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Region – EmPaci”

Documentation of 2nd PB pilot

Vidzeme (Latvia)

(for the full report of all pilot municipalities, see main document)

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Vidzeme/Latvia

1. Situation before the 2nd PB implementation

Compared to the 1st PB pilot of the municipality, have there been any major changes in the key data about municipality-related or citizen-related factors?

☒ No ☐ Yes

PB process-related factors

7. PB is prescribed by law in the country / public authority:

☐ Yes ☒ No

2. Development of the 2nd PB pilot

Citizen- and PB process-related factors

9. PB is implemented to realize the following objectives:

Similar to 1st PB, also the 2nd PB in the Vidzeme Planning Region (VPR) was introduced by implementing the Vidzeme cultural program (VCP) - financial instrument that promotes and ensures the cultural process in Vidzeme. The funding of the VCP has been received from the State Culture Capital Foundations (SCCFs) program "Latvia's State Forests" Support for Cultural Programs in the Regions".

Since the participation budget in Latvia is still a new initiative, which has so far been implemented in only a few municipalities, the opportunity to apply this approach in the form of pilot activity in the implementation of VCP is a good tool that promotes the involvement of the society in decision-making, for example, in decisions also on setting the priorities of the Culture Program and project implementation.

9a. Which objectives have changed compared to the 1st PB pilot? Have objectives been added or abandoned? N/A

10. The following target groups are aimed to be involved in PB, and why:

Residents of Vidzeme region, representatives of the cultural sector, non-governmental organizations, representatives of local communities, municipalities of Vidzeme region.

Regional municipalities, non-governmental organizations, representatives of the cultural field and representatives of local communities are the main target groups that annually prepare and submit cultural project initiatives to the VCP.

To determine the main priorities in the field of culture, which should be included in the 2021 VCP, we invited the residents of Vidzeme to express their opinion by filling in a survey.

In accordance with the four priorities that received the most public support, the Culture Program Regulations were developed.

11. In case an analysis of citizen satisfaction of the 1st PB pilot has been conducted before developing the 2nd PB pilot, the following needs of citizens were taken into account for the 2nd PB pilot's implementation:

N/A

PB process-related factors

12. The following steps were undertaken to develop ideas and concepts for the 2nd PB cycle and the following changes were implemented compared to the 1st PB pilot:

The experience of the 1st pilot showed that there are shortcomings in the process of project submission, reviewing large number of submissions and publishing project initiatives on the voting platform. It was decided to improve the procedure for submitting project initiatives, making it more accessible and simpler for project applicants. A new design online project application form was developed and integrated into the voting platform. In order to allow experts to complete feasibility checks of the projects more effectively, the voting platform has been supplemented with a tool to assist this process.

13. Citizens were involved in the development of the 2nd PB cycle the following way and the following changes were implemented compared to the 1st PB pilot:

The citizen survey for culture priorities was conducted to encourage society to express its views on culture activities that should be funded. The survey results were considered when the Statute of Vidzeme Culture Programme 2021 was prepared, identifying the funded culture areas.

14. Citizens were informed about the initiation of the 2nd PB cycle in the following way and the following changes were implemented compared to the 1st PB pilot:

Depending on the target group, VPR implemented several activities during the communication campaign (03.2021-05.2021) in the 2nd PB cycle. VPR implemented targeted communication activities to inform representatives of local municipalities, non-governmental organisations, potential project applicants on the opportunity to submit cultural projects, vote for the proposed projects, project evaluation, and the results of the public vote and funding.

During the implementation of the 2nd PB, a seminar and a workshop were organized to activate people of the cultural field, thus promoting new project ideas (02.2021). Since it was the first year when projects were allowed to be submitted online, VPR provided additional information in consultations and an informative seminar (03.2021) for potential applicants to instruct on the functionality of the online project submission form and the technical principles of voting.

A summary of communication methods and channels used during the 2nd PB cycle:

- printed questionnaires to fill in person in several municipal institutions (priority survey);

- press releases and media communication;
- social media communication;
- direct communication with all municipalities in the Vidzeme region, dissemination of information in their channels (websites, social networks);
- online workshops and meetings (due to Covid 19 restrictions on face-to-face events).

15. These were the (internal and external) main promoters and success factors in the development of the 2nd PB cycle and the following changes appeared compared to the 1st PB pilot:

15a. Has an Advisory Board been installed to develop the 2nd PB run? If yes, please describe composition and organisation:

“Providus” Centre for public policy and “The Latvian Rural Forum” (LRF) are organizations that are opinion leaders on the topic of PB and the promotion of public involvement, therefore in the development of the 2nd pilot, these organizations were involved in organizing training activities carried out by the VPR for the target groups of the 2nd pilot.

