

Improving Judicial efficiency and budgeting in Latvia

TSIC-RoC-26576

REFORM/2021/OP/0006 Lot 1

Deliverable 7: Final Report

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Abbreviations and their explanations

Abbreviation	Explanation
Beneficiary	Judicial Council
Main stakeholders	Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia, Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia, Court Administration of the Republic of Latvia, State Chancellery of Latvia
CA	Court Administration
EC	European Commission
e-case	E-case is a digitalisation programme that envisages the gradual implementation of a centralised set of IT solutions for the electronic processing of cases in judicial proceedings and investigation processes. Available at: https://elieta.lv/web/#/par-elietu .
JC	Judicial Council
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
Project	Improving the Efficiency and Budget Planning of the Latvian Judicial System
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers EU Services EESV
SG REFORM	European Commission's Reform and Investment Task Force
TIS	Court Information System


Context of the project

As stated in the technical specification of the project “Improving the Efficiency and Budget Planning of the Latvian Judicial System”¹, an efficient judicial system is essential for strengthening one of the fundamental values of the European Union (EU) – the rule of law. The rule of law enables individuals and businesses to fully exercise their rights and fosters mutual trust.

According to the EU Justice Scoreboard, Latvia has 28 judges per 100,000 inhabitants, which is the sixth highest figure in the EU (the EU median is 21.5 judges)². In addition, Latvia has the fourth highest level of government expenditure on the functioning of the judicial system as a share of gross domestic product (GDP).

The Strategy of the Judicial Council for 2021–2025 is focused on safeguarding judicial independence, ensuring fair adjudication of cases, improving the efficiency of court operations, and ensuring responsible use of state budget funds. However, the Judicial Council currently lacks capacity and methodological tools to obtain objective data for assessing staffing needs and efficiency. The existing indicators do not fully reflect the number of judges and other staff required to examine the cases received by the courts, thereby hindering the implementation of measures related to the efficient allocation of resources. Therefore, it was necessary to develop recommendations for the institutional reform of the judicial system and to create a statistical methodology for assessing workload intensity, as well as for the allocation of staff across different institutions of the judicial system. The model will help the Judicial Council strengthen the budget planning process and the methodology for further improvements.

Objective of the project and expected results

General purpose of the service contract	
	Promote institutional, administrative and growth-enhancing structural reforms in Latvia in accordance with Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/240 establishing a Technical Support Instrument (TSI Regulation).
Specific purpose of the service contract	
	To help national authorities improve their ability to plan, amend, implement and review reforms in accordance with Article 4 of the TSI Regulation.
Project results ³	
	Result 1: Development of a roadmap for the institutional reforms necessary to increase the efficiency of the functioning of the justice system.
	Result 2: Development and adaptation of a model (methodology) for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the judicial system based on statistical data.

¹ Tender Specifications Nr. TSIC-RoC-26576 REFORM/2021/OP/0006 Lot 1, Ref. Ares(2024)4158775 – 10/06/2024

² Available at: [CEPEJ Study on the judicial systems in the EU Member States – Country fiche. Judiciary at a glance in Latvia \(2023 data\)](#)

³ The achievement of the objective is not solely the responsibility of the contractor and depends in part on Latvia’s actions. It is expected that Latvia, having been closely involved in the implementation of the contract and having consulted with the contracting authority on all draft deliverables, will approve the deliverables through its internal mechanisms and implement the work contained in the final deliverables.

Project deliverables and main takeaways

The purpose, main conclusions, recommendations, and expected impact of the deliverables developed within the project are described in the table below.

Deliverable	Objective	Main takeaways and expected impact
D1. Inception report	Shared understanding on the work implementation methodology and timeline.	<p>Main takeaways:</p> <p>A shared understanding of the project's implementation approach was established among SG REFORM, the Judicial Council, and PwC, along with updated information on key developments in the judicial system.</p>
D2. Communication material	Inform stakeholders about the project context, objective, planned activities, and expected results.	<p>Expected impact: Better awareness among decision-makers, judges, and other professionals of the project's objectives.</p>
D3. Analytical report	Provide a precise and in-depth analysis of the current regulatory, governance, and institutional framework of the Latvian judicial system, including deficiencies in the existing data analysis of court workload.	<p>Main takeaways: The efficiency of the judiciary can be strengthened in three key areas: (1) by aligning the strategic objectives of the judicial system with public expectations and among all parties interested in the development of the judicial system; (2) by improving the governance of the judiciary, in particular by strengthening the fiscal independence of the courts; and (3) by increasing the effectiveness of the judicial system's human resources policy.</p> <p>Expected impact: An evidence-based rationale for reforms, using comparison with best practices from European Union countries, and clearly defined systemic problems based on a comprehensive mapping of the existing situation.</p>
D4. Recommendations for institutional reforms to increase the efficiency of the justice system and promote more efficient use of budgetary resources	Support the Judicial Council in its work on the reform of judicial institutions by describing the objectives, expected results, and the necessary steps (legislative, institutional, and organisational changes) to achieve those results. Prepare a roadmap for the reform of the administrative management of judicial institutions.	<p>Main takeaways: When planning reforms of judicial institutions aimed at increasing the operational efficiency of the judicial system, the Judicial Council is advised to: (1) reform the institutions of the judicial system responsible for ensuring the functioning of the courts, (2) introduce changes to the court budget management process, and (3) change the management of the courts' human resources.</p> <p>The purpose of reforming the institutions responsible for ensuring the functioning of the courts is to create an independent and modern administrative governance framework for the courts, adapted to the needs of judicial proceedings and conducive to the continuous improvement of the organisation of the judicial system's work.</p> <p>Changes to the court budget management process would make it possible to effectively ensure and demonstrate to the public that the judicial system is free from political influence of the executive power and acts responsibly in managing the state budget funds entrusted to it, while ensuring accountability and responsible management of judicial system resources.</p> <p>This would create a model of court human resources management that makes it possible to improve the efficiency of judicial proceedings and enhance court performance.</p> <p>Expected impact:</p> <p>More effective governance and decision-making within the judicial system, a transparent, data-based court budget, and a sustainable policy for judicial efficiency.</p>
D5. Development, testing, and	Develop a model based on statistical principles	<p>Main takeaways: The project succeeded in developing a model based on statistical principles — a tool combining court activity statistics and judges' working-time data, which,</p>

Deliverable	Objective	Main takeaways and expected impact
adaptation of a statistical data-based model (methodology) for evaluating the operational efficiency of the judicial system	for evaluating the operational efficiency of the judicial system and improving its performance.	through methods of mathematical analysis, makes it possible to determine more objectively the labour intensity of different case-type categories, as well as the workload of judges and judicial institutions. Expected impact: An objective and transparent workload assessment enabling more effective planning of the human resources needed by the courts, substantiation of budget requests, and provision of data-based arguments for the required number of judges.
D6. Guidebook for the application of the Statistical Model for assessing court workload and resource assessment of the justice system	Systematically compile the experience and knowledge gained during the development of the Statistical Model.	Main takeaways: The testing of the statistical model and the regression analysis, including verification of its operation using an additional year of data from the Court Information System, confirmed the model's stability and made it possible to determine the labour intensity typically required for each case-type category using mathematically grounded methods. Expected impact: Data analysts, statistics specialists, and the institutions involved in the justice sector now have a clear and unified process for carrying out calculations, updating weights, and recalculating workload. In addition, the quality of budget and human resources planning has improved, as institutions are able to independently and consistently perform the necessary calculations.
D7. Final report	Provide an overview of the project implementation results.	

