/walking as a mode of transportation on a typical day; road infrastructure mentioned as an important issue in the city.
        - ✓ **Consumption**: Satisfaction with the availability of retail shops
        - ✓ **Public spaces**: Satisfaction with public spaces such as markets, squares, pedestrian areas; satisfaction with green spaces such as parks and gardens; satisfaction with the state of streets and buildings; satisfaction with own neighbourhood

[8] https://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/sociala/sociala__likump/SKG021.px

[9] https://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/iedz/iedz__muza_ilg/PMG040.px

[10] https://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/. Other themes include data on ecosystems, biodiversity, education, health etc..

[11] https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/social-conditions/quality_of_life/search-in-theme/338-areas-cities-except-riga-having

- ✓ **Culture & Sport**: Satisfaction with cultural facilities such as concert halls, theatres, museum and libraries
- ✓ **Personal safety**: Feeling safe in the city/own neighbourhood; urban safety mentioned as an important issue in the city.
- ✓ **Inclusive economy**: Satisfaction with the financial situation of own household
- ✓ **Healthy environment**: satisfaction with the quality of air; satisfaction with the noise level; noise mentioned as an important issue in the city.
- ✓ **Climate change**: Agreement with the statement that the city is committed to fight against climate change (energy efficiency, green transport).
- ✓ **Interpersonal trust (social belonging)**: Agreement with the statement that most people in the neighbourhood are being trusted; agreement with the statement that the presence of foreigners is good for the city.
- ✓ **Institutional trust (good governance)**: Agreement with the statement that the administrative services of the city help people efficiently; agreement with the statement that the public administration of the city can be trusted.

- The CSB conducted the fourteenth EU-SILC survey in 2018 (CSB, 2019), including questions on **population well-being**. Respondents were asked to assess separate aspects of their life – overall life satisfaction, satisfaction with financial situation in the household, job, time use, personal relationships, trust in others, social exclusion, as well as emotional well-being (feeling lonely, nervous, calm, depressed, happy, etc.) during the last month. The survey covered 5833 households and 10785 persons aged 16 and over. A two-stage sampling design was used for the survey, making a stratification according to the degree of urbanisation in four strata: Riga, largest cities (Daugavpils, Jelgava, Jēkabpils, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Rēzekne, Valmiera and Ventspils), other towns, rural areas. Results are available for the following quality of life variables[12]:
  - ✓ Assessment of well-being dimensions (average scale from 0 to 10): Overall life satisfaction, trust in others, satisfaction with financial situation in the household, job satisfaction, satisfaction with time use, satisfaction with personal relationship, perceived social exclusion (by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, regions, income quintile groups, activity status, at-risk-of-poverty status, educational attainment, household type)
  - ✓ Assessment of selected emotional well-being dimensions during the past 4 weeks (persons aged 16 and over, %): Happy, calm and peaceful, down in the dumps, downhearted or depressed, very nervous, lonely (by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, regions, income quintile groups, activity status, at-risk-of-poverty status, household type)
  - ✓ Average assessment of possibility to get material and non-material help (by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, regions, income quintile groups, activity status, at-risk-of-poverty status, educational attainment, household type).

  Moreover, the full range of the EU-SILC survey indicators – monetary poverty and income inequality indicators, household income, housing conditions, risk of households social exclusion and material deprivation, self-perceived health of households

[12] https://data1.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/sociala/sociala__dzives_kvalit__labs_apmier/?tablelist=true

members, households composition and socio-economics characterization of its members – include variables that can be matched with the Territorial Quality of Life framework (as it is shown in section 4.1 below):

- ✓ **Housing**: Dwelling types; amenities available in dwellings; households indicating problems with dwelling; housing costs and their influence on household financial situation.
- ✓ **Inclusive economy**: Average equalised disposable income; households by main source of subsistence; composition of household disposable income.
- ✓ **Healthy society**: Households by demographic type[13] by place of residence urban or rural, regions and income quintile groups; households members by activity status[14] by place of residence urban or rural, regions, income quintile groups and educational attainment[15]; at-risk-of-poverty rate (by gender, age, activity status, accommodation tenure, before and after social transfers, educational attainment); material deprivation rate; answer to the question: "Taking into account your household's total net (after taxes) income, is your household able to make ends meet, namely to pay for its usual necessary expenses?"; households not possessing durable goods because cannot afford; influence of households material deprivation risk factors in urban and rural areas; comparison between households lowest net income necessary to make ends meet and households disposable income; household ability to replace worn-out furniture; possibilities to meet basic needs of persons aged 16 and over.
- ✓ **Personal health**: Self-perceived general health (by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, income quintile group, educational attainment); main reason for unmet need for medical examination or treatment (except dental) during the last 12 months, by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, income quintile group, educational attainment; dental visits and reasons for unmet need for dental examination or treatment by place of residence urban or rural, gender, age, income quintile group, educational attainment.

3.1.2 QoL measurement practice at regional and municipal level

A regional approach partially related to measuring Quality of life is the Territorial development index. This index supports the elaboration of the regional development programme, helps to differentiate EU funding for regions, to assess the impact of public funding (including EU funds) and to compare, assess and forecast the development of different territories. The index describes the level of development in a given year and shows deviations against the national average. It is calculated for planning regions, cities and counties. This index includes a number of indicators used for the calculation of the QoL. However, it focuses more on economic and social characteristics, but lacks aspects like health, education etc. The indicators are weighted and put together to form a composed indicator.

[13] Single persons aged 16-64, single persons aged 65 and over, couple without children, one adult with children, couple with one child, couple with two children, couple with three and more children, other households with children, other households without children.

[14] At work, unemployed, in retirement, other inactive persons.

[15] Basic education or lower, secondary education, higher education

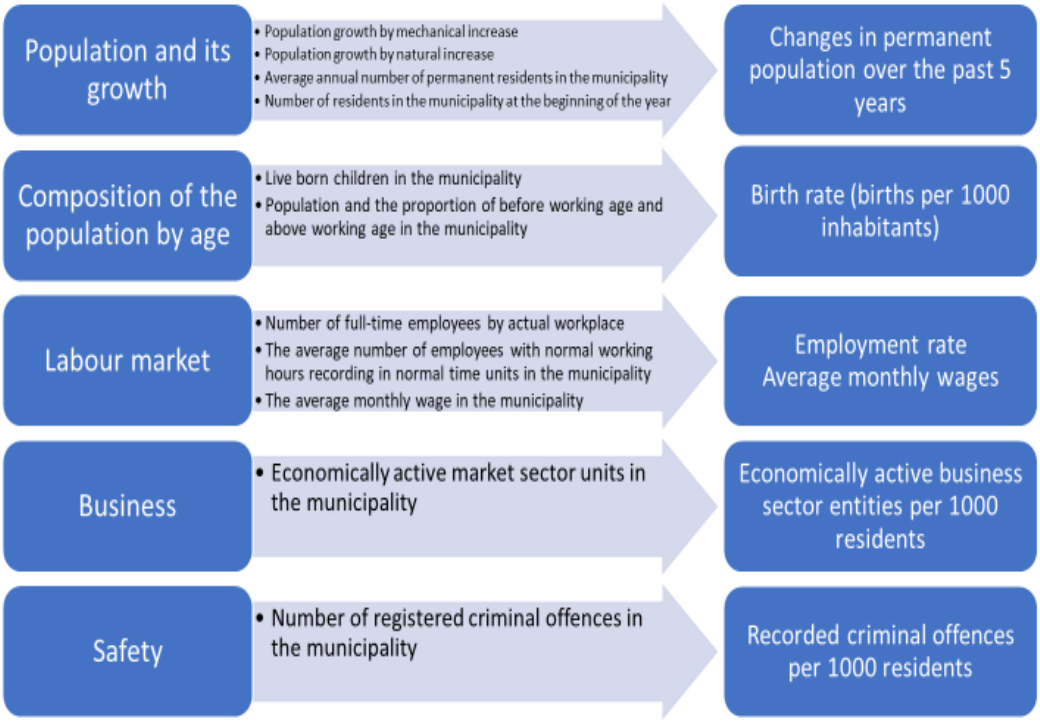
The following indicators are used for the level of county or groups of cities:

- Number of SME per 1000 inhabitants
- Unemployment rate
- Proportion of poor persons
- Total number of criminal offenses
- Balance of birth and death
- Population above working age
- Personal income tax per capita

For planning regions similar indicators are used.

