



HACKATHON BACKGROUND PAPER

Towards the Integration and Expanded Use of Nordic Anti-Corruption Data

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Towards the Integration and Expanded Use of Nordic Anti-Corruption Data

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Introduction

Cross-border open data projects can help Nordic-Baltic countries use public data to prevent corruption and promote political integrity. This project, called "Towards the integration and expanded use of Nordic anti-corruption data", aims to empower civil society actors, from citizens to journalists, to detect corruption and hold decision makers accountable.

Open data is information that anyone can access, use, and share for any purpose. It allows more people to participate in the decision-making process without barriers or licenses. Governments can use open data portals to collaborate with citizens on improving efficiency, innovation, and transparency, and ultimately enhancing public services.

The project compared the quality of ten datasets related to political integrity in Estonia, Finland and Latvia. The datasets were selected based on their relevance to corruption issues and their comparability across the three countries. The project will use the findings to organize a regional online hackathon, where participants from different sectors will create new anti-corruption initiatives using the datasets.

The hackathon will produce not only data analysis tools, but also policy recommendations for the governments of Estonia, Finland and Latvia. The project will choose one initiative from each country for further development and will propose common data standards for anti-corruption and political integrity datasets. These recommendations will facilitate the future implementation of the hackathon initiatives and the national data analysis.

The European Data Act, issued in February 2022, requires all EU sectors to follow an open data directive and an interoperability initiative that modernizes data policies for the public sector. The EU also released a data strategy in 2020 that envisions a single market for data. The project raises public awareness in the Nordic-Baltic region about the benefits and potential of cross-border anti-corruption and political integrity initiatives using open data.

Estonia

Estonia is one of the least corrupt EU countries, thanks to its digital government services. It is also improving its open data access, following international trends and pressure. Estonia has moved beyond its secure data transfer system, X-Road, to become a trendsetter in open data.

Estonia launched its Open Data Portal in 2011, but it made significant progress in 2018, when it appointed a Chief Data Officer and added more datasets to the portal. Now, the portal hosts 787 datasets from 104 publishers, and showcases the newest and updated ones. Estonia also has other regional and local portals.

The Open Data Portal allows users to access and comment on the data, but it does not support discussion among users. Some datasets are closed or behind paywalls, whilst some such as company ownership data have recently been rendered accessible without charge. Estonia should continue to make sure that its datasets follow international standards for reusability, interoperability, and understandability.

Estonia has a strong legal framework for open data, with the Public Information Act of 2000 and the Data Protection Inspectorate. However, there is no body that oversees the exchange of political integrity data. Estonia needs more investment in its open data infrastructure.

Open data can increase public trust in government, which is low in Estonia (46% of people think the government is run by a few big interests). Open data is a fast-growing field that can help prevent corruption and promote political integrity. Estonia can benefit from its potential and advantages.

Estonia - Overview of Datasets Accessed

Dataset	Link	Summary
Company register	https://ariregister.rik.ee/est	The e-Business Register is the official source of company data in Estonia. The Centre of Registers and Information Systems manages the register and ensures its accuracy and reliability. The Tartu County Court collects and verifies the information before it is published on the register. Users can access basic ownership data for free, but they need to sign a contract to use advanced tools or get more detailed data.
Beneficial ownership	https://ariregister.rik.ee/est/beneficial_owners_query	The e-Business Register shows who are the beneficial owners of a legal entity, according to the Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Prevention Act. A beneficial owner is a person who owns or controls more than 25% of a legal entity. The data is available free of charge; however, users need to sign a contract to use advanced tools or get more detailed data.

