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4. IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY FOR VULNERABLE ROAD USERS IN LATVIA

Final Project Report

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Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Abbreviation*** | ***Definition*** |
| CSDD | Road Traffic Safety Directorate |
| EEA | European Economic Area |
| EC | European Commission |
| EMS | Emergency medical services |
| EU | European Union |
| EY | Ernst & Young |
| KPI | Key performance indicator |
| MoH | Ministry of Health of Latvia |
| MoT | Ministry of Transport of Latvia |
| MoW | Ministry of Welfare |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NMPD | Emergency medical service |
| VRU | Vulnerable road users |
| OWG | Operating Working Group |

Introduction

Project context and goals

In recent years, Latvia has consistently ranked among the top 5 EU countries with the highest road fatality rates per million inhabitants, recording 60 fatalities in 2022.[[1]](#footnote-2) Despite ongoing efforts, there has been no decrease in traffic accident-related deaths and serious injuries. [[2]](#footnote-3) This trend is particularly concerning for vulnerable road users (VRUs), whose rates of severe injuries and fatalities remain notably high without any apparent improvement.

As the use of micro-mobility devices like bicycles and electric scooters continues to grow, so does the incidence of accidents involving VRUs. The number of traffic accidents where cyclists have been injured has increased by 62.2% since 2012, reaching 670 in 2020. At the same time, the number of pedestrians injured has decreased by 30.8%, reaching 660 in 2020. Nevertheless, still more pedestrians were killed in road traffic accidents than cyclists – 43 and 19 respectively.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Additionally, the emergence of loosely regulated sharing systems for bicycles and electric scooters presents a new challenge in Latvia and the EU, particularly in urban areas. While these micro-mobility options enhance overall mobility, especially in dense urban environments, they have led to an increase in traffic accidents. In Latvia, there has been a notable surge in traffic accidents involving electric scooter users. In 2018, two such accidents were reported, whereas in 2020, the number rose significantly to 64, resulting in two fatalities. [[4]](#footnote-5) However, there has been a rapid increase of electric scooter use in the past years. Currently, there is no clear EU initiative addressing this issue; however, the European Commission is facilitating the exchange of best practices among member states.[[5]](#footnote-6)

In the light of these statistics, Latvian authorities are committed to decreasing the number of injuries and fatalities among VRU. One of the pathways to achieve this goal is to substitute private cars with public transportation while improving infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 states that “to reduce the proportion of private vehicle use, primarily the quality and access to public transport should be improved, as well as the popularity of public transport with the society should be increased. Concurrently with improvements in the public transportation field and potential restrictions in the use of private transport environment, Latvian authorities aim to increase specific pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure”.[[6]](#footnote-7) Upon implementation of these measures, it is expected that the number of VRU will continue to increase.

* 1. Stakeholder mapping

This project involved a diverse group of stakeholders, carefully identified and strategically integrated into various stages of execution. Their participation was essential in bringing valuable perspectives and expertise, crucial for the project's success.

**Beneficiary authority**

The Ministry of Transport (MoT) is the central authority responsible for overseeing transport and communication in Latvia, with a strong focus on road safety. Among its various duties, the MoT

develops and implements policies related to road traffic, ensuring the safety of all road users.[[7]](#footnote-8), [[8]](#footnote-9)

A key aspect of the MoT's role is enhancing VRU safety, as highlighted in the Road Traffic Safety Plan for 2021-2027. This plan prioritizes information campaigns to raise awareness about VRU safety, addressing issues such as speeding, impaired driving, and driver distraction. Additionally, the MoT collaborates with the European Commission and member states to evaluate and implement measures aimed at improving road infrastructure safety, ultimately reducing fatalities and serious injuries among VRUs.[[9]](#footnote-10)

