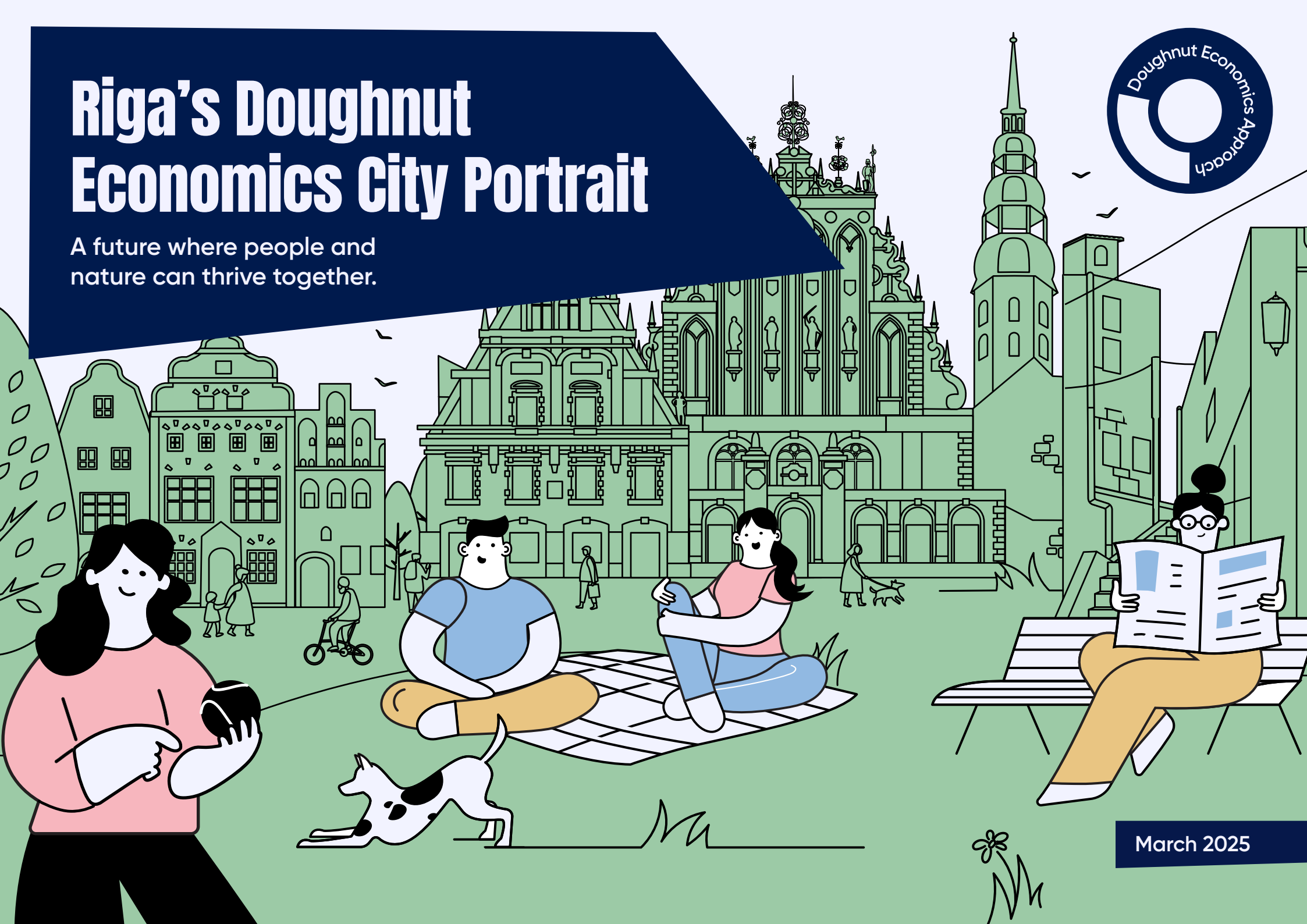
Riga's Doughnut Economics City Portrait

A future where people and nature can thrive together.



March 2025

Welcome to Riga's very first Doughnut Economics City Data Portrait!

This is a summary of a longer report (available here) in which Doughnut Economics framework is applied to Riga for the first time, analysing the city's current social and ecological situation through the Doughnut Data Portrait of Place. This outlook provides insight into how the city is doing now and how it can become a thriving and safe place for everyone in the future. Let's imagine Riga as leader in environmental regeneration, biodiversity, social equity, and human wellbeing.

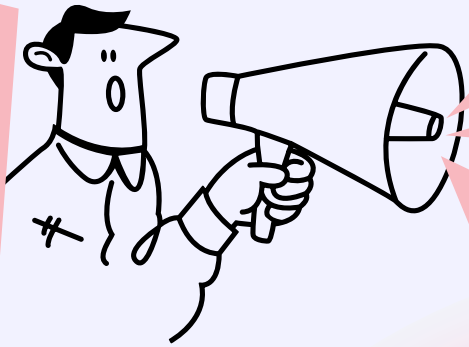
Doughnut Economics, developed by economist Kate Raworth, provides a new approach to understanding sustainability and human prosperity. It is an economic framework through which we can assess whether the place we live in (our neighbourhood, town, region, nation, or even the globe) allows both humans and nature to thrive. It offers a vision of what it means for humanity to prosper in the 21st century and explores the mindset and ways of thinking needed to achieve that goal.

The starting point of Doughnut Economics is to shift the focus from endless GDP growth to thriving within a socially and ecologically just space – i.e. within the Doughnut.