Government budget	https://andmed.stat.ee/en/stat/majandus__rahendus__valitsemissektor-i-rahendus__valitsemisspektori-tulud-kulud/RR055	<p>The government spending data shows how the government uses public money for different purposes. The data is organized into three categories: central government, local government, and social security funds. Each category has its own budget and spending reports. The foreign trade statistics are not part of the spending data, but they are available in a separate database. The data is updated every month, and the latest update was in September 2023</p>
Government spending	https://andmed.stat.ee/en/stat/majandus__rahendus__valitsemissektor-i-rahendus__valitsemisspektori-tulud-kulud/RR055	<p>The government spending data shows how the government uses public money for different purposes. The data is organized into three categories: central government, local government, and social security funds. Each category has its own budget and spending reports. The foreign trade statistics are not part of the spending data, but they are available in a separate database. The data is updated every month, and the latest update was in September 2023</p>
Land register	https://www.rik.ee/et/e-kinnistusraamat	<p>The land register database is the official source of property data in Estonia. It contains information about all properties in the country, such as their owners, boundaries, mortgages, and restrictions. The database is updated every three months with the latest statistics. Users can access the database online or through a mobile app.</p> <p>Users can view their own properties for free by logging in with their ID card or mobile ID. They can also view the properties of others, but they must pay a fee and provide a valid reason for their inquiry. Users who want to download large amounts of data from the database have to sign a contract and pay a fee as well. The fees are set by the Ministry of Justice.</p>
Lobbying meetings	https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/kriminaalpoliitika/viz/Lobikohtumisteteemad/Lobikohtumisteteemad	<p>The government does not regulate the disclosure of lobby meeting data by law, but only by guidelines. This means that different institutions have different ways of reporting their data, and there is no central authority to check the accuracy or consistency of the data. The data is mostly available in digital text format on the websites of each institution. It is not easy to compare or combine data from different sources, but this problem has been alleviated by the Ministry of Justice which has compiled the reported meetings. Nevertheless, the data set cannot be seen as reliable or complete due to lack of regulation or oversight.</p>
Political/Election financing	https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/513042015011/consolide	<p>The Political Parties Act requires political parties to report their revenue and expenditure to the Political Parties Financing Surveillance Committee. The Committee publishes the data and has the authority to monitor and penalize any violations. This database is updated quarterly, and the data is downloadable in CSV format. Political donors are identified by name and date of birth.</p>

Political party membership	https://ariregister.rik.ee/est/political_party	The e-Business register contains a list of party members, updated by the party board. The list shows the following information for each member: first and last name, date of birth, date of joining the party, and date of leaving or being expelled from the party. The list can be downloaded in CSV or PDF formats.
Public procurement	https://riigihanked.riik.ee/rhr-web/#/	The Ministry of Finance manages the Public Procurement Register, which publishes most tenders in accordance with the Public Procurement Act. The Register includes all the information about the procurement process, such as the contracts, the modifications, and the notices. The data can be exported manually or accessed through an API.
Voting records	https://www.riigikogu.ee/tegevus/tooulevaade/haaletused/?startDate=01.07.2023	The website of Riigikogu publishes the results of electronic voting automatically. The Riigikogu Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act regulates the data, which is easy to use and accessible through an API.
Interest and asset declarations	https://maasikas.emta.ee/v1/login?authst=AqLsOKTfgZ	<p>The following individuals are required to submit a declaration of interests: the President of the Republic, members of the Riigikogu (Parliament), members of the Government of the Republic (ministers), judges, the Chancellor of Justice, the Auditor General, the Legal Chancellor, members of the governing bodies of the Bank of Estonia, the Director of the Office of the President of the Republic, the Director of the Riigikogu Chancellery, heads of government agencies, ministry chancellors, the Director of the State Chancellery, members of local government councils, members of municipal or city governments, the elders of local areas or city districts, and the heads of municipal or city government agencies.</p> <p>Access to the register is done through the Tax and Customs Board's e-service environment called "e-maksuamet/e-toll", but only Estonian citizens can access it. The register operates independently of other data collections from a legal standpoint.</p>

Finland

Finland is a leader in open data and anti-corruption efforts, with a highly digitized public sector. The Finnish Digital Agency manages the national open data portal, which has 2,154 datasets from 769 publishers. Regional portals also exist. Political integrity data is widely available.

Finland has improved its transparency in public procurement, with a portal that offers market information. It also adopted a strategic plan for opening and using data in 2022. Finland is working on a transparency register for lobbyists, which will be ready in 2024.

Finland should make its data more machine-readable and accessible for analysis. It should also improve its response rate to information requests and ensure the availability of data. Some recent scandals have raised minor concerns about data quality.