Project scope and principles of operation

Overall structure of the project

The project structure covered four phases: the (1) assessment of the judicial system strategy, financial and human resource planning, and the organisation of operations, processes, and technologies; (2) change planning (design); (3) development of implementation solutions; and (4) testing and implementation. This change management framework was adapted to the needs of the project and covered all stages of the change cycle — from the assessment of the current situation to the development and implementation of practical recommendations (see Figure 1).

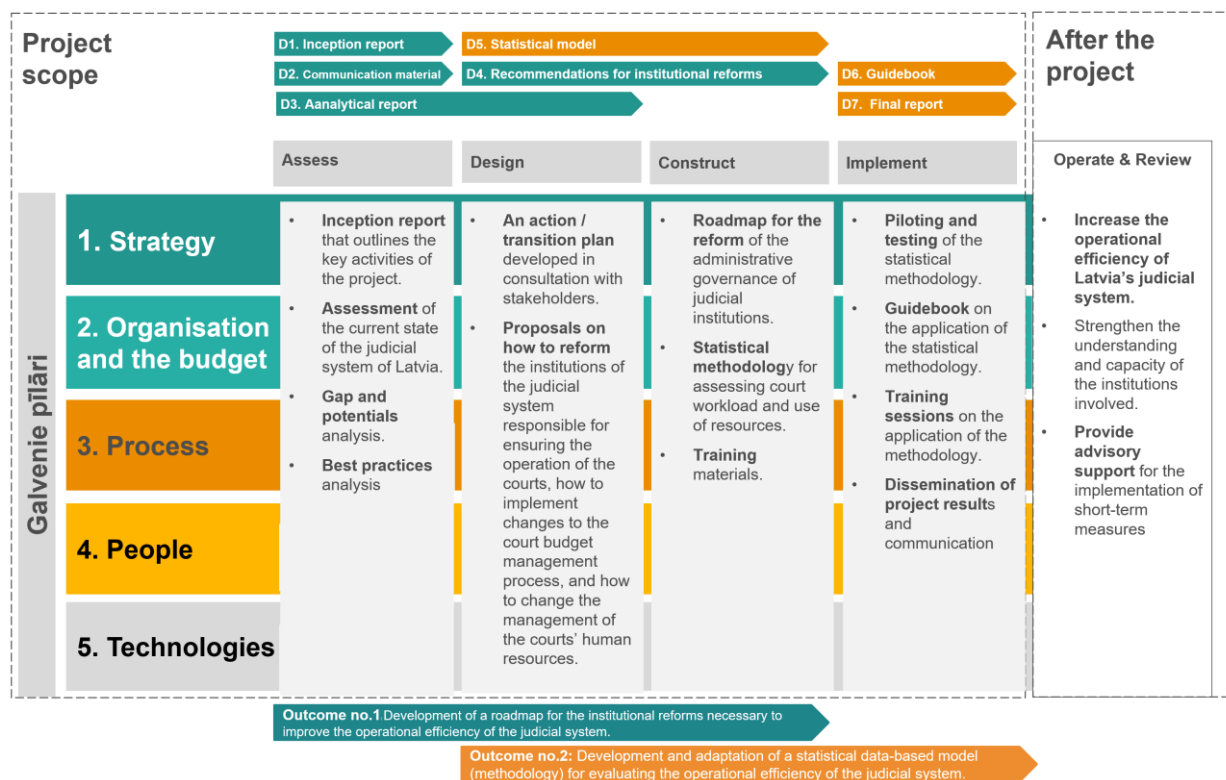
The project activities were structured in sequential phases, including:

- **assessment of the current situation** by analysing strategic, organisational, procedural, human resource and technological aspects;
- **development of improvements and solutions** based on the identified needs and international practice;
- **development of a new statistical model and recommendations** in the areas of court workload, budget planning and institutional reform;
- **testing of the statistical model and support for its implementation**, including training sessions and preparation of guidelines for court data collection and application of the methodology;
- **reviewing the operating principles of the model** to ensure its maintenance and adaptation in the long term.

The project structure is based on a systematic, data-driven approach covering the stages of assessment, development, implementation and maintenance. Such an approach ensures that

the recommendations and solutions are not only developed, but are also practically implementable and adapted to the institutional context.

Figure 1. Logical framework of the Project



The project was implemented through constructive cooperation among all parties involved in its execution, in which the participation of the Judicial Council and the main stakeholders (the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Latvia, the Court Administration of the Republic of Latvia, and the State Chancellery of Latvia) constituted a very significant part.

Methodology

The following research methods were used in the preparation of the deliverables:

Table 1. Overview of the methods used in the preparation of the report.

Method	Description
Literature review	Compilation and systematic analysis of documents (secondary data analysis, including publicly available documents and data, the regulatory framework, and the PwC knowledge database), including analysis of Latvian and foreign practices.
Interviews	Interviews with individual stakeholder representatives were organised as an integral part of the information-gathering process to identify the current system and the improvements needed. This method was used to obtain additional information for the assessment of foreign and Latvian practices and to prepare an in-depth assessment of the situation.
Statistical data analysis	Descriptive statistical analysis covered data collection, compilation, grouping, and graphical representation, focusing on the calculation of basic statistical indicators and the identification of the internal structure and characteristics of

Method	Description
	the dataset. The analysis used data from the official statistical databases of the European Union (EU) and Latvia, as well as data provided by the Judicial Council and the Court Administration.
Discussions (workshops)	Discussions with a broader group of stakeholders were held to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders and based on the study of shortcomings in the current judicial budget and human resources planning, a transition plan from the current situation to the desired future situation.
Case study analysis	Case study analysis was used to obtain as complete an understanding as possible of foreign good practices, seeking answers to the questions “how?”, “in what way?”, and “why?”. In accordance with the assignment, three countries were selected on the basis of specific criteria: Estonia, the Netherlands, and Finland, with a brief description prepared and good practices identified.
Surveys	Surveys were used to obtain judges’ self-assessments of their weekly working time and time distribution between case adjudication and other duties. The results served as the basis for determining the adjustment coefficient and refining the target variables of the model. Survey data were integrated into the statistical model alongside data from the Court Information System and working time accounting data, ensuring a more realistic assessment of labour intensity and workload.

Project management

To ensure effective and traceable implementation of the Project, a Project Steering Committee (hereinafter – the Steering Committee) was established, comprising representatives of the European Commission Task Force for Reforms and Investments (hereinafter – SG REFORM), the Judicial Council of the Republic of Latvia, the Secretariat of the Judicial Council, and the contractor, PwC.

To plan project activities and ensure regular cooperation, project status meetings were organised every two weeks, with the participation of representatives of the Judicial Council, the Secretariat of the Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice (including the Court Administration), and the contractor, PwC.