The Territorial Development Index (TDI) has been also compared with the Objective Evaluation of the Well-Being (OWB) of the municipalities of Latvia (Jekabsone, I., Sloka, B., 2014). To determine objective well-being data on all municipalities were gathered and compared, and an Objective Well-Being Index (OWBI) has been computed combining selected indicators representing various aspects of well-being. To select the objective well-being indicators, a list of variables was prepared and experts were asked to rank them.[16] Finally, 22 were analysed and ranked (from 1 not significant to 10 very significant), and the 11 indicators with the higher average ranking retained, grouped, reduced and compared delivering the following OWB framework of indicators:

Figure 5 Objective Well Being framework of indicators



Source: Jekabsone, I., Sloka, B., 2014

[16] The group of experts was made up of local level specialist, heads of social services, 2 from each of 5 randomly selected municipalities, and of national level specialists from the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Regional Development of Latvia Agency. 59 questionnaires were sent via e-mail, 31 received.

The OWBI framework includes therefore 8 indicators available at municipal level (mostly from the Central Statistical Bureau, plus the State Employment Agency and the State Treasury): unemployment rate, employment rate, amount of personal income taxes per capita, average monthly wages, economically active business entities per 1000 residents, changes in permanent population over the past 5 years, birth rate, recorded criminal offenses per 1.000 residents.

Finally, it is worthwhile mentioning a recent study presented at the 20th International Scientific Conference of the Latvia University, Faculty of Economics and Social Development, on the measurement of the quality of life in the regions of Latvia (Jadrupa, I., Pipare, A., 2019).

The study developed a composite QoL index at regional level. After reviewing the most frequently used indexes for comparison of countries – the Human Development Index, the OECD Better Life Index, the EUROSTAT Quality of Life survey and framework of 8 objective quality of life dimensions plus 1 subjective well-being dimension – the multidimensional concept of quality of life has been assessed in the study using the following set of factors and indicators:

Table 5 Composite QoL index at regional level

Factors	**Indicators**
Financial position	Mean disposable income per household member (EUR/per month) Severe material deprivation rate among persons (%)
Health	Life expectancy of new-borns (years)
Economic activity	Employment level (15-74 years old, %)
Education	Share of population with higher, vocational or professional secondary education (15-74 years old, %) Participation in adult education (%)
Dwelling	Dwelling supply with different amenities (water pipe, hot water, sewerage, town gas, %) Average size of dwelling (m2)
Security	Share of households identifying crime, violence or vandalism in the area as problem regarding their household environment (%)
Environment	Share of households identifying pollution, grime and/or other environmental problems in the area as problem regarding their household environment (%)

Source: Jadrupa, I., Pipare, A., 2019

These data have been analysed for the Latvia regions over the period 2005-2017 (when data were missing for one year, they were estimated by the linear extrapolation method), and 7 normalization methods were used to compute a QoL composite index as the arithmetic mean of the normalized indicators.

Table 6 Overview of data used for measuring the quality of life

Actor/institution/ description of the use	**Data used**	**Geographical unit**	**Time series from-to, periodicity**	**Date source**
CCSC (to be verified)	Quality of life indicators	National level	Annual, since 2003	Statistical office
SRDA	Territorial development index		Annual	Statistical office
Latvia University	Objective Well Being Index	Municipal level	Annual	Statistical Office, State Employment

				Agency, State Treasury
Riga Technical University	Quality of Life Index for the Latvia regions	Regional level	Annual	Statistical Office

3.2 Data sources for QoL

The quality of life indicators and data presented above for the national level are accessible on the Latvia Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) web-site.

The Territorial index is based on data from the Central Statistical Bureau, the Treasury, the State Revenue Service, the Employment Agency and some ministries. The need to present annual updates of the indicator is specified by law[17].

As for regional and municipal level data, a key source is the RIDM tool and database.[18] RIDM stands for "Regional Development Indicators Module". This is an Information System that serves as a tool for monitoring the regional development and support in the decision taking, for evaluating the development trends in municipal territories as well as for elaboration and monitoring the development programs.

All RIDM indicators are available for the whole country as well as for particular regional and municipal territories and for specific years. The information is taken from the state program of statistical information and from other administrative data sources, namely: Central Statistical Bureau, Spatial Development Planning Information System, State Revenue Service, The Treasury, State Social Insurance Agency, The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, State Employment Agency, Ministry of Education and Science, Latvian State Roads, Ministry of Welfare, Register of Enterprises, Management information system for European Union Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund, Rural Support Service, The Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior, A/S "Sadales tīkls".

In relation to the QoL measurement needs, the RIDM include some indicators useful to measure the socio-economic aspects, including:

- Population by gender and age, population change, number of new-borns per 1.000 inhabitants, number of deaths for 1.000 inhabitants
- Number of educational institutions
- Number of all inhabitants receiving pensions
- Average amounts of all awarded pensions
- Amount of benefits to ensure the level of guaranteed minimum income
- Average monthly gross and net salary
- Unemployment level
- Economically active statistical units of the market sector per 1.000 inhabitants.

[17] Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 1 of July 1, 2014. 367 "Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation of Regional Development" in Annex 1. The Agency shall publish the calculated values on the Agency's official website and in the RDIM (Regional Development Indicator Module)
[18] https://raim.gov.lv/en/main_en

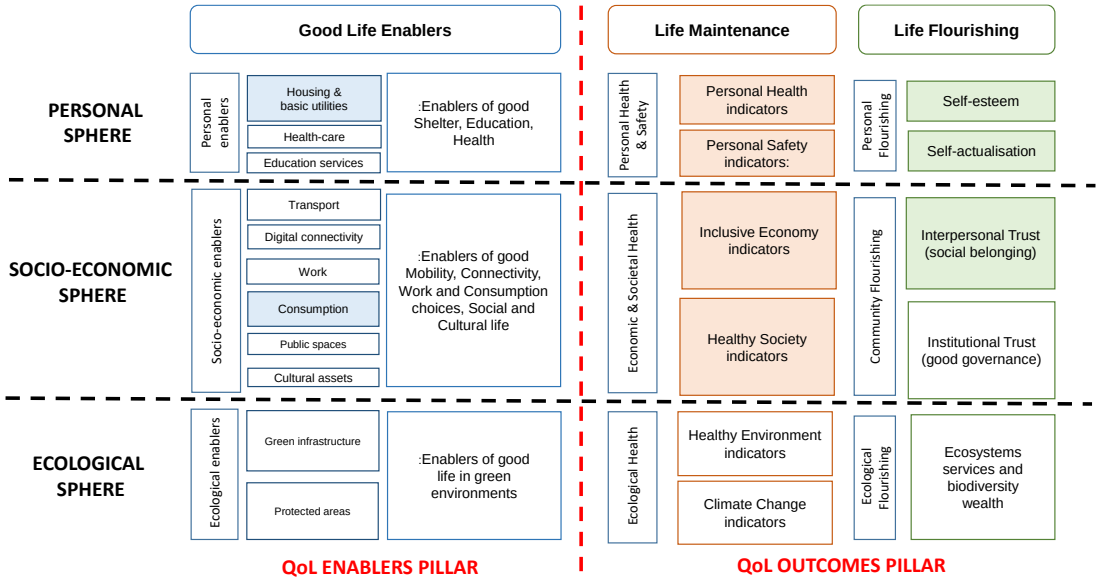
4 Analysing and testing the methodology used in the case study as compared to the TQoL approach

4.1 Comparing the QoL approach in the case study with the TQoL conceptual model

In the following the three approaches to measure QoL that have been developed in Latvia are mapped onto our TQoL framework.