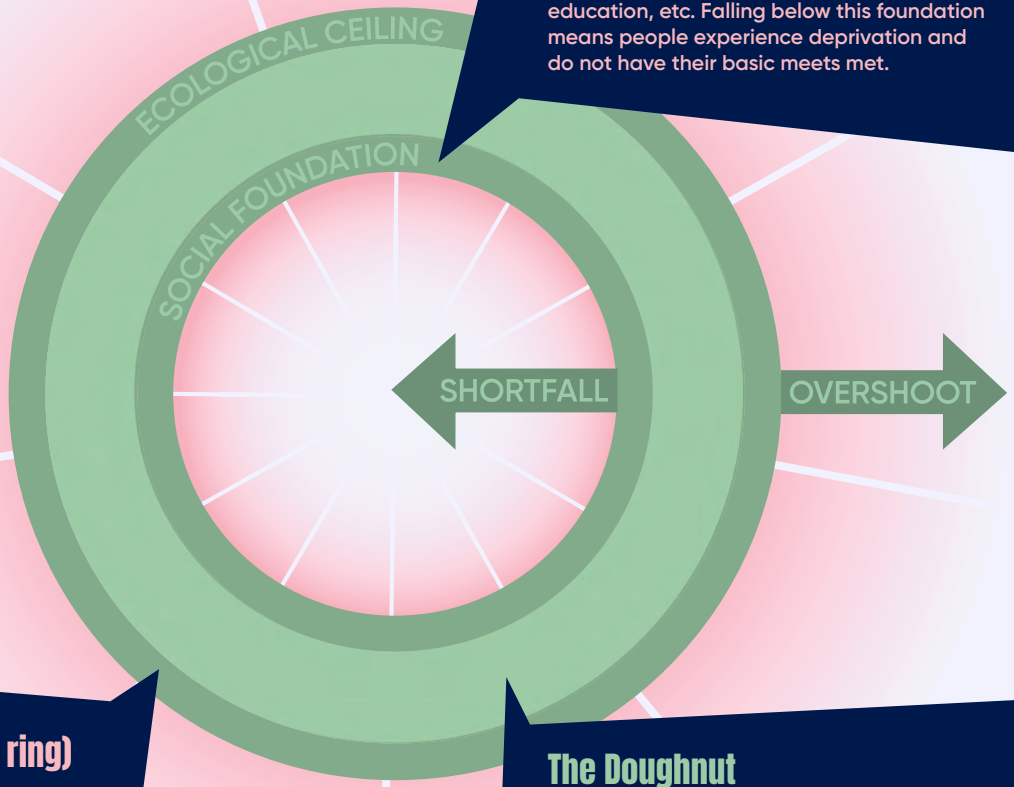
How is Doughnut Economics relevant to cities?

The Doughnut Economics is highly relevant to cities as it provides a holistic and actionable approach to sustainable urban development. Cities are key drivers of economic activity, resource consumption, and innovation, yet they also face social inequalities and environmental challenges that need urgent solutions. The Doughnut City Portrait helps urban policymakers, businesses, and residents visualise and measure a city's impact both locally and globally, ensuring that development aligns with ecological limits and social well-being.

Applying the Doughnut to Riga involves assessing how well the city supports its residents while minimising harm to ecosystems both locally and globally. The categories assessed within the Doughnut are not arbitrary – they are based on scientifically established concepts, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the Planetary Boundaries.



The **Doughnut is a conceptual shape** consisting of two rings and the space between them



The Social Foundation (inner ring)

Ensuring that everyone has access to basic needs such as food, water, housing, healthcare, education, etc. Falling below this foundation means people experience deprivation and do not have their basic meets met.

The Ecological Ceiling (outer ring)

Representing planetary boundaries such as climate stability, biodiversity, pollution control, and resource use. Exceeding this boundary leads to environmental degradation: climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, etc.

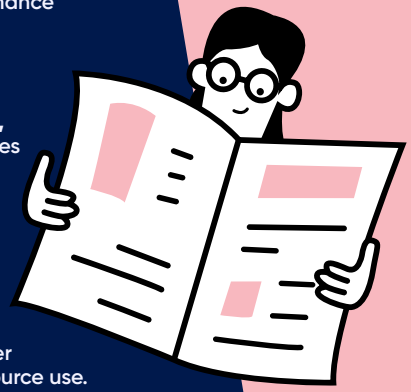
The Doughnut

This is the safe zone, or "green corridor", where humanity can thrive, maximising social wellbeing while ensuring that the planet is not overburdened.

Our context

Riga, the capital of Latvia, is a vibrant and historic city with a population of approximately 600,000 residents, making it one of the major urban centres in the Baltics. As an economic, cultural, and transport hub, Riga plays a crucial role in Latvia's development. However, like many modern cities, it faces pressing environmental and social challenges, including income inequality, pollution, urban heat islands, and reliance on resource-intensive imports. These challenges raise an important question: **How can Riga ensure a high quality of life for its residents while operating within planetary boundaries?**

In this summary, we examine Riga's social and ecological performance through four interconnected lenses, offering a holistic view of the city's sustainability and global impact. For each lens, different indicators of deprivation or degradation were selected. Once the indicators were chosen, we gathered the most recent data available for each. **Most indicators were from the past two years, overall covering the period from 2018 to 2024.** Explore these lenses in detail by clicking on each and see where they lead you!



These four lenses are deeply interconnected. For example:

- If Riga improves local social well-being, it can reduce inequalities that drive overconsumption
- If Riga enhances local ecological sustainability, it can lower its global ecological impact by reducing emissions and resource use.
- Ethical consumption choices in Riga can improve social conditions globally, while also lowering deforestation and pollution worldwide.