15b. Of the explanation above, the following external persons / institutions should be invited to get involved in the International Network (GoA 3.2): *(will be not published)*

Gulbene Municipality

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

“Providus” Centre for public policy

The Latvian Rural Forum (LRF)

15c. These were the role models that were used as an inspiration for own PB

PB pilot project in Riga. This PB project was initiated by the NGO *Rīgas Apkaimju alianse* (Riga Neighbourhood Alliance) that at this moment consists of twelve Riga neighbourhood organizations. This piloting PB project was executed together with Riga municipality.

16. These were the main opponents and hindrances in the development of the 2nd PB cycle and it was coped with these in the following way:

We have made several positive conclusions when evaluating the 1st PB pilot. First of all, it concerns visibility and transparency caused by public involvement in processes and decision-making.

However, due to the lack of a strong tradition of PB in Latvia, there is often a lack of public understanding and sometimes negative attitudes towards voting and project applicants' efforts to promote their project. This is certainly an issue that can change over time as we continue to inform and educate the society on issues related to the participatory budget.

17. A project team for the 2nd PB development was formed:

☒ Yes ☐ No

17a. If yes, the project team was composed of the following functions and it was organized as follows:

Similar to the 1st PB pilot, the 2nd PB pilot team consisted of the EmPaci project team in Vidzeme: a project manager, a communication expert, and a Steering Committee (SC) representative. The VCP Coordinator and VPR IT Specialist were also involved in the process. To successfully implement the pilot, consultations with external experts and stakeholders was carried out.

18. For the IT part / online implementation of the PB, the following considerations and steps were taken and the following changes were implemented compared to the 1st PB pilot

As for the administrative and IT side of the process, we experienced a large number of applications in 1st PB pilot. It took us a lot of time and work to manually enter the information about the submitted projects into the established voting platform.

Therefore, for the 2nd PB pilot, we decided to supplement the voting platform with an online project application form.

Applicants can complete and submit cultural initiative projects on the platform. The application form indicates which of the application details will become publicly visible after the submission of the application. In this way, we have achieved less administrative work by manually publishing the submitted projects.

In addition, the voting platform has been supplemented with a tool that allows experts to access project applications for easier compliance and feasibility checks.

The voting model was changed, asking people to vote for three favourites. It was changed to stimulate voters to evaluate all submitted projects that are important for the region in their opinion, instead of only supporting the project submitted by them or their peer group.

Comparison with the 1st PB pilot:

19a. The following suggestions for changes were made from the EmPaci team to improve the process:

- To improve the project submission by organising project submissions online (explained above);
- To change voting principles, asking to vote for three projects. In order for a participant's vote to be counted, it is mandatory to vote for three projects. This is different from the conditions of the 1st pilot, when it was allowed to vote for one to three projects.
- To improve the process of reviewing submitted projects for experts allowing to access them online.

19b. Of these suggestions, the following were implemented in the 2nd PB pilot:

VPR developed strategic IT solutions making changes to the web-based platform balso.vidzeme.lv adding new features that ensure easier project submission online, changed technical solutions for voting and also created a solution that allows experts to browse submitted projects online.

19c. Of these suggestions, the following were not implemented in the 2nd PB pilot due to the following reasons: N/A

20. The following documents, manuals, regulations were developed and used during the development of the 2nd PB cycle:

Regulations "Citizens' Voting for Vidzeme Culture Program Projects 2021". This document is available on the [voting platform](#), together with information on the online voting process.

IT model/ citizens voting platform - balso.vidzeme.lv – supplemented with an online project application form and a tool that allows experts to access project applications for easier compliance and feasibility checks.

3. Implementation of the 2nd PB pilot

21. These are the general steps of the PB process after final approval:

1) A citizens' survey on the cultural priorities (24.11.20- 30.12.2020)

It was possible to submit the survey electronically and on the spot.

2) Elaboration of regulations and technical specification for VPR organized for public procurement of functionality improvements of the voting platform and development of an online project application form to be integrated in a citizen voting platform.

3) Conducting public procurement for functionality improvements of citizen voting platform and development of online project application form to be integrated in a citizen voting platform.

4) Elaboration of the regulation "Citizens' Voting for Vidzeme Culture Program Projects 2021"

5) Organization of PB training event on PB and citizen involvement in cultural processes (26.02.2021)

6) Submission of project applications – 2.03 – 31.03.2021

7) Organisation of online seminar for project applicants on preparation of project proposals for cultural initiatives and information provided on new procedure for submission of proposals using online application form. 16.03.2021

8) Unlike the experience of implementing the 1st PB Pilot, it was decided for the 2nd Pilot to check the compliance of the administrative criteria of project applications before publishing them on the voting platform and putting them to the citizens' vote.