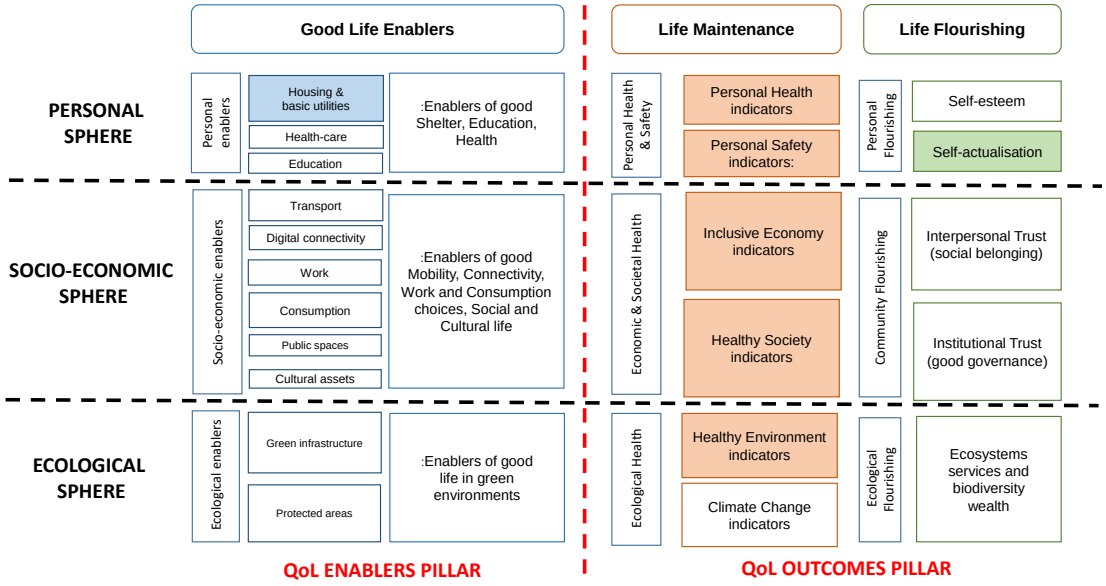
Figure 6 highlights the (sub-)dimensions of the TQoL framework that are covered by the **Latvia quality of life measurement at national level**.

Figure 6 TQoL framework of the Latvia Quality of Life measurement at national level



The indicators of quality of life at national level cover only two aspects of the “good life enablers” pillar of the TQoL framework – housing and consumption opportunities, while the life maintenance dimension is covered in the personal and socio-economic spheres, but not in the ecological sphere. In the life flourishing dimension there are indicators for the personal sphere: the number of suicides per 1.000 inhabitants as a proxy for self-esteem, and indicators measuring the level of education of the population and involvement in training activities of the working age population considered as objective indicators of self-actualization.

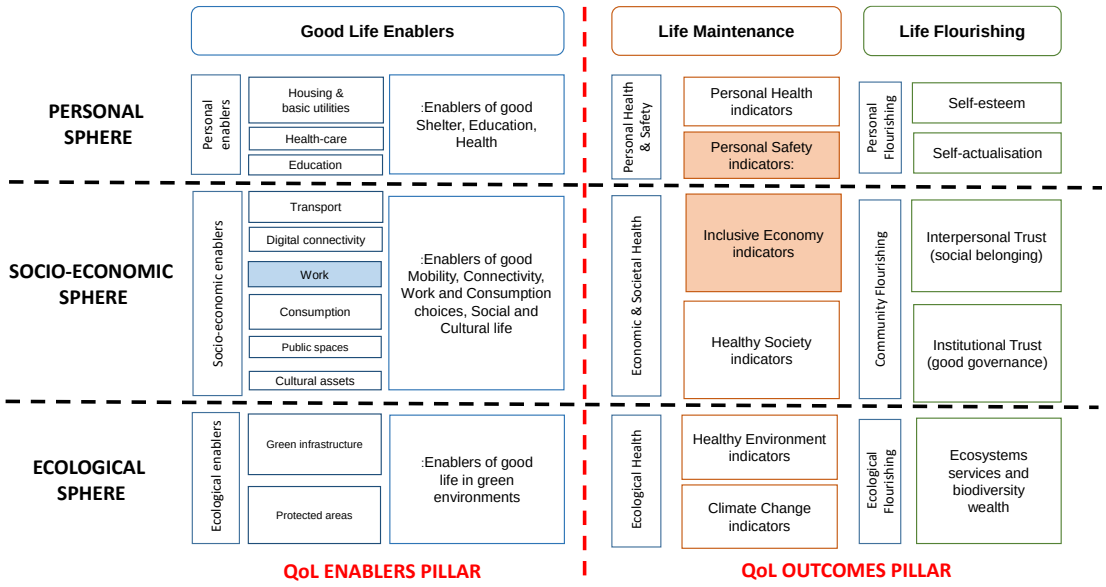
Figure 7 TQoL framework of the QoL concept covered by Latvia Quality of Life Index at regional level



The indicators of quality of life at regional level cover only the housing category in the good life enablers pillar, while they are present in several categories of life maintenance - with the exception of healthy society and climate change indicators. Education outcome indicators are allocated to the domain self-actualization in the life flourishing dimension.

Lastly, figure 8 illustrates the overlap between the Latvia Objective Well Being Index at municipal level and our TQoL framework.

Figure 8 TQoL framework of the QoL concept covered by the Latvia Objective Well Being Index at municipal level



With the exception of one indicator of the presence of working opportunities – economic active business sector entities per 1.000 residents – in the good life enablers dimension, all the objective well-being indicators at municipal level are concentrated in the inclusive economy and

personal safety domains of the life maintenance dimension, with no indicators for the life flourishing dimension.

The OWB index includes demographic data – population dynamics and composition – considered as a proxy of the attractivity to live in a municipality, which are not considered instead in the TQoL framework. Obviously the quality of life is strongly related to the demographic drivers, but the relation is ambiguous: by one side, quality of life is a factor causing the population to "vote with their feet", moving to or leaving a place in relation to the presence or not of good life enablers (compounded with the affordability of housing and commuting costs); by the other side, the shrinkage or overcrowding of population will affect several aspects of quality of life in the place, with a potentially negative feedback loop. For this reason, demographic trends are nor included as one component of the TQoL framework, although an analysis will be always necessary to investigate the cross-influences between territorial quality of life and population movements,

4.2 Coding the indicators

Tables 7, 8 and 9 respectively code the indicators of the Latvia quality of life measurement at national level, the quality of life index at regional level and the Objective Well Being Index at municipal level, for the dimensions of the TQoL framework.