By applying these four lenses, Riga can identify key challenges and develop policies that create a fairer, more sustainable future for both its residents and the planet.

What are the four lenses?

Local Social Lens

Is everyone in Riga able to thrive? Imagine a city where everyone has access to good housing, healthcare, education, jobs, and strong communities—no one should struggle just to meet their basic needs. However, if people cannot afford rent, face job insecurity, or lack quality public transport, it signals a social shortfall.

Local Ecological Lens

Is Riga as generous as the surrounding nature? Think of the city as a giant garden – if we pollute the air, overuse fertilisers, cut down trees, and generate excessive waste, the garden withers. Preserving green spaces, clean air, and healthy water ensures that Riga remains a place where both people and nature can flourish.

Global Social Lens

Is Riga respecting the well-being of people worldwide? If the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or the gadgets we buy come from unfair working conditions, child labour, or unsafe factories, then our choices carry a hidden human cost. A fair city ensures that what it consumes does not come at the expense of workers around the globe.

Global Ecological Lens

Is Riga respecting the health of the entire planet? Every product we import – whether coffee, electronics, or timber – leaves an environmental footprint somewhere. If Riga's consumption habits contribute to deforestation, climate change, and pollution abroad, then we are using more than our fair share of the Earth's resources.

Local	Global
Ecological ceiling	
Local ecological Is Riga as generous as the surrounding nature?	**Global ecological** Is Riga respecting the health of the entire planet?
Local social Is everyone in Riga able to thrive?	**Global social** Is Riga respecting the well-being of people worldwide?
Social foundation	

Riga's Local Social Lens

First, let's examine **how well Riga is meeting the needs of its residents.** To determine whether people in Riga are able to thrive, we assessed fifteen different categories, including work, healthcare, housing, and transport. Take a look at all the categories below!

Water

Do residents have access to clean water for their daily needs?

Health

Do residents have access to primary healthcare and the opportunity to maintain good health?

Housing

Can residents access housing and decent living conditions?

Energy

Can residents afford energy for their daily needs?

Income & Work

Do all residents have job opportunities and can afford a basic standard of living?

Connectivity

Do residents have access and the skills to use the internet?

Peace & Justice

Can every resident feel a sense of safety in their home and neighbourhoods?

Food

Can residents afford an adequate and varied diet?

Education

Do residents have access to a basic education?

Mobility

Can residents easily access public transportation, travel on foot, and experience a safe transportation environment?

Social Equity

Do Riga's residents experience a socially just and equal environment?

Enhancing Quality of Life

Riga is committed to improving residents' well-being through strategic planning aligned with the Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 and the Development Programme for 2022–2027.

- Better housing access – The Housing Policy Guidelines for 2024–2030 aim to increase housing availability and affordability.
- Smart city innovation – By 2025, Riga will finalise the Smart City Guidelines, enhancing digital governance and public services.
- Stronger education ecosystem – The Education Ecosystem Development Strategy for 2024–2028, pending approval, will promote lifelong learning and high-quality education.

Equality in diversity

Are all residents able to access services and be treated equally, regardless of their ethnic, social, religious background, disability, or sexual orientation?

Culture

Are cultural activities accessible to all Riga's residents?

Doughnut Economics Approach

Political voice

Are all eligible voters able to actively participate in Riga's political life?

Community

Can residents fulfil their basic social needs?

Riga's Local Social Lens

In the table below, you can see how Riga is performing across all local social categories. Each category has its own indicators, providing a glimpse of the bigger picture. For a more in-depth analysis of each indicator, take a look at the full report.

To see other lenses, scroll down or return to page three!

0. Zero | 1. Near zero | 2. Moderate | 3. High | 4. Emergency

Deprivation | degradation level

Connectivity — 1

Internet Access
In 2024, 95.8% of households had internet access, indicating near-universal connectivity.

Digital Skills
In 2023, 2.65% of Latvians had no digital skills, suggesting minimal digital illiteracy.

Culture — 0

In 2024, 98% of Riga's residents attended at least one cultural event, indicating strong cultural engagement.

Community — 2

In 2023, 11.36% of residents reported frequent loneliness, a lower rate than the European average of 14%.

Food — 2

In 2023, 7.6% of Riga's population couldn't afford a meal with meat or fish every second day, indicating financial hardship and food insecurity.

Political Voice — 3

In 2024, only 34% of residents felt included in local decision-making, indicating very low participation.

Housing — 3

Availability
In 2024, only 46% of residents rated housing availability positively, suggesting widespread difficulties in finding a home.

Quality
In 2023, 22% of households reported unsatisfactory housing conditions, indicating significant housing quality challenges.

Health — 3

Life Expectancy
In 2022, Riga's life expectancy was 75 years, falling below the EU average of 81, signalling health-related challenges.

Primary Care Access
In 2024, only 64% of residents rated primary healthcare availability positively, suggesting accessibility issues.

Water — 0

Supply
In 2023, 97% of Riga's population was connected to the centralised water supply, approaching full coverage.

Sewage
In 2023, 96% of residents were connected to the centralised sewage system, ensuring near-complete access to sanitation services.

Social Equity — 3

Income inequality
In 2022, Riga's Gini coefficient was 0.33, one of the highest in the EU, highlighting economic inequality. This assesses the distribution of income or wealth in a society and indicates existing inequalities.

Corruption Perception
In 2023, Latvia scored 60 on the Corruption Perceptions Index, indicating notable corruption levels.

