

Latvian **start**up guide



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Introduction

In the 21st century, innovation is no longer a choice - it is a default setting for any ambitious economy. Having joined the government mission to help Latvia become an attractive startup hub several years ago, we at the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia needed to understand how innovation actually works: stakeholders, processes, communication paths, the mechanics of getting to the desired "win-win" solutions. And here is what we found - one of the main pillars of innovation is in fact a diverse, open-minded and dynamic startup ecosystem.

From then on, we kept ourselves busy taking care of our lively startup ecosystem by changing laws, introducing support programs, advocating for a better startup visa, opening new gateways for Latvia-based startups across the world. During this journey we also met numerous enterprising local and foreign startup founders to help us get to the bottom of a question - how to make Latvia a good fit

for startup ambitions and dreams?

This guide sums up all you need to know when being on the way or already a part of Latvia's startup community - why our country is a good place to materialize your ideas, what the first steps in founding a startup are, and how we can support you. We have also included some stories from experienced players on the startup scene to give their perspective.

Whether you are a startup founder based in Latvia or moving here soon - or even if you are just toying with the idea of exploring Latvia for business and more - turn the page and find out for yourself!

**Investment and Development
Agency of Latvia**

Why Latvia? →



Key facts and figures

Look on your right, spot the area on the European map we've coloured green, close your eyes and try to zoom into it - even if by the force of imagination.

To many, Latvia is just a small dot on the map; for us, Latvians – it is the whole world. Why don't you get acquainted with it?



Area:
64,588 km²



Population:
1.91 million (2020)



Per capita GDP:
USD 18,104 (2019)



Political system:
Parliamentary democracy



Legislature:
The Saeima (Parliament)



Official language:
Latvian

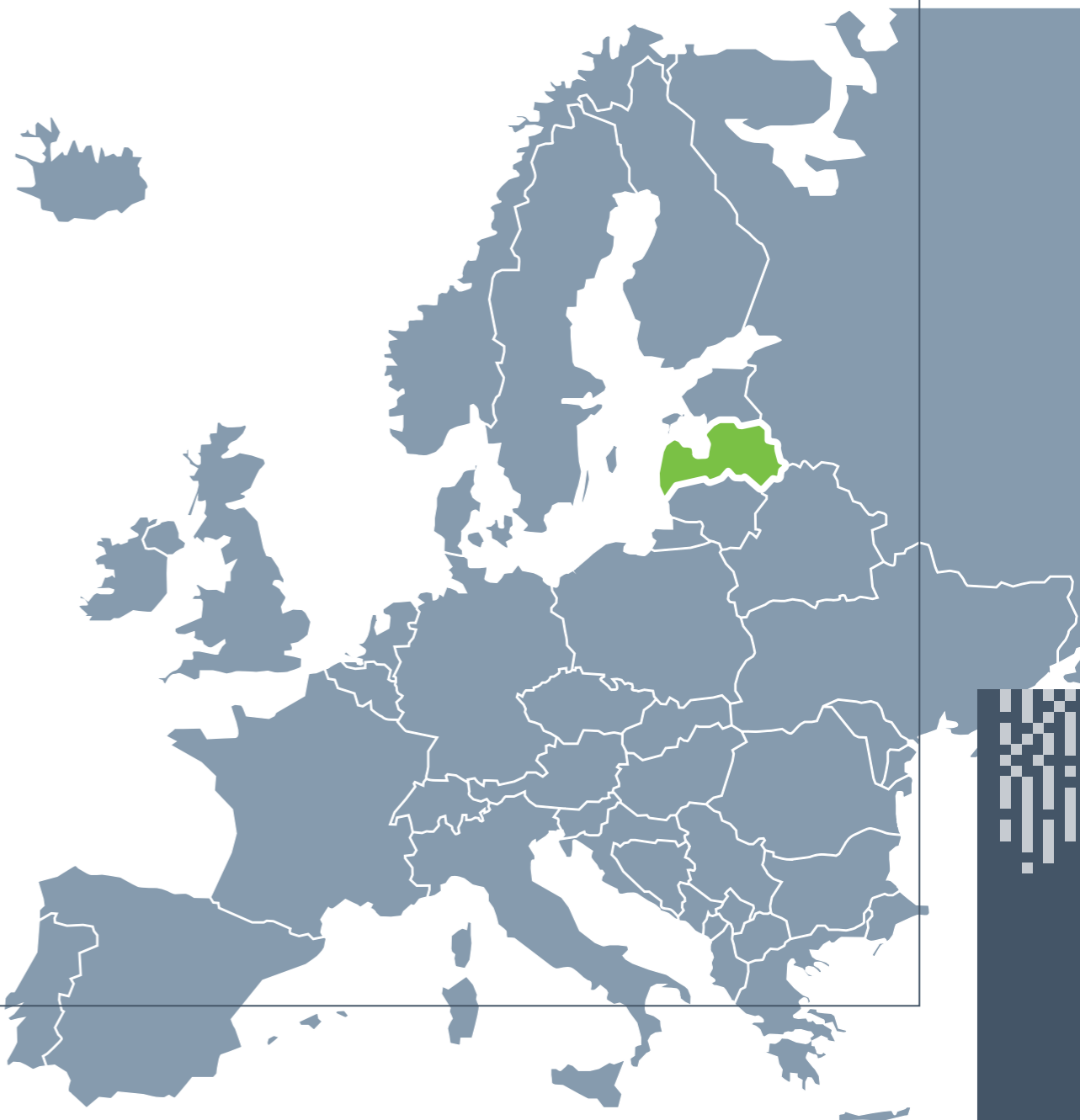


Capital city:
Riga



Currency:
Euro

Member of



Located at the crossroads between Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Scandinavia, Latvia is fully integrated into the major economic and political structures such as the Economic European Area, the Eurozone, the Nato, the OECD, the Schengen Area and the WTO, all of which help to create a favourable business environment.

You may wonder whether all of this creates real value for a startup company. Yes, it does. Benefits for businesses in Latvia are **protected by all major European and global treaties, including** but not limited to:

- Transparent external trade and customs policies that are based on the WTO principles
- Bilateral investment protection and promotion agreements with 46 countries
- Equal legal treatment of local and foreign investors in terms of registering companies, purchasing land or property, etc
- Visa-free travel throughout the Schengen Area for all Latvia's residents
- Access to EU funds via direct application or as a part of Latvia's state-supported business development initiatives

Following a brief review of the advantages which Latvia shares with other EU member states, it is time to focus on some country-specific reasons, answering the question "Why Latvia?"

Key benefits



Cost and time competitiveness



Convenient location



Skilled and multilingual workforce



Advanced IT infrastructure

Cost and time competitiveness

The local business community is closely knit, and you will be able to launch your company with ease and for a reasonable price. Latvia is ranked as having the 3rd most competitive taxation system in the OECD. It is also placed 19th globally in terms of ease of doing business, according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report. Additionally, according to the recent *Startup Heat Map 2019 survey*, which focused on the attractiveness of entrepreneurial hubs in Europe, the Latvian capital city of Riga outperformed the average Top 25 in terms of value for money and business-friendly regulations.

The high scores in these international ratings are based on a combination of overall cost competitiveness and state incentives aimed at improving the daily operations of businesses.

Time efficient procedures

Registration of your company **remotely in 1-3 days**

Competitive business costs

Average gross monthly salary (December 2020): **EUR 1,118**

Registration costs for a limited liability company:

for a private individual **from EUR 32**

for a legal entity **from EUR 162**

Minimum equity capital requirement: **from EUR 1**

Price for a dedicated desk at a co-working space: **from EUR 100 /month**

Average A-class office rent **from EUR 12/m² /month**

Average B-class office rent **from EUR 8/m² /month**

Numerous incubators for small and medium enterprises and startups, offering business launch resources at a discounted cost

Lenient tax regime

0% Corporate income tax on reinvested and retained profits

20% Corporate income tax on distributed profits

0% Personal income tax and low social tax for startup employees*

45% Government co-financing for highly qualified startup employees*

Tax rebates at Special Economic Zones and freeports

* For more information about tax rebates related to the Startup Law, please see Page 115.

It should be emphasised, however, that cost and time competitiveness always go hand-in-hand with accessible elements of production. In a modern, IT-based economy, the classic trio of land, labour and capital that was defined many centuries ago can be interpreted as a convenient and travel-friendly location, a qualified and multilingual workforce, and a well-developed IT infrastructure. Luckily, Latvia offers all of these benefits.

Convenient location

Latvia is located at a junction of the North, West and East in historical, cultural and geographic terms. Its strategic location is based on the availability of a well-developed and diverse transportation system.

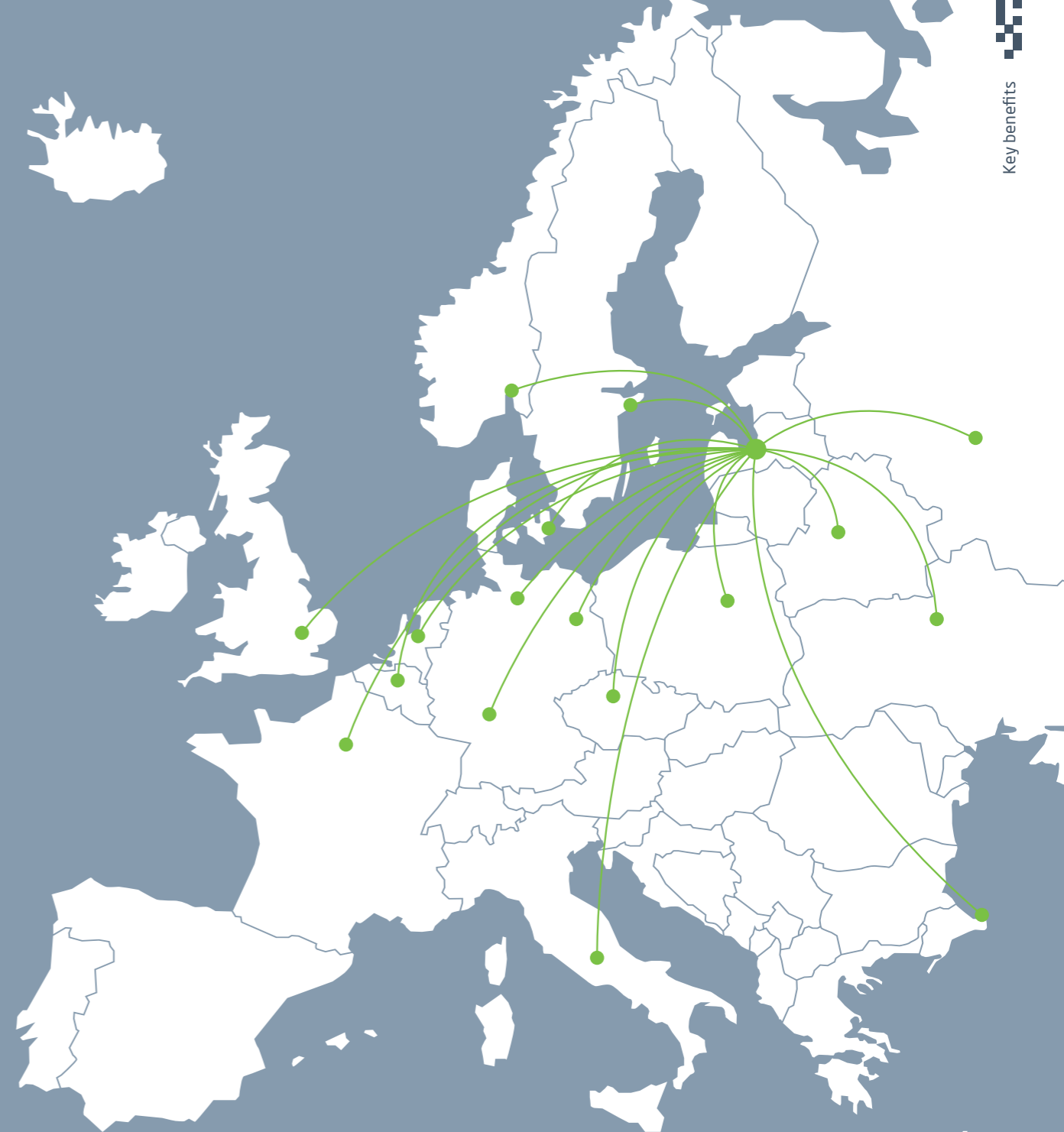
By air

Riga International Airport is the largest airport in the Baltic States, located just 15 minutes from the city centre. In 2019, the airport provided services to 7.8 million passengers, which represented nearly half (46%) of all passengers in the region. More than 100 direct flights from Riga link Latvia to major business destinations in Europe and beyond. The Rail Baltica station at the airport is scheduled to open by 2025, and it will be the first high-speed rail and air traffic hub in the Baltic States. This will provide travellers and businesses with greater opportunities.

Destination	Duration
Amsterdam	2h 25m
Berlin	1h 40m
Brussels	2h 25m
Copenhagen	1h 30m
Frankfurt	2h 15m
Hamburg	2h 15m
Istanbul	3h
Kyiv	1h 35m
London	2h 45m
Minsk	1h
Moscow	1h 30m
Oslo	1h 50m
Paris	2h 30m
Prague	2h 5m
Rome	3h 10m
Stockholm	1h
Warsaw	1h 30m

By rail

There are direct rail links between Moscow and Riga, and this provides access to the Trans-Siberian Railway. The 870 km long Rail Baltica rail line, which is currently being developed, will link Finland, the Baltic States and Poland, thus ensuring the full integration of Latvia into a single European railway system.



