



Integrated Action plan

City of Riga

March 2018



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URBACT integrated action plan

2018-2020

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Introduction

Riga has always been a multicultural city with traditional national minority representatives making an essential part of this diversity and the newcomers, the number of which is increasing gradually during the last years. The issue of accommodation and tackling of this expanding diversity appeared on the agenda of Riga municipality as the newcomers started to appear as the beneficiaries of services provided by the municipality and several issues have emerged - persons who work with clients (for example, teachers, social workers and other service providers) lack knowledge and experience for working with this group and newcomers lack support measures for integrating into the life of municipality. Therefore, Riga municipality got involved into the project “Arrival Cities” in cooperation with partners from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Greece, Germany and France in order to get acquainted with the experience of other cities working with migration issues and to elaborate an action plan on how to work with newcomers.

Since 2011 Riga City has started actively working on integration and migration issues. Riga City Society Integration Programme and action plan for years 2012–2017 has been elaborated. Migration has not been put forward as a separate policy direction of the document, but the action plan has a number of activities aimed at informing inhabitants of Riga about the benefits and potential of migration for the host society as well as the activities targeted at the inclusion of newcomers – free Latvian language courses, cultural and educational activities for immigrants.

New Riga City Integration Programme for the next five years is planned to be elaborated after year 2017 and the implementation of the project “Arrival Cities” will help to define policy directions and list of actions/activities complementing these policy directions in the area of migration, which will be merged later on into a new Riga City Integration Programme.

The partners of the project:

Municipality of Amadora (Portugal), Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council (Latvia), municipality of Thessaloniki, municipality of Messina (Italy), municipality of Roquetas de Mar (Spain), municipality of Vantaa (Finland), Department of Val-de-Marne (France), municipality of Patras (Greece), Dresden University (Germany), municipality of Oldenburg (Germany).

The aim of the project was to review the current practice in the partner cities in the field of migration and integration and to develop local action plans aiming at inclusion of newcomers in cooperation with state, municipal and non-governmental organisations.

Target groups of the project:

- Representatives of state, municipal and non-governmental organisations, working with migration issues.
- Third country nationals, EU citizens, persons with refugee and alternative status.

The project “Arrival Cities” has been implemented from 15.09.2015. to 02.05.2018.

Methodology for developing the IAP

URBACT support group (ULG) has been created in Riga within the project comprising of representatives of state, municipal and non-governmental organisations. The aim of the work of the ULG was to create local integrated action plan for integration of newcomers, taking into account the area of work and competence of the experts involved in the field of migration and integration.

ULG representatives:

- Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council
- Department of Welfare of Riga City Council
- Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia
- The Latvian Language Agency
- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia
- Society Integration Foundation
- NGO “Shelter “Safe house””
- NGO “Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation LAPAS”
- NGO “The association “Education Development Center”” (EDC)
- NGO “Civic Alliance- Latvia”
- NGO “Latvian Centre for Human Rights”
- NGO “I want to help refugees”
- Independent expert – Liesma Ose

Thirteen meetings of ULG took place during the project in which experts actively shared their knowledge and experience and provided contribution for the creation of integrated action plan. Five transnational workshops took place during the project (in Dresden, Vantaa, Thessaloniki, Oldenburg and Val-de-Marne), in which representative of ULG took part in. The experience and knowledge gained was used while elaboration of integrated action plan for integration of newcomers.

The themes of the transnational workshops:

- Building community cohesion
- Integration of migrants into the labour market
- Reception services for refugees
- Education services for migrants and refugees
- Civic participation of migrants and refugees

Three local dissemination events took place, during which local action plan has been presented to teachers and educational specialists, the Riga City Advisory Board on Society Integration Issues and NGO platform for dialogue. The participants of these dissemination events were pleased to know that Riga municipality in cooperation with state institutions and NGOs is working on migration issues and expressed a wish to follow the process of the implementation of IAP.