At the national level, there is a good number of indicators for the personal health, personal safety, inclusive economy and healthy society domains of the TQoL framework, only few indicators for the housing and consumption domains in the good life enablers dimension and few indicators for the personal flourishing dimension.

At the regional level, the quality of life index is built with few indicators, but enough well distributed across different quality of life domains.

Finally, at municipal level the objective well-being indicators fitting in the TQoL framework are few and only concentrated in the domains "work opportunities", "personal safety" and "inclusive economy".

Table 7 Coding the Latvia quality of life indicators at national level in the TQoL framework

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	Definition
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	Dwelling types Amenities available in dwellings Households indicatorng problems with dwellings Housing costs and their influence on household fiancial situation Share of population who indicated the following unsatisfactory dwelling conditions: - leaking roof, damp walls, floors, foundation, or rot in window frames or floor - no bath or shower
		Healthcare	
		Education services	
	Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	
		ICT connectivity	
		Work opportunities	
		Consumption	Monthly consumption expenditure per hosehold member Expenditure for food as percent of total consumption expenditure Expenditure for recreation and culture as percent of total consumption expenditure
		Public spaces	
		Cultural Assets	
	Ecological enablers	Green infraestructure	
		Protected areas	
Life Maintenance	Personal Health and Safety	Personal health indicators	Life expectancy at birth Infant deaths per 1000 live births Deaths by age Self-perceived health status for persons aged 16 or over: good or very good bad or very bad Persons aged 16 or over who have indicated chronic or long-standing ilness condition Persons aged 16 or over who have indicated health problems that have limited their home, work and leisure activities for at least 6 months Share of persons who within the last 12 months did not have medical examination (except dentist) or treatment at health care provider due to lack of money, where the was such need (in percent) Assessement of selected emotional well-being dimensions over the past 4 weeks
		Personal safety indicators	Number of accidents at work Number of lethal accidents at work Number of recorded crimes per 1000 inhabitants Road traffic accidents with injuries Number of road traffic accident deaths per 1000 inhabitants
	Economic and Societal Health	Inclusive economy indicators	Average equivalised disposable monthly income Households by main source of subsistence Composition of household disposable income Unemployment rate Share of long-term unemployed persons Part-time workers who would like to work more hours Atypical working hours: employed by type of atypical wirk (shift work, work in evenings, at night, on Saturdays, Sundays) Working poors (low intensity worker poverty risk index)
		Healthy Society indicators	Share of people at risk of poverty Material deprivation rate Share of population who could not afford: to cover unexpected expenditure a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day to pay utility bills, mortgage repyment or loan payments do to financial difficulties Share of persons suffering from economic strain Households not possessing durable goods because cannot afford Comparison between households lowest net income necessary to make ends meet and households disposable income Households ability to replace worn-out furniture Possibilities to meet basic needs of persons aged 16 and over Satisfaction with financial situation in the household Temporary work - employees on a fixed-term employment contract Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24
	Ecological Health	Healthy Environment indicators	
		Climate change indicators	
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	Number of sucides per 10000 inhabitants Perceived social exclusion
		Self-actualization	Level of education (basic education, secondary education, higher education) Shares of persons aged 25-64 who learn or attend trainings for four weeks per total number of population of the repsectve age group Job satisfaction Satisfaction with time use
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	Satisfaction with personal relationships Average assessement of possibility to get material and non-material help
		Institutional Trust (good governance)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	

Table 8 Coding the Latvia Quality of Life Index at regional level in the TQoL framework

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	Definition
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	Dwelling supply with different amenities (water pipe, hot water, sewerage, town gas, %) Average size of dwellings (m2)
		Health	
		Education	
	Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	
		ICT connectivity	
		Work opportunities	
		Consumption opportunities	
		Public spaces	
		Cultural Assets	
	Ecological enablers	Green infraestructure	
		Protected areas	
Life Maintenance	Personal Health and Safety	Personal health indicators	Life expectency of new borns (years)
		Personal safety indicators	Share of hoseholds identifying crime, violence or vandalism in the area as a problem regarding their houshold environment
	Economic and Societal Health	Inclusive economy indicators	Mean disposable income per houshold member Employment level (15-74 years old)
		Healthy Society indicators	
	Ecological Health	Healthy Environment indicators	Share of households identifying pollution and/or other environmental problems in the area as a problem regarding their household environment
		Climate change indicators	
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	
		Self-actualization	Share of population with higher, vocational or professional secondary education (15-74 years old) Participation in adult education
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	
		Institutional Trust (good governance)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	

Table 9 Coding the Latvia Objective Well Being Index at municipal level in the TQoL framework

Dimension	Domain	Sub-domain	Definition
Good Life Enablers	Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	
		Health	
		Education	
	Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	
		ICT connectivity	
		Work opportunities	Economically active business sector entities per 1000 residents
		Consumption opportunities	
		Public spaces	
		Cultural Assets	
	Ecological enablers	Green infraestructure	
		Protected areas	
Life Maintenance	Personal Health and Safety	Personal health indicators	
		Personal safety indicators	Recorded criminal offenses per 1000 residents
	Economic and Societal Health	Inclusive economy indicators	Employment rate Average monthly wages
		Healthy Society indicators	
	Ecological Health	Healthy Environment indicators	
		Climate change indicators	
Life Flourishing	Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	
		Self-actualization	
	Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	
		Institutional Trust (good governance)	
	Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	

4.3 Other relevant features of the approach

4.3.1 QoL in a territorial context

As mentioned in the rationale for selecting the case study (section 1.2), in Latvia there are substantial differences in the standard of living between Riga and the remaining territory of the country. These problems of spatial inequalities are addressed in the context of the Latvia 2030 strategy and the related mid-term plans National Development Plans for its implementation –

at the national level – and by regional development planning initiatives and measurement efforts, including in particular the Territorial development index.

The main challenge is therefore to implement a more even quality of life across the country. As highlighted in the *Latvija 2030* strategy, "contrary to the present monocentric settlement structure, a polycentric settlement structure should be developed, which would be formed by mutually subordinated and related networks of development centres of different levels, concurrently not weakening the positions of Riga as metropolis. Such policy should be oriented towards reduction of disadvantageous differences between regions and within regions themselves. By stimulating urban-rural partnership it will be possible to ensure more equal life and work conditions, access to basic services and mobility possibilities in both cities and the countryside." [19]

The Latvija 2030 strategy set directions to make the quality of life and work conditions more even across the country, regardless of the place of residence, and to strengthen the polycentric structure in the state, as follows:

- enhancement of the potential and competitiveness of the development centres (cities), creating attractive urban environment for both inhabitants and investors;
- mutual co-operation and interaction of cities and rural territories in provision of workplaces and services, thus facilitating entrepreneurial activities and creation of qualitative living conditions in the countryside;
- establishing of functional networks for development centres, agreeing upon efficient use of resources which is based on the role supplementation and co-operation principles.

In a nutshell, what is claimed to pursue with these directions is an integrated approach in the planning and implementation of the development of territories, the development of creative urban environment, as well as partnership of cities and urban-rural partnership. As a corollary, the capacity of the planning regions (the six NUTS3 regions) and local governments (now aggregated in 42 local authorities by the recent administrative reform) should be improved in planning of the development of territory.

In this context, cities (development centres) should become the driving force of each region and the whole country. The increase in quality of urban environment should ensure living space that is aesthetically and functionally suitable and safe for inhabitants, provide preconditions for attraction of investments, development of entrepreneurship and preservation of cultural heritage. Balanced development of urban territories should be attained as well, including by renovation of the declined territories of the city.