Energy — 2

Heating Affordability
In 2023, 8.4% of Riga's residents couldn't afford proper heating, highlighting an issue of energy deprivation.

Energy Poverty
In 2023, 9.2% of Riga's residents experienced energy poverty, exceeding the deprivation threshold.

Income & Work — 2

Poverty Risk
In 2022, 7.8% of Riga's population was below the minimum income level, indicating financial insecurity.

Unemployment
In 2023, Riga's unemployment rate was 4.2%, remaining below the deprivation threshold.

Poverty & Social Exclusion
In 2023, 25.6% of Latvia's population was at risk of poverty and social exclusion, exceeding the EU average by 4.2 percentage points.

Mobility — 3

Public Transport
In 2024, 83% of residents positively rated public transport accessibility, indicating a well-functioning system.

Pedestrian Infrastructure
In 2024, only 61% of residents rated pedestrian infrastructure positively, suggesting challenges in walkability.

Road Safety
In 2020, Latvia had the second-highest road fatality rate in the EU, with 73 deaths per million, highlighting significant safety concerns.

Education — 1

Dropout Rate
In 2023, 5% of 9th-grade graduates received only a certificate, meeting the threshold for potential educational deprivation.

Minimal Education Levels
In 2023, only 2% of residents aged 15 and over had minimal education, remaining below the deprivation threshold.

School Availability
In 2024, 72% of residents rated municipal education availability positively, indicating accessibility above the deprivation threshold.

Equality in Diversity — 3

Inclusivity
In 2023, over 29% of residents saw Riga as unwelcoming to racial minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and immigrants, reflecting inclusivity challenges.

Housing Accessibility
In 2024, only 38% of respondents positively rated housing accessibility in terms of the environment (elevators, ramps, etc.), suggesting significant shortcomings.

Gender Equality
In 2024, Latvia scored 62.6 on the Gender Equality Index, falling below the EU average of 71.

Peace & Justice — 2

Safety Concerns
In 2023, 12% of respondents had safety concerns, showing that a minority of residents feel unsafe.

Neighbourhood Safety
In 2024, 76% of residents rated neighbourhood safety positively.

Home Security
In 2024, 84% of residents rated their home security positively, indicating a strong sense of personal safety.

Riga's Local Ecological Lens

The second lens asks: **can Riga be as generous as the surrounding nature?** To determine whether the city's natural services remain uncompromised, we examined eight different categories, including air purification, temperature regulation, soil health, and biodiversity. Take a look at them below!

Water cycle

Does Riga effectively manage water, preventing flooding and ensuring clean water quality?

Carbon storage

Does Riga offset its local emissions?

Fostering biodiversity

Can biodiversity thrive in Riga?

Addressing air pollution

Does Riga maintain good air quality and avoid significant air pollution?

Building a Greener City

Riga prioritizes sustainability with policies that strengthen climate resilience and expand green infrastructure.

- Energy efficiency and climate action – The Riga State City Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan for 2022–2030 targets lower energy consumption, climate adaptation, and reduced energy poverty.
- Urban greening for a healthier environment – The upcoming Riga Urban Environment Greening Plan for 2027–2031 focuses on:
  - Preventing urban flooding;
  - Reducing heat island effects;
  - Restoring biodiversity;
  - Expanding green spaces for residents.

Enhance wellbeing

Is Riga providing an environment that supports wellbeing by maintaining good street hygiene and minimising noise?

Build & protect soil

Does Riga maintain high soil quality and control erosion?

Harvest energy

Does Riga use and produce clean energy in its energy production?

Regulate the temperature

Does Riga effectively regulate its temperature and adapt to extreme heat?

Doughnut Economics Approach

Riga's Local Ecological Lens

The table below shows how Riga is performing across all local ecological categories. Each category has its own indicators, providing a snapshot of the bigger picture. For a more detailed analysis of each indicator, take a look at the full report!

To see other lenses, scroll down or return to page three!

0. Zero	1. Near zero	2. Moderate	3. High	4. Emergency

Deprivation | degradation level

3 Build and protect soil

Soil quality

In 2023, soil quality in Riga was 36.1% of the reference level, indicating significant degradation.

Erosion regulation

In 2023, erosion regulation in Riga was 43.1% of the reference level, falling below the threshold, showing notable degradation.

2 Water cycle

Water quantity control

In 2023, water quantity control in Riga was at 49.8% of the reference level, meeting the threshold when rounded up, suggesting minimal degradation. This indicator assesses "the ability of the landscape to manage and convey a storm event."

Water quality

In 2023, 2 out of 14 monitored water bodies in Riga had poor ecological quality, indicating water degradation.

4 Carbon storage

Carbon sequestration ability

In 2020, Riga's forests absorbed only 1.85% of total CO_2 emissions, demonstrating an extremely low capacity to offset emissions.

Carbon sequestration

In 2023, carbon sequestration in Riga was at 44.6% of the reference level, falling below the 50% threshold but remaining close, indicating moderate degradation.

2 Regulate the temperature

Extreme heat vulnerability

In 2022–2030, municipal experts deemed Riga's vulnerability to extreme heat events as 'low,' meaning significant material or immaterial losses have not been observed.

Air temperature regulation

In 2023, air temperature regulation in Riga was 41% of the reference level, falling below the threshold, indicating moderate degradation and potential risks in the future.

1 Addressing air pollution

NO_2 concentration

In 2023, the annual average NO_2 concentration at all three monitoring stations in Riga remained below the upper limit of 32 $\mu g/m^3$, showing no significant changes from 2022 and remaining well under the 40 $\mu g/m^3$ threshold for human health.