Finland – Overview of Datasets Accessed

Dataset	Link	Summary
Company register	https://www.stat.fi/tup/yritysrekisteri/index.html	The company data register is a source of information about various types of businesses and organizations in Finland. To access the public information in the register, one has to pay a fee. The register contains data on private traders, public entities, non-profit entities and companies that are registered with the Finnish Tax Administration. The information is updated monthly and comes from three sources: the Tax Administration, the Finnish Patent and Registration Board, and the businesses and organizations themselves. (KPIs)
Beneficial ownership needed	https://www.prh.fi/fi/kaupparekisteri.html	The beneficial ownership register is a restricted database of information about the owners and controllers of different kinds of businesses and organizations in Finland. Only joint-stock companies, limited partnerships, open companies and cooperatives have to register their beneficial owners. Most businesses and organizations are also responsible for updating their own information in the register. The Trade Register Act, which came into force on June 1, 2023, requires all businesses and organizations to submit business notifications and financial statements to the register. However, this requirement will be fully implemented only in 2026.
Government budget	https://tutkibudjetia.fi/	The interactive visualization website provides data links to the state budget proposal database, which contains the budget proposals of different government agencies and departments in Finland. The budget proposals are available in machine-readable xml and csv formats, which can be downloaded and analyzed by anyone. However, the dataset is not detailed enough to allow for detecting potential conflicts of interest among the budget proposers.

Government spending	https://tutkibudjetia.fi/	The interactive visualization website connects to the state budget proposal database, where the budget proposals of different government agencies and departments in Finland are stored. The budget proposals are published in machine-readable xml and csv formats, which can be downloaded and analyzed by anyone. The website also allows users to view limited data by theme, such as education, health, or defense.
Land register	https://www.maanmittauslaitos.fi/huoneistot-ja-kiinteistot/asiantuntevalle-kayttajalle/kiinteistorekisteri	The register contains information about real estate and property units in Finland, such as their ID, name, area, shared areas, and other details. Each unit has a unique four-part property code that identifies it in the register. The data quality of the register may vary due to different regulations and instructions over time. The register is maintained by the Land Surveying Office and many municipalities, and it is updated every night.
Lobbying meetings	https://valitus.ee/peaminister-ministrid/huvide-konflikt-vahtimise-juhised	Finland is launching a transparency register on January 1, 2024, to track the lobbying activities that target the Parliament and the ministries. The register will be open for limited service in September 2023. The register will require the lobbyists to report their activities twice a year, covering the periods from January to June and from July to December.
Political/Election financing	https://www.vaalirahoitusvalvonta.fi/	To access the election data (not the political party data) in Finland, one needs to identify oneself with either banking credentials or an ID card. The current legislation sets a low reporting threshold for the election funding, which means that most of the funding sources are disclosed. Some of the election data is available in CSV format, which can be downloaded and analyzed by anyone.
Political party membership	N/A	No dataset is currently published.

Public procurement	https://tutkihankintoja.fi/	<p>The public procurement register, also known as “tutki hankintoja”, is a reliable and user-friendly source of information about the public spending in Finland. It allows users to explore the patterns and trends of public procurement at the local, regional, and national levels. The register collects data from the state invoice system, and it organizes it by organization or by category. The data is also published in machine-readable format through the national open data portal, avoindata.fi.</p>
Voting records	https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/taysistunto/Sivut/Aanestys/ykset.aspx	<p>The voting results are available online, but they require the user to know the vote number, the sequence number of the plenary session, and the date of the vote. Alternatively, there is another database that organizes the votes by the issues discussed in the legislature.</p>
Interest and asset declarations	<p>Politicians: https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/nykyiset_kansanedustajat/Sivut/default.aspx</p> <p>Advisors to high-ranking officials: https://vm.fi/julkisen-johtaminen/ylimman-johdon-sidonnaisuudet</p> <p>Judges: https://asiointi.oikeus.fi/sidonnaisuus-ja-sivutoimirekisteri/ilmoitus/search</p> <p>Municipalities: https://asiointi.oikeus.fi/sidonnaisuus-ja-sivutoimirekisteri/ilmoitus/search</p>	<p>The situation with publishing interest and asset declarations in Finland is extremely fragmented. Public entities post their interest and asset declaration data separately. In some cases, there are no databases, and they simply post the reports as part of the meeting minutes of the bodies that approve them.</p> <p>In some cases, data is published in semi-structured formats while some are scanned PDFs.</p>

Latvia

Latvia is a beginner in open data and anti-corruption, with limited monitoring and publication. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development runs the national open data portal, which has 788 datasets. There are no regional or local portals.