9) Public vote – voting for cultural initiatives took place from 9.04. – 25.04.2021

10) Expert forum, assessment on submitted projects, declaration of winners.

11) Feedback questionnaire for the main target groups of the 2nd PB pilot has been prepared and a survey has been conducted

12) The implementation period for cultural initiatives from 15.05. – 31.12.2021.

21a. Total annual PB budget: 141 000 EUR (The funding of the VCP has been received from the State Culture Capital Foundations (SCCFs) program "'Latvia's State Forests" Support for Cultural Programs in the Regions".)

21b. Annual PB budget per citizen (in EUR and %-change of 1st PB pilot): N/A

21c. If applicable, budget earmarked for related internal work, communications etc.: N/A

21d. The PB has been designed as direct democratic tool (citizens' vote = final decision):

☐ Yes ☒ No

21e. The PB is designed for

☒ Region/City projects only ☐ District projects only ☐ Both

21f. Persons eligible participating in the PB:

Age limit for voters: from the age of 16 onwards

Project applicants, according to the regulations are legal entities. (A legal entity is any company or organization also association or even individual (Sole proprietorship) that has legal rights and responsibilities, including tax filings.)

Definition of persons: Project applications can be submitted for activities planned to be implemented in the territory of Vidzeme region

Number of eligible persons (in total): 155 591 (Age 16+ in Vidzeme region)

Number of participating persons (% of citizens): 84,6%

Changes that have been implemented compared to the 1st PB pilot: N/A

21g. The following actions were taken to ensure that only eligible persons made proposals / voted:

Online voting on the submitted projects was possible on a specially designed online voting platform. Legitimate voting was ensured by means of authentication, which verifies personal data.

The eligibility of project applicants (legal entities) was checked in accordance with the submitted supporting documents.

22. These were the specific dates planned for the PB process after final approval of the PB development:

- A citizens' survey on the cultural priorities (24.11.2020 - 30.12.2020.)
- Organization of PB training event on PB and citizen involvement in cultural processes (26.02.2021)
- Submission of project applications – 2.03. - 31.03.2021
- Organisation of online seminar for project applicants on preparation of project proposals for cultural initiatives and information provided on new procedure for submission of proposals using online application form. 16.03.2021
- Public vote - voting for cultural initiatives took place from 09.04.-25.04.2021
- The implementation period for cultural initiatives from 15.05. - 31.12.2021.

23. As key learnings from the 1st PB pilot, these aspects were considered when implementing the 2nd PB pilot:

- The **procedure** for submitting project initiatives **needs to be improved**, making it more accessible and simpler for project applicants. Solution - new online project application form designed and integrated in citizens voting platform balso.vidzeme.lv
- Provide tool that allows experts to access project applications for easier compliance and feasibility checks. Solution - The citizens' voting platform has been improved with an additional tool for experts, which make it easy to review submitted cultural project initiatives for eligibility and feasibility checks.

24. For citizen involvement in the PB-phases (e.g. information, proposal, voting phase), the following steps were taken and events organized:

A citizens' survey on the most important priorities of the Vidzeme Culture Program 2021
24.11.2020 - 30.12.2020.

The survey was available online and printed questionnaire at municipal service centers and libraries. 1 004 people provided an opinion

The first four priorities that received the most public support were included in the program:

1. Involvement of children and young people in cultural processes.
2. Preservation and promotion of the common natural and cultural heritage.
3. Cultural creativity.
4. Availability of professional national and international art and culture in Vidzeme.



A visual was used in the communication, inviting to express an opinion and fill in a questionnaire on cultural priorities, which should be supported in the Vidzeme Culture Program 2021.

Organization of a PB training event on PB and citizen involvement in cultural processes (26.02.2021): 131 participants were registered for the training. Main target groups addressed by the training were the municipalities of VPR, representatives of the cultural sector, non-governmental organizations, representatives of local communities.

These target groups are important for the VPR pilot in the context of the Vidzeme cultural program.



Visual used for PB training event.



A visual used in communication to call for a vote on cultural project initiatives.

25. For the activation of specific target groups of the PB, the following steps were taken and events organized:

- To reach an audience that does not have access to digital tools or does not have the necessary skills to use them, the citizens' survey on cultural priorities was available in printed form in municipal institutions.
- The developed online voting platform has an integrated on-site voting module that allows citizens to vote on cultural project initiatives in municipal institutions, where their vote is accepted.
- By informing the public about the PB process and the opportunity to vote on the submitted cultural project initiatives, various communication channels were used to reach as many different groups of the population as possible.
- In order to inform the target groups about the new online project application form and give detailed instructions on how to use it, the online seminar was organised as well as consultations by phone and e-mails were provided from the VCP coordinator.