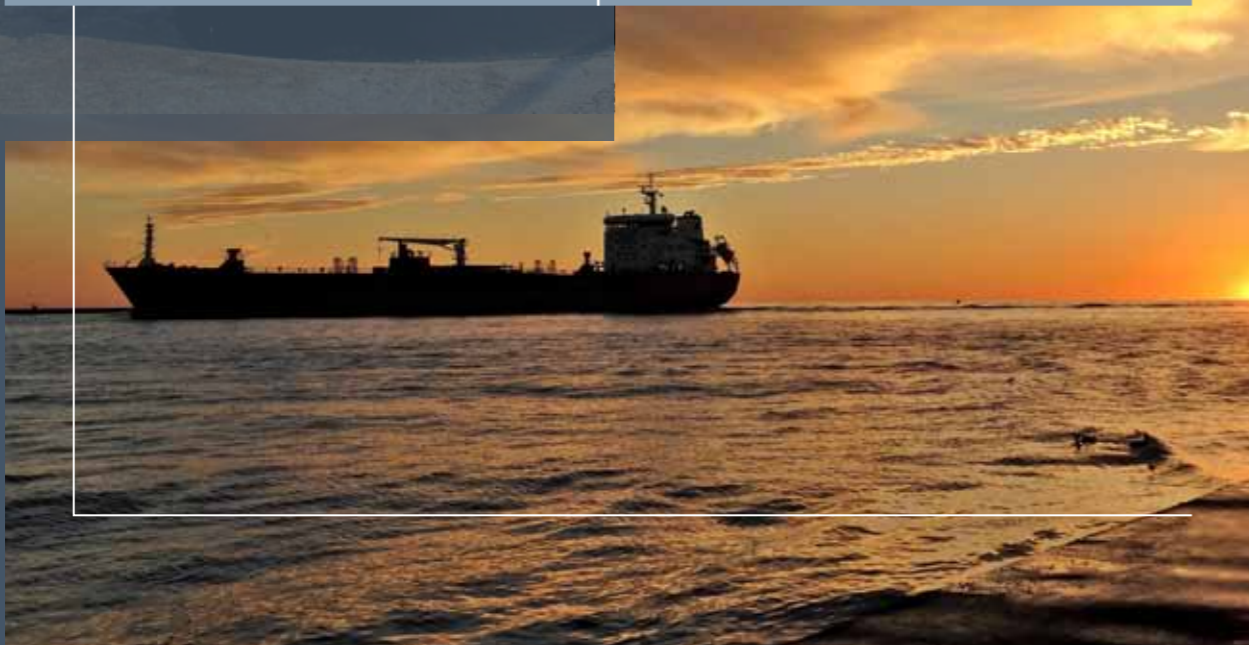
...and another
83 destinations

By sea

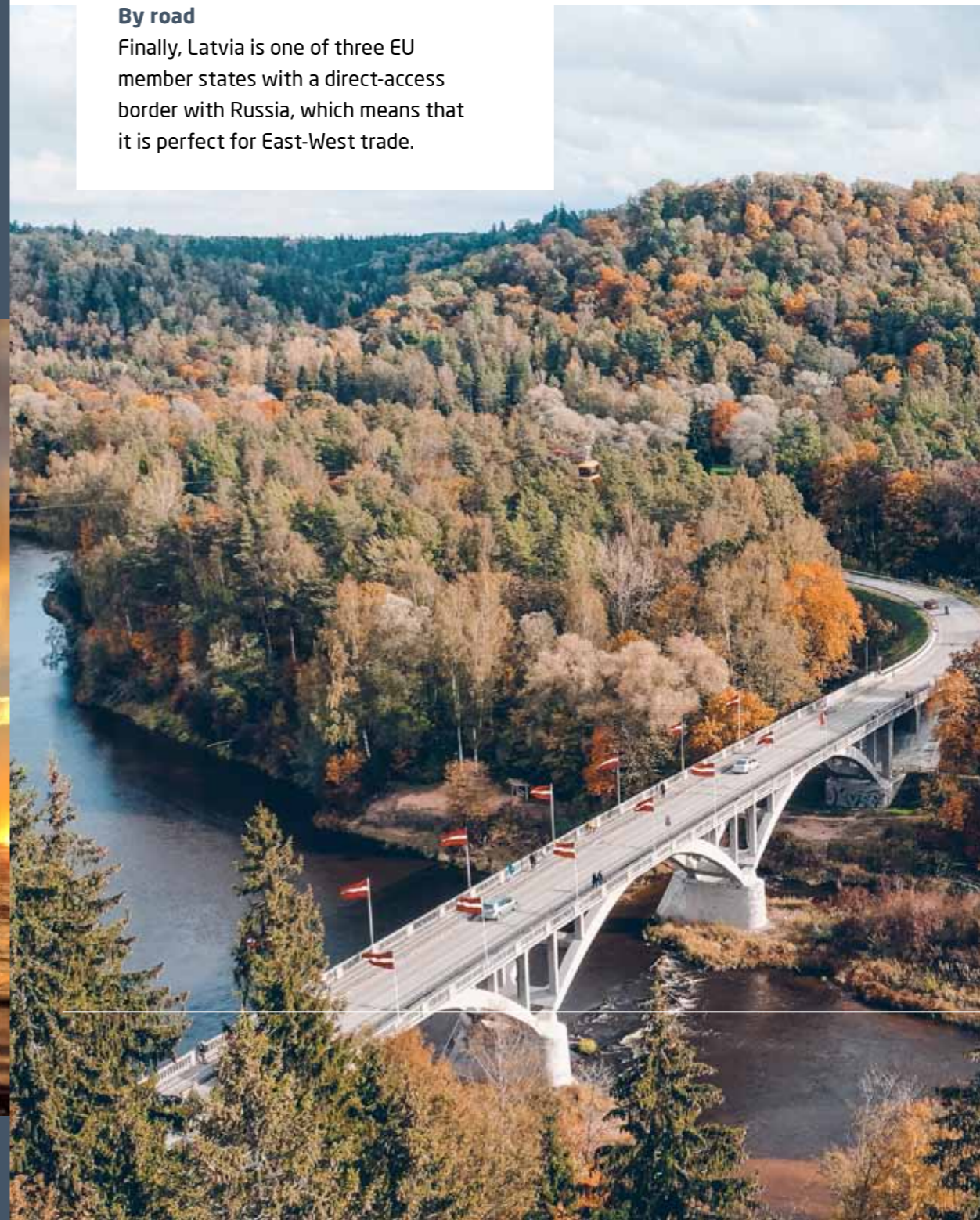
Latvia has three major ice-free international ports in Riga, Liepaja and Ventspils, one of Europe's leading sea hubs in terms of cargo turnover. Regularly scheduled passenger ferry traffic links Latvia to Sweden and Germany, including a popular overnight Riga-Stockholm route that is operated by the Tallink company.

Passenger ferry routes from Latvia

Route	Duration
Riga-Stockholm (Sweden)	21h
Riga-Visby (Sweden)	14h 30m
Ventspils-Nynashamn (Sweden)	8h 30m
Liepaja-Travemunde (Germany)	25h 30m

**By road**

Finally, Latvia is one of three EU member states with a direct-access border with Russia, which means that it is perfect for East-West trade.



Skilled and multilingual workforce

Latvia offers an international and competitive workforce at every level of expertise. Employees can be described as people who have a perfect combination of Northern European work ethics, strong motivation and openness towards new challenges. At the same time, the historical background ensures extensive experience in doing business with CIS countries.

Multilingualism is another distinct feature of the local labour market. **87% of Latvians under the age of 35 speak Russian, and 61% of people of the same age range speak English.** German and Scandinavian languages are also widespread.

When it comes to startups, the trend is even more pronounced. A 2019 poll commissioned by the Ministry of Economics showed that 100% of the surveyed startups stated that their employees spoke both English and Russian, while almost one-third spoke German.



Advanced IT infrastructure

When modern businesses rely heavily on the successful application of information technologies, the role of the IT infrastructure cannot be underestimated. Latvia is among the global leaders in terms of fibre optic connectivity, and it is far ahead of many other well-connected states such as Finland and Estonia.

Moreover, according to the World Broadband Speed League, **Latvia is among the top 20 countries in terms of Internet speed – 32.47 mb/s in 2019.** This means that Latvia outperforms its Baltic neighbours, as well as technologically advanced countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Finally, while Latvian telecoms already offer excellent 4G coverage throughout the country, 5G is on its way. The first pilot stations were launched in 2019.

The strength of the local IT infrastructure is evident because of the rapid expansion of the Latvian ICT sector.

The industry represents a mere 4.3% of GDP, however, it is demonstrating steady growth, particularly in terms of selling services overseas. Between 2016 and 2019, Latvia nearly doubled (187% growth) its ICT exports. This clearly would not be possible without the involvement of startups.



Latvian Startup Ecosystem

Latvian startup ecosystem is young and dynamic. It is big enough to ensure all advantages of a regional entrepreneur-friendly business hub, but it is small enough to provide ample networking opportunities and a sense of belonging. The growth of this ecosystem has been facilitated by a range of stakeholders in the public and private sectors, non-profit organisations and academia.



The number of startups **500+**
(around 10% in the ideation stage)

The number of exits: **14**
(as of June 2020) → (June 2020)



The share of foreign investment:
more than 80%

Main foreign investors:
USA, EE, GB, RUS, UAE



Key support instruments:

- Startup Law
- Startup Visa



The strongest verticals:

- Fintech
- Deeptech
- Drones

As a key stakeholder, the government actively uses its legislative power to provide fertile soil for technology-driven business ideas from all over the world.

For instance, up to five founders of the same company can apply for the Latvian Startup Visa programme that provides non-EU entrepreneurs, their spouses and their children a temporary residency permit for a maximum period of three years with flexible renewal options. For more on this, please see Pages 28-39.

Another important initiative is the Startup Law which lowers the cost burden related to a startup's employees. The Law offers a low flat social tax that is currently fixed at a level of EUR 302 per month per employee, as well as a 0% individual income tax rate. Alternatively, 45% co-financing of the highly qualified specialists can be applied. For more on tax rebates related to the Law, please see Page 115.

The role of the government, however, goes far beyond these initiatives. In close partnership with other stakeholders, the government offers startups a wide business network, various financing opportunities and soft support tools that are discussed in greater detail in the Resources Section.



Startup Visa:

**Up to 5 founders
for up to 3 years**



Tax rebates:

**Low flat social tax + 0%
Personal income tax**

Talent co-financing:

**45% of employee
cost paid back**





“Would I recommend Latvia as a sandbox for space-related startups? For those focusing on software solutions, I would definitely say ‘yes,’ because Latvian IT competences are considered to be among the best in the world.”

Pavels Razmajs,
COO, Eventech.

Strongest startup verticals

Deeptech

Latvia boasts well-developed science and academic sectors which provide top-level specialists in areas like quantum physics, smart materials, biomedicine and space technologies. All of this is reinforced by extensive IT experience. The combination of the two allows some Latvian startups quite literally shooting for the moon: the Eventech satellite laser application originates from Latvia and is currently being used by space study missions. Furthermore, in June 2020, Latvia became a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) which will kick-off a foundation of the ESA incubation centre, thus opening new opportunities for Latvian spacetech.

Another example of how a Latvian scientific breakthrough has conquered the world is GroGlass – unique anti-reflective glass technology which also happens to

be one of the first country’s startup exits. It is used for millions of artwork all around the globe.

Still, deeptech magic cannot happen without the merger of great minds and sufficient funding. Local policymakers share this view, and in recent years the commercialisation of science has become a national priority that is underpinned by a holistic support programme aimed at fostering the most prominent scientific discoveries.

Support for science-based startups, however, is not limited to public sector initiatives. The local Commercialization Reactor Fund has more than 90 successfully accelerated deeptech projects under its belt, while those who want to meet a maximum number of potential investors are welcome at the Deep Tech Atelier, an annual regional industry matchmaking forum in Riga.

Latvian deeptech vs COVID-19

Unique deeptech solutions can be a real game changer when dealing with the global pandemic. As Covid-19 was taking the world by storm in early 2020, Latvian deeptech sector came together and prevailed through a series of hackathons which led to a range of solutions with high potential of combating and preventing future disease outbreaks.

What: **Emergency Ventilator**

The idea: mechanical lung ventilator for short-term respiratory failures

Receiving EUR 7,000 from the Latvia-lead international HackForce hackathon was just the beginning. While the first products had been manufactured shortly after the hackathon, the team took part in the EUvsVirus hackathon to further improve the functionality of the ventilating mode and user interface.

What: **Shield48**

The idea: protective facial shield

After receiving EUR 12,000 as the main winner of the Latvia-lead international HackForce hackathon, the team produced and delivered 10,000 facial shields for local medical personnel within just 10 days from their victory. Two months later, the team has begun to export their product to the Netherlands, UK, Germany, Estonia and Finland, among others.

What: **xT BioE**

The idea: state-of-the-art technology to make testing easier and scale future vaccine faster

After winning the EUvsVirus hackathon in the Research Category, the team received EUR 3,000 and partnered with the Institute of Microbiology and Biotechnology of the University of Latvia, to launch a pilot project for the leading German specialty chemicals company – Evonik Industries AG.



"Drivers of the development of Latvia's fintech cluster include a flourishing ecosystem, international education, startup laws and visas, as well as global ambition from day one."

Anastasija Oleinika,
CEO, TWINO Group.

Fintech

As is the case with deeptech, the development of the fintech startup vertical is closely linked to the characteristics of the Latvian workforce. The sector can be described as a silver lining for the cloud of the 2008-2009 financial recession, which made a lot of banking industry talent unemployed and struggling. Unwilling to accept the crisis-adjusted reality, they instead ventured into alternative financing ideas which laid the foundation for the current fintech vertical.

This "make it happen" mentality is perfectly described by Anastasija Oleinika, CEO of the TWINO Group, which is one of Europe's leading P2P lending platforms. She describes Latvians as "people who know how to build things from scratch."

Some Latvian fintech startups have turned into global players with billions of euros issued in loans and solid international recognition.

Mintos, for instance, received the title of Alternative Finance Platform at the AltFi Awards in 2019.

The range of investment opportunities for newcomers in the sector has also expanded considerably. Looking back at the beginnings of TWINO, Anastasija says that one reason for choosing bootstrapping was that they were basically "creating an industry which did not exist before." Today, when everyone "speaks" fintech, the sky is the limit with numerous accelerators, VC funds and investors who are open to the possibility of co-operation.

Last, but not least, another tendency in the Latvian fintech cluster is the increasing interest among leading banks in the region such as Swedbank, SEB and Citadele Bank, in Open Bank platforms that are meant to ensure collaboration with alternative financial service providers.

Drones

In comparison to deeptech and fintech, the drone sector can be seen as the youngest vertical in the Latvian startup ecosystem. Nevertheless, it already has some big names in the public eye such as, for example, Atlas Dynamics, Aeronos, or Airdog. The latter was recently purchased by Alarm.com, one of the largest US developers of smart home solutions, thus demonstrating what an excellent foundation for further growth Latvian drone sector has.



A special law on piloting unmanned aerial vehicles in 2019 created a favourable legislative framework for dozens of local and international companies which wanted to test early-stage drone technologies. There is also an outstanding infrastructure which provides 4G coverage throughout Latvia. The first 5G stations also come handy and facilitate the growth of this industry.

In terms of the future, one of the leading local telecoms operators, LMT, is currently developing an unmanned traffic management application which will help to ensure additional safety for drones.

While the vast majority of products from the cluster are exported worldwide, there is strong demand in Latvia's public sector, including the Ministry of Defence and the state-owned Latvian State Forests company.



"US investors acquire Latvian startups because of the companies' accomplishments. Uniting forces with Alarm.com was a natural progression of the relation that dates back to 2018."

Agris Kipurs,
Co-founder and CEO,
Airdog.

First steps



When all of the key benefits of doing business in Latvia are listed, there may be a question of where to begin. This section contains all of the key procedures, tips and tricks that will help you relocate successfully.

Startup Visa

When registering a startup company in Latvia, it is not mandatory to apply for the Startup Visa (which is technically a temporary residence permit or TRP, for short). Still, that would certainly make the overall relocation process, business set-up and operations, as well as life in Latvia more convenient and pleasant.

Farmon Akmalov, the founder of Airdas Drone Services, hails from Uzbekistan. According to him, the Startup Visa is “probably the best support tool,” which allowed him to stay in Latvia comfortably and develop his business in an efficient manner. Therefore, if relocation to Latvia is a plan, it is beneficial to secure the Startup Visa and enjoy all of its perks.



Startup Visa in a nutshell



Up to **five non-EU founders** under the same startup business idea can receive the Visa for **3 years**;



It permits the relocation of the startup founder's **spouse and children**;



It grants no-visa travel across the whole **Schengen Area**;



It allows obtaining a certified **eSignature** which grants remote access to numerous private and public online services.

For more information about how to register your company with an eSignature, please see Page 43.

Tip:

Startup Visa programme is aimed at fostering innovation in Latvia. Aspiring foreign startup founders are welcome to check their business idea's eligibility for the Startup Visa **prior to the application process**. Just send a free-form description of your startup idea to the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA) at startup@liaa.gov.lv and wait for the feedback. This is not a mandatory step but will save everyone effort and time.

Zheng Zeng from China is the founder of DentalAi, and here is what he says about his own experience:

“For me, the complexity of application procedure is the main concern, because cumbersome processes and long waiting time are unfavourable for someone who is eager to launch their project. In Latvia, you can check whether your idea qualifies for the Startup Visa by submitting a description on just one page. After a brief email exchange, I received a confirmation message from LIAA, validating my idea. This encouraged me to start the application process, which was super-efficient!”

Application process

Foreign startup founders can submit their applications for the Startup Visa abroad or in Latvia:

- ✦ Abroad: through the consular section of the Latvian embassy in the country where the startup founder legally resides;
- ✦ In Latvia: at any branch of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA).

If you want to submit an application to a consular section at an embassy, you need to arrange your visit with them in advance. Keep in mind that the embassy does not make a decision regarding your Startup Visa – all decisions are taken by OCMA, which receives the application documents from the embassy. You will need to pay a EUR 110 fee to the embassy for their assistance in receiving your application and forwarding it to OCMA.

For more info on this, please see: www.likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/214846-regulations-regarding-the-territorial-competence-of-diplomatic-and-consular-representations-of-the-republic-of-Latvia-for-requesting-visas

The application process at any OCMA branch in Latvia consists of the following steps:

Step #1

Book an appointment with OCMA in advance, via phone or email.

Tip 1:

While some OCMA branches accept applicants without an appointment on a “first come, first served” basis, there is no guarantee that you will be lucky. The only guaranteed way to secure a visit is by getting an appointment in advance. Different OCMA branches have different availability. Therefore, when scheduling an appointment, contact several OCMA branches and see what dates they can offer – in that way you can secure the shortest waiting time. See the list of all OCMA branches at www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/home/contacts/pmlp-divisions.

Tip 2:

Once you have submitted the application to OCMA, it is not mandatory for you to stay in Latvia for the duration of the application review. However, if your citizenship requires that you have a Schengen visa to enter Latvia, you need to have a Schengen visa valid for the whole duration of the application review. For example, if the application review takes 30 days (the standard procedure), your Schengen visa should be valid for no less than 30 days, counting from the day when you submit the application at OCMA.

Step #2

Submit the application package including:

- Your passport – or passports, if applicable, e.g. domestic and for foreign travels (OCMA will scan the necessary passport information and return the passport(s) to you);
- Duly completed application form (https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/images/Uzturēšanās/UA_anketa_2016.pdf.pdf);
- Free-form description of your planned startup business activities during the next three years;
- Certificate to show that you have no criminal record (not required for foreigners who can enter Latvia without a visa);
- Proof of subsistence, for example, a bank statement to confirm that you have at least EUR 6,000 (the amount is computed as EUR 500 per month – the minimum wage in Latvia – multiplied by 12 months);
- One passport-size colour photo;
- Receipt of paid OCMA stamp duty for the application review, paid either in advance or during your appointment at OCMA in a non-cash way (e.g. debit/credit card):
 - Standard procedure – EUR 100, review within 30 calendar days;
 - Faster procedure – EUR 200, review within 10 business days;
 - Fastest procedure – EUR 400, review within 5 business days

Tip:

Be aware that when applicants avail of the shorter application review procedures (e.g. 10 or 5 business days), there is no guarantee that OCMA will comply with the said time frame. If OCMA requires more time to process your application and run all the necessary checks, they have a legal right to extend the review procedure.

Step #3

Wait for the decision letter from OCMA (sent via email) and schedule an appointment to submit additional documents and order your TRP card.

During the visit, you will provide OCMA with your biometric data (finger prints) and pay the stamp duty for the card (non-cash way, e.g. debit/credit card):

- EUR 15 for a TRP card processed within 10 business days;
- EUR 30 for a TRP card processed within 2 business days.

The additional documents to be submitted:

- Annual health insurance policy;
- Medical certification from a Latvian clinic to confirm that you do not have tuberculosis in active form;
- Confirmation of your place of residence (e.g., a rental agreement).



For more information about health insurance, health care services and accommodations in Latvia, see Pages 74-85.

Step #4

Pick up the TRP card from the OCMA office a few days later, presenting your passport and the decision letter.