To inform a broader range of interested institutions about the project activities, a Stakeholder Steering Group was established, and representatives of SG REFORM, the Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, and the State Chancellery were invited to participate in its meetings.

Overall, throughout the project, 32 project status meetings, 13 Steering Committee meetings, 4 Stakeholder Steering Group meetings, 1 project kick-off meeting, 2 pre-kick-off meetings, and a presentation of the report to the Judicial Council were held (See Figure 3).

Cooperation with the Judicial Council, other stakeholders, and target groups

The main beneficiary and end user of the project result is the **Judicial Council**, which is the highest representative institution of officials and institutions involved in the Latvian judicial system.

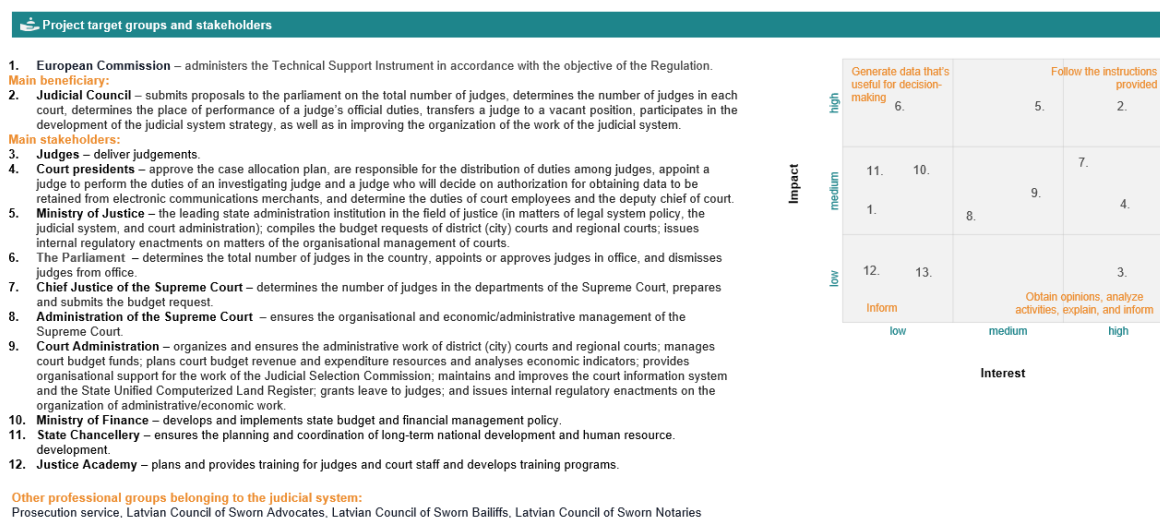
For the purposes of project coordination, the beneficiary was represented by the **Secretariat of the Judicial Council**, which operates within the institutional structure of the **Supreme Court**. The following stakeholders were also involved in the project:

- The President of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Judicial Council
- The Administration of the Supreme Court, including the Secretariat of the Judicial Council
- The Ministry of Justice

- The Court Administration (an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Justice)
- The Ministry of Finance

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project, as well as the assessment of their level of influence and interest and the form of cooperation, are reflected in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project.



The **Judicial Council** was established in 2010 with the aim of promoting the independence of the judiciary and the self-organisation of the courts, as well as ensuring unified representation of the judiciary. The Judicial Council is a collegial body that participates in the development of judicial system policy and strategy, as well as in improving the organisation of the work of the judicial system. Matters relating to its organisation of work are governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Council.

According to Section 89 of the Law on Judicial Power, its permanent members are the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the Constitutional Court, the Minister of Justice, the Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Parliament, the Prosecutor General, the Chair of the Council of Sworn Advocates, as well as the Chair of the Council of Sworn Notaries and the Chair of the Council of Sworn Bailiffs. Its elected members include one Senator of the Supreme Court elected by the Plenum of the Supreme Court and six judges elected by the Conference of Judges, of whom four represent district (city) courts and two represent regional courts.

Areas of responsibility of the Judicial Council

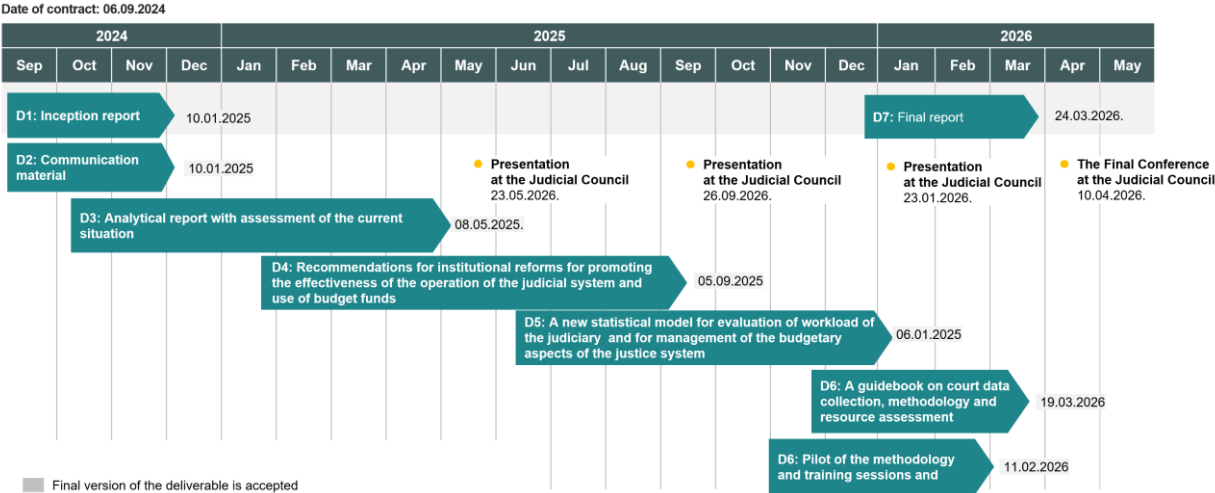
- Judicial career development – selection of new judges, development of judges' careers, and development of criteria for evaluating judges' performance and determining workload;
- Appointment of presidents/chiefs and deputy presidents/chiefs of district (city) courts and regional courts;
- Approval of the rules of procedure of the Judicial Ethics Commission and the Judicial Qualification Board;
- Adoption of decisions on the liquidation, establishment, and reorganisation of courts;
- Determination of the content and procedure for testing judges' professional knowledge and approval of the content of training programmes for judges and court employees;
- Involvement in the preparation of budget requests for the judicial system and judicial institutions.

A significant part of the project was cooperation with representatives of the judicial system — both those who were part of the project’s target groups and those involved in the decision-making process. The forms and activities of cooperation were aligned with the roles and tasks of the target groups. During the implementation of the project, not only consultations and interviews with stakeholders were carried out, but also workshops and working sessions were organised for the development of the statistical model and for learning how to use the final result.