Integrated action plan has been elaborated during the meetings of ULG and taking into account the outcomes of the transnational workshops. Integrated action plan for integration of immigrants in Riga has been elaborated taking into account the areas of competence and expertise of ULG members. Numerous discussions on formulating of problems, actions for the solution of the problem and division of roles and responsibility among partners involved have led to the development of the current action plan. The work of the working group started with the formulation of the problems, taking into account the competence of state and municipality. Initially the list of all possible problems was created. Many of the problems initially defined related to the legislative gap and politically sensitive issues, such as necessary amendments to the State Language Law allowing newcomers to work in public area without the proficiency of the state language. Some of the problems were connected with the financial burden, such as the introduction of teacher assistant in schools for immigrant children. Therefore, after a long discussion ULG decided to focus only on the problems the solutions to which can be at least partially provided by the ULG members.

Several meetings of the ULG were dedicated to the defining actions for the solutions of the problems and the definition of expected results. The ULG members tried to include only the actions that can be implemented either from the budget of their organisations or from the funds they are responsible for management on Latvian level, such as Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and European Social Fund.

A lot of time was spent on defining the result indicators. The area of migration is quite new in Latvia and the number of immigrant is not high. Therefore, the ULG members were quite cautious on the numbers provided in the result indicators and it was decided to keep the result of 2020 on the same level as in 2017.

The outcomes of the transnational workshops have been into account while elaborating of IAP. The idea of one-stop agency implemented by migrant NGO in cooperation with state and municipal institutions in Vantaa will be applied in IAP as one of the partners - NGO "Shelter "Safe house"" got an extension of a grant from Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for a one-stop agency for immigrants. NGO "Shelter "Safe house"" has been expanding its services by developing an official cooperation with state and municipal institutions on migration issues.

The ideas about educational processes seen in Oldenburg and in particular with children using verbal tools for language acquisition were taken by The Latvian Language Agency, which is planning to work on this methodology in Latvia while implementing activities foreseen in IAP.

An integrated approach has been applied while elaboration of integrated action plan in Riga: different level experts were involved, representing state, municipal and non-governmental organisations. Social and economic dimensions of the problems have been tackled. The main aspect of economic integration and essential precondition for access to the labour market in Latvia is the knowledge of Latvian language. In order to foster economic integration Latvian language courses and other activities aimed at language acquisition are foreseen in the integrated action plan.

Analysis of situation in Riga regarding migration issues

According to the data of Citizenship and Migration Board¹ on 01.01.2017 there were 2 129 320 inhabitants in Latvia, including 1 796 608 (84,37%) citizens of Latvia, 242 560 (11,39 %) non-citizens of Latvia² and about 90 000 (about 4%) foreigners who reside in Latvia with permanent or temporary residence permits. The statistics show the number of newcomers in Latvia is not high. Nevertheless, the number of foreigners gradually increases (Diagram No. 1)

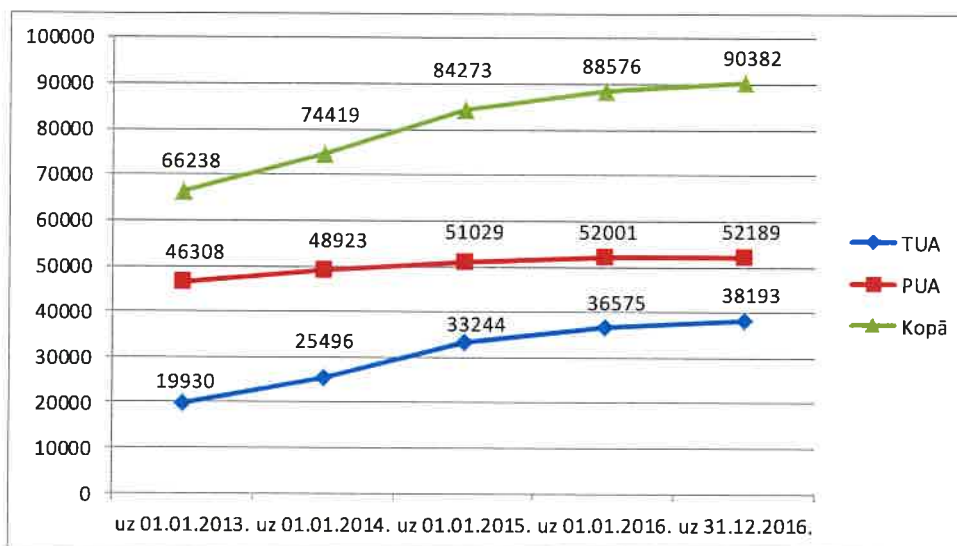


Diagram No. 1 Valid temporary residence permits (TUA) and permanent residence permits (PUA) in years 2013.–2016. (According to data of Citizenship and Migration Board³)