Tip:

Steps 3 and 4 can be processed only over-the-counter at OCMA in Latvia. This means that even if you submit your initial application at the Latvian embassy abroad, you will need to come to Latvia, in order to process your TRP card.



Step #5

Register your startup.

Once you receive your Startup Visa, you have three months to register your startup; to be precise – to become a member of the board of a newly established company which was registered not more than one year ago.

The application process for spouses and children involves basically the same documents for each family member, with the following alterations:

- ≡ No need to submit the free-form description of the planned startup business activities;
- ≡ For spouses: translated and duly legalized marriage certificate;
- ≡ For children: legalized documents confirming kinship, including permission from the other parent to reside in Latvia if the minor relocates to Latvia with only one of his or her parents;

- ≡ Proof of subsistence for a child under 18: At least EUR 1,800 (or EUR 150 per month, multiplied by 12 months) This amount can be reflected as part of a parent's proof of subsistence, in addition to his/her own subsistence of EUR 6,000.

Tip 1:

Make sure that documents, issued by a non-Latvian institution, and which you submit for the Startup Visa, are duly legalized or bear an apostille.

Tip 2:

Once you receive the Startup Visa, remember that your startup is the only place of employment you can legally have in Latvia. You are also not allowed to be a member board at any other company, except your startup.

Extension of Startup Visa

The Startup Visa gives you the right to reside in Latvia for three years, but you need to renew your TRP card annually.

After the first year, the renewal of the card also involves a check of the status of your startup, which is validated either by a fact that your startup has attracted a qualifying investment, or by the nature of your startup's business progress. Schedule an appointment with the OCMA at least 5-6 weeks before your current TRP card expires, and submit the following documents:

- ▬ Your passport – or passports, if applicable, e.g. domestic and for foreign travels (OCMA will scan the necessary passport information and return the passport(s) to you);
- ▬ Your current TRP card which is about to expire;
- ▬ Free-form request to OCMA to extend the Startup Visa;
- ▬ Annual health insurance policy;
- ▬ Receipt of your paid OCMA stamp duty for the application review, paid either in advance or during your appointment at OCMA in a non-cash way (e.g. debit/credit card):
 - Standard procedure – EUR 45, review within 30 calendar days;
 - Faster procedure – EUR 90, review within 10 business days;
 - Fastest procedure – EUR 180, review within 5 business days.

You must also submit information about the qualifying investment OR a business progress report.

Qualifying investment

EUR 30,000 from a venture capital fund (registered as alternative investment fund or fund manager), or

EUR 15,000 from an accelerator or business angel.

Irrespective of the type of investor, it must be qualified in accordance with the Latvian Startup Law. For more information about the Law, see <https://startuplatvia.eu/startup-law-benefits>. For a list of qualified investors, see www.liaa.gov.lv/lv/fondi/2014-2020-gada-planosanas-periods/jaunuznemumu-atbalsta-programmas/riska-kapitala-investoru-saraksts.

If your startup cannot provide information about a qualifying



Progress report

investment, you need to submit a progress report, which provides factual and objective information about your startup's achievements during the first year. There is no form or template for this, but here are a few ideas about what you should include in the report:

- Proof that your product has substantially improved since you got your Startup Visa and/or new versions of it have been launched;
- Proof of company revenues, sales, R&D costs, financial statements (P/L, BS and CFS), etc;
- Copies of existing partnerships, client or supplier agreements.

After the second year,

submit the same documents as you did after the first year, with one exception – information regarding the investment or the business progress is no longer required.

After the third year,

when the Startup Visa expires, you can apply for another type of temporary residence permit, for example, on the basis that you are:

- A shareholder in your startup;
- A member of your startup's board or council;
- A legally employed staff member of your startup (for more, see www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/home/services/residence-permits/doc2).

After residing in Latvia for five years and if you speak Latvian language at the A2 level, you may apply for a permanent residence permit (PRP).

Starting a business

Company registration

Step #1

Decide on the most appropriate form of business.

The most common forms of business in Latvia include individual merchants, joint stock companies, partnerships and limited liability companies. For a startup company, the two most suitable forms of business are 1) a regular limited liability company (LLC, or – in Latvian – SIA) with equity capital of EUR 2,800 and up, and 2) a limited liability company with reduced equity capital (EUR 1-2,799).

Step #2

Set up a temporary bank account.

Regular LLC needs a temporary bank account prior to the company registration, in order to transfer the equity capital and obtain a payment order or a bank reference on depositing the equity capital. LLC with reduced equity can either do the same or skip the step of opening a temporary bank account, register the company first, then open a full-fledged bank account and after that transfer the equity capital to the full-fledged account.

Step #3

Submit your complete application package to the Register of Enterprises.

The application includes the proof equity capital payment (mandatory when equity capital exceeds EUR 2,799). For more on applications to register an LLC or an LLC with reduced equity capital, see Pages 44-45.

Step #4

Once the business is registered, open your full-fledged bank account.

Step #5

If applicable, apply for the status of a VAT payer's at the State Revenue Service (SRS).

There are several cases when VAT payer's status is mandatory for individuals and legal entities. For example, one of the most common circumstances is when the company's total supply of goods and services during the previous 12-month period is worth more than EUR 40,000. To peruse all the cases when the VAT payer's status is mandatory, please see the Value Added Tax Law <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/253451-value-added-tax-law>.

The application for the VAT payer's status can be submitted to:

The Register of Enterprises along with the application to register your company;

Directly to the SRS, after your company is registered and when the VAT payer status becomes necessary.

To download an application for the VAT payer's status, see www.ur.gov.lv/en/register/company-or-merchant/branch-of-a-foreign-company/founding/registration-with-the-enterprise-register/registration-in-the-srs-register-of-vat-taxpayers

The SRS will review the application and issue its decision regarding the VAT payer's status in five business days.
In case of a positive decision, your company will be given a VAT number.

Tip:

Steps 2 to 5 can be completed online with a digital authentication tool – electronic signature.

Electronic signature

The most widely used electronic signature in Latvia is the so-called eSignature (eParaksts, in Latvian). It saves time and money by granting remote access to numerous public and private services, including the opening of a bank account, as well as the submission of documents to state institutions. Applications signed with an eSignature and uploaded at the country's administrative services portal (www.latvija.lv/en) are subject to a 10% discount on the company registration fee.

Latvian state institutions also accept documents that are signed by a foreign secure electronic signature if it complies with Regulation No 910/2014 of the European Union.*

The TRP card that is issued by the OCMA to a Startup Visa holder comes with a certified eSignature. An envelope with PIN numbers is issued along with the card. For more information about eSignature products that are available to individuals and legal entities, see www.eparaksts.lv/en/Produkti.

* Regulation No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and Council, 2 July 2014, on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC. For more information, see www.eur-lex.europa.eu/lega-content/EN/TXT?uri=uriserv%3A0J.L_2014.257.01.0073.01.ENG.

Registration requirements	LLC with reduced equity capital	Regular LLC
Founders, shareholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founders may only be up to 5 private persons - Shareholders may only be up to 5 private persons - The board of the company may only consist of the shareholders - No shareholder can be a member of any other company with reduced equity capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlimited number of natural and legal persons acting as founders and shareholders - The board may consist of private persons
Equity	EUR 1-2,799	EUR 2,800 and more
Transfer of equity capital	Capital must be transferred to a temporary account at a bank that is registered in Latvia OR to a full-fledged account that is opened after the company is registered.	Capital must be transferred to a temporary account at a bank that is registered in Latvia.
Documents to be submitted to the Register of Enterprises*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application form KR4 (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - A Memorandum of Association; - Articles of Association; - A bank statement or other document related to the payment of equity capital, if the founders decide to make the transfer of equity capital to the temporary bank account, as described above; - The division of the register of shareholders (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - Consent from each council member to hold the office (if there is a council); - Consent from each board member to hold the office unless consent is included in Paragraph 12 of the application form KR4 (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - A statement by the board of the company's legal address; - Consent from the real owner of property to the registration of the legal address (not required if the owner is among the signatories of the application); - A receipt, copy or printout of a payment order from an online bank or information about payment of the state fee; - A receipt, copy or printout of a payment order from an online bank or information about the publication in the official gazette Latvijas Vēstnesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application form KR4 (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - A Memorandum of Association; - Articles of Association; - A bank statement or other document related to the payment of equity capital if the payment is in cash; - A document certifying the value of property contribution (if the equity payment is paid up by contribution of property); - The division of the register of shareholders (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - Consent from each council member to hold the office (if there is a council); - Consent from each board member to hold the office unless consent is included in Paragraph 12 of the application form KR4 (notarized signatures or eSignatures); - A statement by the board of the company's legal address; - Consent from the real property owner to the registration of the company's legal address (not required if the owner is among the signatories of the application); - A receipt, copy or printout of a payment order from an online bank or information about payment of the state fee; - A receipt, copy or printout of a payment order from an online bank or information about the publication in the official gazette Latvijas Vēstnesis.
Submitting the application to the Register of Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By email: Sign all documents with eSignature and send them to info@ur.gov.lv; - Online: Sign all documents with eSignature and upload them to the Register of Enterprises section at https://www.latvija.lv/en; - By regular mail: Sign all documents and send them to a regional branch of the Register of Enterprises.** 	Note: Notary certification is not needed if the application is signed with eSignature and submitted by email or online. If the application is submitted by regular mail, documents specified by law and regulation need to be certified by the notary.
Application review time	1-3 business days	
State registration fee (10% discount applies on applications signed with eSignature and submitted to www.latvija.lv)	EUR 20 for applications reviewed within three business days or one business day of the LLC has a single shareholder (by request) EUR 60 for applications reviewed within one business day	EUR 150 for applications reviewed within three business days or one business day if the LLC has a single shareholder (upon request) EUR 450 for applications reviewed within one business day
Fee for publication in the official gazette Latvijas Vēstnesis	EUR 14.23	EUR 27.03
Production of a derivative of a document to be submitted to the Register of Enterprises	EUR 3.15	EUR 3.15

A comparison between LLC with reduced equity capital and regular LLC

* All documents must be in Latvian or supported by a translation (the translation must be notary-certified if relevant laws and regulations so require). For a range of templates for industry-standard legal documents in English, see www.startuplatvia.eu/resources.

** For information about the regional branches of the Register of Enterprises, see www.ur.gov.lv/en/contacts.

Registering an LLC with reduced equity capital (as little as EUR 1) might seem like a good idea at the beginning. However, be aware that in the long run it may limit the opportunities to attract investments, because the limitations related to shareholders and board members – all of them must be individuals – will prevent startup accelerators and venture capital funds from investing and joining the shareholder structure. Furthermore, LLC with reduced equity capital is required to make a reserve of at least 25% of the annual net profit, which is then contributed to the equity capital with a target to reach the equity capital of a regular LLC – EUR 2,800. In other words, while the reduced equity capital requirement may be a great starting bonus, over time you will need to transition to a regular LLC status.

Opening temporary and full-fledged bank accounts

Latvia's financial market offers a diverse range of financial providers to satisfy the expanding needs of a rapidly growing business community. For company registration purposes, however, future entrepreneurs tend to choose services of one of the local banks.

International banks:



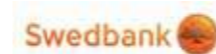
www.expobank.eu/eng



www.luminor.lv/en



www.signetbank.com/en/



www.swedbank.lv



www.seb.lv/eng



www.bib.eu/



www.blueorangebank.com/int/en

Domestic banks:



www.rietumu.com/en



www.citadele.lv/en/private/



www.lpb.lv/en/



www.ribbank.com/en

Opening a temporary account

Procedures and fees will vary from bank to bank. In general terms, the documents needed to open a temporary account may include:

- Valid identification document (passport) and the document, which allows to stay in Latvia (visa or resident permit);
- A document which testifies to the right to enter and be in Latvia – a Schengen visa or a residence permit (e.g. Startup Visa);
- A CV or free-form letter with detailed information about past and present professional activities;
- Documents to prove the origin of funds and wealth – tax declarations, bank account statements, etc;
- A completed application form.

Opening a full-fledged bank account

Once your LLC is registered at the Register of Enterprises, most banks will convert your temporary account into a full-fledged one. Those LLCs with reduced equity capital which opted not to open the temporary account (a step they are allowed to skip) and those regular LLCs interested in switching banks, will need to go through the application process for a full-fledged bank account at the bank of their choice. The application process will be similar to the one described in the “Opening a temporary account” section above, with some further questions from the bank remaining possible.

It is worth noting that bank account opening requirements are similar for Latvian residents, regardless of their citizenship. That said, this is a point when a Startup Visa (temporary residence

permit) comes handy. Non-residents should be prepared to answer additional questions, e.g. about their shareholders’ structure and their links to Latvia. This heightened interest from the banks is not a mere curiosity, but rather a result of strict anti-money laundering (AML) and know-your-customer (KYC) requirements which oblige banks all over European Union to inspect their clients – especially non-residents – for various red flags.

The good news is that once you have a full-fledged bank account, that represents a huge step from establishing your business to actually ensuring that it is operational.

Taxation and annual financial reporting

When choosing an optimal location for launching a startup, founders consider a wide range of factors, one of them being a tax system, i.e. tax rates which do not cannibalise profits of a newly established business, transparent taxation rules and laws, and reporting standards which are easy to navigate.

The taxation environment in Latvia is business-friendly, and it aims at fostering economic development and foreign investments. *Paying Taxes 2020 report by PricewaterhouseCoopers* ranks Latvia 16th in the world in terms of ease of

paying taxes. This indicator is based on a relatively low time-to-comply parameter (measured in hours) and overall administrative simplicity, enabled by the Electronic Declaration System (EDS). Moreover, Latvian Total Tax and Contribution Rate (38.1%) is way ahead of its both Baltic neighbours - Estonia (47.8%) and Lithuania (42.6%).

Taxes in Latvia

While there are 15 different types of taxes levied on income, property, goods, and services in Latvia, all administered by the State Revenue Service (SRS), the key taxes that affect the entrepreneurial activity of a Limited Liability Company (LLC) include:

Main business taxes in Latvia

The tax	The rate
Corporate income tax	0% on reinvested profits 20% on profits distributed or disbursed as dividends, or used for purposes not directly related to business operations
Personal income tax	20% on annual income up to EUR 20,004 23% on the portion of annual income above EUR 20,004, but below EUR 62,800 31.4% on the portion of annual income above EUR 62,800
Social tax	35.09% , of which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11.00% is deducted directly from an employee's salary - 24.09% is paid separately by an employer on top of gross salary
VAT	0% on intra-community and international transport 5% on a range of locally produced vegetables and fruit 12% on food products for infants, pharmaceutical products, medical products for disabled persons, domestic passenger transport, books (excluding e-books), newspaper and periodicals, hotel accommodation, district heating 21% on all other taxable goods and services

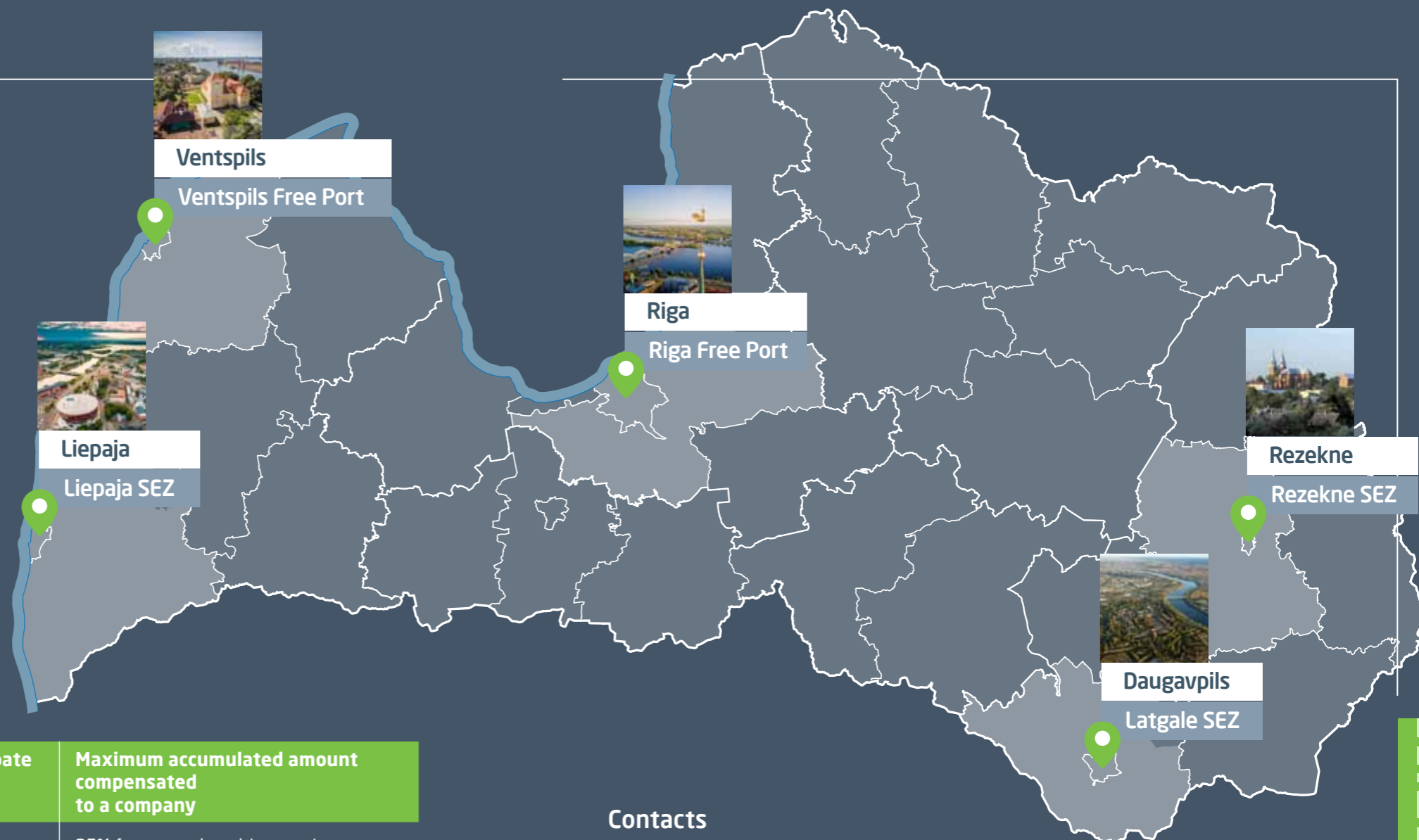
Qualifying startups can benefit from the tax rebates under the Startup Law, adopted in 2017, namely, the low flat Social tax and the 0% Personal income tax for startup employees*.