Latvia has a legal framework for open data, based on the Constitution, the Freedom of Information Law, and the Regulation Nr. 611. The Law was amended in 2015 to encourage open-by-default data publication. The government also adopted an Open Data Strategy in 2019.

Latvia was referred to the EU Court of Justice in 2023 for not implementing the Open Data Directive. It is also unlikely to meet its anti-corruption goal of 64 points on the TI Corruption Perceptions Index by 2024.

Latvia lacks sanctions and accountability for open data compliance. Some agencies sell data instead of publishing it openly. Latvia does not have a centralized list of public officials. Some data is not machine-readable or accessible for analysis.

Latvia - Overview of Datasets Accessed

Dataset	Link	Summary
Company register	https://data.gov.lv/dati/lv/dataset/uz	The National Open Data Portal provides comprehensive and up-to-date information on all registered companies in its jurisdiction. Users can access the data in CSV or API format and find out the basic details of each company, such as its formation date, activity status and address. The data is updated daily to ensure accuracy and reliability.
Beneficial ownership	https://data.gov.lv/dati/eng/dataset/patiesie-labuma-guveji	The National Open Data Portal offers transparent and current data on the beneficial owners of companies in its jurisdiction. Users can access the data in CSV or API format and learn about the identity and background of each owner, such as their registration number, ID, name, surname, partial ID number, birth date, nationality, place of residence and date of registration. The data does not cover land and real estate ownership. The data is updated daily to maintain its validity and quality.
Government budget	https://data.gov.lv/dati/eng/dataset/valsts-budzets	The National Open Data Portal provides detailed and accessible data on the national budget and its allocation. Users can access the data in CSV or API format and explore the different sectors of spending, such as health, education, defense, etc. Each sector has subcategories that show the specific items and amounts of expenditure. The data also includes explanatory notes that clarify the budgetary decisions and priorities.

Government spending	https://www.kase.gov.lv/parskati/kopbudzeta-izpildes-parskati/menesa-parskati	The Treasury of Latvia's website offers timely and reliable data on the national budget expenditure. Users can download the data in PDF or XLS formats and view the monthly and quarterly reports that show the breakdown of spending by different categories and subcategories. The data helps users to understand how the government manages its finances and allocates its resources.
Land register	https://data.gov.lv/dati/eng/dataset/kadastra-informacijas-sistemas-atvertie-dati	The Latvian Land Register data contains the essential information on the real estate properties in the country. Users can access the data in XML format and find out the name, address, number of designations, base value and description of each property. However, the data does not reveal the beneficial ownership of the properties. To obtain the ownership data, users need to pay a fee at the State Land Service.
Lobbying meetings	https://titania.saeima.lv/livs/saeimasnotikumi.nsf/comisWebCalendar?OpenView&Grid=2&Date=2022-04-22	Latvia does not have a lobbying regulation that requires the disclosure of lobbying meetings. Therefore, there is no lobbying meeting database available to the public. Some institutions, such as the Parliament "Saeima", publish their meeting minutes on their own websites. However, there is no consistent format for the meeting minutes across different legislative committees.
Political/Election financing	https://info.knab.gov.lv/lv/db/ziedojami/	The Corruption Prevention and Combating Office (KNAB) provides the political financing database, but the data is not interoperable or in machine-readable format. Data on political party expenditure, party coalition identification markers should also be included.
Political party membership	N/A	Lack of political will and concerns regarding data privacy are preventing Latvia from publishing data on political party membership.

Public procurement	https://info.iub.gov.lv/?translate_to=en	The Procurement Monitoring Bureau hosts a user-friendly public procurement database with information on purchasing publications, result statements, previous informational statements, complaints, notifications on changes to the duration of contracts and statements of consultations--all available in XLS format. Data is published in real-time, as received. The National Data Open Data Portal also provides data in CSV format.
Voting records	https://data.gov.lv/dati/lv/dataset/saeimas-sedes	The National Open Data Portal provides XML data on voting records, debate parameters and the Saeima agenda. Information on debates and committee votes, however, can only be accessed by minutes in PDF format on the Saeima webpage.
Interest and asset declarations	https://www6.vid.gov.lv/VAD	Interest and asset declarations are provided by the State Revenue Service, the institution does not provide any list and instead officials need to be searched for individually. All public officials must submit the declarations and not only those pertaining to a threshold. However, not all information included in the declarations is published.