Within the framework of the project, the following information activities, interviews, consultations with stakeholders, and presentations of project results were carried out:

- **21 interview with stakeholder representatives**, organised as an integral part of the research and information-gathering process to identify the current system and the improvements needed. The interviews were conducted with court presidents/chiefs, members of the Judicial Council, and representatives of the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Finance, and the Court Administration.
- **Three information events for court presidents/chiefs and judges** — introducing the project, informing them about the time survey, and presenting the statistical model.
- **Four discussions or workshops** with a broader group of stakeholders to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders and based on the study of shortcomings in judicial budget and human resources planning, a transition plan from the current situation to the desired future situation.
- **Four workshops for the development of the statistical model**, during which hypotheses were developed and tested, forming the basis for the development of the statistical model.
- **Two training sessions on the application of the statistical model** — one training session, using a train-the-trainer approach, was intended for data analysts and statistics specialists in the judicial system, while the other was intended for judges, judicial assistants, court presidents/chiefs or their delegated representatives whose duties or areas of interest are related to judicial system resource planning, to explain the operating principles and results of the Statistical Model.

Figure 3. Project implementation timeline and the approval date of each project deliverable.



Project main results

This chapter describes the objective, tasks, methods used, main results, as well as the conclusions and recommendations for each project deliverable.

Deliverable 1. Inception report

Objective

To ensure a shared understanding among the parties involved (SG REFORM, the Judicial Council, and PwC) regarding the project implementation approach and to provide an update on new relevant developments since the tender was submitted.

Main tasks

1. Brief issue analysis (issue tree) of the reform to be implemented, identifying its key elements.
2. Presentation of the proposed methodology including tools and techniques to be used for the various tasks of the project.
3. Presentation of working methods as well as data and information needed and documents to be reviewed.
4. Outline of roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders.
5. Project's timetable and milestones.
6. Overview of the challenges identified and key issues with mitigation measures. Develop the inception report based on the discussions.
7. Prepare a summary of the project description for communication and publication purposes.

Methods

To achieve this objective, a collaborative approach was used in preparing the inception report, beginning with separate informal pre-launch meetings with the Judicial Council and SG REFORM to discuss the project background, align expectations, identify key issues and success factors, and exchange documents for the initial analysis.

A joint kick-off meeting took place on **18 October 2024**, during which the project objectives, methodology, timeline, and data needs were aligned. Subsequently, in-depth consultations were held with the key institutions to confirm needs, data availability, and the arrangements for further cooperation. Based on these discussions, the inception report and a project summary for communication purposes were prepared. Finally, the report was refined by integrating the feedback received and including the meeting minutes.

Results

An inception report containing a description of the methodology, the project objectives, the roles of stakeholders, the timeline, the communication protocol, an overview of the project governance arrangements, and risk mitigation measures.

Deliverable 2: Communication material

Objective

Inform stakeholders about the project context, objective, planned activities, and expected results.

Tasks

Within the framework of the project, a brief one-page information summary describing the project activities, objectives, and expected results had to be prepared.

Results

Within the framework of the project, in cooperation with the Judicial Council, a one-page information summary was prepared, including visual elements and short sections on the main project activities, timeline, impact, and project objective.

Figure 4. Communication material.

Improving judicial efficiency and budgeting in Latvia

i Key Project Insights

An efficient justice system is crucial for reinforcing the rule of law – one of the fundamental values of EU and enabling individuals and businesses to fully exercise their rights and build mutual trust.

The Judicial Council's strategy for 2021-2025 focuses on safeguarding judicial independence, ensuring fair case handling, enhancing judicial effectiveness, and promoting responsible use of the state budget.

However, the Council currently lacks the capacity and methodology to obtain objective data for evaluating staffing needs and efficiency. Existing indicators do not fully capture court case workloads, hindering the implementation of measures for efficient resource allocation.

To strengthen its justice system, Latvia is developing a new statistical model and preparing institutional reforms.

✓ Objective

To assist the Judicial Council in enhancing their capacity to calculate the court budget based on current trends and societal needs.

≡ Project Outcomes

- 1 Roadmap for institutional reforms to improve the work efficiency of the judicial system
- 2 Adoption of a model based on statistical methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the national judicial system

🎯 Impact

The quality of the justice system is upheld and enhanced through sufficient human and technical resources.

📅 Project Activities

- ✓ An analytical report aims to evaluate the current methodology for determining the required number of judges in Latvia. It will compare Latvia's approach with best practices from other countries and gather insights from judges, judicial representative organizations, and other stakeholders on ways to enhance judicial efficiency.
- ✓ Recommendations for institutional reforms to improve the effectiveness of the operation of the judicial system and use of budget funds.
- ✓ A new statistical model to evaluate the judiciary's workload and manage the budgetary aspects of the justice system.
- ✓ A pilot implementation of the methodology, including training sessions and a guidebook on court data collection, methodology and resource assessment.

📅 Project Timeline

2024	Sep	Nov	2025	Jan	Mar	Jun	Sep	2026	Jan	Mar
	Project kick-off			Analytical report			Statistical model		Project closing	
	Investment report	Communicational material				Recommendations for institutional reforms			Pilot implementation	

Funding:

The main beneficiary:

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**Judicial Council
Republic of Latvia**

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Deliverable 3: Analytical report with assessment of the current situation

Objective

To provide an accurate and in-depth analysis of the current regulatory, governance, and institutional framework of the Latvian judicial system, including any deficiencies in the existing data analysis of court workload.

Main tasks:

1. Analyse the current situation, including: (1) shortcomings in the existing analysis of court workload data; (2) the existing case-type category weighting model used by the courts; (3) the institutional structure of the courts (number of judges, competence, and staff); (4) the proposed change in the status of judicial assistants; and (5) the functionality of the existing information technology (IT) systems used by judges and judicial assistants.
2. Outline a high-level description of the future situation.
3. Conduct research into international good practice (in at least three countries).
4. Prepare a comparative analysis of the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of different case-weighting systems and models developed and/or used in other European countries (at least three).
5. Prepare an action/transition plan for achieving the desired future situation.
6. Summarise the analysis (current situation analysis, objectives to be achieved, desired future situation, and transition plan) in a report, taking into account the comments of the parties involved.

Methods

To achieve the project objective, the following methods were used:

- **Compilation and systematic analysis of documents** (secondary data analysis, including publicly available documents and data, the regulatory framework, and the PwC knowledge database), including analysis of Latvian and foreign practice.
- **Interviews with individual stakeholder representatives**, organised as an integral part of the information-gathering process to identify the current system and the improvements needed. This method was used to obtain additional information for the assessment of foreign and Latvian practice and to prepare an in-depth assessment of the situation.
- **Descriptive statistical analysis**, covering data collection, compilation, grouping, and graphical representation, focusing on the calculation of basic statistical indicators and the identification of the internal structure and characteristics of the dataset. The analysis used data from the official statistical databases of the European Union (EU) and Latvia, as well as data provided by the Judicial Council and the Court Administration.
- **Discussions with a broader group of stakeholders**, to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders and based on the study of shortcomings in judicial budget and human resources planning, a transition plan from the current situation to the desired future situation.
- **Case study analysis**, used to obtain as complete an understanding as possible of foreign good practices by seeking answers to the questions “how?”, “in what way?”, and “why?”. In accordance with the assignment, three countries were selected on the basis of specific criteria: Estonia, the Netherlands, and Finland, for which brief descriptions were prepared and good practices identified.