Cities are also envisioned in this polycentric strategy as the support centres of surrounding rural territories, including farmsteads and villages, market for agricultural products, workplaces and places for receipt of different services for rural inhabitants. In turn, the countryside, concurrently with the production of agricultural and forestry products, provides recreation possibilities for inhabitants of cities, qualitative living space for those who are working in cities, as well as territories for non-agricultural entrepreneurship.

Besides the main cities, for further successful growth of development centres of county significance (small towns, large villages) it is necessary to ensure the development of all types of infrastructure and improvement of its quality, the availability of basic (education, health, social etc.) services and qualitative dwellings, the possibilities for culture and spending of leisure time,

[19] Saeima (2010), page 72.

as well as of entrepreneurial activities, creating work possibilities for inhabitants, including in rural territories adjacent to the development centre.

4.3.2 Involvement of citizens – Citizens-centric approach to Quality of Life

"People First" is the core approach taken in the Latvia2030 strategy (Seima, 2010). Coherently, since the very conception and design of the strategy to achieve 2030 sustainable development goals in Latvia, the process was participatory. Besides the appointed group of experts, persons representing different age groups and professions from around Latvia also took active part in shaping the strategy directions, measurement and recommended measures, participating in discussions and forums that took place within the framework of the project "Latvia 2030. Your Choice".

The strategy emerged therefore as the result of extensive discussions in different places of Latvia, on the Internet and other media and not only in offices or among limited number of experts. Indeed, The *Latvija2030* drafting process has been a unique experience in terms of the content, form and objectives – active use of public opinion, wide discussions of experts and interested parties, active participation of young persons. Public debates are particularly important in circumstances when public opinions in different matters are radically different and do not tip towards strong majority. Moreover, upon direct and personal co-operation of as large number of people in formulation of future vision, gradually the sense of the society as the co-owner of the strategy emerges – and this is one of the most important preconditions for successful implementation of the strategy itself.

Public participation is also at the core of the innovative government goal of the strategy: "*To establish efficient public administration, which is capable not only to respond quickly to changes, but also foresee and guide them, creating significant services necessary in the future, and in which the majority of the society of Latvia takes active part*".

Some of the solutions recommended tor innovating the government in Latvia point to support a people/citizen-centric approach, as for instance:

- *Citizens' panel.* Most political decisions demand certain compromise between different groups of the society because each of them may have its own opinion and interests. The uneasiness of one party to take others' solution is frequently related with the lack of information regarding the opinion and arguments of the other party. The citizens' panel is a mechanism in which it is examined what the opinion of the society would be, if the parties involved were informed regarding opinions of all parties. In establishing a citizens' panel regarding particular political decision, initially a representative national (if the decision is of national level) or appropriate lower level selection of citizens is established. First of all, their opinion is found out in a questionnaire. Before participation in a panel discussion thorough information regarding the issue to be reviewed and the possible solutions is sent to its participants, and after discussion participants repeatedly fill in the questionnaire and express their attitude. Makers of the relevant decision use the final report in adoption of the final decision.
- *Provision of participation of organised civil society*. The groups of organised civil society possess knowledge and skills, how to involve inhabitants in public processes. Organisations provide support to inhabitants when neither the state, nor local government is capable to provide it, therefore, the work of such organisations is highly valued and promoted. The groups of organised civil society are a bridge between inhabitants and state administration, they provide competent opinion based on public needs, involve in the development, implementation and assessment of action policy.

- *Discussions on current themes and societal challenges*. In order to improve public awareness and understanding regarding social problems and their possible solutions, public discussions should be organised in which current events are discussed, opinions, assessments and necessary steps are expressed. Significant organisers of such discussions could be schools because the required resources (suitable premises, equipment) are at their disposal and they can easily mobilise an audience, inviting pupils, their parents, friends and relatives. Alongside with schools such discussions could also be organised by non-governmental organisations, libraries.
- *Portal of mass creative activity*. In order to use the creative potential of the society to the utmost, a mechanism should be introduced so that everybody could recommend ideas of mass creative activity. If e-environment is used, it could be a portal where inhabitants can submit their ideas, evaluate, comment and supplement ideas submitted by others. In order to motivate people to exchange ideas, a foundation for testing and implementation of the most successful ideas should be established and it should be determined that 10 most popular ideas are implemented from the resources of foundation every year etc.
- *E-petitions*. The introduction of e-government should be used in order to perform structural reforms in the previous state administration, making it more efficient. In order to facilitate the possibility for inhabitants to participate in referendums and to submit petitions, the possibility to participate in a referendum and submit petitions via e-technologies should be ensured at local and national level.

Some of these solutions have been applied in Latvia to let a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the NDP 2014-2020 and now the NDP 2021-2027 elaboration.

The participation of organised business and civil society actors by means of online consultations – where the participants leave their comments to the strategic documents in the process of drafting – remain the most popular and effective form of participation. The NDP2027 collected in this way about 800 position statements, which have been considered in the final formulation of the plan.

Other forms – more interactive, as the citizens meetings and conferences – are more difficult to organise and not easy for the citizens to attend, mostly due to lack of time or enough incentive to attend such assemblies.

To increase the quality of people participation and attendance to the meeting would require:

- The discussion of topics that are really of interest for the citizens, which should therefore be identified by engaging them in the early phase of quality of life priorities selection.
- A real empowerment – which means that what the citizens are called to discuss will contribute to change something for the better in their future life, influencing concretely the policy decisions.
- Organising online meetings with small groups of citizens (focus groups) to discuss and select the QoL priorities first, and later to monitor the quality of life trends in their own place (municipality) compared to other places (other municipalities of the same type). Virtual meetings – as we have been forced to learn after the COVID-19 outbreak – are more efficient of physical meetings in this respect, and they do not require wasting too much time.

Finally, a recent report on civic involvement practices in the municipalities of Latvia (PROVIDUS, 2019) confirms at local level what has been already observed above for the preparation of the National Development Plan

As noted in the report, although municipalities are much closer to the residents than the authorities of national level, the proximity of these institutions does not itself guarantee extensive involvement. To a large extent civic involvement in the work of the municipalities depends on their openness and readiness to engage with the residents and whether they see the residents as cooperation partners that will help them make better decisions.

The report includes 38 examples from 21 municipalities of Latvia, summarising their experience in civic involvement in decision-making, solving of particular problems, budgeting and overall activity to reach the residents more effectively. The representatives of the municipalities surveyed in the report mention the passivity of the residents as the biggest problem when organising various events, meetings, competitions etc., pointing out that a limited number of people usually respond to such opportunities. The rest of the residents are hard to reach. As a result, municipalities are sometimes very cautious in searching for new forms of involvement – they fear that only a few will attend their events.

This local experience shows therefore that the activation of the residents is a long-term process, where one of the essential prerequisites for success is to create a climate of trust between the residents and the municipality. Namely, both the municipality and the residents must feel that their involvement will be appreciated and that the involvement will be meaningful.

On a positive side, the report noted the extent to which technologies and social media have opened a new page for state and municipality communication with the residents. It is becoming easier and more convenient for the residents to influence the municipality processes using their smartphones, not only taking advantage of the growing range of e-services, but also helping the municipality to improve its work – by expressing opinions, participating in surveys, reporting problems, voting on solutions. Indeed, many of the municipalities have developed reporting tools and mobile applications enabling the residents to notify various issues, such as damage to the road surfacing, updates on public order, traffic movement or environmental pollution.