The inhabitants of Latvia – third country nationals in 2017⁴:

	Country	Number of third country nationals
1.	Russia	55440
2.	Ukraine	6442
3.	Byelorussia	3034
4.	Uzbekistan	1641
5.	Kazakhstan	772
6.	USA	575

¹http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/ledzivotaju%20re%C4%A3istrs/07022017/ISPP_Pasvaldibas_pec_VPD.pdf

² According to the Law On the Status of those Former U.S.S.R. Citizens who do not have the Citizenship of Latvia or that of any Other State non-citizens are such citizens of the former USSR who reside in the Republic of Latvia as well as who are in temporary absence and their children who simultaneously comply with the following conditions:

1) on 1 July 1992 they were registered in the territory of Latvia regardless of the status of the living space indicated in the registration of residence, or up to 1 July 1992 their last registered place of residence was in the Republic of Latvia, or it has been determined by a court judgment that they have resided in the territory of Latvia for 10 consecutive years until the referred to date;

2) they are not citizens of Latvia; and

3) they are not and have not been citizens of another state.

³ More detailed information about age, gender and other characteristics of foreigners is not available

⁴ http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/ledzivotaju%20re%C4%A3istrs/07022017/ISVP_Latvija_pec_VPD.pdf

7.	China	1192
8.	Azerbaijan	521
9.	Israel	405
10.	Georgia	293

The statistics show that the biggest number of foreigners reside in Riga – 55%. About 26% of foreigners choose other cities of Latvia and about 19% of foreigners choose other regions of Latvia. Other cities of Latvia with the biggest number of foreigners are Daugavpils (6, 9%), Jurmala (6, 4 %) and Liepaja (6, 4 %)⁵.

According to the research conductor in 2017 “Integration of Society in Riga” one fifth of the inhabitants of Riga is acquainted with someone who has moved to Latvia within the last five years and the number of such persons who knows any newcomer increases (from 9% of Rigans in 2014 to 19% in 2017).

According to the data from State Education Information System there are about 300 foreign pupils attending schools in Riga. (Diagram No. 2)