Results

An analytical report containing a description of the current situation, a high-level description of the future situation, research into international good practice, a comparative analysis of the

effectiveness of different case-weighting systems and models developed and/or used in other European countries, as well as an action/transition plan for achieving the desired future situation.

Main conclusions

1. The professional level of judicial personnel affects the courts' ability to fulfil their role. Therefore, the professionalisation of judges' support staff and remuneration commensurate with the scope of judges' responsibilities are essential priorities alongside the fiscal independence of the judiciary. These are long-term objectives, the implementation of which is possible in line with the state's economic circumstances; however, priority should be given to reaching agreement on a human resources development strategy linked to the objectives of the services provided by the courts.
2. A fragmented governance structure with multiple organisational centres and unaligned strategic objectives hampers the performance of individual courts and judges.
3. In Latvia, the powers of court presidents/chiefs are narrower than in the comparator countries. In the governance of judicial institutions, there are elements of organisational subordination to the Judicial Council or the Minister of Justice, as well as to the Court Administration. Some areas of responsibility of judicial institutions fall within the competence of other institutions. Court presidents/chiefs are tasked with managing the work of the courts, but they have limited powers to independently determine the type and number of support staff, decide on judges' leave, or participate in the evaluation of judges. Judicial independence is also affected by the autonomy of the court as an institution, including reasonable self-determination in administrative matters.
4. The centralisation of decision-making and the enforced standardisation of work organisation within the judicial system reduce the autonomy of judicial institutions. The absence of administrative management to support the court president/chief in Latvian courts, combined with centralised resource management, has created a situation in which judicial institutions are responsible neither for budget planning and the efficient use of funds, nor for seeking solutions to improve efficiency within existing resources.
5. Measuring court performance would allow courts to collect and provide evidence of how successfully they meet the needs and expectations of court users. Monitoring indicators of court performance is a necessary component of judicial accountability and evidence of the effective governance of the judiciary as a sector.

Main recommendations

1. It is necessary to establish a model of judicial system governance with a clear structure, separated from political processes, and one that enhances the authority of the judiciary. In Latvia, a major challenge is the low level of public trust in the courts; therefore, the judiciary needs to demonstrate that its work and services correspond to the needs of society as a whole and of individuals.
2. While retaining the Court Administration as a shared service centre, it is recommended to clearly define the powers of the court president/chief to set the objectives of the judicial institution and determine performance results, covering not only the time limits for adjudicating cases, but also, for example, aspects of case flow management and human resources planning. In larger judicial institutions, it is necessary to establish a more targeted case flow management process, supervised by officers responsible for case flow and data analysts.
3. To demonstrate the quality of court service delivery and enable the judiciary to communicate its efficiency to the Saeima, it is necessary not only to demonstrate the degree of achievement of performance indicators, but also to regularly obtain data on the

actual time spent on frequently heard categories of cases by periodically carrying out time measurement exercises.

4. It is recommended that decisions on resource management be entrusted to the administrative management of the court institution itself, thereby reducing centralisation and top-down solutions. A similar approach should also be applied to the development of staffing and cooperation models for judges, judicial assistants, and court secretaries.
5. It is necessary to ensure that, in at least 90% of cases, the interval between the first substantive hearing and subsequent hearings or other significant procedural actions does not exceed 45 calendar days or another number of days set by the courts. Collecting such information would make it possible to obtain data for planning purposes, identify unjustified delays, accelerate case flow, and improve the efficiency of judicial proceedings.

Deliverable 4: Recommendations for institutional reforms to increase the efficiency of the justice system and promote more efficient use of budgetary resources

Objective

Support the Judicial Council in its work on the reform of judicial institutions by describing the objectives, expected results, and the necessary steps (legislative, institutional, and organisational changes) to achieve the results.

Tasks

1. Prepare a roadmap for the reform of the administrative governance of judicial institutions, including:
 - an assessment of existing draft reform proposals and policy documents aimed at strengthening the role of the Judicial Council;
 - a proposal for possible changes to the institutional structures of the courts, with the aim of ensuring the optimal number of judges in each court;
 - a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of changing the status of judicial assistants (human resources planning and distribution of duties);
 - recommendations for legislative/institutional solutions to ensure that the court budget is calculated on the basis of actual trends and the needs of society;
 - recommendations on how to optimise existing internal and legal procedures / IT solutions / human resources investments to promote more efficient day-to-day functioning of the judicial system.
2. Organise a seminar with the beneficiary, SG REFORM, and the relevant stakeholders to discuss the institutional reform roadmap.

Methods

This was the fourth deliverable of the project, the content of which was based on the analytical work previously carried out.

1. **Initial analysis:**
 - a. the inception report, setting out the main project activities and the methodology used;
 - b. the analytical report, containing the analysis of the current situation, the study of good practices, and the comparative analysis.
2. Analysis of the information obtained through interviews and workshops, supplementing and refining the above-mentioned analysis to prepare, together with stakeholders, a transition plan from the current situation to the desired future state.

Recommendations for institutional reforms that would improve the operational efficiency of the judicial system and the use of budget resources were developed by assessing the current situation in accordance with the criteria set out in the terms of reference and listed in the time management tools of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), in particular the revised SATURN Guidelines for Judicial Time Management. The recommendations

were developed taking into account both the Latvian practice identified in the previous report and the best practices of other countries.

The following research methods were used in conducting the study and preparing the report:

- **interviews with individual stakeholder representatives** to obtain additional information for assessing foreign and Latvian practice. The recommendations developed are based on the insights expressed during the interviews;
- **statistical data analysis, covering data collection, compilation, grouping, and graphical representation**, focusing on the calculation of basic statistical indicators and the identification of the internal structure and characteristics of the dataset. The analysis used data from the official statistical databases of the European Union (EU) and Latvia, as well as data provided by the Judicial Council and the Court Administration;
- **discussions (workshops) with representatives of a broader group of stakeholders** to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders and based on the study of shortcomings in judicial budget and human resources planning, a transition plan from the current to the desired future situation;
- **case study analysis**, used to gain as complete an understanding as possible of foreign good practices, seeking answers to the questions “how?”, “in what way?”, and “why?”. In accordance with the good practice review carried out under Deliverable 3, in which three countries were selected — Estonia, the Netherlands, and Finland — the recommendations developed were designed taking into account the identified good practices, especially in the area of court budget management.

Results

Development of a roadmap for the institutional reforms necessary to improve the operational efficiency of the judicial system.

Main conclusions

1. By retaining responsibility for supervising the activities of the Court Administration within its competence, the Ministry of Justice functionally duplicates the cooperation with the Court Administration that is necessary for the Judicial Council to perform its tasks. Overall, governance of the judicial system in Latvia is fragmented and has several organisational centres: many issues relating to work organisation are handled either by the Judicial Council or by the executive branch in the person of the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Justice, or the Court Administration.
2. An effective institution of judicial assistants has not been established in the judicial system to promote judges' productivity, carry out legal research on behalf of the judge, and prepare high-quality legal documents, thereby allowing judges to focus on adjudicating cases on their merits. As a result, judges' workload is increased by the performance of duties that could be carried out by other specialists.
3. In Latvia, there is no actual judicial self-governance in matters of budget and work organisation and support, which negatively affects both judicial independence and the operational efficiency of the courts.
4. The fragmented geographical distribution of judges creates unnecessary costs and limits opportunities for judicial specialisation. Maintaining separate court buildings is associated with additional costs — each court building has its own court registry, security staff, and cleaners. In small court buildings, the cost of administrative support is disproportionately high in relation to the number of judges.