4.4 Application of the methodology in the case study context

In the following table we match the TQoL framework domains and subdomains with the directions of the National Development Plan 2021-2027. This shows in detail the high level of correspondence between the two measurement frameworks.

Table 10 Comparison of the NDP2027 and ESPON TQoL frameworks of indicators

NDP 2021-2027			ESPON TQoL Framework sub-domains
Economic directions		Quality of Life directions	
Competitiveness	Cohesion		
		Human-centred healthcare	Healthcare
		Psychological and emotional well-being	Personal health Self-esteem
		Strong families across generations	Healthy society
		Social inclusion	Inclusive economy
Science for the development of society, the			*This aspect is not included in the TQoL framework*

economy and security			
		Quality, accessible and inclusive education	Education services Self-actualization Self-esteem
Productivity, innovation and export			*This aspect is not included in the TQoL framework*
		Work and income	Inclusive economy Personal safety
Capital and business environment			*This aspect is not included in the TQoL framework*
		Nature and the environment – the Green Deal	Protected areas Healthy environment Climate change Ecosystems services and biodiversity
		Technological environment and services	Transport Digital connectivity Housing & basic utilities
	Balanced regional development		*This aspect is not included in the TQoL framework*
		Housing	Housing & basic utilities
		Public participation in culture and sport activities	Cultural and sport assets and activities Personal health
		Contribution of culture and sport to sustainable society	Cultural and sport assets and activities
		Cohesion of society	Interpersonal trust (societal belonging)
		Rule of law and governance	Institutional trust (good governance)
		Safety and security	Personal safety

Source: own elaboration

The NDP2027 adopts the following 7 strategic indicators to monitor the progress of the plan and the achievement of development targets in 2027:

Table 11 Latvia National Development Plan 2021-2027 – Strategic Indicators

No.	Indicator	Unit	Base year	Base year value	Target value 2024	Target value 2027	Data source
[43]	Nominal labour productivity per hour worked	% of EU27 average	2018	59.2	65	68	Eurostat
[44]	GDP per capita in purchasing power parity	% of EU27 average	2018	71	75	80	Eurostat
[45]	GINI coefficient	%	2018	35.6	34	30	Eurostat
[46]	At-risk-of-poverty rate for children (0-17)	%	2018	17.5	13.5	11.5	Eurostat
[47]	Life satisfaction	%	2018	73.6	77	81	Eurostat
[48]	Mutual trust (aged 16+)	Scale 0-10	2018	6.4	6.8	>7	CSB, Eurostat
[49]	Regional GDP gap - ratio of average GDP per capita of the four planning regions with lowest GDP per capita against the GDP of the planning region with the highest GDP per capita	%	2017	47	52	55	CSB, calculation

Source: CCSC (2020)

At this strategic level of monitoring, it is interesting to note the distribution of indicators: two indicators measure economic competitiveness (labour productivity and GDP per capita), two indicators economic cohesion (GINI coefficient and regional GDP gap), and three aspects of quality of life that are also included in the TQoL measurement framework (at-risk-of-poverty rate for children, life satisfaction, mutual trust).

The monitoring of NDP2027 targets achievement is suggested at more detailed level for the 18 directions of the plan, using several indicators for each direction. This results into a collection of about 100 indicators, all based on data available at the national level and most also at regional (six NUTS3 regions) level, while only few indicators are available at municipal (LAU level (currently, some of the indicators included in the RDIM source).

These NDP2027 indicators can be matched punctually with the domains of our TQoL framework, using the coding system table already introduced in section 4.1 to match with the quality of life indicators available at national, regional and municipal level in Latvia. The coding of the Latvia NDP2027 indicators in the TQoL framework is presented in the next table. All indicators are available at national level, and the same table will have to be completed with the information on which indicators are available also at regional and municipal level.

Table 12 Coding the Latvia NDP2027 indicators in the TQoL framework – Good Life enablers

TQoL Domain	TQoL Sub-domain	Latvia NDP 2020-2027 indicators	*Data availability*
Personal enablers	Housing & basic utilities	1. Persons registered in the municipal assistance register for housing 2. Proportion of households experiencing financial distress due to total housing expenditure (very burdensome / slightly burdensome) 3. Share of renewed housing in total housing per year 4. Share of households reporting unsatisfactory housing conditions 5. New apartments commissioned per year 6. Housing units, including apartments with improved energy efficiency	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Healthcare	7. Healthy life years at birth: men/women; 8. Unmet healthcare needs (access to healthcare) 9. Out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare, from total healthcare expenditure 10. Patient satisfaction with healthcare services 11. Preventable and treatable mortality, per 100 000 population 12. Number of attending doctors, per 100 000 population 13. Number of attending nurses, per 100 000 population 14. Average waiting time for children (up to 18 years of age) for secondary outpatient counseling at the Children's Clinical University Hospital (BKUS) 15. Average waiting time for children (up to 18 years of age) for scheduled surgery in daytime inpatient care at the Children's Clinical University Hospital (BKUS)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Education services	16. Number of pupils per teaching workload (ISCED levels 1-3)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Socioeconomic enablers	Transport	17. Proportion of railway passengers in public transport 18. Proportion of energy produced from RES in transport 19. Proportion of zero emission vehicles of total vehicles	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	ICT connectivity	20. Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Work opportunities		
	Consumption	21. Proportion of energy produced from RES in total final energy consumption 22. Accumulated (cumulative) final energy savings in final consumption	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Public spaces		
	Culture & Sport	23. Share of recreation and culture in total household expenditure 24. Share of the population (aged 15–74) engaged in physical activities at least twice a week for 30 minutes 25. Number of amateur performing units in cultural centres, thsd 26. Number of attended cultural events per year per 100 inhabitants 27. Total expenditure of international multi-day visitors in Latvia, millions 28. Number of international sporting events held in Latvia / participants per year 29. Media literacy (respondents who check content before sharing on social media / check the reliability of information sources)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Ecological enablers	Green infrastructure		
	Protected areas	30. Specially protected natural areas	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....

Table 13 Coding the Latvia NDP2027 indicators in the TQoL framework – Life resilience

TQoL Domain	TQoL Sub-domain	Latvia NDP 2020-2027 indicators	*Data availability*
Personal Health and Safety	Personal health	31. Potential years of life lost, per 100 000 inhabitants aged 0-64 32. Adult population having consumed alcohol excessively during last year (aged 15+) 33. Percentage of adult population smoking daily (aged 15+)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Personal safety	34. Number of serious and fatal accidents at work (per 100,000 employees) 35. Reduction in the number of road traffic fatalities 36. Deaths from external causes (per 100 000 population) 37. Criminal offenses, per 10 000 population 38. Individuals know how to react when they hear an emergency siren or receive information via electronic media (radio, TV) / receive notification on mobile phones (SMS or cell broadcast or other communication solution), % respondents 39. Recidivism rate of persons serving full sentence among convicts (a new crime committed 2 years after the end of sentence (for which proceedings have been commenced or person has been convicted))	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Economic and Societal Health	Inclusive economy	40. At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers 41. At-risk-of-poverty rate for pensioners aged 65+ 42. Percentage of total equivalent disposable (net) income of households in 1st decile group of total equivalent disposable (net) income of all households 43. Share of persons living below the minimum income level 44. Share of children living with custodians and in foster families (family environment) out of the total number of children in out-of-home care 45. Number of recipients of community-based social services, per 10 000 inhabitants (at the begin of the year) 46. Share of social services that meets the norm set by legislation on the minimum number of social workers 47. Employment rate, age 20-64 48. Employment rate, age 65-74 49. Long-term unemployment rate, age 15-74 50. Participation in education during paid working hours, % of employees age 25–64 51. Tax wedge 52. Socially insured persons making mandatory state social insurance contributions from an amount below the minimum wage,% 53. Debt service-to-income ratio (2nd quintile of net wealth)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Healthy Society	54. Total birth rate 55. At-risk-of-poverty rate for single-parent families 56. At-risk-of-poverty rate for households with two adults and three or more dependent children 57. Share of children living with two parents 58. Number of returning migrants	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Ecological Health	Healthy Environment	59. Reduction in air pollution, %: Nox, PM2.5, NH3 60. Water bodies of high and good ecological quality 61. Recycling rate of municipal waste 62. Municipal waste generated per capita 63. Hazardous waste generated	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Climate change	64. GHG emission intensity 65. CO2 sequestration and GHG emission ratio in certain registration categories of the ZIZIMM sector	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....