**Other stakeholders**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * + - 1. **Stakeholder** | * + - 1. **Description** |
| State Police of Latvia | The State Police of Latvia is a government institution dedicated to protecting the State and society from criminal and unlawful threats to life, health, and property.[[10]](#footnote-11) Within this project, the State Police are crucial for enforcing traffic laws and regulations, thereby safeguarding VRUs and reducing traffic accidents. |
| Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD) | The Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD) is a state joint-stock company operating under the Road Traffic Law, responsible for vehicle registration, driver exams, license issuance, and roadworthiness tests.[[11]](#footnote-12) It plays a vital role in this project by ensuring vehicles and drivers meet safety standards, conducting road audits, and educating the public on road safety, all of which are crucial for reducing accidents involving VRUs. |
| Latvian State Roads (LVC) | Latvian State Roads (LVC) is a state joint-stock company under the Ministry of Transport, responsible for managing the state road network, administering the State Road Fund, and organizing public procurement.[[12]](#footnote-13) Its involvement in the project is crucial, as it directly impacts the design, maintenance, and safety of roadways, which are key to reducing accidents and improving the safety of VRUs. |
| Ministry of Health (MoH) | The Ministry of Health oversees state administrative functions in the health sector, ensuring compliance with health, public health, and pharmaceutical regulations to provide quality healthcare and a safe living environment.**[[13]](#footnote-14)** Its role in the project is crucial for establishing health standards and emergency response protocols, particularly within the key safety dimension of safe post-crash care. This is vital for reducing accident-related fatalities by ensuring prompt and appropriate medical care at crash sites. |
| Ministry of Interior (MoI) | The Ministry of the Interior is the leading institution in home affairs sector which includes such subsectors as fight against crime, protection of public order and security, protection of individual rights and lawful interests, state border security, fire safety, fire security, rescue, civil protection, record keeping and documentation of population, as well as migration. Its role in the project is critical to ensure enforcement function of road safety. |
| Ministry of Justice | The Ministry of Justice is the leading State administrative institution in the sectors of justice (legal system policy, judiciary system and court administration), as well as in other fields of the State policy referred to in these Regulations. Its role in the project is crucial to ensure enforcement of road traffic violation punishments and coordinate implementation of road traffic violation fine policy changes. |
| Hospitals | Latvia has around 40 hospitals, with approximately 6 located near Riga. These hospitals play a strategic role in the project by providing essential healthcare services and emergency response to road accident victims. Additionally, they collect and report data on road accidents, including injury severity, contributing valuable insights for improving road safety.[[14]](#footnote-15) |
| Emergency medicine service (NMPD) | The NMPD (Emergency Medical Services) coordinates and provides pre-hospital emergency medical care throughout Latvia, both in routine situations and during emergencies. It also offers specialized support to hospitals when needed. In the context of the project, the NMPD plays a crucial role by ensuring timely and effective medical response to VRUs involved in traffic accidents, helping to mitigate the severity of injuries and improve survival rates.[[15]](#footnote-16) |
| **NGOs** | Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are non-profit entities that operate independently of government at various levels. [[16]](#footnote-17) Key NGOs involved in the project include:  **City for People:** this NGO advocates for the development of safe, efficient, and convenient urban environments in Riga and other Latvian cities, focusing on improving transportation options for all, whether on foot, by bike, public transport, or car.[[17]](#footnote-18)  **Riga Neighborhoods Union:** this group works towards the sustainable development of Riga, preserving natural and cultural heritage, enhancing the quality of life for residents, and ensuring good governance in the city's interactions with state institutions and citizens.[[18]](#footnote-19)  **Latvian Cyclists' Association**: A member of the European Federation of Cyclists, this association promotes the growth of cycling as a practical, economical, healthy, and eco-friendly mode of transportation in Latvia.[[19]](#footnote-20)  **Latvian Motorcycle Clubs Association (MCA):** A non-political organization that advocates for the rights and responsibilities of motorcyclists.[[20]](#footnote-21)  The involvement of these NGOs was vital to the project, as they provided insights from broader societal groups and road safety enthusiasts, helping to identify issues and potential solutions related to road safety. |
| **Micromobility sharing companies** | Companies like Bolt[[21]](#footnote-22), Tuul[[22]](#footnote-23), and Charge-Mobility[[23]](#footnote-24) in Latvia offer convenient and eco-friendly transportation options for short-distance urban travel through the rental of electric scooters, bicycles, and e-bikes via mobile apps. These vehicles, particularly electric scooters, are highly vulnerable in traffic and have a significant accident rate. Collaboration with these companies is essential for enhancing vehicle safety features, educating riders, and integrating safe riding practices into urban traffic planning to reduce the number of accidents. |