PM10 pollution

In 2023, the permissible PM10 pollution limit was exceeded on 14 days, a decrease from previous years, indicating an improving trend in air quality.

3 Harvest energy

In 2020, 95.76% of electricity in Riga was generated from fossil gas, with only 0.05% from solar. However, solar energy increased more than 15 times by 2023, indicating a positive shift but, still, a strong ongoing reliance on fossil fuels.

0 Enhance wellbeing

Neighbourhood cleanliness

In 2024, 73% of Riga residents rated their neighbourhood cleanliness positively, indicating no major hygiene concerns.

Noise levels

In 2024, 74% of residents rated daytime noise levels and 76% rated nighttime noise levels positively, suggesting no significant noise pollution issue.

2 Fostering biodiversity

Biodiversity support

In 2023, biodiversity support in Riga was at 48.4% of the reference level, slightly below the 50% threshold, indicating minor degradation.

Pollinator support

In 2023, pollinator support in Riga was 41.1% of the reference level, highlighting notable degradation and a potential risk to biodiversity and food production.

Food web support

In 2023, food web support in Riga was 44.8% of the reference level, indicating moderate degradation of ecological food chains.

Riga's Global Social Lens

We live in an interconnected world, where our local actions can impact the well-being of people globally. **Have you ever wondered who made your shoes?** To explore Riga's impact on communities worldwide, we examined the third lens and analysed twelve different global social categories, ranging from education and child labour (stemming from the consumption of goods) to the exacerbation of political conflict through imports from aggressor countries. Take a look at all the categories below!

Water

Is Riga affecting global water resources and contributing to water pollution?

Energy

Does Riga contribute to energy security in the surrounding regions and globally?

Housing

Does Riga's consumption patterns hinder global access to housing?

Food

Does Riga contribute to maintaining global food security?

Education

Does Riga's consumption hinder the education of children worldwide?

Social equity

Does Riga contribute to the unequal distribution of wealth in other countries through corruption?

Contributing to Sustainability Beyond Riga

Riga aligns with international sustainability goals and best practices.

Advancing waste management – National and regional policies aim to:

- Reduce waste and improve sorting;
- Enhance biodegradable waste processing;
- Promote circular economy principles to reduce resource use

Strengthening governance and transparency – The Corruption Prevention and Combating Action Plan 2023–2025, praised by the OECD, and the Riga Municipality Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2022–2025 reinforce ethical governance.

Aligning with EU climate goals – Riga is enhancing energy efficiency, expanding renewable energy, and implementing sustainable urban policies.

Peace & justice

Does Riga exacerbate global conflicts?

Income & work

Does Riga's consumption patterns rely on the exploitation of workers around the world?

Equality in diversity

Does Riga contribute to discrimination against women?

Community & networks

Does Riga threaten the existence of communities through consumption patterns?

Doughnut Economics Approach

Political voice

Does Riga's consumption indirectly contribute to the suppression of workers' political rights, voices, and freedoms worldwide?

Health

Does Riga's consumption affect health globally?

Riga's Global Social Lens

The table below shows how Riga is performing across all global social categories. Each category has its own indicators, providing a snapshot of the bigger picture. For a more detailed analysis of each indicator, take a look at the full report!

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Deprivation | degradation level

4 Food

Food waste

In 2024, the average citizen in Riga generated 52 kg of food waste per year, far exceeding the sustainable limit and highlighting a major local responsibility in global food security.

Ecological footprint of food consumption

In 2024, Riga's food supply required an area approximately 42 times larger than the size of the city, indicating an unsustainable impact on global resources.

2 Peace & Justice

In 2024, Latvia's imports from Russia and Belarus decreased by 77% compared to 2021, but its 0.46 SDG Index score suggests moderate deprivation due to contributions to weapon exports.

4 Housing

In 2024, an estimated 2,600 people were displaced due to climate change effects associated with Riga's emissions, while the number of refugees welcomed in the city remains unknown, highlighting a major humanitarian concern.

3 Water

In 2023, 11.75% of Latvia's total imports consisted of water-intensive goods from non-European sources, exceeding the 10% threshold and contributing to global freshwater depletion.

4 Education

In 2023, approximately 15,000 children were estimated to be working in the global supply chains supporting Riga-based consumption, indicating a significant ethical and human rights issue.

2 Income & Work

In 2022, 71% of Latvian students were open to buying fair trade products, indicating a willingness to support responsible consumption. In 2023, 12.6% of Latvia's textile imports came from highrisk worker exploitation countries.

1 Energy

Despite bans on Russian fossil fuel imports in 2022, Latvia still imported €176 million worth of Russian energy resources in 2023, showing continued dependence on geopolitically unstable sources.

4 Health

In 2023, an estimated 326 premature deaths were linked to high pollution levels caused by the consumption supply chains that Riga relies on, raising serious concerns about global health impacts.

4 Political Voice

In 2023, 26.8% of Latvia's imports came from countries with an alarming Global Rights Index score.

2 Social Equity

In 2023, only 0.03% of Latvia's imports came from the world's most corrupt countries.

2 Equality in Diversity

In 2023, 13.6% of Latvia's textile and footwear imports came from Asian countries, suggesting a moderate link to fast fashion and potential exploitation of women.

1 Community & Networks

In 2023, only 1.8% of Latvia's imports by weight came from countries with high group grievance scores.