Table 14 Coding the Latvia NDP2027 indicators in the TQoL framework – Life flourishing

TQoL Domain	TQoL Sub-domain	Latvia NDP 2020-2027 indicators	*Data availability*
Personal Flourishing	Self-esteem	66. Share of children and young people with special needs who continue their education after compulsory education 67. Number of school children being bullied by schoolmates 68. Suicide mortality rate, per 100 000 population 69. Prevalence of children and young people with special needs attending general education institutions and programs out of the total number of special need children and young people 70. 15 year olds who have suffered from violence in an educational institution several times during a one month period 71. Subjective experience of discrimination	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Self-actualization	72. Proportion of 15 year olds with high / low achievement in reading, mathematics and natural sciences 73. Employment rate of recent (previous 1-3 years) graduates (aged 20-34) of secondary and higher education institutions 74. 16-74 year olds with basic and advanced digital skills, % of all in the age group 75. Graduates in natural sciences, mathematics and information technology, % of the total number of graduates of higher education institutions 76. Young people aged 15-24 neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), % of total population of 15-24 77. Ratio of students in general secondary education and vocational education programmes after completing elementary education 78. Percentage of 25-64 old adults who participated in formal and non-formal education and training (last 12 months) 79. Low-achieving learners from the lower quarter of OECD PISA Socio-Economic and Cultural Status Index (ESCS) 80. Percentage of early leavers from education and training, age group 18-24	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Community Flourishing	Interpersonal Trust (Social Belonging)	81. Pride in belonging to Latvia (very close, close) 82. Mutual support between inhabitants 83. Involvement in civil society organisations, % of respondents answering "nowhere" 84. Civic trust - in NGOs / trade unions (fully trust or rather trust)	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
	Institutional Trust (good governance)	85. Satisfaction with the way democracy works (fully satisfied, rather satisfied) 86. Civic participation index 87. Perceived ability to influence policy 88. Perceived ability to influence the work of the Saeima and Government (strongly disagree, rather disagree) 89. Political Confidence Index (overall) 90. Political Confidence Index: Saeima, Cabinet of Ministers, Administration of your county/city, political parties 91. Trust in the law enforcement system: Courts, Prosecutor's office, Police 92. Perception of corruption 93. Awareness, experience and satisfaction with received public services 94. Average length of court proceedings (1st instance district/city court)s: administrative cases, administrative infringement cases, civil cases, criminal cases	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....
Ecological Flourishing	Ecosystems services and biodiversity wealth	95. Rural bird index 96. Forest bird index	National level: all indicators Regional level (six NUTS3 regions): .... Local level (119 LAU, merged in 42 new municipalities): ....

5 Synthesis and conclusions

5.1 How the QoL concept and indicators could be further developed in the region

The combination of global trends and events – the latter including the COVID-19 pandemic – and local events in Latvia, especially the new administrative reforms that aim to enhance the size and capacities of local authorities and development centres, as well as the recent approval of the National Development Plan 2021-2027, creates now a favourable context to foster Quality of Life measurement in the country. The COVID-19 impact is discussed in section 5.3 below. In this section we will discuss a possible implementation of the TQoL measurement framework and dashboard tool in the Latvia context, and in the next section 5.2 suggestions on how it can be improved and enriched to adapt it to the QoL measurement needs in the local context.

Table 10 in section 4.4 above shows the strong correspondence between the TQoL domains and the NDP2027 directions, allocating the NDP2027 indicators to the 22 subdomains of the TQoL framework. Only few subdomains – work opportunities, green infrastructure – are empty, but probably suitable indicators could be found and added also for these subdomains, The effort to monitor with the set of about 100 indicators the NDP2027 is expected to push the production and delivery of statistical data at the national level and on an yearly basis, and in particular at the mid-term evaluation milestones of the plan (2024).

Combined with the now approved administrative reform aggregating the 119 municipalities in larger (42) local governments – and in particular the provision dictated by law that the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development must develop a methodology for local governments to start operating new municipalities until the new municipal councils will be elected and meet by July 2021 – the NDP2027 measurement effort should be localised, organising the collection of data and determining the indicators base year and target values at regional and local level – the latter at least for the six statistical regions (NUTS3) and the development centres of national and regional significance, aggregating instead the small towns and rural areas together. This process should involve primarily the Central Statistical Bureau – to harmonise the production and access to relevant data not only at national but also regional and municipal level. For instance, the survey on “life quality in cities” could be repeated on yearly basis – or perhaps better for the NDP2027 mid-term evaluation – and the sample extended to cover all development centres of national and regional significance. By the same token, the EU-SILC survey now providing QoL data at national and regional (NUTS3) level, could be extended to cover the development centres of national and regional significance, and continue to cover the ensemble of rural areas as well. Finally, the same process of “NDP2027 localising” measurement effort, should involve key Ministries collecting administrative data – e.g. the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Welfare – and lead to a further enhancement, expansion and consolidation of the information provided in the RDIM source.

In this context, the ESPON TQoL framework – and especially the TQoL dashboard tool – could be used as shared resource by all actors involved in the NDP2027 data localising effort. Conceptually, agreement could be found between all the central data stakeholders – the CSB and the network of Ministries and State Agencies – and the new 42 local governments about

which indicators to include in TQoL domains and sub-domains[20]. This exercise should identify also the two key indicators to be chosen for each domain for the application of the TQoL dashboard tool.[21] The selection of these two (or maximum four) key indicators per TQoL subdomain should be based on data collection feasibility and quality of life policy priorities.

When the list and allocation of the TQoL indicators is agreed, the ESPON TQoL dashboard would be available to analyse and compare the behaviours of the indicators across the Latvia regions and the 42 local authorities, and to compute synthetic QoL indexes. In practice, pilot QoL studies could be performed applying the tool on readily available datasets – even partially for some QoL domains – and extended gradually to cover all the QoL domains when new data become available at regional/local government level.