Table 1 Description of other stakeholders

1. Deliverable 1 – Inception report
   1. Aim of the deliverable

The Inception Report aimed to lay a strong foundation for the project's success by aligning with the main beneficiary on expected outcomes, value, and deliverables. EY facilitated discussions to solidify agreements with the MoT concerning roles, governance, methods, and timelines. Additionally, the report enhanced our understanding of Latvia's micromobility and road safety landscape, identifying key project issues based on stakeholder consensus. It also reviewed global best practices to guide analysis, align stakeholder goals, and identify the critical factors for Latvia's success.

* 1. Methodology of deliverable

The inception phase was a critical milestone in the project, setting the foundation for all future activities. Key strategic actions were taken to ensure a thorough understanding of the project landscape, establish essential partnerships, and outline the roadmap for successful project implementation (Figure 1).

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Figure 1 Strategic actions of Deliverable 1

* 1. Results of deliverable
     + - 1. Strategy and organizational structure were presented and agreed upon the following question/ aspects:
* **The project governance** involved the EY team (both project management and implementation), a dedicated project coordinator from the MoT, a Steering Committee (SC), and an Operating Working Group (OWG) comprising various ministries and organizations. Each team had clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
* **The project team** was highly experienced and diverse, with expertise in large-scale transport reforms, project management, and road safety. EY also had access to specialized global services, including the EY Global Future Mobility Competence Centre, which offers deep technical expertise in advisory services.
* **The communication plan** included biweekly status updates and additional meetings as needed. SC meetings occurred monthly, with deliverables submitted in both Latvian and English, primarily via Microsoft Teams.
* **Deliverables were prepared** **by EY and reviewed** by the MoT and contracting authority. Feedback was expected within 14 days; otherwise, deliverables were deemed approved. EY revised documents based on feedback.
* EY was required to **use confidential information** solely for contractual duties and to protect it with the same care as its own confidential materials. Disclosure to third parties was prohibited without written consent from the relevant authority.
* High-quality deliverables were ensured through **multiple review layers,** including preparation by the project team, oversight by an engagement partner, and a final review by a quality reviewer, in line with contract requirements.
* **Stakeholders’ roles were updated,** involving various ministries, state agencies, and NGOs, each with specific levels of engagement in the project.
* **Potential issues** were identified, monitored, and mitigated, with strategic, operational, quality, and organizational risks outlined alongside specific mitigation plans to ensure project success and timely delivery.

1. Deliverable 2 - AS-IS report and gaps analysis
   1. Aim of the deliverable

Deliverable 2 aimed to analyze best practices in road safety for vulnerable road users (VRUs) and develop a reference model. It assessed the current road safety situation in Latvia, identifying discrepancies between the reference model and existing conditions through a gap analysis.

* 1. Methodology of deliverable

Deliverable 2 utilized a best practice analysis to explore five essential dimensions: Safe Roads, Safe Speed, Safe Vehicles, Safe Road Users, and Safe Post-Crash Care. This evaluation focused on three European Union countries—Estonia, the Netherlands, and Sweden—while also incorporating additional best practice examples from other European nations. The first four dimensions corresponded to the responsibilities of the Ministry of Transport (MoT), whereas the fifth dimension (post-crash care) was associated with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Welfare (MoW). Furthermore, the analysis of Latvia's situation included a review of casualty data, causative factors, the regulatory framework, institutional roles, and road safety statistics. This was followed by a gap analysis to pinpoint inefficiencies, data deficiencies, policy and regulatory issues, VRU behavior challenges, and resource limitations (Figure 2).