Riga's Global Ecological Lens

Our Earth is a complex and beautiful natural system that is our only home. However, due to irresponsibly high consumption of natural resources, land conversion, construction, and the development of synthetic chemicals, humans have degraded large portions of natural ecosystems, accelerated global warming, and contributed to biodiversity loss. Countries and cities in the Global North bear a greater responsibility for the deterioration of our planet's health than those in the Global South, mainly due to historic emissions and current high consumption per capita. **But how is Riga faring?** Below, you can explore nine categories, such as climate change, excessive fertiliser use, and others, to understand the footprint of Riga's consumption and production patterns.

Riga's Climate Commitments

Riga has set ambitious goals for carbon reduction and climate neutrality.

Net-zero commitment – As a European Covenant of Mayors member since 2008, Riga aims to:
- Cut CO_2 emissions by 40% by 2030 (from 1990 levels);
- Reach full climate neutrality by 2050.

Clean energy and emissions cuts – The Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan for 2022–2030 outlines 112 measures, targeting:
- 1,289 GWh in energy savings;
- 1,350 GWh in renewable energy;
- 509,000 tonnes less CO_2.

Sustainable municipal operations – Key efforts include:
- 100% renewable energy in public buildings;
- More efficient infrastructure and street lighting;
- Greener municipal transport.

Minimising waste and embracing circularity – The Central Latvia Regional Waste Management Plan 2024–2028 supports:
- Smarter waste collection systems;
- Prevention initiatives like exchange and home composting.

Excessive fertilizer use

Does Riga rely on agriculture that uses excessive fertilisers?

Climate change

To what extent does Riga contribute to global warming?

Land conversion

Does Riga exceed the Earth's biocapacity through its consumption of resources, including land conversion?

Ocean acidification

Does Riga contribute to the acceleration of ocean acidification?

Chemical pollution

Does Riga contribute to chemical pollution through its waste management practices?

Biodiversity loss

Is Riga endangering or causing the extinction of wildlife and plant species?

Air pollution

Does Riga's consumption increase air pollution levels globally?

Water withdrawals

Do Riga's consumption patterns lead to excessive freshwater withdrawals?

Ozone layer depletion

Does Riga contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer through its chemical consumption?

Doughnut Economics Approach

Riga's Global Ecological Lens

The table below shows how Riga is performing across all global environmental categories. Each category has its own indicators, providing a snapshot of the bigger picture. For a more detailed analysis of each indicator, take a look at the full report!

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Deprivation | degradation level

Climate Change — 4

In 2022, Latvia's per capita GHG emissions were 7.8 tonnes CO_2 equivalent, exceeding the 7.1-tonne carbon budget and requiring urgent reductions. These emissions directly contribute to global heating.

Ocean Acidification — 4

In 2022, Latvia's consumption-based GHG emissions per capita were 7.8 tonnes CO_2 equivalent, exceeding the carbon budget and requiring urgent reductions. These emissions serve as a proxy value for the impacts on ocean acidification (as CO_2 is the main gas that influences the changes in ocean pH).

Ozone depletion — 1

Production impacts

In 2023, Latvia produced 0 tonnes of HFCs, Class I and Class II ozone-depleting substances, showing no degradation.

EU refrigerant imports

In 2023, the EU imported 1,306 metric tonnes of appliances containing refrigerants.

Water withdrawals — 3

In 2023, 11.75% of Latvia's total imports were water-intensive products from non-European countries, exceeding the 10% threshold and contributing to global water depletion.

Biodiversity loss — 3

In 2021, 13.8% of species assessments in Latvia had a bad conservation status, showing ongoing biodiversity loss despite better performance than the EU average.

Air pollution — 1

In 2023, only 2.1% of Latvia's manufactured goods imports came from the most air-polluted countries.

Land conversion — 4

Land use

In 2024, Latvia's ecological footprint was 13.5 million hectares, surpassing the country's surface area and indicating severe degradation.

Global comparison

In 2022, four planet Earths would have been needed if everyone consumed resources like the average Latvian, showing extreme overuse.

Chemical Pollution — 1

Plastic waste

In 2023, only 4.52% of Latvia's exported plastic waste went to Asia or Africa, remaining below the 5% degradation threshold.

Batteries and accumulators

In 2023, Latvia exported 0.48% of its total waste as batteries and accumulators, indicating no significant degradation.

Hazardous waste

In 2022, less than 5% of Latvia's hazardous waste was likely exported to Asia or Africa, though hidden trafficking creates uncertainty.

Excessive fertilizer use — 3

Nitogen

In 2024, Latvia's Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index was 60.3, falling below the safe threshold and indicating degradation.

Phosphorus

In 2024, Latvia's phosphorus surplus score was 52.3, ranking 97th globally and indicating degradation.

... And when we combine all the lenses into a holistic view, we can finally see the bigger picture.

- Food
- Water
- Health
- Mobility
- Education
- Housing
- Energy
- Peace & justice
- Income & work
- Connectivity
- Equality in diversity
- Social equity
- Culture
- Community
- Political voice