26. The following actions were taken to provide information about PB in a citizen-friendly manner:

Extensive and explanatory information on the entire PB process was provided for citizens:

- detailed regulations explaining the preconditions for the preparation and submission of the cultural projects;
- transparent voting regulations explaining the procedure of the public vote;
- explanation of the criteria and reasons if funding for the project was refused after the evaluation;
- overall publicity in the media and social networks, information resources of the region's municipalities, and by e-mail and phone, depending on the situation and target group.

27. The following actions were especially taken to achieve a high participation rate:

Seminars and individual consultations (e-mail, by phone) to promote the preparation and submission of high-quality cultural initiatives.

28. The following steps were taken to train the own actors for PB:

Organization of a PB training event on PB and citizen involvement in cultural processes (26.02.2021): 131 participants were registered for the training. Main target groups addressed by the training were municipalities of VPR, representatives of the cultural sector, non-governmental organizations, representatives of local communities.

These target groups are important for the VPR pilot in the context of the Vidzeme cultural program.

The training structure was created by dividing it into two parts. In the first part, a webinar with main topics that were highlighted tackled how to involve the society, what forms of participation to use, how to activate strong communities, how to encourage like-minded people to represent common interests in creating a strong and functioning living environment.

The second part of the training event was dedicated to practical work in four workshops, where the co-creation process took place and concepts for innovative cultural project initiatives were developed using creative thinking methods. Special emphasis in the workshops was on issues and solutions on how to better involve the society in the development and influence of cultural processes in the region.



Video recordings of the event and training are available on the [VPR website](#).

PB training presentations:

Participation budget: simple on the complex / Līga Stafecka, Providus >> [Presentation](#)

Public participation in cultural projects in Vidzeme / Lienīte Priedaja-Klepere, Vidzeme Planning Region >> [Presentation](#)

Participation budgeting in Gulbene municipality / Zane Pūcīte, Gulbene municipality >> [Presentation](#)

Community initiatives as a driving force of processes / Anita Selicka, Latvian Rural Forum >> [Presentation](#)

Practical workshops:

[Workshop "PLACE"](#)

The incredible revival story of Červonka church. What can culture bring to a place?

Ieva Jātniece, association "Ūdenszīmes" >> [Presentation](#)

VIDEO >> [HERE](#)

[Workshop "KNOWLEDGE"](#)

The story of "Sēlijas Laivas" as an agent of change. How can knowledge, working together and a common goal change the experience of communities? Santa Šmite, Association "Sēlijas Laivas" >> [Presentation](#)

VIDEO >> [HERE](#)

[Workshop "COMMUNITY"](#)

A story about the cooperation of local people and people living abroad in building community culture. Why devote resources to community involvement? Ilze Kļava, "Jaunlutrīni Development Society" >> [Presentation](#)

VIDEO >> [HERE](#)

[Workshop "PROCESS"](#)

The story of art processes that include the "Sansuši" Welfare Residency Program. Māra Pāvula, society "Sansuši" >> [Presentation](#)

VIDEO >> [HERE](#)

29. If applicable, the following steps were taken to train actors in other municipalities (outside the EmPaci-project):

Gulbene municipality, as the first municipalities in Vidzeme, started the implementation of PB. VPR's experience in implementing EmPaci pilot activities has been very important in transferring its knowledge to Gulbene municipality.

The municipality continues to implement the PB also in 2021. A representative of VPR is involved in the PB process of Gulbene municipality as a member of project evaluation commission.

4. Results of the 2nd PB pilot

Priority voting phase:

30a. Predetermined priorities for voting:

Citizens were invited to choose four of the eight most important cultural priorities to be supported in the Vidzeme Culture Program:

1. Cultural creativity
2. Community/Society involvement and cultural education
3. Involvement of children and young people in cultural processes
4. Availability of professional National and international art and culture in Vidzeme
5. Local history (research work) of Vidzeme region
6. Preservation and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage of Vidzeme region
7. Preservation and promotion of the tangible cultural heritage characteristic of Vidzeme region
8. Preservation and promotion of the common natural and cultural heritage.