5.2 How the QoL concept of this ESPON project can be improved and enriched

The application of the TQoL framework in the Latvia case study – especially its comparison with the NDP2027 framework of indicators – offer important insights to improve the TQoL framework itself in a next version (and/or in the version that could be adapted for further use in the Latvia context, as suggested in section 5.1 above):

- The subdomain "consumption opportunities" in the Good Life enablers dimension of the TQoL framework was meant to include the accessibility (physical or virtual) to consumption opportunities (e.g. retail shops, online delivery, etc.). However – as considered in the NDAP2027 direction "Technological environment and services" – the diffusion of energy efficiency solutions and distributed energy production (presumption) and sustainable consumption purchases and lifestyles contribute to improve the quality of the living environment. So, also energy efficiency, saving, presumption indicators, as well as the purchase of sustainable goods and services – should be included in the "consumption" enabler of quality of life.
- In the description of the subdomain "cultural assets" of the Good Life enablers dimension, we currently mention only indicators of availability, accessibility and affordability of cultural assets (e.g. heritage sites, museums, etc.). However, the NDP2027 includes a full priority for "culture & sport".[22] Undoubtedly, sport centres and activities, and more in general an active lifestyle are key components of quality of life – being both options for leisure time and enablers of personal health and subjective dimensions of quality of life. Sporting activities and exercising are significant factors for a person's development and his/her integration in the society. They have side benefits for physical and psychological health as well. This aspect is increasingly important – physical activity, exercise and sporting habits

[20] The allocation presented in Table 9 was based on our own judgement, but it could provide guidance for a participatory exercise engaging the data production and use stakeholders to define a final and shared allocation.

[21] Currently the ESPON TQoL dashboard consider up to 2 indicators for each sub-domain (this limit could be raised to 4 indicators per sub-domain in the final version of the tool). One of the main issues when dealing with composite indexes is the fact that if one of the selected indicators is missing for one region or city, this region or city has to be excluded from the analysis in order to avoid biased and misleading results. Using too many indicators within one sub-domain would also increase complexity and create a "black box" effect. For these reasons, in this framework each index by QoL sub-domain should use two or in any event not more than four indicators.

[22] Priority 5: Culture and Sport for an Active Lifestyle, including two directions: public participation in culture and sport activities; contribution of culture and sport to sustainable society.

should become a basic need in the life of all people (like needs of eating and sleeping), because the technologies and the current way of working and travelling do not secure enough movement for keeping the human body healthy (Peráčková J. and Peráček P, 2019).

- Another important aspect of culture is the average cultural level of population (e.g. as measured by media literacy), because it is a pre-requisite for people being aware and prepared to cope with the challenges of an increasingly complex social environment. So, a next version of the TQoL framework should adopt the more comprehensive name “culture & sport” for this domain, including also indicators of sport assets, activities and active habits as enablers of personal health and better subjective quality of life, as well as of the cultural level of the population.

5.3 COVID-19 and its impact on QoL

Taking into account that NDP2027 was submitted to the Saeima before the COVID-19 pandemic began in Latvia, when approving the new National Development Plan the Saeima also adopted a decision with tasks for the Cabinet of Ministers in healthcare, public safety, social protection and equal opportunity, and to promote economic recovery in areas accelerated by the Covid-19 crisis. The following conclusions – extracted from the Saeima statement (Saeima, 2020) – address several aspects and priorities useful to orient also the quality of life measurement efforts in the future:

- The rapid spread of Covid-19 and the measures taken to contain the pandemic have seriously impacted the nation’s economic development. The Covid-19 crisis is also a serious test for Latvian society and the state. And it provides a unique opportunity to change habits and behaviour, to plan national development and invest public funding for achieving clear and specifically defined goals, avoiding sectoral fragmentation by allocating more resources to productive growth of sectors and ideas with future potential, and spending less for maintenance of unproductive economic structures. It gives us a chance to focus on developing an innovative, knowledge-based society, unleashing its ability to generate new knowledge, as well as to move towards developing digital solutions in all sectors of the economy, in particular in education, in order to lay a solid foundation for the development of society and ensure future-oriented investment in human capital.
- Significant additional resources will be spent to stop the spread of the pandemic and overcome its consequences, and this spending from the short-term perspective must be linked to the NDP2027 strategic objectives and directions. Indeed, the Covid-19 crisis has already demonstrated the relevance and contemporary nature of the guiding theme of NDP2027: "Change of Habits – the Path to Development", and the strategic objectives: Productivity and Income, Equal Opportunity, Regional Development and Social Trust - in terms of national sustainability. The strategic objectives of NDP2027 reflect those common values on which the Latvian state and society must be based, as they remain unchanged in times of short-term crises or impact from external events.
- As the macroeconomic forecast for the coming years is unclear, and different future scenarios on the spread of Covid-19 are feasible, long-term national development also is contingent upon restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 and national support measures to counteract it. It is vitally important to invest wisely in areas most directly affected by the performance the public safety and health systems, and the mitigation of Covid-19 waves, namely, in healthcare and disease prevention, lifelong learning, science and research, in particular biomedicine, civil protection, with a special focus on material reserves and local

food supply security, individual human resilience to improve the readiness of the population to adapt to changing life conditions, as well as to stimulate the economy to enable the affected sectors, including small and medium enterprises, to adapt and continue operating with all necessary safety measures.

- So, at a time when the impact of the Covid-19 crisis affects the people and economy of Latvia, it is necessary to mobilize forces and resources on new urgent priorities:
    - in the field of healthcare and public safety, implement targeted measures to attract human resources to the publicly funded healthcare sector for the improvement of healthcare quality and accessibility. Special attention is to be paid to socially vulnerable persons, strengthening of the capacity of the healthcare system, developing centralized electronic health cards and remote healthcare services.
    - in the field of social protection and equal opportunities, pay particular attention to ensuring a minimum income level for all, as well as provide social, psychological and material support when needed, especially for people and households in crisis, vulnerable groups, inhabitants at risk of poverty and social exclusion;
    - In the field of the economy, the digital transformation must be introduced, taking advantage of the new opportunities offered by e-commerce and e-government, introducing new forms of employment, developing higher digital skills, high-quality data transmission infrastructure, information and communication technology solutions and wider digitalisation of public services. The active labour market policy's ability to respond to a rise in short-term unemployment must be strengthened, and a sustainable labour market policy and a flexible lifelong learning system must be created and introduced to enable citizens to successfully integrate into the future labour market through the acquisition of new skills and competences.
    - Finally, an appreciable by-product of the Covid-19 crisis has been the determination and decisive action attitude shown by civil society and the private sector in selflessly supporting fellow citizens, municipalities and the state during the Covid-19 crisis. This cooperation capacity should be enhanced during the new and better economic recovery phase through programmes for strengthening civil society, promotion of civic initiatives and volunteering, and by parity in public authority dialogue with civil society and social partners at all stages of decision-making, thereby strengthening democracy and raising the level of mutual trust between people in Latvia as well as trust in government

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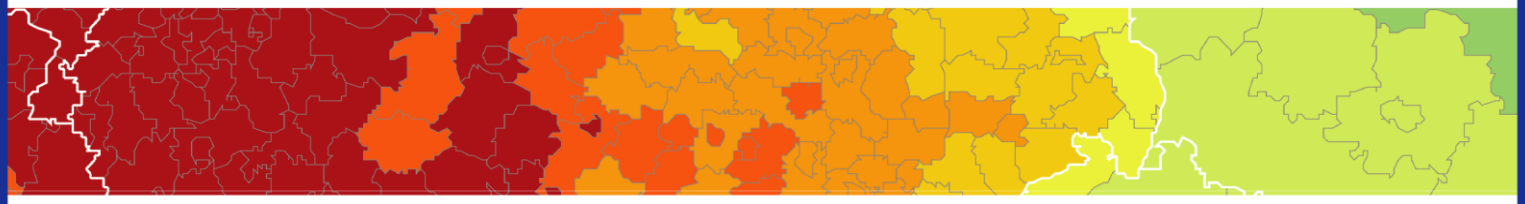

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