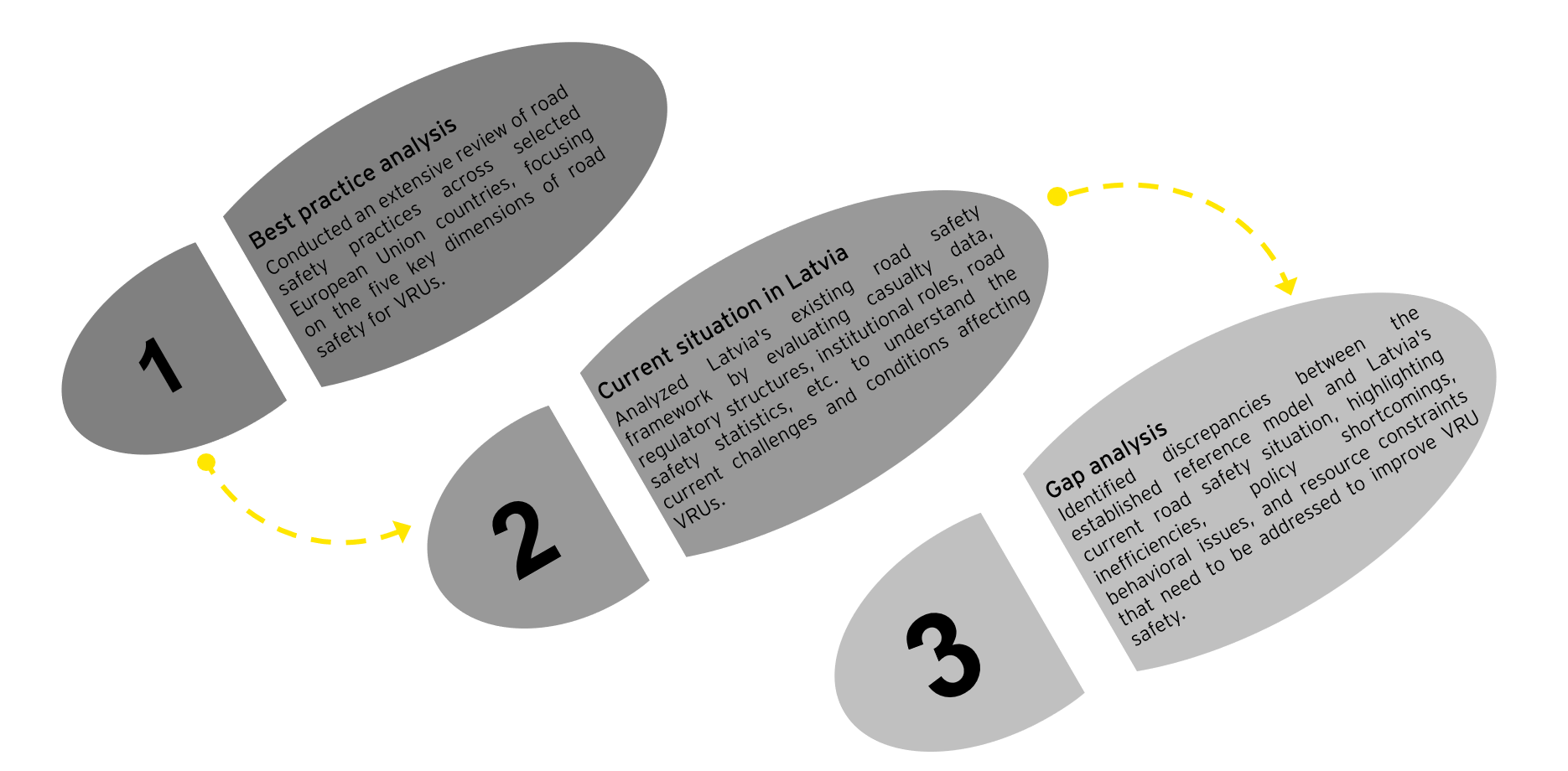


Figure 2 Methodological approach for Deliverable 2

* 1. Results of deliverable
     + - 1. This summary outlines the findings from Deliverable 2 regarding road safety practices in Latvia in relation to best practices from leading countries. The analysis underscores critical areas where Latvia's road safety measures lag behind the reference model across the safety dimensions (Table 2).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Safe Roads** | | |
| **Element** | **International best practices** | **As-Is situation in Latvia** |
| Unified network | Best practice countries such as Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands have extensive unified infrastructure networks for each category of VRUs. | Infrastructure in Latvia is fragmented, for example cycling paths end abruptly. Due to fragmentation in infrastructure, VRUs that are not pedestrians are forced to use infrastructure meant for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists, therefore moving around the street a lot. |
| Infrastructure design | Best practice shows that infrastructure is adjusted for the purpose of the street (e.g., shared spaces between VRUs and motorized vehicles will have physical limitations for motorized vehicles that restrict the use of street in a way that is not in line with its use). | Infrastructure in Latvia often is not in line with the purpose of the road. (e.g., Latvian bicycle standards comply with best practices in infrastructure design, however they are rarely applied in real life. Most roads do not have cycling paths at all, and the width of the road allows for higher speeds than permitted). Additional problem is lack of standardized design (e.g., coloring of cycling paths). |
| Intersections | Intersection design should prioritize maintaining an angle as close to 90 degrees as possible, the intersection should be narrow. This type of layout enhances the visibility for both VRUs and approaching traffic (cars etc.). | There are intersections where VRUs have died, which do not have a 90-degree angles and are wide. |
| Pedestrian crossings | Best practices shows that pedestrian crossings should be raised to alert the approaching traffic to reduce their speed. | In Latvia raised pedestrian crossings are not observed often, almost never. |
| **Safe Speed** | | |
| **Element** | **Best practice** | **Situation in Latvia** |
| Overall speed limits | In best practice countries speed limits are generally lower. In Sweden and the Netherlands speed limits on non-urban roads are 70 km/h and 80 km/h respectively. | In Latvia the speed limit on non-urban roads is 90 km/h. |