Combined with the 0% Corporate income tax rate on reinvested profits, the Startup Law benefits strengthen the two main driving forces behind the innovation: R&D activities and retention of the best talent. Further tax incentives are offered for the companies registered within one of the **three special economic zones** (Liepaja, Latgale, Rezekne) or **two free ports** (Riga and Ventspils).

For more information about the Startup Law, please see Page 115.



Special Economic Zones (SEZ) & Free Ports



The main tax rebates for companies registered within the territory

Tax	Regular tax rate	Rebate	Maximum accumulated amount compensated to a company
Real estate tax	1.5%		35% for companies with more than 250 employees and/or turnover exceeding EUR 50 million
Corporate income tax (on profits distributed as dividends)	20%	80 %	45% for companies with 50-250 employees and/or turnover between EUR 10-50 million 55% for companies with less than 50 employees and/or turnover being less than EUR 10 million

Contacts

Name	Location	Website
Liepaja SEZ	Liepaja	https://liepaja-sez.lv/en
Rezekne SEZ	Rezekne	http://www.rsez.lv/index.php/en
Latgale SEZ	Daugavpils	https://lpr.gov.lv/en
Riga Free Port	Riga	https://rop.lv/en
Ventspils Free Port	Ventspils	http://www.portofventspils.lv/en

Annual financial reporting

According to the Law On the Annual Financial Statements and Consolidated Financial Statements, all commercial companies registered in Latvia **must submit their financial statements to the State Revenue Service (SRS) on an annual basis**. The composition of the financial statements **depends on the size of the company**.

For a small-sized company, its financial statements shall consist of:	For a medium-sized or a large company, its financial statements shall consist of:
Balance Sheet	Balance Sheet
Profit and Loss Statement	Profit and Loss Statement
–	Cash Flow Statement
–	Statement of Changes in Equity
Annex to the Financial Statement	Annex to the Financial Statement
<p>A company is classified as a small-sized if two out of the following criteria are met for two consecutive financial years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net revenue exceed EUR 700,000 - Balance sheet total exceeds EUR 350,000 - The average number of employees exceeds 10 	<p>A company is classified as a medium-sized or large if two out of the following criteria are met for two consecutive financial years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Net revenues exceed EUR 8 million - Balance sheet total exceeds EUR 4 million - The average number of employees exceeds 50

The financial statement shall be submitted to the SRS in one of the following ways:

- Online using the SRS Electronic Declaration System (EDS)
- Hard copy over-the-counter at the SRS Customer Service
- By post, sending it to the SRS office at Talejas iela 1, Riga, LV-1987

EDS is a free, safe and convenient online platform which allows submitting all the necessary documentation to SRS remotely. Besides, EDS offers other online services, such as electronic income tax book, information on public procurements and various reports by SRS, e.g. information on tax payment status.

For the SRS Customer Service contacts, please see www.vid.gov.lv/en/tax-customer-service

List of reliable accounting, tax, and legal service providers, operating in Latvia

Company name	Practice areas	Website
AAT - FINANCE	Accounting, tax consultancy, company formation	http://aat.lv/en
Amber Law	Corporate and M&A, real estate and construction, legal advisory	http://amberlaw.lv/en/ birojs/klienti
Auctus Capital	M&A (sell/buy-side advisory), leveraged buy-out advisory, capital raising (private debt and equity, mezzanine financing), management buy-out & buy-in advisory, joint ventures and strategic partnerships	https://www.auctus.lv
AZ Service	Audit, accounting, tax, financial advisory, law, architecture	http://www.azservice.lv
Cipari Baltic	Accounting, including local tax reporting and payroll processing services	www.cipari.com/main_eng.html
Cobalt	Commercial law, tax, legal advisory, M&A	www.cobalt.legal/en
Davis Suneps Investments	Company registration, using and acquiring e-signature vs. going to a sworn notary & office, accounting and EDS onboarding	https://registeracompany.lv
Deloitte Latvia	Audit, accounting, tax, legal, financial and risk advisory	https://www2.deloitte.com/lv/en.html
Ernst & Young Baltic	Audit, accounting, tax, legal, financial and risk advisory	https://www.ey.com/en_lv
Eversheds Sutherland Bitāns	Legal assistance in all areas of commercial law	https://www.eversheds-sutherland.com/global/en/where/cee/latvia/
INLUD Legal	Company registration, Commercial law, Start-up advisory, Data protection, IT, Intellectual property, Tax regulation, M&A, Finance & Banking, Investments, Digital assets, Employment, Immigration law, Real estate law.	www.inludlegal.lv
KPMG Baltics	Audit, accounting, tax, legal, financial and risk advisory	https://home.kpmg/lv/en/home.html
Leinonen Group	Audit, accounting, tax, legal	www.leinonen.eu/lv-en

When startup founders prefer not to spend time and effort on financial reporting and tax matters, they often outsource these tasks to a competent service provider.

Company name	Practice areas	Website
LM Law Office	Free Ports, real estate law, Swiss law, commercial law, commercial contracts, labor law	http://www.lmlawoffice.com/about-us
Orients Audit & Finance	Audit, accounting, tax advisory, financial consultancy and risk advisory, business valuation, company registration, startups	https://www.oriens.lv/en
Pricewaterhouse Coopers Latvia	Audit, accounting, tax, legal, financial and risk advisory	www.pwc.com/lv/en.html
Primus Derling	Corporate services and M&A, real estate, and construction, dispute resolution, competition and regulatory, tax, restructuring and insolvency, banking & finance, shipping & transportation, public procurement, IP and technology, energy, employment and immigration, competition, capital markets	www.primusderling.eu
Rektina un Mieze	Commercial law, consumer law, labour law, administrative proceedings, legal advisory	http://rektinamieze.lv/en/the-firm
Rödl & Partner Riga	Audit, accounting, BPO, tax, legal and business consulting services	www.roedl.com/about-us/locations/latvia
Sorainen	Corporate services and M&A, employment, tax, investments, contracts, data protection, intellectual property (IP)	https://www.sorainen.com
TaxLink Baltic	Audit, accounting, tax, financial and risk advisory	http://www.taxlink.lv/en/
TGS Baltic	Commercial law, M&A, tax, international trade, labour law, legal advisory	https://www.tgsbaltic.com
Venture Faculty	Consulting, Corporate Finance, Fundraising, Relocation & Customer Development.	www.venturefaculty.io

Tip:

Third-country nationals can access free of charge face-to-face and remote lawyer consultations at the Information Centre for Newcomers (ICN), run by the society "Shelter Safe House". Currently, ICN operates as a one-stop-shop agency in Riga and in four Latvian regional centres - Daugavpils, Jelgava, Valmiera, and Liepaja. Besides legal support, the centre offers foreigners free psychological consultations, as well as interpreting and translation services in various languages.

Contacts:

ICN Riga office

Website: www.integration.lv/en

Phone: (+371) 25 565 098,
(+371) 28 612 120

Additional information:
(+371) 67 898 343

Email: konsultacijas@integration.lv

Address: Lāčplēša Street 75 - 1B, Riga

ICN regional focal points

"Latgale" in Daugavpils

Phone: (+371) 25 723 222

"Zemgale" in Jelgava

Phone: (+371) 25 719 588

"Vidzeme" in Valmiera

Phone: (+371) 25 719 266

"Kurzeme" in Liepaja

Phone: (+371) 25 719 118

Talent hiring

Highly-skilled, multilingual, and cost-competitive workforce is often regarded as one of the key reasons behind a decision to do business in Latvia. Even though the local ICT sector offers an above-average salary, it is highly competitive, if compared to the leading global tech economies.

The most popular ways of finding the best local talent:

- through a recruitment company that offers tailored solutions, including outsourcing options;
- through a job ad placed on a recruitment website and social media;
- through LinkedIn.

Salaries

Average gross salary for full-time employment in Latvia (December 2019)

EUR 1,152 gross

Average gross salaries for full-time employment in Latvian ICT sector (December 2019):

Junior Software Engineer

EUR 2,300-3,600

Senior Software Engineer

EUR 4,300-6,500

Technical Sales Representative

EUR 1,900-2,700 + performance bonuses

Technical Customer Service Representative

EUR 1,400-1,900

Java Programmer

Senior-level - EUR 3,600

Middle level - EUR 2,800

Junior level - EUR 1,700

Front-End Developer (2+ years of experience)

EUR 2,600

Prices of job ads on recruitment websites:

EUR 15-250 (excl. VAT) for a job ad posted for one month.

Prices vary depending on the advertising period and desired job position.

Prices of recruitment company services:

EUR 1,000-15,000 (excl. VAT).

Prices vary depending on the required level of experience and qualifications.

Some of the biggest recruitment companies in Latvia:

Amrop Hever Baltics / Executive Search Baltics

<https://www.amrop.com>

Ariko ReServ

<http://ariko.lv/en/main-en>

CVO Recruitment Latvia

<https://recruitment.lv/en/>

Enjoy Recruitment

<https://www.enjoyrecruitment.lv/en/personnel-selection>

I-Work Latvia

<https://www.i-work.lv/en>

ManPower

<https://manpower.lv/en/>

People Management

<https://peoplemanagement.lv>

WorkingDay Latvia

<https://www.workingday.lv>

Most often used staffing and recruitment employee databases:

CV Market

<https://www.cvmarket.lv>

CV.lv

<https://www.cv.lv/english>

VisiDarbi

<https://www.visidarbi.lv/en>

LikeIT

www.likeit.lv
(for IT talents only, first 5 ads for free)

Another worthy recruitment-related initiative all startup founders looking for talent should be aware of is Yourmove.lv. Not only does this online platform connect professionals with Latvia-based companies, but it also places a big emphasis on reaching out to the foreigners who are willing to relocate to Latvia.

Contacts:

Website: www.yourmove.lv
Phone: (+371) 25 939 939
Email: janis@yourmove.lv

To employ a foreign professional, the hiring company needs to make sure that the requirements on the work permit are properly satisfied. **The requirements differ depending on the origins of the foreigner.**

That said, **holders of EU/EEA or Swiss passports can be employed under the same conditions as the locals.** They are not required to apply for a work permit in Latvia, however they **need to obtain a registration card from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA), if their stay in Latvia exceeds 90 days within a 6-month period.**

In all other cases, a foreigner needs to have a valid work permit, in order to engage into a long-term contract (more than 90 days within 6 months) with a Latvian company. To secure the work permit, the company that would like to hire the foreigner in question needs to take the following steps:



1. Register a **job description of the vacant position with the State Employment Agency (SEA)** which will stay open for applicants for at least 10 working days;
2. File a **request at OCMA, in order to initiate an invitation** for the foreigner who the company is interested to hire;
3. To get the invitation approved, submit an **application package** which consists of the following documents:
 - Completed foreign employee invitation form;
 - Copy of employment contract or a contract draft;
 - Documents proving that the employee has all the qualifications and permits/licenses required for the vacant position.
4. When the invitation is approved, the invited employee needs to submit an **application package for a temporary residence permit (TRP)**, which consists of the following documents:
 - Passport(s) (if applicable, both - domestic and international; scanned copies are made and the document is returned to the owner);
 - Completed TRP application form;
 - Certificate of clean criminal record;
 - Proof of subsistence, e.g. an employment contract whereas the gross salary is stated to be equal to and higher than the average salary in Latvia during the previous calendar year (EUR 1,076, as of June 2020);
 - One passport size color photo;
 - Receipt of paid stamp duty for the review of an application.

Once the application is processed, OCMA issues a TRP which incorporates the foreign applicant's rights to employment at the hiring company. Worth emphasising, the foreigner's rights to employment are limited to the company in question.

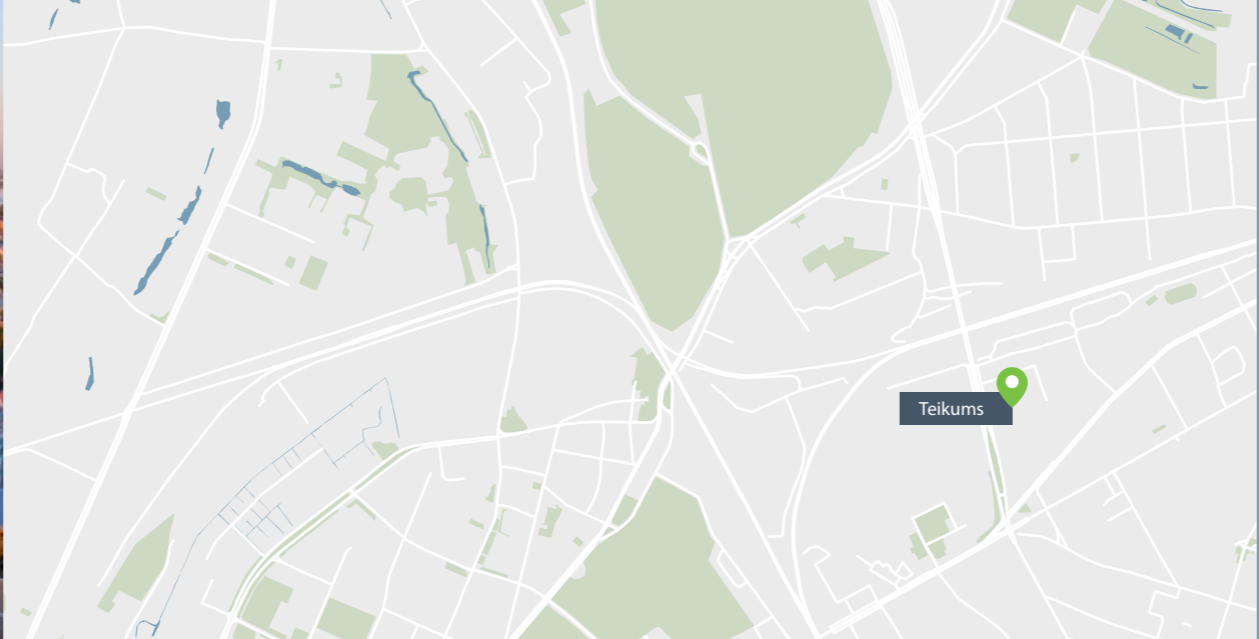
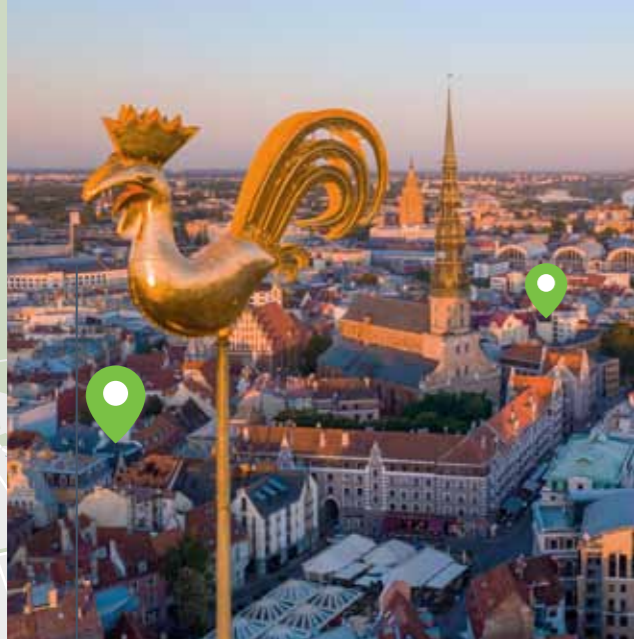
To employ a foreign professional under a short-term contract (less than 90 days within 6 months), there is no need to apply for the work permit and TRP, as described above. Instead, the hiring company and the foreigner process a **D-type Schengen visa**, which can be issued by the Consular Section of the Latvian Embassy Latvian in the country of the foreigner's legal residence.



