



Emerging digital democracy

Organisation ManaBalss

Foundation of Public Participation

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ABOUT US



Developing innovative
solutions
for digital civic engagement



Promoting digital
democracy, **raising
awareness**



Spreading know-how
over the borders



Citizen initiative platform ManaBalss.lv



HOW IT WORKS

- 1 THE IDEA
- 2 IMPROVING INITIATIVE
- 3 10 000 SIGNATURES = SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT
- 4 EXPERTS, DISCUSSIONS, CIVIC LOBBY
- 5 ACCEPTS or REJECTS



THE PROJECT



Effective way for the Citizens to
initiate new laws



Instant, daily involvement



Bringing together
legislators & citizens



Measure of success: political power of
the ordinary Citizen



RESULTS

HIGHEST KNOWN
SUCCESS RATE :

67%

Initiatives have changed the law



NATION ENGAGED:

70%

Of Latvia's population have
visited ManaBalss.lv

**16,6% of Latvian electorate have
voted at least once**



WHY IT WORKS

Trust

- From citizens
 - Successful initiatives from the beginning (in 2011)
 - Right to collect 10 000 signatures - established in Law
- From government
 - Strong authentication system - one person, one vote
 - Quality control system (No false arguments, no disinformational texts)
- From media
 - Trustful, independent source for media



WHY IT WORKS

Financially self-sustainable

- Since 2014, ManaBalss operational costs have been covered by micro-donation from ~ 45 000 people

Non-governmental, politically independent, equally friendly with all political parties

Loud about its success

- Strong and vocal social media presence
- Brand building
- Building personal relationships with media and journalists
- Daily publicity



WHY IT WORKS

User friendly

- Taking care of each initiative and each voter
 - Legal advice and advice from field experts on how to improve initiative
- User-centric design, web and voting systems
 - Could use some improvements, though



EXAMPLES

Author's profile: Woman. No previous experience with lobby, media or campaigning.

Initiative aim: Automatic repayment of overpaid taxes. Target group: Everyone, especially elderly, people with no internet access or with no skills to understand the complicated gov. system.

In 1 year time, Initiative becomes a law: Parliament instructs the government to develop a regulation and solution for system implementation!

Factors of success:

- ★ Non-political initiative
- ★ Topical for disadvantaged group of people
- ★ Initiative's text focused, direct, asking for specific solutions to the problem
- ★ Deputies recognises the problem and supports the solution



EXAMPLES

Author's profile: NGO with public representative. Strong previous experience with lobby and campaigning.

Initiative aim: Election of the Latvian president by open vote. Highly political initiative.

In 5 year time, Initiative established as an amendments to the Constitution.

Factors of success:

- ★ Strong civic lobbying + strategic approach to the initiative submission in Parliament => perfect timing
- ★ Period of upcoming elections
- ★ Author organisation - well known, trusted organisation in Latvia



THE CHALLENGES

- ① Funding for growth, especially - programming expenses.
- ② Consistently competing in the media with the content from political parties
- ③ International growth: partners and initial funding
- ④ «Special interest» groups, fake news, black PR, political campaigns, etc.



ENVIRONMENT

The right to collect 10 000 signatures and submit an initiative - established in the law:

- can be submitted digitally, if the identity of the signatories and the protection of personal data is ensured
- the law was initiated by ManaBalss.lv in 2010 and submitted by 5 MPs
- can be submitted in paper with *name, surname, and ID number*

At the moment there are 2 initiative platforms:

- ManaBalss.lv
- Balsojam.lv (not transparent, not active, has few initiatives, political party platform)



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