| 30 km/h zones | In Stockholm 30 km/h speed limit is applied on residential streets since 2004. At present, Amsterdam has implemented a city wide 30 km/h zone – 80% of streets in Amsterdam have a 30 km/h speed limit. | Municipalities in Latvia in contrast have been slow to introduce 30 km/h zones, changes have been very recent and in a small number of municipalities. In Riga, the first 30 km/h zone appeared only in 2020 (Āgenskalns) and many densely populated areas with high volume of traffic still permit 50 km/h (e.g., Avoti). |
| Fines for speeding | In best practice countries high fines for speeding are applied starting from 1 km/h over the speed limit (e.g., for speeding 1-10 km/h over the limit, the fine in Sweden is 193.50 EUR). | The starkest difference is in fines for speeding are in the range between 1 – 30 km/h over the speed limit. For speeding 1-10 km/h over the speed limit only a warning applies. |
| **Safe User Behavior** | | |
| **Element** | **Best practice** | **Situation in Latvia** |
| Unsubstantiated emphasis on VRUs | In best practice countries, the focus is on creating a safe space for VRUs by limiting speed and creating designated spaces that are understandable for both heavy motorized vehicle users and VRUs. It is important to inform motorized vehicle users about the risks associated with certain behaviors in spaces with VRUs. | Latvia places significant emphasis on the responsibility of VRUs, while comparatively less emphasis is placed on heavy motorized vehicle users. There is less clarity about the use of space for VRUs than in Sweden and the Netherlands (e.g., differences in street design). |
| Driving under the influence | Sweden and Estonia the limit for driving is set at 0.2 BAC. Driving under the influence poses a problem not only for vehicle drivers but also for micro-mobility users. Advocacy groups suggest implementing a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol consumption and driving across EU nations. Presently, countries such as Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia have already adopted a zero-tolerance stance toward drink driving. | In Latvia, the legal alcohol limit for driving is higher at 0.5 BAC\*.  \*a driver with a motor vehicle driving experience of no more than two years has a blood alcohol concentration limit of 0.2 BAC.  Micromobility users have perception they will not get in trouble for driving intoxicated. Data analysis shows high level of intoxicated accidents involving scooter/bike. |

Table 2 Results of the deliverable

Deliverable 3 - Report with recommendations

* 1. Aim of the deliverable

The aim of Deliverable 3 was to provide recommendations for enhancing road safety for VRUs in Latvia. Building on the findings from Deliverable 2, this report outlines a comprehensive set of suggestions to bridge the gaps between the reference model and the current situation in Latvia. It also establishes a clear implementation pathway by proposing a roadmap that details the necessary actions for various stakeholders, along with the required resources and proposed timelines for these steps