For a step-by-step guidance on how to apply for a work permit, please see <http://workinlatvia.liaa.gov.lv/in.php>

For more information about visas and work permits, please see <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/home/services/visas-and-invitations/work-permit.html>

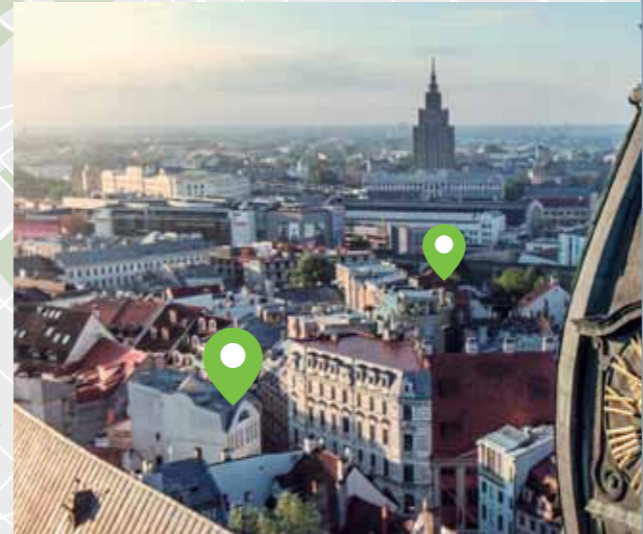
For more information about locations and contacts of the Consular Sections of the Latvian Embassies, please see <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/214846-regulations-regarding-the-territorial-competence-of-diplomatic-and-consular-representations-of-the-republic-of-latvia-for-requesting-visas>



Offices and coworking spaces

When setting up a startup, an office might not be an immediate necessity. Therefore, a co-working space is perhaps the solution for a young company: co-workings are convenient, typically well-located, and affordable.

While most of the co-working spaces are located in Riga, including several options in the very heart of the historical Old Town, some of them can be found in beautiful remote areas - by the beach in the resort city of Jurmala or Liepaja, or in the so-called Latvian Switzerland - Sigulda or Cesis.

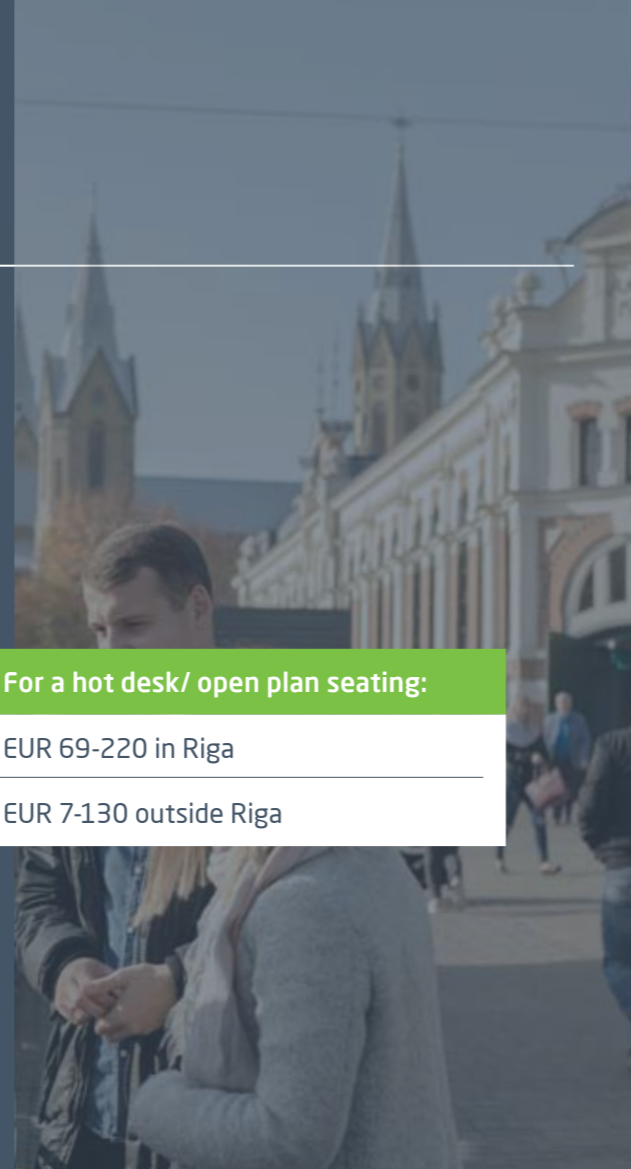


The monthly prices for a spot in a co-working space vary:

For a dedicated desk:	For a hot desk/ open plan seating:
EUR 100-200 in Riga	EUR 69-220 in Riga
EUR 60-190 outside Riga	EUR 7-130 outside Riga

Aside from the private co-workings, there are 15 government-run Magnetic Latvia Business incubators throughout the whole Latvia. They offer free co-working spaces for their members and non-members, while the former also enjoy various training, mentor support and grants.

For more information about Magnetic Latvia Business Incubators, please see <http://inkubatori.magneticlatvia.lv/en>



When it is time to upgrade the premises and move to a private office, the best way to find a new home for the company is to resort to the help of a reliable real estate company that operates in the Latvian market and caters to all their clients' needs, whatever they might be.

The list of professional real estate companies:

Arco Real Estate	https://www.arcoreal.lv/en
CBRE group	https://cbre.lv/cbre-group
Imperio Estate	https://www.ie.lv/en
Kivi real estate	https://www.kivi.lv/en
Latio	https://latio.lv/en
NewSec	https://newsec.lt/en
Ober-Haus Real Estate Advisors	http://ober-haus.com/about-us

The office rental prices, as well as utilities and service charges vary as following:

	Rent:	Utilities and service charges:
For A-class office:	EUR 12-16 /m2/month	EUR 2.50-5.50 /m2/month
For B-class office:	EUR 8-12 /m2/month	EUR 1.50-3.50 /m2/month

Setting down

Social benefits

Relocating to a different country always comes with a certain degree of uncertainty and vulnerability, therefore it is important to be aware of the social security system which your new home country has to offer.

The degree to which foreigners have access to the social support and

benefits in Latvia depends on their citizenship, residence status, income situation, employment status, as well as the contributions they make to the social security system.



The EU nationals and the permanent residence permit (PRP) holders are eligible for the same social support and benefits that are available for the Latvian citizens residing in Latvia. This includes the benefits which are granted regardless of the contributions made into the social security system, e.g. one-off childbirth benefit, guaranteed minimum income, etc. For the entire list of the state social support and benefits in Latvia, including the eligibility criteria and the rates, please visit www.vsa.gov.lv/en.

Third-country nationals can also avail of a range of social support and benefits, provided that they are legally employed in Latvia and make contributions to the social security system.

Key social security benefits available to third-country nationals legally employed in Latvia

Benefit	Time period	Rate
Sickness benefit (also granted to employed parents taking care of a child under 14 years old or under 18 years old, in case of a severe illness)	<p>In case of illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 26 weeks, if sickness is continuous - Up to 52 weeks within a 3-year period, if sickness is intermittent <p>In case of child's illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 14 days, if child is cared for at home - Up to 21 days, if child is cared for at hospital - Up to 26 weeks, if child's illness is severe - Up to 3 years within a 5-year period, if child's illness is intermittent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st day - unpaid - 2nd and 3rd day of sickness: the employer pays at least 75% of the average wage subject to social tax - 4th day of sickness: the employer pays at least 80% of the average wage subject to social tax <p>For 11th day of sickness and onwards, the State Social Insurance Agency grants a sickness benefit amounting to 80% of the average wage subject to social tax</p>
Maternity benefit	Up to 140 days	80% of the average wage subject to social tax
Paternity benefit	10 calendar days within 2 months after childbirth	80% of the average wage subject to social tax
Unemployment benefit	<p>Up to 8 months.</p> <p>The benefit is paid out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During months 1 & 2 - 100% of the benefit granted - During months 3 & 4 - 75% of the benefit granted - During months 5 & 6 - 50% of the benefit granted - During months 7 & 8 - 45% of the benefit granted 	<p>Benefit amount depends on the total length of the insurance (employment) record, and is computed as a certain % from the average wage subject to social tax:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From 1 to 9 years - 50% - From 10 to 19 years - 55% - From 20 to 29 years - 60% - 30 years or more - 65%



You can apply for the social support and benefits

- Through online platform www.latvija.lv, logging into with your eSignature or via internet bank
- At any branch of the State Social Insurance Agency (SSIA)

SSIA contacts

Phone: (+ 371) 67 011 814

Email: vsaa@vsaa.lv

Email for consultations:

konsultacijas@vsaa.lv

Health care and mandatory health insurance

Obtaining an annual health insurance policy is a mandatory condition for finalizing your Startup Visa (and other types of TRP) application process. The minimum insurance coverage limit is EUR 42,600. The policy should cover at least the following positions:

-  Emergency medical care
-  Treatment of a critical condition at a hospital
-  Transporting to the nearest medical treatment institution in both of the above-mentioned cases
-  Return to the country of origin in the event of a severe illness or death (repatriation)

Health insurance prices may vary considerably from as little as EUR 30 to hundreds of euros. The final price will depend on various factors such as the insured person's age, occupation, as well as the number of additional services one might include into the insurance package. Therefore, prior to purchasing an insurance policy, it is wise to check what deals different insurance providers offer.

List of reliable insurance providers in Latvia

Company	Website
AP Companies	https://www.ap-companies.com
Balta	https://www.balta.lv/lv (in Latvian and Russian)
BAN	https://www.ban.lv (in Latvian and Russian)
BTA	https://www.bta.lv/en
Compensa	https://www.compensa.lv/private
Ergo	https://www.ergo.lv (in Latvian and Russian)
Gjensidige	https://www.gjensidige.lv/english
IF	https://www.if.lv/privatpersonam (in Latvian and Russian)

Aside from the mandatory health insurance with a limited coverage, all legally employed foreign nationals and their family members can apply for the state-funded health care services at the National Health Service (NHS). For the application form, please see <http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/lv/nvd-pakalpojumi/iesniegumu-veidlapas>



The Startup Visa holder **Olga Maksimova**, originally from Russia and living in Latvia for 10 months, praises the access to the state-funded health care as the most pleasant post-relocation discovery: "As I pay taxes here, I can visit my family doctor to get vaccinations, prescriptions and check-ups for free or at a reduced cost."

For the list of family doctors in your neighborhood, please, visit <http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/lv/veselibas-aprupes-pakalpojumi/gimenes-arsti/gimenes-arsti-atbilstosi-teritorijam> (in Latvian)

Alternatively, you can reach out to NHS:

By phone: (+371) 80 001 234
Email: info@vmnvd.gov.lv

Apart from consultations and primary care, family doctors provide their patients with the referrals to the specialist physicians. These referrals allow patients to receive specialists' services at a considerable discount, because a portion of the expense is funded by the state. However, the waiting time for the discounted appointments might be rather long. In case you are not willing to wait, you are free to receive the service at a full price in any health care institution of your choice, covering all the costs by your own means or with an insurance.

Reliable health care providers in Latvia

	Company	Website
Emergency units	First help and treatment in case of life-threatening conditions	113 or 112
Family doctors	First help in case of simple injuries Treatment in case of sickness Home visits Prescription of medicine Examinations and vaccination Newborn and child care Referrals to specialist physicians	+371 66016001 Email: medkonsultacija@gmail.com
Specialist physicians	Range of services aimed at treatment of specific conditions and recreation	Please visit https://healthtravellatvia.lv/en

Dental care in Latvia is offered at a full price to adults and is free for children under 18 years old. The average price range for dentistry services is as follows:

Consultation	EUR 18-35
Treatment plan	from EUR 49
Aesthetic filling	from EUR 50
Tooth renewal	from EUR 90
Hygiene	EUR 55-65

While health care costs vary substantially among different Latvian service providers, one will notice that even at a full price, the health care services in Latvia are competitive in terms of price and quality within the Baltic Sea region and are considerably more affordable than in Western Europe and Scandinavia.

Housing

Choosing accommodation is another important step in the relocation process. The declaration of the place of residence is also a mandatory condition for finalizing the Startup Visa application. This section gives a brief introduction into the local housing market in Latvia.

For the guide to the Latvian social security system and state-funded health care, please visit www.ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=858.

The guide is available in Latvian, English, French and German.



To start with, it is important to understand where to look for information about the accommodation options.

The most popular search channels include:

1. Websites

<https://www.city24.lv>

in Latvian, English, Russian, and Finnish

<https://zip.lv>

in Latvian, English, and Russian

<https://www.rentinriga.lv>

in Latvian, English, and Russian

<https://www.cityreal.lv>

in Latvian, English, and Russian

<https://www.ss.com>

in Latvian and Russian

2. Social groups on Facebook

(for accommodation options in Riga):

Apartments in Riga - Sale - Rent

37k members

Rent an apartment in Riga

13k members

Rental Apartment Market Riga

9.2k members

RENT in RIGA

7.1k members

3. Real estate agencies



Kivi Real Estate



NEWSEC



CBRE Baltics



Ober-Haus Real Estate Advisors



Latio



Arco Real Estate



Imperio Estate

and other companies

4. Airbnb and Booking.com

Location is another important aspect in the accommodation search, especially for those who are planning to settle down in the capital of Latvia. Riga differs a lot from other Latvian cities in terms of size, yet it still is a very compact city with a range of diverse, yet easily accessible districts.



Districts

The Old Town of Riga steals hearts with its cosy cobble-stoned streets and well preserved medieval churches. While the rent prices can't reach the iconic roosters on the steeples, it still is one of the most expensive neighbourhoods to live in.

The City Center, lying just next to the Old Town, is considerably bigger in terms of area and thus provides a wider choice of housing, restaurants and entertainment options that accommodate different tastes and cost preferences.

The Quiet Center, also known as the Art Nouveau district or the Quarter of Embassies, is a prestigious central parish with stylish restaurants and distinguished historical residences, all snuggled between the fine greenery of two parks.

Agenskalns (3.7 km from the Dome square), located on the left bank of the Daugava river, is full of beautifully restored wooden buildings, including arts, entertainment and event enclave The Kalnciems Street Quarter.

Kipsala (3.8 km from the Dome square) is another picturesque left-bank neighbourhood located within 10- minute



walk from the centre. Here you can enjoy one of the best views of the Old Town from a waterfront jogging field or a cosy beach.

Skanste (3.9 km from the Dome square) is very popular among professionals employed in the nearby banks. Besides a vast number of high-class residential buildings and offices, Skanste is home to the biggest event venue in Latvia - Arena Riga.

Grizinkalns (3.9 km from the Dome square) may be perfect for families with children, as its newly renovated park hosts a number of sports activities for kids and teenagers that give this historic neighbourhood a completely fresh and youthful vibe.

Teika, Purvciems, Imanta (6.5-7.5 km from the Dome square) are relatively new and densely populated neighbourhoods that provide all the necessary infrastructure and numerous housing opportunities just within a half an hour drive from the city centre - from Soviet projects to a number of new residential complexes.

Rent prices for the most popular apartment types in Riga

District	Type of apartment	Rent per month*
Prestigious central districts, including the Old Town and the Quiet Centre	2 rooms	EUR 650-800
	3 rooms	EUR 700-1500
	4-5 rooms	EUR 1500-2100
Residential districts (Teika, Purvciems, Imanta, etc.)	Old building, 1 room	EUR 200-300
	Old building, 2 rooms	EUR 250-400
	Old building, 3 rooms	EUR 350-550
	New building, 2 rooms	EUR 350-550
	New building, 3 rooms	EUR 500-750

*Based on the Ober Haus Market Report 2019

It should be emphasized that in the majority of cases **the rent prices do not include utility charges** that depend on the season, building maintenance cost and overall consumption of water, electricity and gas. In 2019, the average utility charges for a 50 m² apartment in Riga were from EUR 1.50 to EUR 4.00 per m².



The buying prices for an apartment with final finishing in new buildings look as follows:

Residential districts	EUR 1,500-2,100 per m ²
Central districts	EUR 2,100-4,000 per m ²
Exclusive apartments in central districts	EUR 5,000-6,000

Declaration of the place of residence

Within one month from changing the place of residence, whether it is owned or rented, all residents of Latvia should declare their place of residence:

- at the local government in whose territory they live,
- electronically, using e-signature or verification means provided by internet banks in the portal www.latvija.lv,
- at the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs.



Cost of living

Cost of living in the capital city of Riga is the highest in Latvia, as one may expect. However, a euro goes a much longer way here, if compared to the biggest European startup hubs, such as Berlin, London, Paris and Stockholm, among others. What it means in practice: Riga offers a great quality of life without eating a big hole in your budget.



Cost of living comparison among Riga, Stockholm and Berlin*

	Price in Riga	Price in Stockholm	Price in Berlin
Bottle of water	EUR 0.82	EUR 1.88	EUR 1.70
Loaf of fresh white bread (500g)	EUR 0.88	EUR 2.11	EUR 1.34
Meal at inexpensive restaurant	EUR 7	EUR 11.96	EUR 9
One-way ticket (local transport)	EUR 1.15	EUR 3.83	EUR 2.90
Monthly transportation pass (regular price)	EUR 50	EUR 88.96	EUR 82.75
Internet (60 Mbps or more, unlimited data, cable/ADSL, per month)	EUR 16.22	EUR 26.25	EUR 31.55
Cinema (international release, 1 seat)	EUR 8	EUR 13.29	EUR 12
1 Pair of Nike running shoes (mid-range)	EUR 72.89	EUR 92.02	EUR 85.45

*Based on www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living data

Free time activities

In spite of its compact size, Latvia is not at all lacking in variety: beautiful routes lead to miles of delicate white-sand beaches and pine forests, and world-class performances of opera and ballet easily alternate with lively street food fairs and music festivals. For more ideas on what to see and where to go, please visit www.latvia.travel/en.



Insider's guide to Riga

Being the epicentre of local cultural life and a home for a number of iconic landmarks, Latvian capital offers activities to suit all tastes. Besides classic attractions to be featured in the majority of tourist guidebooks, there are some non-traditional venues approved by the local startup community.