5. An assessment of the experience of other countries and the institutional governance models existing in Latvia leads to the conclusion that preference should be given to an institutional model that meets the following criteria:
 - a single management centre is established — the Judicial Council — which leads and coordinates the administration of judicial institutions;
 - at least two-thirds of the members of the Judicial Council are representatives delegated by judges;
 - there are clear lines of subordination between the body assigning tasks in judicial administrative matters — the Judicial Council — and the implementing body — the Court Administration — which, as an administrative judicial institution, is subordinate to the Judicial Council;
 - district (city) courts and regional courts, under the leadership of the Judicial Council and with the support of the Court Administration, operate as a single organisational unit with hierarchically aligned objectives and performance indicators;
 - to genuinely steer improvements in judicial efficiency, management of the judicial system budget is consolidated with the system for managing judicial performance, which is currently divided between two different institutions — the Ministry of Justice and the Judicial Council.

Main recommendations

1. To improve work efficiency and provide meaningful professional support to judges in legal work, the governance model of the judiciary needs to be simplified. The preferred solution would be to integrate the organisational units of the judiciary and other involved parties into a single hierarchical framework fully governed by the Judicial Council.
2. To ensure more professional and sustainable support for judges' work, it is necessary to establish a requirement that judicial assistants must hold a Master's degree in law, while at the same time increasing the grade and remuneration of this position and providing for a transitional period for existing staff. It is also recommended to use funding from judicial positions that have remained vacant for a long time to strengthen support staff, taking into account the limited possibilities for attracting additional budgetary resources.
3. It is recommended to review the need for the current scale of physical infrastructure and consider concentrating judicial positions in larger administrative centres. More centralised court buildings could significantly improve not only cost efficiency, but would also allow courts to optimise and mobilise their resources much more easily and provide better opportunities for judicial specialisation. This would make it possible to significantly increase the speed of adjudication and the quality of court decisions.

Goal



Independent and modern judicial administrative management adapted to the needs of judicial proceedings.

The result of the reforms



A hierarchically subordinate court administration model under the Judicial Council ensuring the continuous improvement of the organisation of the judicial system's operations

Basic principles of Court Administration



Focus on effectiveness of the court



Cooperation and transparency



One management center: the Judicial Council

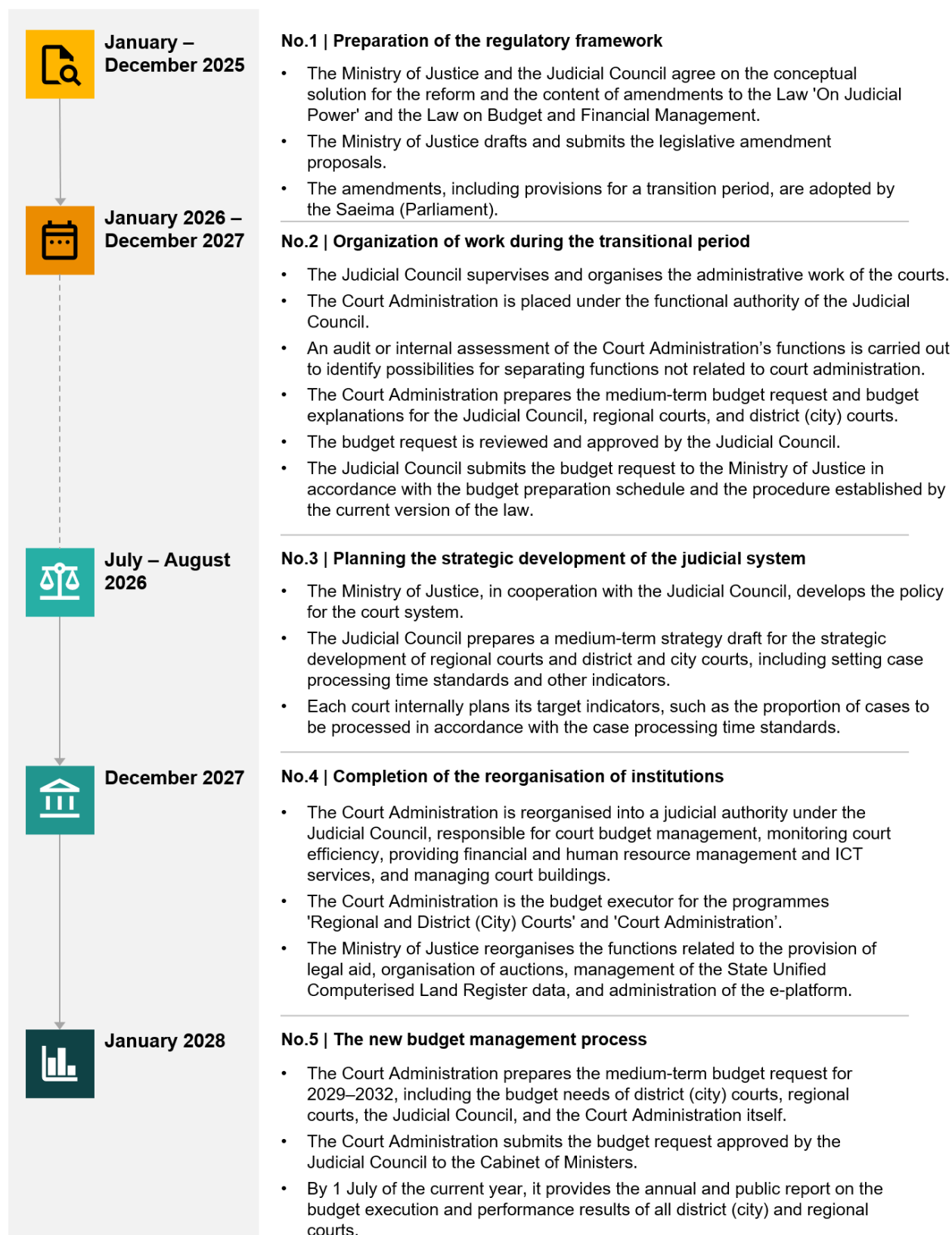


Aligned objectives and performance results

The institutional organisation of the administrative management of the courts in the future

Courts	Judicial Council	Court Administration	Strategic coherence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District (city) courts and regional courts are the clients of judicial administrative management services, defining the types of services and monitoring their quality. The courts nominate representatives to the Judicial Council. At least two-thirds of the composition of the Council shall consist of representatives delegated by judges and one third by other specialists competent in the field of court management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages and coordinates the administration of the courts. Approves the regulations and structure of the Court Administration. Appoints and dismisses the Director of the Court Administration. Defines the principles of work organisation and cooperation between the courts and the Court Administration. In cooperation with court presidents, develops a unified development strategy for the court system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Court Administration is a judicial institution that ensures the necessary conditions for conducting legal proceedings in courts and provides services to the courts and the Judicial Council. Prepares and submits for approval the budget request for district (city) courts and regional courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Judicial Council, develops the policy for the court system. The organisation of work and budget management of the court system is consolidated with the court performance management system. The goals of the court system are aligned with the performance outcomes of each court institution.