33%

2 Lūdzu, atzīmē, Jūsprāt, nozīmīgākos kultūras virzienus, ko būtu nepieciešams izvirzīt par Vidzemes kultūras prioritātēm 2021. gadā? (Norādiet ne vairāk par 4 prioritātēm) (vaiņākas atbildes iespējamas)

- ☐ 1. KULTŪRAS JAUNRADE – radošās aktivitātes, inovatīvu kultūras produktu un pakalpojumu radīšana, radošās industrijas - amatniecība un dizains.
- ☐ 2. SABIEDRĪBAS IESAISTE UN KULTŪRIZGLĪTĪBA – kultūras darbinieku profesionālā izugsme, jauno metožu, tehniku izmantošana, pielietošana, jaunu zināšanu ieguve, kultūras norišu izpratnes veidošana, sabiedrības iesaistes veidi kopienu veidošanā, kultūras norišs, kultūras mārketinga.
- ☐ 3. BĒRNU UN JAUNIEŠU kvalitatīva iesaiste kultūras procesos, izglītība, dalība amatiermākslas kolektīvos, brīvprātīgais darbs, interaktīvas nodarbības u.c.
- ☐ 4. PROFESIONĀLĀS NACIONĀLĀS UN STARPTAUTISKĀS MĀKSLAS UN KULTŪRAS PIEEJAMĪBA Vidzemē – teātra izrādes, mūzikas koncerti, mākslas izstādes, filmas u.c., radoša sadarbība ar profesionāļiem, būtiski veicinot izpratni par profesionālo mākslu reģionos, tikšanās ar autoriem, māksliniekiem.
- ☐ 5. Vidzemes reģiona NOVADPĒTĒNĒCĪBA – pētījumi, publikācijas, grāmatas, rakstu sērijas, ekskursijas, lekcijas, semināri u.c.
- ☐ 6. Vidzemei raksturīgā NEMATERIĀLĀ KULTŪRAS MANTOJUMA SACĻABĀŠANA UN POPULARIZĒŠANA, tradīcijas vietējā kopienā, mazākumtautību kopienā – svētki, gadskārtu ieražas, rituāli, dziesmu un deju svētku tradīcijas un process, valoda, valodas dialekti, vietējās izloksnes, apvīdārdi, vietvārdi, mutvārdu dailrade, kulinārais mantojums, amatu prasmes, meistarklases u.c.
- ☐ 7. Vidzemei raksturīgā MATERIĀLĀ KULTŪRAS MANTOJUMA SACĻABĀŠANA UN POPULARIZĒŠANA – arheoloģiskie izrakumi, vēsturisku ēku arhitektūras detaļu restaurēšana, priekšmetu restaurēšana, radošas rīcības mantojuma saglabāšanai vai popularizēšanai, meistarklases u.c.
- ☐ 8. Vidzemes reģiona VIENOTĀIS KULTŪRAS UN DABAS MANTOJUMS, unikālās kultūrvides saglabāšana, vietējo kopienu attīstība. Nemateriālā un materiālā kultūras un dabas mantojuma sintēze, kultūrainavas izpēte, saglabāšana un popularizēšana.

Turpināt

Screenshot of the cultural priority's questionnaire

30b. The voting for priorities was conducted the following way:

The priorities of the Culture Program were selected on the basis of the goals and tasks set in the Vidzeme Region Development Strategy, as well as the strategic goals and program settings of the National Culture Capital Fund.

Eight priorities were selected, and a questionnaire was prepared, inviting citizens to rank them in order of priority.

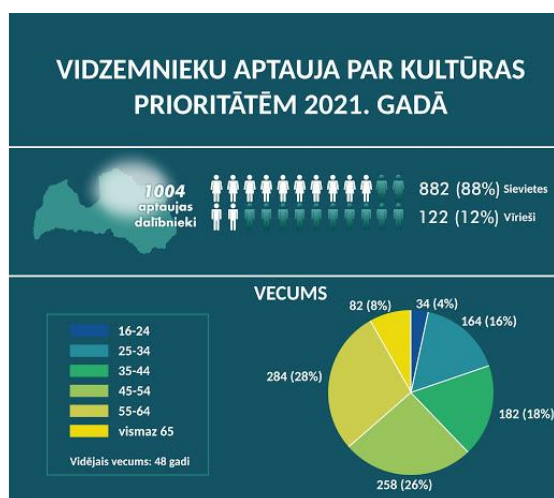
The survey was available online and printed questionnaire at municipal service centers and libraries.

30c. Number of citizens participating: 1 004 (+34% compared to the 1st pilot priority voting)

30d. Participation rate: 0,55% (+0,16% compared to the 1st pilot priority voting)

30e. Number of votes received in total: 1 004 (+38% compared to the 1st pilot)

The survey was completed by 1 004 citizens, most of them were women - 88% and 12% men.
The average age of citizens, who had completed the survey was 48 years.