Robert`s Books offers hungry minds and open hearts a glass of good wine and even a better book in English. Grab a drink, browse through shelves or stop for an event.



Kurts Coffee, founded by parents of one strong little warrior, is a place to do a good deed by buying a coffee to support some of Kurt's special needs.



Andrejosta quarter serves the most beautiful sunsets, accompanied by nice food, sparkling wine and tasteful sets by popular local DJs.



Jauna Teika is a modern living space with offices, co-workings, restaurants, cocktail bars and a sports club - all within easy reach. Chill by the fountain or explore one of the summer street food fairs.



K.K. Von Stricka villa hosts the most charming open-air festivals. Grab your smile and some friends for a memorable evening in the middle of the city.



Tallina street quarter, once used as an ambulance depot, now is full of hipsterish bars and art venues. Explore the graffiti during the daytime and get back for a sip of buzzing nightlife.



Miera street with its local speciality stores, cozy cafés and creative studios is holding the title of the hippest location in Riga almost a decade, and it hasn't lost an ounce of its vibrancy.

Kanepes Culture Centre is a bohemian place with an authentically "come as you are" attitude. Down-to-earth parties and live performances are just a few things to experience here.



The Spikeri Flea Market attracts design fans, vintage lovers and treasure hunters looking for the best bargains and extensive cultural programs in the summer. **Tip!** If you find yourself craving for fresh seasonal berries or fruits, **the nearby Night Market** will surprise your taste buds.



Vespa Garazh is where Vespa scooters, delicious coffee and cocktails live. Don't have Vespa? Rent it here and explore the city to create your own insider's guide!



Education

Aside from being a vibrant and culturally exciting country, Latvia is politically stable and safe to live and raise a family. While all the requirements on relocation with spouses and kids under the Startup Visa programme are listed on Page 35, this section covers another important aspect of a smooth transition for a family – education system.

The education system in Latvia consists of four key levels: pre-school education, basic education, secondary education, and higher education.



Pre-school education is compulsory at the age of five and six and must be completed by the age of seven, with an option to postpone the completion by one year, following a doctor's order or parents' request.

Basic education is compulsory, too. It is typically completed by the age of 16, but may continue until the child is 18 years old.

After these two stages, teenagers are free to choose whether they want to continue studies and receive secondary education or not. Typically, secondary school programmes are focused on preparing youth for the high schools, and vocational secondary education is more hands-on and helps students secure a specific profession or skill.

The length of a study year at Latvian schools differs across the four levels of education. Typically, it starts on the first working day of September and lasts until the last working day of May. As for the grading approach, a ten-point system prevails, whereas 10 is the best result and 4 is a passing grade.



Levels of education in Latvia

Pre-school	Basic education	Secondary education	Higher education
Age: 1.5-7	Age: 7-16	Age: 16 and up, depending on the programme	Age: 19 and up, depending on the programme
Kindergartens or pre-primary classes at general education institutions, e.g. schools	Schools	Schools or vocational education institutions	Higher education institutions
Compulsory at age of 5 and 6	Compulsory from age of 7	Not compulsory	



Language of tuition

The language of tuition in public pre-school, basic and secondary education institutions is Latvian, the only official state language. There is also a number of public kindergartens and schools with programmes taught in one of the minority languages - Russian, Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Roma or Belarusian, as well as private institutions with programmes in English, French, and German, among others. Every student receiving pre-school, basic or secondary education in a foreign language, also studies the official state language.





Higher education may be acquired in Latvian, English and Russian, or in a combination of any of these languages.



Tuition fees and admission

Pre-school, basic and secondary education in public institutions is free of charge, parents are only required to cover catering costs (if not covered by the municipality) which vary from approximately EUR 1.3 - 2.1 per day for kindergartens and up to a few euros per meal at the school canteen.

To have your child admitted to a public kindergarten or school, you need to visit the institution of your choice and submit the following documents:

-  Filled application form
-  Copy of the child's birth certificate
-  Statement of the declared place of residence
-  Parent's passport

Additionally, when a foreign child is considered for admission, the educational institution may ask for the documents which validate the curriculum and education acquired before. In case of an application for secondary education, the proof of basic education is also required.

Tip:

Residents of Riga can submit their applications through www.eriga.lv.



The demand for public kindergartens surpasses the supply, and the waiting lists tend to be long. It is advised to enlist your child at a kindergarten as soon as you have a declared address. The demand for the best public schools is also high, it is therefore recommended to apply to several schools.



Tip:

Scholarship opportunities are also available. To find more, please visit: http://viaa.gov.lv/eng/scholarships_gov/latvian_scholarships/scholarships_for_studies

Private schools and kindergartens may set their own tuition fees and admission requirements. In Riga, their regular fees are around

-  EUR 300-400 per month for a private kindergarten
-  EUR 450 and up per month for a private school, including catering

Tuition fees at higher education institutions vary substantially. Students may either cover the fees by their own financial means, or consider taking a state-guaranteed loan. Tuition for some students is subsidised by the state or the institution itself.

To find more on higher education institutions in Latvia, please visit: www.izm.gov.lv/en.

Latvian language courses

In Riga, every third-country national can learn Latvian language free of charge with the support of the Riga City Council. The State Employment Agency also provides free Latvian language courses to the residents with an active unemployment status. For more information about educational centers and study schedules, please visit <http://www.integration.lv/en/courses-events>

Alternatively, you or your family members can study Latvian individually with private teachers at private language training centers or online distance-learning platforms, e.g. <https://maciunmacies.valoda.lv/eng>

List of private language training centres offering Latvian courses

Alius Lingua	https://aliuslingua.lv/en
Baltic Media Language Training Centre	http://www.valodukursi.lv/en
BaltImage	http://mcbaltimage.lv (In Latvian)
Dialogs AB	https://www.dialogs-ab.lv (In Latvian and Russian)
Durbe Education Centre	http://www.durbe.edu.lv/en
International House	https://ihriga.lv/en
Language Training Centre	https://vmc.lv/en
LatConsul	http://www.latconsul.lv/en/home/page
Lonet.Academy	https://lonet.academy/language-teachers/latvian-tutors-online?lang=en
Nordisk	http://nordisk.lv/en/main.html
Polyglot School	http://www.polyglotskola.lv/en
Skrivanek	https://valodumacibas.lv (In Latvian)

Useful apps

As our lives become more digital, there is a range of apps Latvian residents use to do things fast and in a more efficient way.



Bolt or **Yandex Taxi** are the equivalents of Uber that provide taxis at a relatively low cost. Pay drivers directly or via the app - if it's connected to your payment card.



Mobilily is an app to pay for parking, RedCab and Baltic Taxi services, buy train tickets, and a whole bunch of other useful things. When creating an account, fill the "resident number" space - if you don't have one - with zeros.



Waze is a global app heavily used by Latvian drivers for plotting the best route, especially during the rush hours, as it provides real-time updates about accidents on the road and the overall intensity of traffic.



Wolt delivers food from the majority of Riga restaurants and the cafes - from street food to high cuisine for some special occasions. Just enter your banking card details and pay via the app, yet make sure you are browsing through the local offers, as Wolt is international.



Barbora app and website allows you to order groceries from one of the leading supermarket chains Maxima. Everything, including fruit and vegetables, need to be ordered by weight. Pick up your orders in Maxima stores or arrange the same-day front-door delivery.



Stop Covid is a state-of-the-art Bluetooth-based app developed by Latvian IT professionals for detecting encounters with COVID-19 positive users. In comparison to other apps that use similar monitoring features, Stop Covid is available for devices with iOS or Android operating systems.

Startup Visa stories



Zheng Zeng,
founder of DentalAI

From China

Lives with his wife in a two-bedroom apartment in Riga Centre

Works from home

Shops at Maxima and Rimi

Eats lunch at home

Travels around Latvia, the Baltics and Scandinavia

Total monthly costs: EUR 1,500

Pleasant surprises in Latvia: low prices, compact size of Riga downtown and huge choice of Asian ingredients at the local supermarkets



Farmon Akmalov,
founder of Airdas

From Uzbekistan

Lives with his brother in a two-bedroom apartment in Riga Centre

Works from a co-working space

Shops at Rimi and Maxima

Eats lunch at different cafes

Travels around Latvia by car, enjoys the nightlife

Total monthly costs: EUR 600-1,000

Pleasant surprises in Latvia: open-minded people, numerous funding and support tools available for startups



Olga Maksimova,
founder of Lovat

From Russia

Lives with her family in a two-bedroom apartment in Riga Centre

Works in Swedbank DoBe co-working

Shops at Rimi and Riga Central Market

Eats lunch at Swedbank canteen

Does yachting, studies German, goes to bachata lessons and enjoys Jurmala beach

Total monthly costs: EUR 1,400

Pleasant surprises in Latvia: multilingualism both in terms of business and everyday matters, competitive cost of living, access to state-funded health care



Austin Nicholas,
founder of iSTAQ

From the UK

Lives in Latvia for 15 years

Works from the garage of his newly purchased house in Ciekurkalns

Shops at Rimi and Maxima

Eats lunch at home, or at Stockpot or Wok&Curry, when in city centre

Spends free time in the garden, plays golf at Ozo or Viesturi clubs, visits Kisezers or Vecaki for a swim

Total monthly costs: EUR 1,500

Pleasant surprises in Latvia: the vibrancy of the startup scene

Oftentimes, relocation is a draining and mentally exhausting process. However, it doesn't need to be that way. With the right amount of information and inspiration, everyone can find the courage to follow the dreams. Have a look at four startup founders who went through this experience and are now enjoying life in Latvia.

Resources



Investment opportunities

It is never easy to run a company, but startups often feel additional pressure. Statistics show that nine out of ten startups will not survive. The foundation for the success of a startup is based on innovation and the ability to scale. This, in turn, heavily depends on a mixture of business, engineering and design skills, as well as the availability of the financial means. Over the course of time, as the startup grows, pivots and expands, the need for financing grows exponentially, and many startup founders lose sleep over longer runways. There is always a chance to bootstrap, and many successful startups in Latvia have taken that path. Experience, however, shows that this is not the most obvious option. Whether

you are looking to raise funds for piloting, MVP tests, market validation, sales funnels, top-notch marketing or scaling, the Latvian startup ecosystem provides the necessary support. Business angel networks, acceleration programmes and numerous venture capital funds are domiciled in Latvia. There is also an increased interest among foreign investors in terms of the Baltic States.

Business angels

When funding from Friends, Family and Fools is unavailable, business angels can help you get your startup off the ground. A good angel provides not only funding, but also their expertise and network. Because of the highly perceived risks related to early-stage startups, however, the angels might want to receive a larger share of equity.

Changer Club

One of the biggest business angel communities in the Nordic region with 130+ private investors and entrepreneurs, and counting, Changer Club focuses on edtech, medtech, foodtech, productivity tools, and home entertainment mostly supporting early-stage startups from the Baltics and the CIS. Changer Club does its own scouting through monthly pitching sessions where three or four startups from about 30 are selected for possible investments. In order to get to the pitch, the startup's monthly revenue needs to be at least EUR 2,000-3,000. There should also be a clear plan on how to multiply it by hundred in a year's time. Finally, the startup also needs to aim for a regional or global market.

Applications: idea@clubchanger.com

Candidates per session: 3-4

Average ticket: up to EUR 200,000

Website: www.clubchanger.com

LatBAN

Founded in 2014, this Latvian business angel network has already invested about EUR 11 million. Best known for its monthly investment sessions, which bring together investors and entrepreneurs, LatBAN has been able to add more than 110 investment deals to its portfolio, often choosing to create syndicates. Instead of the go-big-or-go-home mentality, the angels opt for lesser equity but a bigger number of companies to invest in. There are no specific industry preferences and on top of investment, mentoring by experienced entrepreneurs is available.

Applications: www.startupincluder.com
Candidates per session: 5-8
Average ticket: EUR 50,000
Website: www.latban.lv/en



Accelerators

If a startup needs both an early-stage investment and intensive hands-on mentoring, an accelerator is a great fit. With the highest concentration of business accelerators across the Baltic capitals, Riga offers four thematically diverse acceleration programs with varying entry criteria and the amount of funding.

Buildit Latvia

Specializing in hardware and IoT solutions, Buildit has created an acceleration programme fitting the needs of startups in these particular industries. Four intensive weeks in a four-month programme for ten team batches are enough for the startup to become investable. While all you need to apply is a prototype and a team of 2, if you feel like your idea will change the world, even that might not be necessary. Each startup receives up to EUR 50,000 in pre-seed investment, as well as mentoring by established professionals and a network of manufacturers and investors. There is a possibility of a follow-up seed round up to EUR 250,000.

Requirements for startups :

Stage of development:

MVP or working prototype

Team: At least two individuals with relevant experience

Ticket size: Pre-seed up to EUR 50,000 as a convertible loan; seed up to EUR 250,000

Teams in batch: up to 10

Website: www.buildit.lv



Commercialization Reactor

With a strong focus on deeptech, Commercialization Reactor (CR) is all about the commercialisation of scientific breakthroughs. CR mostly works with early-stage startups and offers six-month acceleration that is focused on market and customer development. Pre-seed investments of up to EUR 50,000 are provided for the teams in the acceleration programme with the possibility to apply for the seed investments of up to EUR 250,000. CR is also known for its annual Ignition Event, which provides a unique matchmaking opportunity for ambitious entrepreneurs and world-class scientific teams that are seeking to launch a deeptech startup

Requirements for startups:

Stage of development: early-stage (before sales or sales have just started)

Team: the committed team, consisting of at least an entrepreneur and a developer of technology (a scientist)

Ticket size: Pre-seed up to EUR 50,000 as a convertible loan; seed up to EUR 250,000

Acceleration programme: 6 months

Teams in batch: up to 10

Website:

www.commercializationreactor.com

Overkill Ventures

Overkill has a diverse portfolio of b2b startups, and it supports pre-seed stage companies in finding their product-market fit. In order to accelerate this process, Overkill offers EUR 40,000 investment and a 3-month mentoring program. During this period, the founders work closely with the partners of Overkill and combined with various mentoring sessions, workshops and 1:1s, aim to find their beachhead and score those early customers so necessary for the company's growth. After the program, the initial funding can be followed up by another investment of up to EUR 250,000.

Requirements for startups:

Stage of development: MVP

Ticket size: Pre-seed up to EUR 40,000; seed up to EUR 250,000

Acceleration programme: 3 months

Teams in batch: up to 12

Website: www.overkill.vc



Startup Wise Guys

These guys (and girls) are one of the largest early-stage investors with the most extensive experience in Europe. SWG is focusing on b2b startups in three verticals: SaaS, fintech and cyber security. SWG has supported startups since 2012, investing in more than 185 companies with a survival rate of 77%. Up to 5 months of intensive full-time mentoring program offers up to EUR 50,000 in investments, dedicated coaching, as well as access to 250+ mentors with in-depth knowledge of business development, sales and fundraising magic, as well as tech wisdom. To get accepted to the programme, startups must have full-time teams, a working and scalable prototype, some traction and a willingness to disrupt the market.

Requirements for startups:

Stage of development: Early stage

Ticket size: Up to EUR 50,000

Acceleration programme: up to 5 months

Teams in batch: 10

Website: www.startupwiseguys.com



Venture capital funds

While a startup can receive an investment from a venture capital (VC) fund at any stage of its development, mostly those who have proven their product traction, will. During the past couple of years, the VC scene in the Baltics has grown immensely, bringing in funds from many regions, especially from the Nordics. With the growing economy, relatively low cost of living and high ease of doing business ranking, as well as a seed round averaging around EUR 150,000 (instead of the USD 1.1 million in Europe), more and more investors are looking at Latvia to diversify their portfolios.

List of venture capital funds

Change Ventures

Website:

www.changeventures.com/#about

Funding stage: Pre-seed and seed

Ticket size: EUR 100,000-750,000 in pre-seed and seed capital investments along with more capital in later rounds

Expansion Capital AIFP

Website: www.excap.lv/en/

Funding stage: Seed and Series A

Ticket size: EUR 150,000-25,000 at seed stage; EUR 600,000-2.1 million at the growth stage

ZGI

Website: www.zgi.lv/offer

Funding stage: Series A

Ticket size: EUR 500,000-3.75 million

Imprimatur Capital

Website: www.icfm.lv

Funding stage: Pre-series A

Focus: b2b software & data, digital health & lifestyle, learning & training, robotics/automation

Ticket size: EUR 500,000

Rubylight

Website: www.rubylight.com

Funding Stage: Series A

Focus: B2C, social media, content sharing, communications, and crowdsourcing

Ticket size: EUR 500,000

Livonia Partners

Website: www.livoniapartners.com

Funding stage: Series A

Focus: SMEs operating the Baltic States that have become market leaders in the region and beyond

Ticket size: EUR 3-15 million

Baltcap

Website: www.baltcap.com

Funding stage: Series A

Focus: Tech, robotics, automatics, healthtech, AI and mobility

Ticket size: EUR 2 million

Flycap

Website: www.flycap.lv

Funding stage:

Series A (Mezzanine investment)

Focus: Healthcare, b2b, IT & tech, export-oriented manufacturing

Ticket size: Mezzanine investment of EUR 1-3 million

Equity-free government support

Any forward-thinking country values the quality of life that innovation creates, the impact that technology has on basically any aspect of our lives, and the importance of motivating and supporting those individuals and companies that nurture innovation. Latvia is no exception, and there are numerous mechanisms to support this transformation. The impacts of technologies have affected the importance of motivating and supporting the relevant individuals and companies. Latvia is no exception, and there are numerous mechanisms in support of this.

