

Public Participation - Key to the Future of Democracy

Status: Implementation

EEZ

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The State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia in cooperation with partners of the Civic Alliance-Latvia and the Citizens Foundation in Iceland is implementing the "Public Participation - Key to the Future of Democracy" initiative. The Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers will monitor the implementation of the initiative. The State Chancellery of the Republic of Latvia in cooperation with partners of the Civic Alliance-Latvia and the Citizens Foundation in Iceland is implementing the "Public Participation - Key to the Future of Democracy" initiative. The Council for Implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers will monitor the implementation of the initiative.

Funding and funding source:

The implementation of the initiative of EUR 49 997 is supported under the bilateral cooperation fund for the European Economic Area and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway for the period 2014-2021.

Partners to the initiative:

The Latvian Civic Alliance and the Citizens Foundation in Iceland

Planned activities:

The following activities will be implemented under the supervision of the Council for Implementation of Cooperation Memorandum between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers in order to significantly improve public involvement and participation:

Collaborative think tanks - finding mutually acceptable solutions

At least three collaborative think tanks will be organized. The think tanks will look for concrete solutions to civil society development issues that have already been identified in the Mutual Dialogue and included on the list of issues of the Memorandum Council for 2020/2021 (e.g. legal framework, administrative burden reduction, streamlining public benefit system, assessment of economic conditions and review, optimization of civic participation legislation etc.).

Organizations and public administration institutions that are members of the Memorandum Council as well as other interested civil society organizations, experts from the private sector and research institutions will be involved in the activities of think tanks. The results of the think tanks' work will be recorded and made publicly available in the follow-up process to public administrations, NGOs and other stakeholders who wish to offer concrete solutions to further development of public participation.

Digital solutions to enhance efficiency of public participation

Based on the results of the think tanks and expertise of the Icelandic partners (a partner has received international awards for the development and implementation of democratic participation instruments), the situation will be analyzed, one to three prototypes of digital democratic participation tools (such as an e-consultation application) will be evaluated and developed. It will ensure communication among NGOs and between the public administration and civil society, gathering of views and efficient

involvement of civil society in the decision-making process.

Raising public awareness and communication activities

The initiative will carry out various communication activities on the role of civil society and civic participation in a democratic state to raise public awareness and interest in processes of national significance, to encourage public involvement in these processes, thereby mitigating the crisis of confidence, specifically addressing the part of society that does not believe in its ability to influence processes at national level.. The communication activities are intended to raise various issues and use different information spaces. The results and solutions of the initiative will be used to develop activities.

A civil society forum will be organized in 2021 to bring together civil society representatives and public administrations to discuss and find common solutions to promote civic participation, while ensuring cross-sectoral networking. The Forum will present the achievements of the Initiative, examples of the donor country and where possible, specifically invite NGOs implementing projects supported by the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms.

All three activities of the initiative are interconnected and complementary. As part of the work of the think tanks, concrete solutions will be developed to promote public participation and improve cooperation between civil society organizations and public administrations. Digital engagement solutions will be developed based on international best practices and expertise from Icelandic partners. At the same time, the skills of the representatives of the participating organizations to develop and organize a respectful and productive dialogue will be developed. The wider public will be able to engage with innovative digital solutions. Broader public engagement will be achieved through strategic communication campaigns, covering as many people as possible and encouraging them to engage.

Expected outcomes:

The initiative will include three think tanks and a forum. It will develop and test at least one new digital tool to expand existing participation opportunities. Communication activities are also planned to raise public awareness and inform on public participation.


Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway grants


Norway
grants

<https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/projects/eez-financial-instrument>