Statistics on voting on cultural priorities

30f. Priorities voted for:

The first four priorities that received the most public support were included in the program. Project applications must be prepared in accordance with one of these four priorities:

1. Involvement of children and young people in cultural processes.
2. Preservation and promotion of the common natural and cultural heritage.
3. Cultural creativity.
4. Availability of professional national and international art and culture in Vidzeme.



Statistics on voting on cultural priorities

31. The PB was limited to certain areas of the budget or priorities of programmes:

☐ Yes ☒ No

Proposal phase:

32a. The proposal phase was implemented in the following way:

The submission of project applications for cultural initiatives took place from 02. – 31.03.2021.

An online seminar for project applicants on the preparation of project proposals for cultural initiatives and with information on the new procedure for submission of proposals using online application form was organised on 16.03.2021.

During the submission of project applications, the VPC coordinator advised the applicants both by phone and e-mail, mainly on issues related to the new online project application form (technical / IT support).

After the application deadline, the VCP coordinator assessed the applications according to the administrative criteria. Projects (short summary, descriptive photo and requested funding) that met the rules of the administrative criteria were published on the citizens' online voting platform balso.vidzeme.lv

If the proposals were to be submitted online:

Number of Online Accounts (if applicable): 182

Number of interrupted proposal procedures (if applicable): no data available

32b. Number of citizens participating:

According to the conditions, project applications can only be submitted by legal entities. 182 project applications were received.

32c. Participation rate : n/a

Percentage of females (% of proposers and %-change compared to 1st PB pilot): n/a

According to the conditions, project applications in the Vidzeme Culture Program can be submitted only by legal entities.

32d. Number of proposals received in total: 182

Submitted online: 182 project proposals (149 project proposals in 1st PB pilot 2020)

Submitted by paper-and pencil (number and % of total proposals and %-change compared to 1st PB pilot):

Innovativeness of proposals

Number of “new” proposals (number and %-change compared to 1st PB pilot):

Number of resubmitted proposals: N/A

Co-Creation of proposals

If applicable, number of originally not feasible proposals that were reworked together with the proposer:

If applicable, number of proposals that were reworked together with the proposer: N/A

32e. Main categories of proposals:

Cultural initiatives were submitted in line with the thematic priorities of the program:

1. Involvement of children and young people in cultural processes -35 proposals received
2. Preservation and promotion of the common natural and cultural heritage. 69 proposals received
3. Cultural creativity- 50 proposals received
4. Availability of professional national and international art and culture in Vidzeme -28proposals received

32f. Information provided to citizens after completion of the proposal phase:

Confirmation of received submitted project and information that proposal will be initially assessed according to administrative criteria.

Number of positive comments on implementation (if applicable): n/a

Number of negative comments on implementation (if applicable): n/a

Feasibility check:**33a. A feasibility check of proposals or voted projects was implemented:**

☒ Yes, of the proposals ☐ Yes, of the voted projects ☐ No

Number of feasible proposals: 172

Percentage of feasible proposals (% of proposals received in total): 95%

33b. The feasibility check was implemented in the following way:

A feasibility check, considering the program criteria approved in regulation, was carried out by the experts' commission. The commission consisted of three representatives of VPR and representatives of funding provider organizations: State Cultural Capital Fund; the "Latvia's State Forests".

33c. If applicable, political decision-makers were involved in the feasibility check in the following way:

N/A

33d. If applicable, citizens making specific proposals were involved in the following way: N/A**33e. The difficulties that became apparent through the feasibility check: N/A****33f. As a result of the feasibility check, the PB process should be changed as follows: N/A****33g. As a consequence:**

Number of feasible proposed projects /feasible voted projects

All project applications that met the administrative criteria were published and put to a public vote.

(Number of passed checks): 172

Number of not feasible proposed projects /not feasible voted projects

(Number of failed checks):

Voting phase:

34a. The voting phase was implemented in the following way:

All projects submitted within the VCP (and met the administrative criteria) were published online. Residents of VPR were allowed to vote for proposed cultural initiatives for almost three weeks. The voting was possible by authentication that verifies voters' identity. Unlike the 1st PB when voters were allowed to choose a maximum of three projects to vote on, during the 2nd PB each had to vote on three projects. Voting statistics were automatically displayed on the website, ranking the submitted projects according to the number of votes (from highest to lowest). After the public vote and the evaluation of the projects, information on supported project status was published on the website.

34b. Each citizen was given the following number of votes:

Each citizen had to vote for three project applications. A single vote for one project could not be submitted.

34b. Number of citizens voting : 5 452 (2021); 8 925 (2020) **Ratio of females of total (%):**—No data available

34c. Participation rate (% of citizens): 3,5 % (5 452 of 155 591 (eligible voters))

34c. Number of votes received: 16 356 (votes 2021); 12 364 (votes 2020)

34d. Results of the votes (which projects with which amounts and votes were winning):

In the Vidzeme case, the submitted cultural initiatives are subject to public voting and are also evaluated by a commission of experts in accordance with qualitative criteria. Citizens' vote is one of the determining criteria in expert assessment.