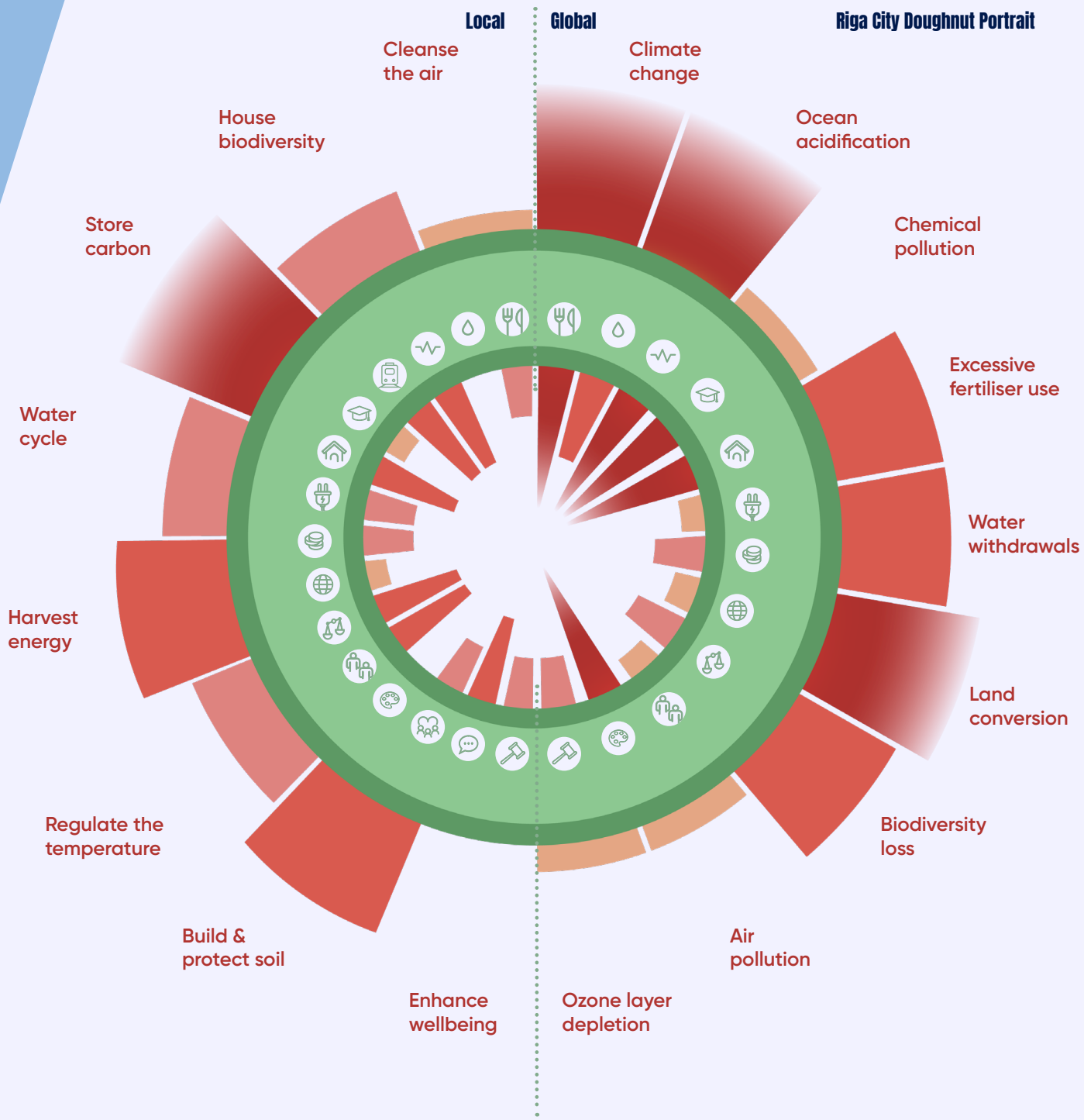
Emergency deprivation/degradation
Life-threatening deprivations and human right abuses/critical ecological degradations and the breakdown of ecosystems

High deprivation/degradation
Major shortcomings in fulfilling basic needs for a large part of the population/severe ecological degradations

Moderate deprivation/degradation
Challenges in fulfilling basic needs of a portion of the population/ocassional and low-impact ecological degradations

Near-zero deprivation/degradation
Deprivation and inequities for a few individuals/rare and minor ecological degradations

Zero deprivation/degradation
Universal access to essential services and basic needs/human activities respecting ecological limits



Takeaways

From Riga's City Doughnut Portrait, in more than half of the dimensions, both human and ecological thresholds are being exceeded.

We are facing an emergency across several global ecological areas such as:

- Climate change
- Ocean acidification
- Land conversion

which are the hidden consequences of our unsustainable resource use.

Similarly, global social needs are also being severely deprived. Unfortunately, Riga's consumption patterns appear to threaten basic aspects of human life around the world, including:

- Health
- Food security
- Education
- Housing
- Political freedom

Overall, most of the negative impacts are observed within the global context.

There are also multiple categories within the local context that indicate negative impacts and untapped potential for Riga, such as

- Carbon storage
- Local energy harvesting
- Soil protection

The social situation of Riga and its citizens clearly reflects that some people lack access to

- Decent healthcare
- Housing
- Reliable work and income
- Safe transportation

A few categories do present a positive picture for example:

- Local air pollution levels are relatively safe around the city (except for specific locations)
- Drinking water quality is high and it is publicly accessible
- There is sufficient access to green spaces to support the well-being of locals

Additionally, there are no issues with:

- Providing citizens access to energy and the internet
- Sewage systems and sanitary conditions
- Opportunities for people in Riga to enjoy cultural activities

Furthermore, the results show that political considerations, social equity, gender equality, and the inclusion of different racial and LGBTQ+ minorities are still too low (as is the case in global consumption chains) and could be significantly improved. These aspects highlight the potential for significant progress that Riga can make for both its citizens and the natural environment within the city.

To explore Riga's Doughnut in detail, take a look at the detailed report (available here)!

Vision & Next Steps for a Thriving Riga

There is increasing recognition that the current global economic system is driving ecological crises and exacerbating social deprivation and inequity. Rather than pursuing endless GDP growth, Doughnut Economics offers a growingly recognised guide for a thriving future, focusing on meeting the needs of all people within the planet's ecological limits. It envisions an economy that is embedded within society and the living world, rather than a self-contained market. Its goal is to create economies that are regenerative and distributive by design.