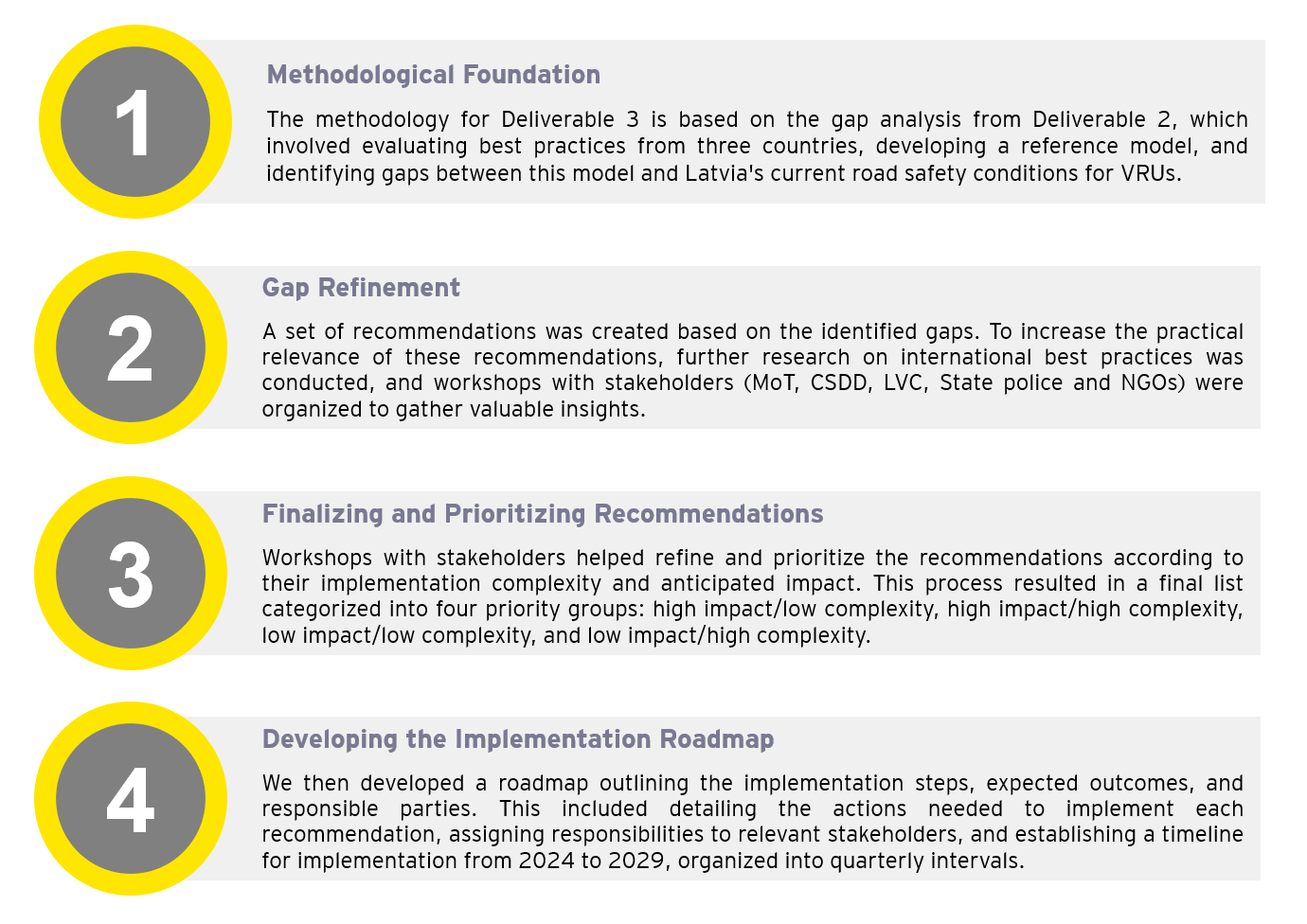
* 1. Methodology of deliverable
     + 1. The methodology for the third deliverable incorporates 4 steps (Figure 3).
       2. 