34e. Total PB budget realized / implemented :

In total **54 projects** were approved, allocating the available funding of 141 000 EUR.

34f. Was part of the total PB budget unused?

☒ No ☐ Yes, unused ☐ Yes, otherwise designated

If yes, why was part of the budget unused? N/A

34f. Information provided to citizens after completion of the voting phase:

After the end of the voting, on the platform balso.vidzeme.lv, information is placed next to each project on whether it has received support or not.

It also shows how many votes each initiative has received.

Number of delayed proposal implementations /feasibility checks: n/a

34g. Extent to which the approved projects can be realized: In total **54 projects** were approved and realized

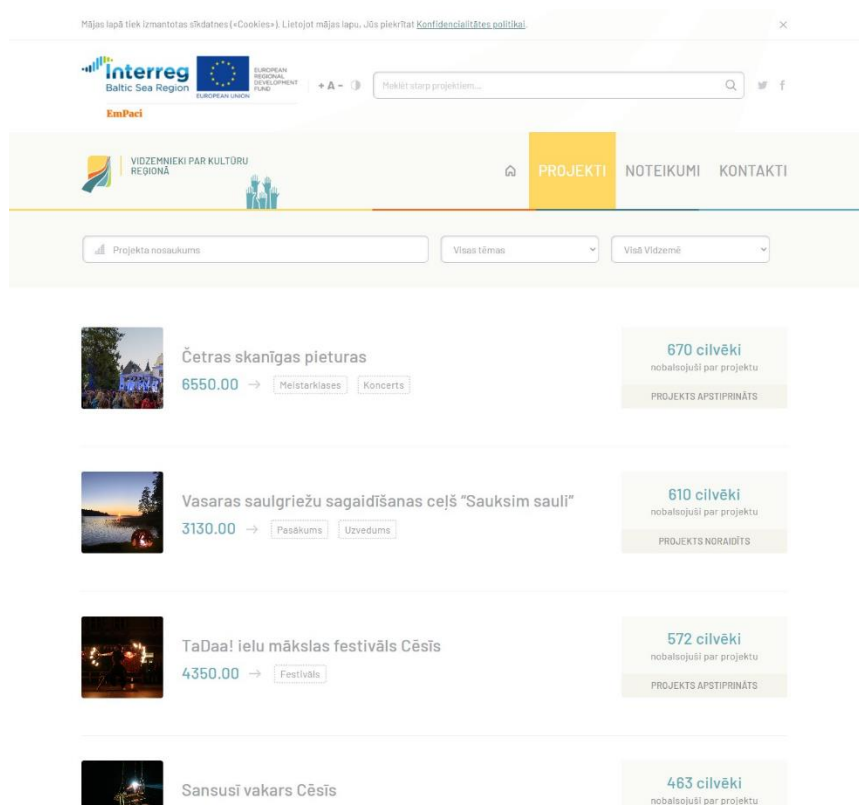
34h. Timeframe planned to realize the approved projects: May 2021 – December 2021

34i. Extent to which citizens were involved in the realization of the approved projects:

Citizen involvement is one of the preconditions included in the VCP regulations and must be implemented by the project applicants during the project implementation. In several cases, when the implementation of the project was related to the organization of wider cultural events, volunteers were involved. One of the most common formats for citizen involvement in the implementation of cultural program projects is related to informal learning, where different workshops are organized, offering the opportunity to acquire various traditional skills related to the intangible cultural heritage.

35. Citizens were informed about the completion of the 2nd PB pilot in the following ways:

The results of the 2nd PB were published on the VPR website and made available on the voting platform. In addition, a press release to the mass media, local municipalities was sent, and information in social media ensured.



The screenshot displays the EmPaci website interface for project voting. At the top, there are logos for Interreg Baltic Sea Region and the European Union, along with a search bar and navigation links. Below the header, there are filters for project names, topics, and regions. The main content area lists four projects, each with a thumbnail image, title, budget, and the number of votes received. The projects are:

Project Name	Budget	Votes	Status
Četras skanīgas pieturas	6550.00	670 cilvēki	PROJEKTS APSTIPRINĀTS
Vasaras saulgriežu sagaidīšanas ceļš "Sauksim sauli"	3130.00	610 cilvēki	PROJEKTS NORĀDĪTS
TaDaa! ielu mākslas festivāls Cēsīs	4350.00	572 cilvēki	PROJEKTS APSTIPRINĀTS
Sansusī vakars Cēsīs		463 cilvēki	