Timeline for judicial administrative management reforms



Deliverable 5: A new statistical model for assessing court workload and managing justice system budget resources

Objective

To develop a model based on statistical principles for evaluating the operational efficiency of the judicial system and improving its performance.

Tasks

1. Develop a statistical methodology/model intended for evaluating the efficiency of Latvia's judicial system.
2. Develop an implementation plan for the methodology.
3. Organise a workshop with the beneficiary, SG REFORM, and other involved parties to present the results and the recommended solutions/improvements, as well as to discuss an action plan for implementing the methodology/model.
4. Develop recommendations on:
 - how to improve the existing Case Weighting Model (the time and work input required for adjudicating different categories of cases), for assessing the workload of judges of different specialisations and the workload of different judicial institutions;
 - how to determine the optimal number of judges and the optimal institutional distribution of judges across the country, taking into account demographic, geographical, and specialisation principles;
 - the implementation of institutional reforms in the judicial system with the aim of promoting an efficient use of state budget resources.

Methods

The content of the deliverable was based on the analytical work carried out previously:

1. Initial analyses:

- a. the inception report, which outlined the main project activities and the methodology used;
- b. the analytical report, which included an analysis of the current situation, a study of good practices, and a comparative analysis.

2. **Analysis of the information obtained** through interviews, workshops, and the survey, supplementing and refining the above analysis to develop, in cooperation with stakeholders, a statistical model for evaluating the operational efficiency of the judicial system and improving its performance.

3. **Data analysis**, which served as the basis for developing the statistical model, including indicators on case-type categories and numbers, judges' workload, and institutional workload.

The statistical model was developed by assessing the existing situation in accordance with the criteria set out in the terms of reference and listed in the judicial time management tools of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), in particular the revised SATURN Guidelines for Judicial Time Management.

The statistical model also used data accumulated in the Court Information System (TIS) for the period from 2019 to December 2024, other data obtained during the project, as well as the good practices in other countries identified in the Analytical Report.

The following research methods were used for conducting the study and preparing the model:

- **Literature review.** Compilation and systematic analysis of documents (secondary data analysis, including publicly available documents and data, the regulatory framework, and the PwC knowledge database), including analysis of Latvian and foreign practice. Interviews with individual stakeholder representatives, organised as an integral part of the information-gathering process within the third deliverable, to identify the current system and the improvements needed. Where necessary, interviews were organised with court representatives to identify shortcomings in the existing Case Weighting Model and the case allocation algorithm. This method was used to obtain additional information for the assessment of foreign and Latvian practice.
- **Statistical data analysis.** Descriptive statistical analysis covered data collection, compilation, grouping, and graphical representation, focusing on the calculation of basic statistical indicators and the identification of the internal structure and characteristics of the dataset. The analysis used data provided by the Judicial Council and the Court Administration.
- **Workshops** with a broader group of stakeholders and court representatives, to discuss interim results and proposed solutions on the basis of the study of the current situation and data analysis. The workshops took place on 16 and 30 July and 13 and 27 August 2025, bringing together approximately 20 participants from the Secretariat of the Judicial Council, the Court Administration, district (city) courts and regional courts, including members of the case weighting working group.
- **Surveys of judges and court staff**, in which respondents were asked to provide a self-assessment of their workload and the time they devote to handling cases.

Results

Within the project, an implementation plan for applying the statistical model methodology was developed, and recommendations were provided on how to improve the Case Weighting Model developed by the court efficiency working group.

A statistical model was also developed using TIS data for 2019–2024, the results of interviews, workshops, surveys, and a time survey, as well as an analysis of the CEPEJ guidelines and practices in other countries, all of which served as the basis for assessing court workload and the labour intensity of cases. Several statistical methods were applied in the model, including descriptive statistics, empirical analysis, and regression analysis, to determine realistic case-type category weights and calculate the optimal workload of courts and judges.

Main conclusions

1. The current Case Weighting Model significantly overestimates the workload of district (city) courts and judges in several case-type categories, in some cases by slightly more than 50%. With regard to the case-type categories of regional courts, the labour intensity of all categories is overestimated by more than 50%. When assessing the actual work performed by judges, it is evident that the labour intensity of all administrative cases is relatively similar (27 hours per case), and for the purposes of determining the number of judges there is no need to distinguish between different case-type categories. However, the weight assigned to this category of cases raises doubts as to its correspondence to practical needs, since it results in the calculation of a relatively large surplus in the number of judges in administrative courts.
2. Judges of district (city) courts specialising in civil cases are more heavily burdened than judges specialising in criminal cases. 80% of judges dealing with civil cases and administrative offence cases exceed the normal annual working time for adjudication (1,367 hours, or 79% of total working time). The workload of criminal judges is significantly lower — only 25% of judges exceed the normal annual working time. In regional courts, judges specialising in criminal cases have a higher workload than judges specialising in civil cases.

3. An analysis of the workload of district (city) courts shows that the weight of completed cases per judge in courts of general jurisdiction is relatively similar. The highest workload — 13% higher than the average across all courts of general jurisdiction, both in terms of completed cases and case weight per judge in district (city) courts of general jurisdiction — is in the Latgale District Court.
4. As a result of the statistical analysis, evidence was obtained that, in district (city) courts and administrative courts, to adjudicate 42,443 cases, excluding land register matters and uncontested cases, the optimal number of judges working at average productivity would be 310, instead of the current 335 judicial positions.
5. In regional courts, to adjudicate a total of 5,739 cases, the optimal number of judges working at average productivity would be 113, instead of the current 141 judicial positions. This means a total reduction of 28 positions in regional courts and 25 positions in district (city) courts.
6. Given that the number of incoming cases is the main workload indicator, the weighted number of cases provides a more accurate calculation of workload, making it possible to optimally forecast the required number of judges on the basis of comparison of these data.

Main recommendations

1. To promote transparency and a shared understanding of the expected intensity of work in the courts, it is recommended that, within the judicial system, agreement be reached on the minimum amount of time per year that a judge should work, which should be set at no less than 1,600 hours. This amount of time includes both time spent adjudicating cases and time devoted to professional development (training), as well as administrative and other tasks related to official duties.
2. It is recommended to ensure that the case groups in the Case Weighting Model fully correspond to the case-type categories in the Court Information System (CIS), thus guaranteeing the possibility of using automated data analysis and more accurate workload calculations.
3. Given the significant differences in the workload of judges of different specialisations, especially between those specialising in civil and criminal cases, it is recommended to develop a flexible approach to changing specialisation, with training and a transition period, so that judges specialising in criminal cases can make a high-quality transition to adjudicating civil cases.
4. It is necessary to review the case weights in the Case Weighting Model at least once every two years, based on the most up-to-date statistical data and court practice, and also to introduce the possibility of an extraordinary review if significant changes in case structure or workload are identified.