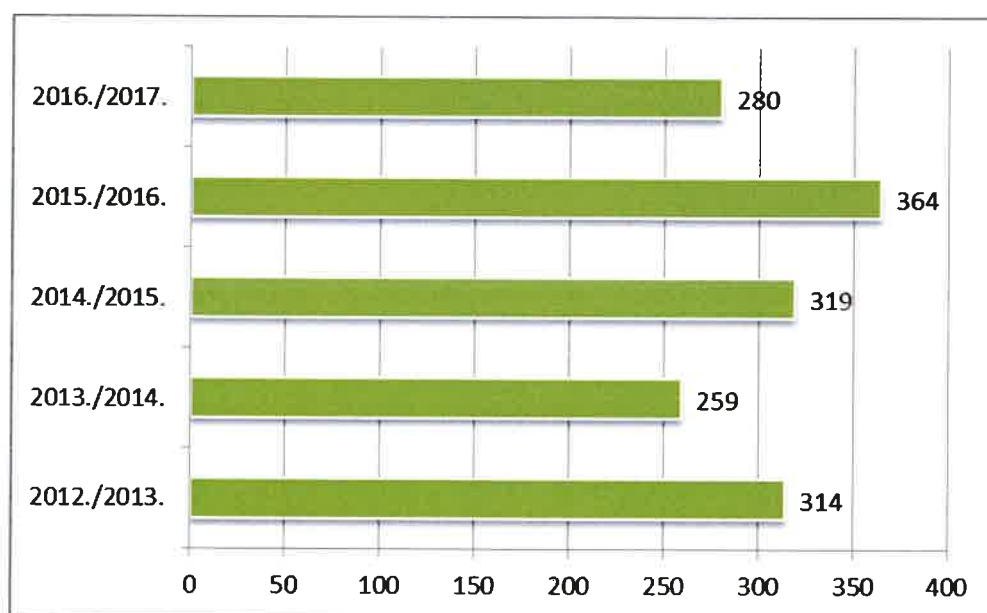


Diagram No. 2 The number of foreign pupils in the schools of Riga.

In 2016/2017 school year there are foreign pupils in the schools of Riga from the following countries: Russia (115), Ukraine (23), Byelorussia (20), the United Kingdom (19), Kazakhstan (11), Lithuania (10), China (6), Germany (6), the USA (5), Italy (5), 4 pupils from the following countries: Azerbaijan, Israel, Syria, Poland, 3 pupils from Afghanistan and 1-2 pupils from the following countries: Armenia, Egypt, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Honduras, Iraq, Norway, Thailand, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Luxembourg, Malta, India, Ireland, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Switzerland, Turkey, Mexico, etc.

⁵http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/ledzivotaju%20re%C4%A3istrs/07022017/ISPP_Pasvaldibas_pec_VPD.pdf

Definition of problems and setting of focus on objectives

Despite the fact that the society of Latvia becomes more diverse from the increase of newcomers in Latvia, the results of researches show that the level of intolerance towards newcomers is high.

The results of Eurobarometer research in 2016 show that 51% of inhabitants of Latvia have negative attitude towards migration from the EU and 86% have negative attitude towards migration from the third countries⁶.

The research of SKDS and NRA in 2015 show negative attitude of 78,3% of inhabitants of Latvia towards resettled asylum seekers in Latvia⁷.

The research of Latvian Center for Human Rights in 2016 show that 2/3 of foreign students who participated in the research (most of them live in Riga) have personally encountered the expressions of intolerance (verbal or physical) or were witnesses of such expressions⁸.

According to SKDS research conducted in 2017 almost 1/3 of the inhabitants of Latvia would not like to live next to Muslims, refugees or asylum seekers. The research also shows that the inhabitants would not also like to have Roma or Muslims as close friends (accordingly 35% and 34% of inhabitants)⁹.

Taking into account that the society of Latvia becomes more diverse, but there is lack of understanding about cultural diversity in local society and newcomers encounter the lack of support for successful integration in Latvia, the following **problems** have been defined in the integrated action plan in Riga:

- Persons who work with newcomers (for example, teachers, social workers and other service providers) lack knowledge and experience for working with this group. There is a lack of positive experience working with newcomers, language barrier and negative stereotypes about immigrants).
- Inhabitants of Riga lack information about cultural diversity, non-discrimination and migration.
- Newcomers lack support activities for successful integration into local society, especially Latvian language and integration courses.

⁶ Standard Eurobarometer No.85 „Public opinion in the European Union”, Spring 2016.

<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2130>

⁷ <http://nra.lv/latvija/159845-petijums-sabiedribamigrantus-negrib-pret-begliem-78-3.htm>

⁸ Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centrs (2016), Ārvalstu studentu/imigrantu aptauja par saskarsmi ar neiecietības izpausmēm Latvijā Rezultātu apkopojums <http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/media/attachments/10/05/2017/studentuaptaujaLV2016.pdf>

⁹ Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds (2017) Izpētes ziņojums par pašreizējo sabiedrības izpratnes un informētības līmeni un efektīvākajiem informācijas sniegšanas mehānismiem, SKDS Aptaujas atskaite (2017)

http://www.sif.gov.lv/images/files/nodevumi/ESF_Da%C5%BE%C4%81d%C4%ABbas/Izpetes_zinojums_par_sabiedribu.pdf

Taking into account the problems formulated the following **target groups** have been defined in integrated action plan:

- Persons who work with newcomers (for example, teachers, social workers and other service providers).
- Inhabitants of Riga.
- Newcomers: third country nationals, EU citizens, persons with refugee and alternative status.