Apart from grant programmes offered by the government, innovative and new businesses have access to a broad range of EU funds from programmes such as Horizon2020, Eureka, Eurostars, etc. Information about various types of financing, the application process, project management and potential project partners can be found at the European Commission website.

Promotion of International Competitiveness program

Actions to be supported under the measure "Promotion of International Competitiveness":

- Participation in international exhibitions, conferences or forums;
- Participation in international digital industry platforms and digital exhibitions;
- Adaptation of product services to foreign markets;
- publicity in foreign media;
- Telemarketing services to find a foreign cooperation partner;
- Conformity assessment of plants and products;
- Participation in national stands organized by LIAA;
- Participation in trade missions and visits of state officials organized by LIAA;
- LIAA consultation costs (also consultation costs of foreign economic representations).

Main requirements:

- Any legal entity that applies to the EU commission 2014-year June 17th REGUL (ES) Nr.651/2014 Appendix 1.
- Link: (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R0651>)

For more information, please see:

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/lv/programmas/skv-uznemejdarbiba>

Innovation voucher

45% co-financing for highly qualified employees can also be sourced through the Innovation Voucher, which is a tool aimed at encouraging innovation in Latvia-based companies. The programme is designed for companies which have a new product or service idea with international growth potential and which require external expertise. Up to EUR 25,000 in financing can be used to cover various R&D expenditures such as:

- A feasibility study
- Industrial research
- Development of a product's industrial design
- Industrial research needed to develop new products or technologies
- Experimental development, including prototyping
- Certification and testing of a new product or technology
- Registration of industrial property rights for inventions, industrial designs and topographies of semiconductors

Main requirements:

- Company should be developing a new or upgrading an existing technology/product
- Proof that the innovation activity contributes to the company's competitiveness and productivity
- A business plan for a new product/technology which considers the development process up to introduction to the market, as well as production process

For more information, please see:

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/lv/programmas/inovaciju-vauceri>
<https://startuplatvia.eu/innovation-voucher>

Startup Law

The Latvian workforce offers clear value for money, but wages may nevertheless pose a challenge for startups which are taking their first steps in the world of business or are looking for the most talented employees. Introduced in 2017, the Startup Law:

- Defines the startup as a scalable business with high economic potential,
- Describes two support mechanisms aimed at **easing the labor-related costs, namely**,
 - a. Flat social tax EUR 302 + 0% personal income tax or
 - b. 45% co-financing for highly qualified employees

For more information, please see:

<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/287272-law-on-aid-for-the-activities-of-start-up-companies>
<https://startuplatvia.eu/startup-law-benefits>
<http://www.liaa.gov.lv/lv/fondi/2014-2020/jaunuznemumu-atbalsta-programmas>

Startup loans

Startup-focused loans of EUR 2,000 to EUR 150,000 are issued by the state-owned ALTUM development finance institution.

For more information, please see:

<https://www.altum.lv/en/services/business-start-ups/business-start-up-programme/about-the-programme/>

Main requirements:

- An investment from a qualified investor (VC fund - EUR 30 000, accelerator or business angel - EUR 15 000) in the first five years of a newly established company or
- Evidence demonstrating the development or production of an innovative product in the startup
- Tax debt of no more than EUR 150
- No ongoing bankruptcy process

Stock option regulation

Stock options give employees the opportunity to acquire the company's shares for a nominal price or free of charge after a certain period of time, regardless of the company's shares of the current fair value. The employee thus gains the opportunity to sell the shares and earn additional income if the value of the company has increased.

The granting of stock options is a bonus payment system that allows companies to attract important employees for several years.

Main requirements:

- An innovative startup with SME status, registered less than five years ago
- A business plan that justifies the viability of the company or project

Contacts for Startup Law, Innovation Voucher, Explore the Globe

Investment and Development Agency of Latvia
 E-mail: startup@liaa.gov.lv

Contacts for Startup loans

The state-owned ALTUM development finance institution
 E-mail: altum@altum.lv

Community shapers

It is never too much support, as it comes to setting up your own enterprise. While the entrepreneur-friendly legislation may form the excellent ground for creative ideas, the buzzing Latvian startup ecosystem helps to reap the harvest by arming the future innovators with both financial and soft support tools.



Compact in size, yet tight-knit and welcoming, the local ecosystem comprises both public and private stakeholders

Media

Events

Media: Digital Health Cluster Latvia, VEFRESH, Bi smart BIZNESĀ TEHNOĻOĢIJU PLATFORMA, RTU DESIGN FACTORY, Microsoft, Baltic Startup Mafia, MAGNETIC LATVIA LABS OF LATVIA, GDG, #RigaTechGirls, WindHackers, RACC ONS, techhub, Venture Faculty, VENTSPILS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PARK.

Events: Digital Freedom Festival, 5G TECHRITORY, iNOVUSS JAUNRADES FESTIVĀLS, RACC ONS, RIGA COMM, Tech Industry, Deep Tech Atelier, techchill, IMPRIMATUR CAPITAL, LATBAN LATVIAN BUSINESS ANGEL NETWORK, COMMERCIALIZATION REACTOR, BALTCAP, CHANGE VENTURES BACKING AMBITIOUS BALTIC FOUNDERS, CHANGER CLUB, FLYCAP, WISE GUYS.

Hubs & clusters: Digital Innovation Hub, IT CLUSTER, RACC ONS, techhub, Venture Faculty, VENTSPILS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PARK.

Funds: ZGI CAPITAL, OVERKILL, COMMERCIALIZATION REACTOR, BALTCAP, CHANGE VENTURES, CHANGER CLUB.

Business incubators

Industry

Business incubators: RTU DESIGN FACTORY, MAGNETIC LATVIA BIZNESĀ INKUBATORI, RISEBA CREATIVE BUSINESS INCUBATOR, UL STUDENT BUSINESS INCUBATOR, altum, NL Netherlands, VENTSPILS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PARK, LIAA Latvijas Investīciju un attīstības aģentūra Investment and Development Agency of Latvia.

Industry: Imt, Microsoft, tet, LATVIJAS VALSTS MEŽI, Rietumu Banka, SORAINEN, SEB.

Government: Ministry of Economics Republic of Latvia, State Education Development Agency Republic of Latvia, British Embassy Riga, LIAA.

Associations: accenture, NORD DDB° RIGA, DRAUGIEM GROUP, LATA, startin .lv Go Global., LIKTA LATVIAN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION, LATBAN LATVIAN BUSINESS ANGEL NETWORK, LATVIJAS ALTERNATĪVO FINANŠU PAKALPOJUMU ASOCIĀCIJA, LVCA LATVIAN PRIVATE EQUITY AND VENTURE CAPITAL ASSOCIATION.

With "startup" on everyone's lip, the ecosystem is constantly expanding, yet some key supporters have remained active for years and thus may deserve a closer look.

Associations:**Startup Association Startin.LV**

<http://startin.lv>

Latvian Business Angel Network

LatBAN <https://www.latban.lv/en>

Latvian Venture Capital Association

<https://www.lvca.lv/en>

Latvian Blockchain Association

<http://blockchain.org.lv>

Latvian Information and communications technology association (LIKTA)

<https://likta.lv/en/home-en/>

Business incubators:**Magnetic Latvia Business Incubators**

<https://inkubatori.magneticlatvia.lv/en>

RTU Design Factory <https://www.rtu.lv/en/science/dizaina-fabrika>**UL Student Business Incubator**

<https://www.lu.lv/en/cooperation/ul-student-business-incubator/>

RISEBA Creative Business Incubator

<https://www.riseba.lv/en/about-riseba/riseba-creative-business-incubator>

Ventspils Business Support Centre

<https://www.vatp.lv/en/business-support>

Funds:**Acceleration Funds:**

Overkill Ventures www.overkill.vc

BuildIT <https://www.buildit.lv>

Commercialization Reactor

<https://www.commercializationreactor.com>

Startup Wise Guys

<https://startupwiseguys.com>

Business Angel Networks:**Latvian Business Angel Network**

LatBAN <https://www.latban.lv/en>

Changer BAN <http://changerban.next.lv>**Venture Capital Funds:**

Imprimatur Capital <https://www.icfm.lv>

ZGI <https://www.zgi.lv/offer/>

RubyLight

<http://rubylightinvestments.com.au>

Change Ventures <https://www.changeventures.com>

Expansion Capital <https://excap.lv/en>

Livonia Partners <https://www.livoniapartners.com>

BaltCap <https://www.baltcap.com>

FlyCap <https://www.flycap.lv>

Government:**Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA)**

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en>

Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia

<https://www.em.gov.lv/en/>

ALTUM <https://www.altum.lv/en/>

State Education and Development Agency (VIAA) <https://viaa.gov.lv/eng/>

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

<https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl/countries/latvia>

Embassy of the United Kingdom in Riga

<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-riga.lv>

Hubs & clusters:

TechHub Riga <https://riga.techhub.com>

Latvian IT Cluster <https://www.itbaltic.com>

Latvian Digital Health Cluster <https://www.digital-health-cluster-latvia.org>

Riga Tech Girls <http://www.rigatechgirls.org>

Google Developer Group (GDG)

<https://gdgriga.lv>

Business technology platform BiSMART

<http://www.bismart.lv/en>

VEFRESH <https://www.vefresh.com>

UL Microsoft Innovation Center LUMIC

<https://www.lumic.lu.lv>

Wind Hackers <https://windhackers.com/about>

Racoons <https://www.theraccoons.org>

Industry:

Swedbank Latvia <https://www.swedbank.lv>

Accenture Latvia <https://www.accenture.com/lv-en/about/company/about-latvia>

Microsoft Latvia

<https://www.microsoft.com/lv-lv>

LMT <https://www.lmt.lv/en/main>

SEB Latvia <https://www.seb.lv/eng>

Tet <https://www.tet.lv>

Sorainen <https://www.sorainen.com>

Draugiem Group

<https://draugiemgroup.com/en>

Latvian State Forests

<https://www.lvm.lv/en/>

Nord DDB <https://ddb.lv>

Events:

TechChill <https://techchill.co>

Digital Freedom Festival

<https://www.digitalfreedomfestival.com>

Riga Venture Summit

<https://www.rvsummit.co>

Deep Tech Atelier

<https://deeptechatelier.liaa.gov.lv>

iNovuss <https://www.inovuss.lv/en>

Riga Comm <https://rigacomm.com/en>

5G Techritory

<https://www.5gtechritory.com>

Tech Industry

<http://www.techindustry.lv/en/index.php>

Baltic Honeybadger

<https://bh2019.hodlhodl.com>

Media:

News platform about technologies and innovation "Labs of Latvia"

<https://labsoflatvia.com/en/home>

Latvian Public Broadcasting

<https://eng.lsm.lv>

The Baltic Course

<http://www.baltic-course.com>

Baltic Startup Mafia

<https://www.facebook.com/balticstartupmafia>



Latvijas Investīciju un attīstības aģentūra
Investment and Development Agency of Latvia

LIAA (Investment and Development Agency of Latvia)

Contacts

Website:

<https://labsoflatvia.com/en/home>
www.liaa.gov.lv/en

Phone: +371 67039499

E-mail: startup@liaa.gov.lv,
liaa@liaa.gov.lv

Address: Perses Street 2, Riga

Subordinated to the Ministry of Economics, the LIAA, equipped by its own startup consulting unit a.k.a Startup Latvia, is a one-stop-shop for all foreign nationals who are willing to plug into the local entrepreneurial scene.

Startup Latvia

Being the hands, the minds and the hearts behind this guide, Startup Latvia team offers a diverse range of incentives and opportunities for innovative ideas at each stage of growth. No matter whether you would like to obtain the Startup Visa or the social tax rebate under the Startup Law, this unit will be your contact point for the key support mechanisms provided by the state and the EU. Apart from implementation of these programmes, discussed in the previous sections, Startup Latvia nurtures the ecosystem by exciting events, promotional activities, as well as extensive consulting on both relocation and business matters.

Tech scouts

While innovation and science always go hand-in-hand, it may take time and expertise to navigate through opportunities offered by the academia sector, especially if you are starting up in a new country.

Being familiar with what every researcher or lab can bring to the table, **LIAA scouting experts will save you**

extra effort by finding the best tech partners in the field of bioeconomics, smart materials, ICT, intellectual property rights, smart energy, and biomedicine. Apart from industry-specific scouting, an additional scout is assigned to the University of Latvia, one of the biggest multidisciplinary educational institutions in the country.

Labs of Latvia

In spite of its name, the Labs of Latvia is not a physical place, and thus this online platform has no limitations in terms of **exposing the best of the local startup scene to the entire world**. Visit <https://labsoflatvia.com/en/home> for fresh community news, inspiring stories and a broad directory of direct links to diverse support mechanisms.

Events

While it may be a hard task to count all the networking events organized by the LIAA, **Deep Tech Atelier and iNOVUS festival** clearly stand out in terms of scope. While the first one is a practical, seminar-type forum on commercialization of the scientific breakthroughs, the latter

is a relaxed open-air fest for the entire innovative entrepreneurship community. As both events contain pitches and “meet-and-greet” with potential investors, tangible results.

Magnetic Latvia Business incubators

In case your startup team speaks Latvian, it can benefit from two types of incubation programmes aimed at setting up a company or scaling the existing one, both free of charge and available throughout the country. For more information about Magnetic Latvia business incubators, please see www.inkubatori.magneticlatvia.lv/en

International representations

While you can easily reach the LIAA or the Startup Latvia online, the institution has a broad network of representations in Belarus, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the UK, and the USA.



**UNIVERSITY
OF LATVIA**

University of Latvia (UL)

Contacts

Website: www.lu.lv/en/

E-mail: lu@lu.lv

Phone: +371 67034444

Address: Raina bulvaris 19, Riga

No matter whether you will rely on the LIAA tech scout or your own effort, the search for scientific expertise may lead you to University of Latvia - is one of the largest comprehensive and leading research universities in the Baltics and a long-time supporter of the local startup community.

House of Science

Opened in 2019, House of Science of almost 20,000 sqm comprises all the UL facilities related to exact disciplines, medicine and life sciences. If your business idea requires any research or prototyping, this modern place has it all - under one roof.

The Innovation Center of the University of Latvia and Microsoft (LUMIC)

Being one of a kind in the Baltics, the LUMIC implements **Microsoft for Startups support programme that provides ICT sector's newcomers with free access to Microsoft's cloud-based computing software.** Other perks of the centre include an access to a broad network of both partners and investors, as well as regular meetups and hackathons.

Startup Accelerator

Startup Accelerator is a collaboration project handled by UL and experts from other countries around the Baltic

Sea. In case your idea deals with the environmental burden on consumption, this accelerator is the right place to look for support your sustainable innovation may require.

Icebreakers

Another example of UL cooperation projects includes Icebreakers - a business opportunity festival for students and young professionals, organised together with Riga Technical University and expected to become the most influential event of its kind in the whole of Northern Europe.

Student Business Incubator

Last, not least, while university-based co-working spaces is not something unique, in case of the **UL incubator, its office facilities are available to every entrepreneur with business expertise who is ready to consult other teams.** Moreover, if you have a co-founder who is studying at the University or is a recent alumni, the scope of assistance grows on behalf of access to two incubation programmes and numerous grants.





Riga Technical University (RTU)

Contacts

Website: www.rtu.lv/en

E-mail: rtu@rtu.lv

Phone: +371 67089333

Address: Kalku Street 1, Riga

As its name would suggest, Riga Technical University is the first university of technology in the Baltics that provides the local startup ecosystem with both knowledge and infrastructure for commercialization of scientific discoveries.

RTU Design Factory

With technologies that range from laser cutting and engraving, 3D printing and scanning to high speed CNC machining and post-processing, RTU Design Factory is the best equipped prototyping lab in the Baltics that employs a team with skills in mechanical engineering, robotics, electronics, product development, business and etc. As its staff happens to speak 10 languages, RTU Design Factory embodies two of the key benefits of starting up in Latvia, namely, a great access to the tech and a highly-skilled, multilingual workforce.

EIT hubs

Apart from tech facilities, RTU Design Factory is also home to three **EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology) hubs** - **EIT Climate-KIC**, **EIT Food** and **EIT Raw Materials** that grant support to innovations in specific fields of science. For more information about EIT, please see <https://eit.europa.eu>

For instance, **EIT Climate-KIC** implements the only EU acceleration

programme focused on climate impact by cleantech commercialisation. In three stages, the program brings startups the knowledge, resources, tools and the coaching a cleantech start-up needs for success. For more information about the programme, please see <https://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/entrepreneurship/accelerator/>

EIT Food Innovation Prizes, on the other hand, is one of the largest startup competitions for early stage startups developing innovative products and services that can transform our food system. For more information about the programme, please see <https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/projects/Innovation-Prizes>

University Incubator

Moreover, joining efforts with UL, RTU runs the **University Incubator - a project that offers a 12-week STEM-oriented incubation programme**. In order to qualify, at least one member of your team should possess a STEM background from either RTU or UL.





Swedbank Latvia

Contacts

Website: <https://www.swedbank.lv/about/swedbank/about/dobe>

E-mail:

innovatetogether@swedbank.lv

Address: Balasta dambis 15, Riga

Being among the largest and the most modern banks in the Baltics and Sweden, Swedbank has a long history of innovation and thus eagerly supports all the game-changing ideas.