The Doughnut is a great tool for citizens' engagement – **you can organize a Doughnut event yourself!**

How does your city look like? Share your portrait with us!

Recommendations

We invite Riga's residents, organisations, and businesses to:

Explore the Doughnut to gain insights into both the local situation and Riga's global impact. By examining the Doughnut snapshot, you can quickly identify critical challenges highlighted by shortfalls and overshoots. The Doughnut is a visualisation tool that makes data easy to understand for everyone.

Engage with the Doughnut, by participating in the process and reflecting on local and global issues. The Doughnut sparks discussions, offering a new narrative and common language that enables everyone to take part in the dialogue. With a shared understanding of current degradations and deprivations, we can engage in constructive discussions. Residents, organisations, and businesses can challenge the thresholds for deprivation and degradation.

The municipality of Riga can use the Doughnut to:

Analyse local and global issues and take accountability. The Doughnut can be applied as a monitoring tool, providing the city with a multi-dimensional diagnostic of the situation. The city can now connect social and environmental lenses on both local and global scales, which is particularly useful for strategies like fostering a socially just energy transition. The Doughnut also reinforces accountability by raising awareness of Riga's global impact, an area where understanding has often been limited due to the lack of assessment of the city's impact on planetary boundaries and social conditions elsewhere. Moreover, the Doughnut framework not only provides a snapshot of the current situation but also allows for monitoring progress.

Set informed priorities and shape new policies. The Doughnut can be used as a decision support tool to help identify priorities and opportunities. It serves as a strategic compass by indicating various levels of degradation and deprivation, guiding municipal action on the most urgent issues (e.g. at emergency levels). It can also assist in the prioritisation of projects during political and budget discussions.

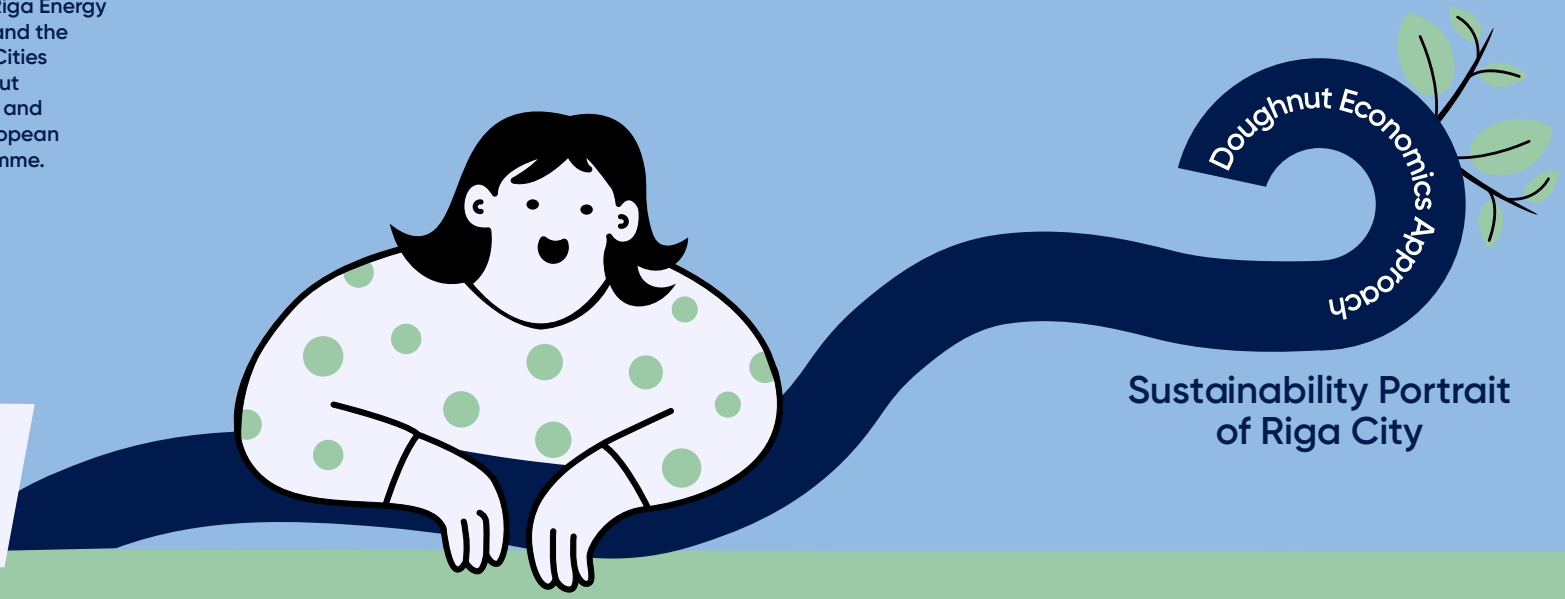
And lastly, check out Doughnut City Portraits of other places in Doughnut Economics Action Lab website: https://doughnuteconomics.org/

Riga's Doughnut Economics City Portrait

A future where people and nature can thrive together.

Scan me!

Riga's Doughnut City Portrait was developed by the Riga Energy Agency in collaboration with the NGO Green Liberty and the consultancy firm Regenalyze. It is part of the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme – Cohort 2 project, "A Doughnut Economics Approach to Sustainable Decarbonisation and Citizen Engagement" (SEED) and is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.



Sustainability Portrait of Riga City

More information about the Riga's Doughnut City Portrait is available here: https://rea.riga.lv/doughnut/

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