Deliverable 6: Testing of the methodology, including the development of training and a handbook on court data collection, methodology, and resource assessment

Objective

To systematically compile the experience and knowledge accumulated during the development of the Statistical Model.

Tasks:

1. Test the methodology of the Statistical Model in cooperation with the Judicial Council and the Court Administration.
2. Provide training sessions (using a train-the-trainer approach) on the practical use of the methodology for budgetary purposes.
3. Develop a handbook and guidelines on the use and updating of the methodology, as well as on court data collection, the methodology for data collection and processing, and the assessment of court resources.
4. Describe the results of testing the methodology.
5. Provide recommendations on the practical use of the methodology for budgetary purposes.

Methods

The Statistical Model uses regression analysis and other statistical techniques to assess the quantitative relationships between the court performance data accumulated in the Court Information System regarding the number of cases completed within one year by case-type category, and the working time spent by judges during the year. These calculations made it possible to obtain coefficients that best describe the quantitative relationships between the variables — the amount of work (labour intensity) in hours required to adjudicate each case-type category.

Data preparation took place in three stages:

1. **First stage – data selection and collection:** selection and extraction of court performance data from the Court Information System; analysis of judges' working time, determining how many working hours per year judges are employed and, proportionally, what share of this time is devoted to adjudicating cases; selection of judges whose performance results would be included in the model; grouping of case-type categories; and other related activities.
2. **Second stage – estimation of the case-weights per case-type categories:** regression or empirical analysis of the number of completed cases in grouped case-type categories, determining case weights or labour intensity for a specific case-type category; statistical compilation of adjudication data by analysing the distribution of completed cases across grouped categories and main case types, as well as their labour intensity proportions across courts and instances.
3. **Third stage – forecasting the number of judges:** summing the labour intensity of cases across court instances, individual courts, and judicial specialisations, and assessing the distribution of workload in the judicial system.

Within the framework of this deliverable, two training sessions were also organised using the train-the-trainer method (see Annex 1).

Results

Within the project, a handbook for the application of the statistical model was developed, describing data selection, the grouping of case-type categories, the determination of the labour intensity of case-type categories through regression or empirical analysis, as well as calculations of workload and the optimal number of judges.

Two training sessions were also organised on **11 February 2026**. The first session was intended for data analysts and statistics specialists in the judicial system, during which, using the train-the-trainer method, participants were introduced to the operating principles of the statistical model and learned the processes of data selection and the creation of the sample of judges. The session also included testing of the model using the 2024 and 2025 datasets. The purpose of the second training session was to familiarise judges, judicial assistants, court presidents/chiefs, and other judicial system employees with the operating principles and application possibilities of the statistical model, to ensure that the examination and quantitative determination of the level of complexity of court cases is transparent and understandable to the officials involved in calculating judges' workload and the required number of judges.

Main conclusions

1. Using the regression analysis method, it was possible to obtain coefficients that best describe the quantitative relationships between the variables of the Statistical Model — the amount of work (labour intensity) in hours required to adjudicate each case-type category.
2. When the coefficients (case weights) obtained as a result of the 2024 regression analysis were applied to the number of cases adjudicated in 2025, a disproportionate excess in judges' working time emerged. As a result, it can be hypothesised that the case weights in the Statistical Model are also too high to fully assess judges' workload in 2025. The 2025 coefficients (self-assessed working time) show the most balanced labour intensity in the calculation of judges' workload.
3. It was possible to calculate the case-type category weights for all court instances and all courts, and it can therefore be concluded that regression analysis was a better fit for the 2025 dataset than for the 2024 dataset.
4. Judges' working time based on self-assessment was not obtained specifically for 2025, and therefore an assumption derived from the survey conducted in May 2025 was used. Consequently, the self-assessed amount of working time is hypothetical.

Main recommendations

1. When using regression analysis to determine the labour intensity of case-type categories, it is recommended that the weights be reviewed and updated regularly, for example once every year or every two years, using the most up-to-date court performance data, so that the model dynamically reflects changes in adjudication practice and ensures consistency and accuracy over time.
2. The flow of cases in the courts is not stable or cyclical and is significantly affected by external factors. It is necessary to establish close cooperation between the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor General's Office, the State Revenue Service, the Council of Sworn Advocates, bailiffs, and other cooperating institutions and bodies to forecast the number of cases received by the courts. Proactive information exchange would make it possible to model expected changes in the structure of cases in a timely manner and plan the necessary judicial capacity accordingly.
3. In certain courts and instances, judicial capacity is uneven and does not correspond to the required optimal level. Calculations show that in several courts the optimal number of judges is lower than the current number of positions, while in others it is significantly higher, especially in the Economic Court and the Riga Regional Court, indicating the need to review the distribution of resources within the system.

4. The analysis of the judicial system budget should also include information technology costs, including expenditure for the development, maintenance, and security of the e-case portal⁴. Such costs are an essential part of ensuring the continuity of court operations and the digitalisation process, and their full inclusion in the budget would allow for more accurate resource planning.

⁴ E-case is a digitalisation initiative programme that envisages the gradual implementation of a centralised set of IT solutions for the electronic processing of cases in judicial proceedings and investigation processes. Available at: <https://elieta.lv/web/#/par-elietu>.

Annexes

Annex 1. Indicators to monitor the Project implementation

Dimension and target	Whether the target has been met
Project management	
Project plan feasibility: 100% of deliverables delivered on time in reference period.	Fully met within the agreed deadline
Feedback loop efficiency: 100% of feedback points from SG REFORM and JC considered.	Fully met
Completeness of deliverables: 100% of Project results defined in the Inception are achieved.	Fully met
Deliverable specific	
Quality of stakeholder engagement activities: At least 5 workshops and multiple trainings conducted.	Fully met
Quality of situational analysis and gap analysis: The AS-IS report details the current state of judicial efficiency and budgeting in Latvia, covering all relevant policy aspects, including missing data, investments, regulatory and institutional gaps, communication, and infrastructural, and financial resources.	Fully met
Quality of best-practice examples: The criteria for best practice countries selection are agreed with JC.	Fully met
Quality of comparative analysis: A detailed methodology of the analysis was developed, discussed and agreed upon, thus ensuring aligned expectations and relevance of the analysis to JC and relevant stakeholders.	Fully met
Quality of recommendations and roadmap: The recommendations are actionable and follow the SMART methodology. Recommendations and roadmap are confirmed in the workshop with the key stakeholders.	Fully met
Quality of statistical model/ methodology and pilot projects: KPI's defined in beginning of the development of statistical model/ methodology and pilots are achieved.	Met to the extent that the available dataset contained the data required for the model
Quality of communication materials: Materials include unified visual elements and main messages tailored to the needs of the target audience.	Fully met

Annex 2. Output Indicators

Indicator	Value by 2026
Number of deliverables to achieve the Project outcomes	7
Number of district and regional courts where the statistical model / methodology has been piloted	14
Number of trainings delivered to the courts for the implementation of the statistical model and methodology in courts	1
Number of trainings delivered to the administration of courts for the implementation of the statistical model	1



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