Swedbank co-creation space

Swedbank co-creation space is a Riga-based co-working that provides a free-of-charge permanent workplace within a fully equipped co-working space for a period of time. While priority is given to Fintech, companies from other sectors may apply as well.

Main requirements:

- An early-stage startup* registered in the Baltics
- A team of 1-5 people
- Plan to work on your idea/product full time

The scope of Swedbank co-creation space support is not limited to co-working services. It also hosts regular startup events, including **SeedTalks meetup series on innovation in finance**, as well as **B2B FinTech acceleration programmes performed in cooperation with Startup Wise Guys accelerator**. Besides funding, the startups selected for acceleration get premium access to Swedbank's APIs, as well as potential access to 7 million clients in 4 markets through the Swedbank Open Banking platform.

* Mainly before the first major fundraising





techhub

The central space for startups in Latvia

TechHub Riga

Contacts

Website: <https://riga.techhub.com/>

E-mail: helloriga@techhub.com

Phone: +371 22 882 909

Address: Kronvalda Bulvaris 4, Riga

Founded in 2011 as the first-ever co-working space in Latvia for startups, TechHub Riga has been actively supporting the local ecosystem for almost 10 years.

Apart from being the birthplace of some startup success stories, it has also kickstarted numerous series of networking and educational events, such as Monthly Meetup, TechHub Academy, TechHub Riga Tech Talks and Demo Nights, Startup BBQ, as well as an annual TechChill conference.

Since the Faculty of Biology of UL has moved to the House of Science, TechHub Riga took over its former location and turned it into the epicenter of the local startup buzz. Together with co-working inmates, this space is now inhabited by some of the ecosystem's leading players,

including the Latvian Startup Association, Riga Tech Girls, TechChill, Startup Wise Guys, Change Ventures and etc.

In addition to all the perks you get on-site, TechHub membership grants access to TechHub Global Community co-workings and support programmes all over the world.

Finally, the NGO actively promotes interdisciplinary and cross-border cooperation between startups and regional stakeholders. Its foreign partners include "Google for Startups", "Garage48", "Baltic Innovation Agency", University of Tartu, to name but a few.



techhub



TechChill

Contacts

Website: www.techchill.co

E-mail: info@techchill.co

Phone: +371 27136551

Address: Kronvalda Bulvaris 4, Riga

Started as TechHub Riga side-project, TechChill has successfully emerged into an independent non-profit organisation with focus on helping local startups succeed globally.

Events

The range of TechChill activities includes job fairs, educational workshops, hackathons and international trips aimed to promote the local business environment, yet its key initiative is an eponymous conference.

With topics changing and number of participants growing from year to year, this global Riga-based forum is known for its signature relaxed atmosphere, yet strong make-it-work attitude.

In case you are an early-stage company, visit TechChill for contacts or knowledge, win funding in pitch competitions and explore the secret behind traditionally high levels of attendees' satisfaction on your own.

X Europe

Alongside with its own brand projects, TechChill actively collaborates with startup supporting units from all over the world. For instance, it is among 5 regional ecosystem leaders that implement the X Europe - a EU-funded programme created to foster Deeptech innovations in the Baltics, Western Europe, and the Visegrad region.





Riga Tech Girls (RTG)

Contacts

Website: www.rigatechgirls.org

E-mail: rigatechgirls@gmail.com

Address: Kronvalda Bulvaris 4, Riga

Created by two female startup co-founders, RTG is probably one of the most inspiring ecosystem stakeholders.

Uniting more than 1000 members and constantly expanding its activities all over Latvia by opening regional branches, this social non-profit organization empowers women in tech, including the startup sector.

Addressing ladies as “the architects for the future”, RTG ensures their words go hand in hand with actions through numerous talent-boosting events, including the first ever Women in Tech Hackathon in Latvia, as well as series of workshops for aspiring female tech entrepreneurs, prepared in collaboration with the LIAA and covering topics from business modelling, product research and prototyping to team building and presenting.

Stressing the importance of practical IT skills for development of the current or starting a brand new career, RTG also collaborates with leading ICT sector enterprises on providing special scholarships for women with interest in basic programming. For instance, She Goes Tech initiative, implemented in close cooperation with Accenture Latvia and aimed at technology training for women in SAP, JAVA, Scala, JavaScript, LowCode, turned out to be a great success, marked by hundreds of applications for dozens of vacant places.



▶ DIGITAL FREEDOM FESTIVAL ▶

Digital Freedom Festival (DFF)

Contacts

Website:

www.digitalfreedomfestival.com

E-mail: hello@dffestival.com

Address: OracleTang Space, Doma laukums 2, Riga

With over a thousand participants and high-profile speakers, including policymakers and industry leaders, an annual Digital Freedom Festival is the perfect place to explore the latest digital discoveries and meet the top players in the investment scene.

While DFF organizers host numerous educational seminars throughout the whole year, they all lead to a key event - a multi-date and multi-location platform with high quality educational content and great deal making opportunities.

As for startups, there is a special **Investor day dedicated to speed dating, networking sessions, and pitch competitions**, including

- Rockstart Pitch Competition – for emerging tech and industry-changing automated solutions (Energy, AI, Healthcare, Agrifood, Mobility)
- 500 Startups Pitch Competition – for ideas that transform economies for the future (Impact, Sustainable Businesses, Ed Tech etc.)
- LVM and Climate KIC Green Tech Startup Pitch– for sustainable innovations (Green Tech, Clean energy, AgTech, Forestry etc.)





**Digital
Innovation
Hub**



Latvian IT Cluster (LITC)

Contacts

Website: www.itbaltic.com

E-mail: itcluster@itbaltic.com

Phone: +371 67089815

Address: Skolas Street 11, Riga

Latvian IT Cluster, also as a Digital Innovation Hub, is a strong community of the local ICT companies and innovation ecosystem organizations that have joined efforts on promotion of export, cooperation with other industries and digitalization of small and medium enterprises.

Being experienced professionals, LITC members are well aware of how hard it is to both scale-up and go global, thus they are ready to share their own expertise, resources and contacts with the ICT sector's newcomers, including the startups. As we live in a digital age, IT Cluster sees that ICT works as a core industry which can help to boost other industries to become more digitally aware.

Describing themselves as «the gateway helping coolest Latvian tech companies grow strong and enter new markets», LITC supports this promise by the wide-ranging scope of assistance - from exhibitions and trading missions to digital transformation, acceleration programs and cross-industry hackathons.



startin^{.lv}
Go Global.

Latvian Startup Association Startin.LV

Contacts

Website: www.startin.lv

E-mail: info@startin.lv

Address: Kronvalda Bulvaris 4, Riga

All startups differ in terms of stage and industry, some common business goals, such as scaling and going global, require **one united voice for effective communication with policymakers and other parties of interest**. In Latvia this voice belongs to Latvian Startup Association, a.k.a. Startin.LV that unites startups and other ecosystem stakeholders. Its key functions include:

- To represent interests of startups to state institutions and legislators
- To advocate startup-friendly regulations
- To initiate mutually beneficial cooperation between ecosystem players
- To promote Latvian startup scene both locally and abroad through marketing and PR activities
- To provide startups with up-to-date information, mentorship and special discounts for events

As for specific actions, Startin.LV carries out plenty of community-shaping events, such as the annual Riga Venture summit aimed at existing policy examination and improvements, Founder Marathons providing aspiring entrepreneurs with guidelines for starting up in Latvia, as well as Founder Mentorship sessions where experienced startups share their tips and tricks with sector's newcomers.





LATVIAN PRIVATE EQUITY
AND VENTURE CAPITAL
ASSOCIATION

Latvian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (LVCA)

Contacts

Website: www.lvca.lv/en

E-mail: info@lvca.lv

Phone: +371 26554125

Address: Brivibas Street 46-26, Riga

Finally, while networking and other soft support can certainly make your startup thrive, no business can survive without sufficient financial means.

As the whole section of this guide is dedicated to numerous fund-raising opportunities, the good news is that there exists one organization that unites all the majority of participants in the local venture capital industry - **Latvian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (LVCA)**.

The members of the association are fund management companies operating in Latvia and legal and financial consultants working for the industry. Currently, the association unites 40 organizations - the majority of participants in the countries' venture capital industry.

The main tasks of LVCA:

- Inform entrepreneurs and the public about the possibilities of receiving venture capital financing;
- Promote the exchange of knowledge and experience of the members of the association;
- Represent the interests of the industry to state institutions and legislators;
- Organize and ensure cooperation with international and foreign Venture Capital associations.



Useful links

ECONOMICS & BUSINESS:

Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

<https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/sakums>

Electronic Declaration System

<https://eds.vid.gov.lv/login/#>

Enterprise Europe Network

<http://www.een.lv/en/>

Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA)

<https://www.liaa.gov.lv/en>

Latvian Chamber of

Commerce and Industry

<https://www.chamber.lv/en>

Latvian Electronic Signature

<https://www.eparaksts.lv/en/>

Latvian Enterprise Database

<https://www.lursoft.lv/?l=en>

Latvian Export Import Directory

<http://www.exim.lv/>

Legal Acts of the Republic of Latvia

<https://likumi.lv/p/en/covid-19>

Portal of State Administration Services

<https://www.latvija.lv/en>

Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia

<https://www.ur.gov.lv/en/>

State Revenue Service

<https://www.vid.gov.lv/en>

State-owned Development Finance Institution "ALTUM"

<https://www.altum.lv/en/>

RELOCATION:

Informative website about integration in Latvia

<https://www.integration.lv/en>

Latvian Immigration Law

<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/68522-immigration-law>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the republic of Latvia

<https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/>

Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

<https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/>

BANKS:

International Banks:

Baltic International Bank

<https://www.bib.eu/>

Blue Orange www.blueorangebank.com

Expobank www.expobank.eu/eng

Luminor <https://www.luminor.lv/en/private>

SEB <https://www.seb.lv/eng>

Signet Bank <https://www.signetbank.com/en/>

Swedbank

<https://www.swedbank.lv/private/d2d/start>

Latvian Banks:

Citadele <https://www.citadele.lv/en/private/>

Latvijas Pasta Banka <https://www.lpb.lv/en/>

Reģionālā investīciju banka

<https://www.riibank.com/en>

Rietumu banka <https://www.rietumu.com/en>

LEGAL & FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS:

International Service Providers:

Cobalt <https://cobalt.legal/en>

Deloitte Latvia

<https://www2.deloitte.com/lv/en.html>

Ernst & Young Baltic

https://www.ey.com/en_gl

Eversheds Sutherland

<https://www.eversheds-sutherland.com/>

KPMG Baltics

<https://home.kpmg/lv/en/home.html>

Leinonen Group <https://leinonen.eu/lv-en>

PricewaterhouseCoopers Latvia

<https://www.pwc.com/lv/en.html>

Rödl & Partner Riga

<http://www.roedl.net/lv/en/home.html>

Reliable Latvian Service Providers:

AAT <http://aat.lv/en>

AmberLaw

<http://amberlaw.lv/en/birojs/klienti>

Auctus Capital www.auctus.lv

AZ Service www.azservice.lv

Cipari Baltics

http://www.cipari.com/main_eng.html

Davis Suneps

<https://davissuneps.com/about/>

LM Law Office

<http://www.lmlawoffice.com/about-us/>

Orients Audit & Finance

<https://www.orient.lv/en/>

PRIMUS DERLING

<http://www.primusderling.eu/>

Rektina un Mieze

<http://rektinamieze.lv/en/the-firm/>

SORAINEN www.sorainen.com

TaxLink Baltic SIA www.taxlink.lv/en/

TGS Baltic <https://www.tgsbaltic.com/>

INSURANCE SERVICES:

AP Companies www.ap-companies.com

Balta <https://www.balta.lv>

BAN www.ban.lv

BTA <https://www.bta.lv/en>

Compensa

<https://www.compensa.lv/private/>

Gjensedige

<https://www.gjensidige.lv/english>

If <https://www.if.lv/en/private>

Latvian Insurers Association

<https://www.laa.lv/en/>

EDUCATION:

Academic Information Center

<http://www.aic.lv/portal/en/>

Institutions of Higher Education in Latvia

http://www.aic.lv/rec/HE_2002/HE_LV/ed_sys/high_ins.htm

State Education

Development Agency (VIAA)

<http://viaa.gov.lv/eng/>

TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY:

Latvian Railway (LDZ) <https://www.ldz.lv/en>

Public transport services in Riga

<https://www.rigassatiksm.lv/en/>

Riga International Airport

<https://www.riga-airport.com/en>

Riga International Coach Terminal

<https://www.autoosta.lv/?lang=en>

Road Traffic Safety Directorate (CSDD)

<https://www.csdd.lv/en/>

HOUSING:

<https://www.city24.lv/en/>

<https://www.cityreal.lv/en/>

<https://www.rentinriga.lv/en/main>

<https://www.ss.com>

<https://zip.lv/en/>

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT:**Get To Know Latvia** www.latvia.eu**In Your Pocket Essential City Guide**<https://www.inyourpocket.com/latvia>**Latvia Travel** <https://www.latvia.travel/>**Live Riga** <https://www.liveriga.com/en/>**HIRING:****CV Market** <https://www.cvmarket.lv/>**CV.lv** <https://www.cv.lv/english/>**Your Move** <https://www.yourmove.lv>**Like IT** <https://www.likeit.lv>**State Employment Agency**<https://www.nva.gov.lv/en>**Visi Darbi** <https://www.visidarbi.lv/en/>**HEALTH CARE:****Emergency Medical Service of Latvia**<http://www.nmpd.gov.lv/en/>**Ministry of Healthcare**<https://www.vm.gov.lv/en/>**National Health Service**<http://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/en>**Private Clinical Laboratory E. Gulbis**<https://www.egl.lv/en/>**Private Health Center "ARS"**<https://arsmed.lv/en/>**Private Outpatient Hospital MFD**<http://www.mfd.lv/en>**Private Outpatient Medical Center****"Veselības centrs 4"** <https://vc4.lv/en>**STARTUP COMMUNITY:****Alternative Financial Services****Association of Latvia (LAFPA)**<https://www.lafpa.lv/en/home/>**Business technology platform BiSMART**<http://www.bismart.lv/en>**Google Developer Group (GDG)**<https://gdgriga.lv/>**Latvian Blockchain Association**<http://blockchain.org.lv/>**Latvian Business Angel Network LatBAN**<https://www.latban.lv/en>**Latvian Digital Health Cluster**<https://www.digital-health-cluster-latvia.org/>**Latvian Information and communications technology association (LIKTA)**<https://likta.lv/en/home-en/>**Latvian IT Cluster** <https://www.itbaltic.com/>**Latvian Open Technology****Association (LATA)**<https://www.lata.org.lv/?lang=en>**Latvian Venture Capital Association**<https://www.lvca.lv/en>**Racoons** <https://www.theraccoons.org/>**Riga Tech Girls** <http://www.rigatechgirls.org>**Startup Association Startin.LV**<http://startin.lv>**Startup Latvia** <https://startuplatvia.eu/>**TechHub Riga** <https://riga.techhub.com>**UL Microsoft Innovation Center LUMIC**<https://www.lumic.lu.lv/>**VEFRESH** <https://www.vefresh.com/home>**Wind Hackers** <https://windhackers.com/about>**BUSINESS INCUBATORS:****Magnetic Latvia Business Incubators**<https://inkubatori.magneticlatvia.lv/en/>**RISEBA Creative Business Incubator**<https://www.riseba.lv/en>**RTU Design Factory**<https://www.rtu.lv/en/science/dizaina-fabrika>**UL Student Business Incubator**<https://www.lu.lv/en/cooperation/ul-student-business-incubator/>**Ventspils Business Support Centre**<https://www.vatp.lv/en/business-support>**FUNDS:****Acceleration Funds:****BuildIT** <https://www.buildit.lv>**Commercialization Reactor**<https://www.commercializationreactor.com/>**Overkill Ventures** <https://www.overkill.vc>**Startup Wise Guys**<https://startupwiseguys.com/>**Business Angel Networks:****LatBAN** <https://www.latban.lv/en>**Venture Capital Funds:****BaltCap** <https://www.baltcap.com/>**Change Ventures**<https://www.changeventures.com>**Expansion Capital** <https://excap.lv/en/>**Flycap** <https://www.flycap.lv/>**Imprimatur Capital** <https://www.icfm.lv>**Livonia Partners**<http://livoniapartners.com>**RubyLight**<http://rubylightinvestments.com.au>**ZGI** <https://www.zgi.lv/offer/>**STARTUP AND TECH EVENTS:****5G Techritory**<https://www.5gtechritory.com/>**Baltic Honeybadger**<https://bh2019.hodlhodl.com/>**Deep Tech Atelier**<https://deeptechatelier.liaa.gov.lv/>**Digital Freedom Festival**<https://www.digitalfreedomfestival.com/>**Icebreakers** <https://icebreakers.lv/>**iNovuss** <https://www.inovuss.lv/en/>**Riga Comm** <https://rigacomm.com/en/>**Tech industry**<http://www.techindustry.lv/en/index.php>**TechChill** <https://techchill.co/>**MEDIA:****Business Technology Platform**<https://www.bismart.lv/en>**Latvian Information Agency "LETA"**<https://www.leta.lv/eng>**Latvian Public Broadcasting**<https://eng.lsm.lv/>**News platform about technologies and innovation "Labs of Latvia"**<https://labsoflatvia.com/en/home>



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