Taking into account the problems formulated the following **two types of activities** have been defined **for the solution of the problems**:

- Educational and informative activities about cultural diversity and migration (with a special focus on how to work with newcomers) for different groups: teachers, social workers, other service providers, pupils, students, inhabitants of Riga).
- Support activities for newcomers: information, Latvian language courses, cultural orientation courses and other support activities.

The following activities **targeted at persons working with newcomers** are planned for fostering of social integration:

- Development of support mechanisms - development of adaptation programs/methodological materials/recommendations for the inclusion of newly arrived pupils in mainstream schools.
- Educational activities and exchange of experiences (good practice examples) for educational staff about inclusion of children – newcomers in mainstream education institutions.
- Establishing a methodological centre for work with children newcomers.
- Regular educational and informative activities on cultural diversity and migration (including work with newcomers) for different target groups working with newcomers.

The following activities **targeted at inhabitants of Riga** are planned for fostering of social integration:

- Organizing of events for the inhabitants of Latvia aimed at provision of information about newcomers and cultural diversity, socializing activities for newcomers and local people.
- Support for NGOs working with newcomers.
- Promotion of volunteering in Latvia in the field of migration.
- Support measures for volunteers working with newcomers (training, psychological support).

The following activities **targeted at support of newcomers** are planned for fostering of social integration:

- Latvian language courses for inhabitants of Latvia, including newcomers.
- Activities aimed at acquisition of Latvian language, in which representatives of different ethnic groups participate (for example, discussion clubs).
- Organization of explanatory, informative and support activities for newcomers (for example, integration courses), including preparation of informative materials on newcomers' topical issues in several languages (for example, in Russian, English, Arabic).
- Providing information to newcomers on the principles of NGO activity in Latvia and about minorities and other NGOs working with newcomers.
- Involvement of newcomers (especially young people) in different activities and events, especially as volunteers.
- Support for children - newcomers and schools (additional free language classes and other support).

The activities foreseen in the integrated action plan in Riga have been partially implemented before, for example, there are charge-free Latvian language courses organised by Riga municipality, for which newcomers can apply. There were some support activities conducted aimed at integration of newcomers, some training activities for teachers and other service providers working with newcomers were organised before from time to time¹⁰. However, there

¹⁰ For example, Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council has implemented the following migration-related projects before: “**Development and Human Rights Through Local Partnerships (AMITIE)**”, 14.03.2011 – 13.05.2013, EuropeAid / Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development; “**ImpleMentoring. City-to-city support for migrant integration**”, 15.11.2012 - 14.05.2014, EC / DG Home Affairs, Directorate B Immigration and Asylum; “**We are Rigans!**”, 05.12.2014 – 30.06.2015, European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals; “**AMITIE CODE- Capitalizing On Development**”, 21.05.2015.- 20.01.2017, EuropeAid / Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development

is lack of coordinated immigration policy in Latvia and the activities in the field of migration are usually conducted within the short-term projects implemented by different organisations and institutions. The sustainability of such projects is quite low due to the lack of financial resources after the end of the projects. These activities usually lack mutual coordination and evaluation. While implementing integrated action plan it is foreseen to establish and maintain close cooperation between ULG experts representing organisations working with migration issues and to ensure coordinated implementation of the activities in the area of migration.

The activities foreseen in the action plan will be implemented by the members of ULG according to their competence. The option of enlargement of ULG for implementation of IAP can be considered. Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council will continue coordination of cooperation between organisations involved in the implementation of the action plan. The meetings of ULG are foreseen while implementation of the activities of the IAP in order to monitor its' implementation.

The implementation of the action plan is foreseen between the years 2018-2020 according to the funding and other resources available. A great deal of activities depends on the political will for support of integration policy (both on state and municipal level) and on the finances allocated for implementation of these activities from state and municipal budget, as well as the financial support from the European funds.

