

Estonia - country profile

1 General background and who's who. SDGs are often discussed, but not yet implemented in a convincing way in Estonian libraries. A working group within the Estonian Association of Librarians (ELA) — “Fresh Approach” — is dealing with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, but the group has not yet acquired a leading position.

Concerning SDG-related documents having a national scope, it is worth mentioning that libraries are included in the general document “Estonia 2035”, the national strategic document which deals with libraries are included in the general document “Estonia 2035”, the national strategic document that deals with SDGs and assesses Estonian advances in fulfilling the Goals.¹

2 SDG priorities and policies in Estonian libraries. ELA “Fresh Approach” — the working group dealing with SDGs in libraries — considers that focus on SDGs should concern the following library activities:

- debates on SDGs with citizens,
- library collections and Library exhibitions,
- projects in co-creation with partners/citizens (digital inclusion; digital citizenship),
- pursuing the green library objectives.

The same working group selected the following SDGs as central for library development in Estonia:

- SDG 1. No Poverty: Access to basic human needs of health, education, sanitation;
- SDG 3. Good Health and Wellbeing: Better, more accessible health systems to increase life-expectancy,
- SDG 4. Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty,
- SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Generating employment and income through innovation,
- SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable,
- SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Reversing current consumption trends and promoting a more sustainable future;
- SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice,
- SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals: Revitalize strong global partnerships for sustainable development.

3 SDG-oriented projects

1. **Raamatud liikuma / Books on the move² (SDG 1, 4, 10, 11, 12).** The innovation project *Books on the Move* has set out to modernise the lending service and bring it into the 21st century. The project is driven by the wish to encourage better use of the physical book collections, and to render this body of knowledge relevant and conveniently accessible to the contemporary user. The idea behind the project is as simple as it is ambitious: to make the physical book collections of Estonian libraries universally available and discoverable in a one-stop search, so as to enable quick delivery of the desired book to the user.

¹ <https://valitsus.ee/en/estonia-2035-development-strategy/strategy/strategic-goals>

² <https://www.nlib.ee/en/node/8181>

After having found the required book, the user simply clicks “order”, without having to consider the location of the book. An algorithm picks the most fitting, most expedient copy across all participating library holdings. With the help of our logistics partner, the book is then delivered to the user, either to a parcel locker, local store or directly to an address indicated. Library lending becomes conveniently integrated into the users’ daily routines. Remote loans will no longer be interlibrary transactions — the physical book becomes mobile in Estonia, and the broader library network will serve as the home library for the user.

As a result of the project, we are creating a digital platform together with a mobile application for the end user, to be navigated seamlessly in its features of discovery and delivery: “find and order” books, “manage and monitor” orders, set delivery preferences, retrieve information on due dates, pay for delivery and settle overdue fines, and recommend books to friends.

The project runs from 2020 to 2022. All relevant parties to the new lending service (libraries, users, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, local municipalities) are included in the project through various advisory bodies. Books on the Move is funded by Enterprise Estonia and their Innovation Procurement Program in the amount of EUR 333,332.50.


- 2. MUIS2 15 (SDG 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16).** The National Heritage Board is developing a new information system for museum collections, the aim of which is to provide better and more user-friendly access to Estonian museum collections and to create a modern solution for museums that supports the preservation and management of museum collections.
- 3. Bürokratt / KrattAI (SDG 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 16).** #KrattAI is envisioning how digital public services should work in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI). #KrattAI will be an interoperable network of AI applications, which enable citizens to use public services with virtual assistants through voice-based interaction. #KrattAI is not just an IT project to create an Estonian state virtual assistant, i.e. an user interface — although this may be necessary as an intermediate step. Instead, #KrattAI will, in the future, allow people to get everything they need from one device and through a virtual assistant in one communication session. #KrattAI is thus an interoperable network of public and private sector AI solutions, which from the user’s point of view, acts as a single channel for public services and information.

Most of the time, people don’t know which public agency to contact and they do not have an overview of their own obligations and of the opportunities offered by government.

Future benefits: People will communicate with the government 24/7; thanks to the interoperability of bots, it will be possible to have access to direct contacts efficiently between different government agencies.

#KrattAI will include the following steps:

- analysis and PoC on the use of alternative channels,
- classification of citizen messages: analysis and PoC,
- analysis and PoC of eesti.ee national mobile app,
- speech synthesis,
- information extraction,
- consent management platform,
- cooperation with companies,
- cooperation with Finland (#KrattAI and AuroraAI).



4. Massive digitalisation of Estonian cultural heritage, including printed material (books, newspapers, etc) 16 (SDG 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16). The Ministry of Culture prepared an action plan for the digitisation of cultural heritage. Its objective is to make one third of the cultural heritage stored in our memory institutions digitally accessible by 2023 and to upgrade the infrastructure for storing information in the memory institutions.

The action plan largely focuses on the heritage from 1900 to 1940. Documents, publications, photographs, films and objects are being digitised. The objective is to make key choices in terms of cultural heritage, and not to digitise the entire cultural heritage.

The objective of the action plan is to make the following digitally accessible by 2023: 3% of the documentary heritage, 32% of artefacts; 60% of both film and photographic heritage and 28% of printed heritage; i.e. about 33% of our entire cultural heritage. The total cost of the project is €9.02 million, of which €8.19 million will come from the planned European Union structural fund investments. The action plan was prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, and the Ministry of Education and Research.

The project runs from 2019 to 2021. All relevant parties to the new lending service (libraries, users, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, local municipalities) are included in the project through various advisory bodies. Books on the Move is funded by Enterprise Estonia and their Innovation Procurement Program in the amount of EUR 333,332.50.

4 Funding sources and evaluation. Usually, SDG-oriented projects are financed from ordinary library budget, although additional funding may be provided if the activity is part of a special project. In this case, support is provided by International organisations (European Commission, Structural Funds, etc.), Ministries, Non-Governmental Organisations. Agencies which would provide additional funding may be cultural, but often they are departments within the Ministry of Finance.