Data Comparisons

For the purposes of this comparison between the three countries the methodology developed for the project [Integrity Watch 3.0](#), which was funded by the European Commission, has been adapted. The methodology which was developed by Transparency International was based on:

- The G20 Anti-Corruption Open Data Principles, which were adopted by 17 governments in 2015 at the Open Government Partnership Global Summit in Mexico. These principles aim to leverage open data as a tool to prevent, detect, and fight corruption
- The International Open Data Charter, which was launched in 2015 by a collaboration of governments and experts. The charter sets out six principles for how governments should publish and share data for improved governance, citizen engagement, inclusive development, and innovation
- The Global Data Barometer questionnaire, which was conducted from 2019 to 2021 by a global network of researchers and experts. The questionnaire assessed the state of data for public good in 109 countries, covering data governance, capability, availability, and use and impact

The data-set quality indicators are as follows:

Data: Is this data available online in any form?

Timeliness: Are the available datasets timely and updated?

Completeness: Does the dataset include all units/items/subjects that are required to be reported?

Granularity: Does the government release datasets at the finest level of granularity available without data aggregations?

Formats: Does the government release datasets in machine-readable and reusable formats?

Openness: Does the government release open data that is free of charge and under an open and unrestricted license?

Accessibility: Does the government release the datasets without mandatory registration?

Interoperability: Does the government make use of common identifiers when collecting and publishing data?

Metadata: Does the government ensure that the datasets include consistent core metadata including at least a descriptive title, data source, publication date and available formats?

The green color in the tables below indicates commonalities in data quality, whereas the color red indicates differences. Y indicates reasonable success in performing at a specific indicator, whilst N indicates a poor showing.

Company Register

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N

*Formats: If YES: a) machine readable file or b) APIs. If NO, a) image/hand-written text or b) digital text

Beneficial ownership

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Latvia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Government budget

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Latvia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Government spending

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Latvia	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Land registers

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Lobbying meeting

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
Finland	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N

Political/Election financing

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y

Political party membership

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finland	N	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N
Latvia	N	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N

Public procurement

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Latvia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Voting records

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Finland	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y

Interest and asset declarations

	Data	Timeliness	Completeness	Granularity	Formats*	Openness	Accessibility	Interoperability	Metadata
Estonia	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Finland	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Latvia	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N

Conclusion

This comparison provides a general overview of the open data landscapes in Estonia, Finland and Latvia. The purpose of the comparison is to introduce participants of the Norden Project Hackathon to the datasets that they will be working with in pursuit of creative and timely recommendations to the governments of Estonia, Finland and Latvia that promote the development of open data accessibility.

The green markings highlight shared characteristics in the datasets across all three countries, and red marks features that differ. Differences can be conducive for the potential of collaboration in advocacy activities, as they denote dataset characteristics that one or more countries have successfully implemented and can teach or inform partner governments. There are also a few instances when countries collectively fail at providing quality data, and thus, are highlighted in green but with "N". Such instances of negative commonality are also opportunities for collaboration, given that countries can engage in cross-border cooperation by lobbying to advance the same open data reform.

Based on the preliminary comparison above, we can make the following recommendations:

- Company information and beneficial ownership databases vary incredibly across the three countries. These differences are an opportunity for collaboration. For example: Estonia and Finland excel in completeness of the dataset, whereas Latvia has taken additional steps regarding publishing format and accessibility.
- One of the most prominent weaknesses in data availability across all three countries is the lack of a lobbying database, which Finland is launching on Jan. 1, 2024, and Latvia only plans to begin work on in coming years. Even Estonia's well-established lobbying database, however, suffers from accessibility issues.
- Estonia is the only country to provide a political party membership dataset. Demonstrating the utility of this data set can provide the necessary impulse to drive change also in the other countries.
- The public procurement dataset may serve as an optimal starting place for cross-border open data analysis. All three countries boast an impressive public procurement dataset that scores well in all data quality indicators.

Participants of the hackathon are encouraged to use the comparative analysis provided in this document as a starting point for planning their integrated digital solutions for tackling issues relating to combatting and preventing corruption.

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