1. Submitted projects, votes, and status of the project on the platform balso.vidzeme.lv:
<https://balso.vidzeme.lv/projekti>
2. Citizens vote on the most important Vidzeme cultural priorities
http://www.vidzeme.lv/lv/projekti/lidzdalibas_budzeta_procesa_attistiba_baltijas_juras_regiona_empaci/apzinats_vidzemnieku_viedoklis_par_kulturas_prioritatem_sogad/
3. "Vidzeme Culture Program 2021" announced:
http://www.vidzeme.lv/lv/vidzemes_kulturas_programma/39/133092/
4. PB training and workshops to stimulate cultural initiatives:
http://www.vidzeme.lv/lv/projekti/lidzdalibas_budzeta_procesa_attistiba_baltijas_juras_regiona_empaci/iespejams_noskatities_seminara_un_koprades_darbnicas_8220sabiedribas_lidzdaliba_vietu_izaugsmei8221_ierakstu/
5. A public vote on the projects submitted within the Vidzeme Culture Program:
http://www.vidzeme.lv/lv/projekti/lidzdalibas_budzeta_procesa_attistiba_baltijas_juras_regiona_empaci/balso_par_kulturas_projektiem_vidzeme/
6. Publicity on supported projects and allocated funding:
http://www.vidzeme.lv/lv/projekti/latvijas_valsts_mezu_un_valsts_kulturkapitala_fonda_atbalstita_vidzemes_kulturas_programma_2021/noslegusies_8222latvijas_valsts_mezu_un_valsts_kulturkapitala_fonda_atbalstitas_vidzemes_kulturas_programmas_2021_projektu_vertesana/

36. Other actors involved (e.g. local council) were informed about the completion of the 1st PB pilot in the following ways:

The results of the 2nd PB were sent to each project applicant individually by e-mail.

5. Assessment of PB pilot and potential for enhancements

37. Objectives for PB as specified in Question 9 were reached as follows:

Citizens survey on cultural priorities. This was the 2nd year that this survey has been conducted. Last year, 726 people expressed their views, in 2021 the response was higher – 1 004. In addition, based on the recommendations of Vidzeme residents, a new thematic priority was created this year - public involvement and cultural education. The VPR sees that with the involvement of the public in determining the priority areas of culture, the projects submitted to the competition are becoming more diverse and more in line with the interests of the population.

In addition to the priority questions included in the survey, residents have repeatedly pointed out the importance of involving all age groups in cultural processes, non-governmental organizations, the role of the local community and the availability of cultural events particularly important.

38. Besides the objectives for PB as specified in Question 9, the following additional issues can be seen as a success for the PB pilot:

VPR sees the benefits of the newly created online project application form, as applying for cultural initiatives has become more accessible and easier for citizens.

The number of submitted project applications has increased compared to last year.

39. Some objectives for PB as specified in Question 9 were not reached due to the following reasons:

The on-site voting module, which was developed and integrated into the online voting platform, was not used due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

40. To our knowledge, the following elements of the PB process are innovative compared to other PB initiatives in the BSR:

The PB approach piloted by VPR differs from the traditional practice of participatory budget implementation, when projects related to infrastructure development are mostly planned and PB financing is provided by a specific municipality. In the case of the VPR pilot, the participatory budget was introduced at the regional level, not within one municipality, and the funding provided came from the State Culture Capital Fund program.

41. The PB benefitted from the transnational approach of the EmPaci project in the following way:

The PB approach and traditions in Latvia are still developing, so the knowledge about the participation budget gained during the EmPaci project is very valuable. The training organized within the project for the target groups on the PB, when international experience was also presented, aroused great interest - 131 participants applied for online training.

42. These changes are recommended for future PB processes to better reach objectives of PB:

In connection with the continuation of the PB approach to VCP still some improvements needed for the evaluation model to increase the power of public voting. In the Vidzeme case, the submitted cultural initiatives are subject to public voting and are also evaluated by a commission of experts in accordance with qualitative criteria.

43. These changes are recommended for future PB processes to better involve target groups or to better represent the eligible persons:

Online voting is a limiting factor for older populations who lack digital skills. In order to involve wider groups of society, it is definitely important to ensure the possibility to vote in person. During the PBbase networking events, several municipalities shared very interesting approaches to organizing face-to-face voting, which would be feasible in the future also for local municipalities in Latvia.

44. The pilot municipalities plans to run PB also in the future

☒ Yes ☐ No

Gulbene municipality will continue in PB in the next years as well.

In Latvia, the legal framework and regulation on the mandatory implementation of PB in local governments is currently being developed.