Figure 3 Methodological approach for Deliverable 3

* 1. Results of deliverable
     + - 1. The implementation roadmap for road safety was developed through a collaborative process with stakeholders, involving thorough discussions to assess and enhance each recommendation's feasibility. The resulting roadmap outlines practical steps, assigns responsibilities, and sets timeframes, reflecting a strategic framework aimed at achieving safety goals. This roadmap is a comprehensive strategy for improving infrastructure, vehicle safety, user behavior, and post-crash support, with a commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder involvement.

The roadmap encompasses a series of tasks designed to address various facets of road safety:

* Task 1 focuses on **developing comprehensive guidelines for urban infrastructure**, including designing intersections at near 90-degree angles, creating continuous pedestrian pathways, and ensuring proper safety measures at crossings.
* Task 2 emphasizes **piloting new infrastructure solutions**, such as shared spaces, to enhance urban environments and promote community cohesion.
* Task 3 addresses maintenance protocols to ensure **infrastructure sustainability.**
* Task 4 advocates for routine roadside inspections to **ensure** **vehicle roadworthiness.**
* Task 5 involves implementing a **strict zero-tolerance policy for driving under the influence** of alcohol, with a phased approach to reducing the legal BAC limit.
* Task 6 proposes **removing the tolerance for speeding**, enhancing compliance with speed limits, and improving overall road safety.

In addition to these tasks, the roadmap includes measures to enhance vehicle monitoring, such as:

* Task 7 is an **introduction of alcohol interlocks** and Task 8’s evaluation of systems for citizen-submitted traffic violation evidence.
* Tasks 9 and 10 explore the **delegation of parking fine issuance to municipal departments** and the **implementation of computer vision technology** for automating parking enforcement.

The roadmap also covers post-crash care and support:

* Tasks 18 and 19 focus on **establishing compensation standards for moral damages** and **creating comprehensive guides** for accident victims and their families.
* Task 20 aims to **enhance data collection mechanisms**, while Task 21 seeks **to develop a unified mechanism for stakeholder collaboration in road safety efforts.**

Deliverable 4 – Report on public awareness campaign

* 1. Aim of the deliverable

The aim of Deliverable 4 is to present and detail the outcomes of an awareness-raising campaign conducted as part of the project. This campaign focuses on promoting the safe integration of micro-mobility options while emphasizing the road safety of the most vulnerable road users. It utilizes the data and recommendations from Deliverables 2 and 3. The primary goal is to encourage mutual respect among various road users and to enhance public awareness regarding the increased injury risks that VRUs face in accidents.

* 1. Methodology of deliverable

Initially, we organized a kick-off meeting led by our McCann experts, involving key stakeholders such as representatives from the MoT and the CSDD, as well as communication teams from both institutions. The structure of this meeting followed a workshop strategy designed to foster collaboration and consensus. The primary aim of the workshop was to acquaint all stakeholders with each other and to agree on a common campaign objective, target audience, and key messages.

During the workshop, we addressed several critical questions:

* What are we trying to solve?
* What are our goals (short-term & long-term)?
* Who is our audience?
* What are the obstacles?
* What do we want to say?

During the kickoff meeting all involved stakeholders agreed that it is necessary to determine the most critical issues to address, ensuring that the campaign’s focus remains on impactful and achievable outcomes. Based on the discussion, it was decided to focus on a specific high-risk group (electric scooter riders) to maximize the campaign’s effectiveness.

Further strategic development was carried out (Figure 4).