Chair of Education, Culture and Sports Committee
of the Riga City Council



E. Aldermane

Action plan

Abbreviations used:

- Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga City Council (Society Integration Programme) (RD IKSD)
- Welfare Department of Riga City Council (Programme for cooperation with NGOs) (RD LD)
- Society Integration Foundation (SIF)
- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia (PMLP)
- Ministry of Culture (KM)
- The Latvian Language Agency (under the Ministry of Education and Science) (IZM (LVA))

Description of the problem	Lead agency and key partners	Action	Result indicator	2017	2020	Resources/Assets
Limited opportunities for newcomers to acquire Latvian language	RD IKSD, SIF, NGO, KM	Latvian language courses for inhabitants of Latvia, including newcomers	Number of persons attending courses	1000 persons	1000 persons	AMIF RD IKSD SIF
	RD IKSD, SIF, NGO, KM	Activities aimed at acquisition of Latvian language, in which representatives of different ethnic groups participate (for example, discussion clubs)	Number of events/projects/participants	9 events	9 events	AMIF RD IKSD
Support and information activities for the inclusion of	RD IKSD, NGO, KM, PMLP	Organization of explanatory, informative and support activities for newcomers (for example, integration courses),	Number of events/projects/participants	3 projects	3 projects	AMIF RD IKSD

newcomers in Latvian society are fragmented		including preparation of informative materials on newcomers' topical issues in several languages (for example, in Russian, English, Arabic)				PMLP
Intolerant attitude of the society towards the "different" - different social and ethnic groups of society, including newcomers	RD IKSD, SIF, KM	Organizing of events for the inhabitants of Latvia aimed at provision of information about newcomers and cultural diversity, socializing activities for newcomers and local people	Number of events/projects/participants	6 projects	6 projects	AMIF RD IKSD SIF
Insufficient participation of newcomers in NGO activities	KM, RD IKSD, NGO	Providing information to newcomers on the principles of NGO activity in Latvia and about minorities and other NGOs working with newcomers	Number of events/projects/participants	1 project	1 project	AMIF RD IKSD
	RD IKSD, SIF, KM, RD LD	Support for NGOs working with newcomers, including diaspora NGOs	Number of events/projects/participants	2 projects	2 projects	AMIF State NGO support programme State regional NGO support programme RD IKSD RD LD
	RD IKSD, SIF, NGO,	Involvement of newcomers (especially young people) in	Number of	1 project	1 project	AMIF

	KM	different activities and events, especially as volunteers	events/projects/participants			
Insufficient development of volunteerism in Latvia in the area of migration and lack of support for volunteers working with newcomers	KM, RD IKSD, SIF	Promotion of volunteering in Latvia in the field of migration	Number of events/projects/participants	1 project	1 project	AMIF RD IKSD
	KM, RD IKSD, SIF	Support measures for volunteers working with newcomers (training, psychological support)	Number of events/projects/participants	1 project	1 project	PMIF
There is no support system for the inclusion of newly arrived children in general education institutions in Latvia, teachers lack the experience in different subjects, especially if children do not know any of the language schools offer	RD IKSD (RIIMC), IZM (LVA)	Development of support mechanisms - development of adaptation programs/methodological materials/recommendations for the inclusion of newly arrived pupils in mainstream schools	The number of materials, programmes	0	1 programme	RD IKSD (RIIMC), IZM (LVA)
	RD IKSD	Support for children - newcomers and schools (additional free language classes and other support)	Number of pupils supported	400 pupils	400 pupils	RD IKSD
	RD IKSD, IZM (LVA), NGO	Educational activities and exchange of experiences (good practice examples) for educational staff about inclusion of children – newcomers in mainstream education institutions	Number of events/projects/participants	3 events	3 events	RD IKSD IZM (LVA)
	RD IKSD	Establishing a methodological center for work with newcomers	Methodological center	0	1 center	RD IKSD

Lack of support activities for persons working with newcomers (such as customer service specialists and social work specialists)	RD IKSD, RD LD, SIF, NGO, KM	Regular educational and informative activities on cultural diversity and migration (including work with newcomers) for different target groups working with newcomers	Number of events/projects/participants	2 projects	2 projects	AMIF SIF RD IKSD RD LD
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