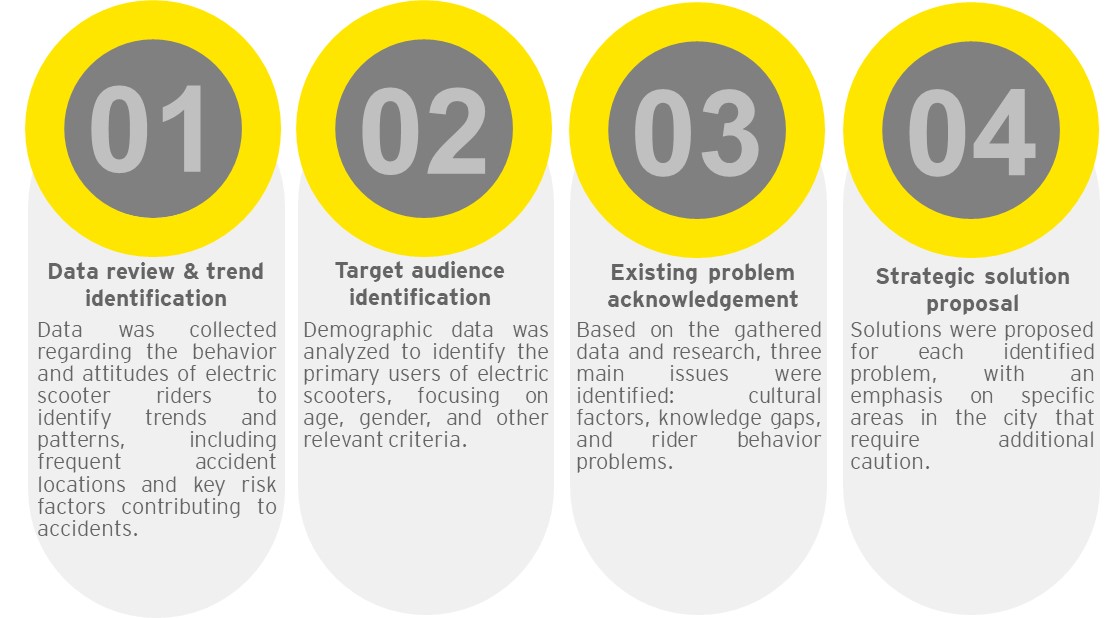


Figure 4 Strategic development of the campaign

Following the execution of creative development, various campaign aspects were defined:

* The **campaign's tone** was established to reflect the harsh realities of road negligence, ensuring a serious and impactful message.
* The **visual identity** drew inspiration from the recognizable style of the CSDD traffic rule tests. This design choice was made to capture attention effectively and convey key messages clearly while engaging the audience cognitively.
* The campaign employed two primary types of **creative content**: static and interactive elements. This combination ensured that the materials were visually appealing and effective in delivering important messages, engaging users more deeply. In addition to static and dynamic social media posts, a variety of Public Relations activities were incorporated to enhance the campaign's reach and impact through traditional media and community engagement.
* To maximize the campaign's reach and impact, visual materials were disseminated through **various channels**, including the MoT’s social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the official website) and those of the CSDD, along with influencer accounts and local media sources.

Three primary challenges needed to be addressed to achieve the campaign goals. Strategic solutions were developed for each issue, and when combined, these solutions formed a comprehensive and effective campaign. (Figure 5).

A screenshot of a computer

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Figure 5 Problems and how campaign will address them

* 1. Results of deliverable

It was crucial to emphasize that certain areas in the city required extra caution. These dangerous zones were specifically highlighted to enhance individual awareness and foster a collective responsibility towards creating safer streets for everyone. Three primary danger areas were identified: gateways, pedestrian crossings, and pavements around intersections. These areas were selected based on the following criteria:

* Infrastructure points where visibility was less than 5 meters in any direction.
* Infrastructure points where multiple road users converged at one point.

A diagram of a car accident

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Figure 6 Identified dangerous areas in the city

* + 1. Overview of campaign period and developed creative elements
       - 1. The public campaign preparation period was carried out from May 2024 until July 2024. Campaign was launched on 22nd of July and finished on 31st of August.
         2. A screenshot of a phone

            Description automatically generated
    2. Overview of campaign results

The total quantitative indicators of the social network posts and influencer videos were summarized, based on META Ads campaign statistics during the campaign period. However, it is to be noted that the campaign is finished on 31st of August, it is expected for results to increase.

A screenshot of a phone

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A collaboration with an influencer was organized, and three Reels videos were published on the Ministry’s Facebook and Instagram accounts, along with the promotion of these videos on the influencer’s Instagram and TikTok accounts:

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