

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Latvia – Lithuania

REGULATION AND A COMPENDIUM OF TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STEPPING COMPETITION

„A BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE“ CASE



This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of NGO „Training Synergy “and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Editors of the publication:

Evelina Lazdane–Jakukaitė, expert – head of the working group

Anita Puzonaitė, expert

Domantas-Augustinas Grigūnas, expert

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
1. THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN THE WORLD.....	5
2. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SITUATION IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA.....	7
3. WALKING BENEFITS	8
4. "BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE" PROJECT MODEL	10
5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PROMOTION STRATEGIES	11
6. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT APP FOR A STEP CHALLENGE	13
7. PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING THE RESULTS OF STEPS.....	16
8. COUNTING EVERY STEP	18
9. DATA ANALYSIS	19
REFERENCES	22



INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the pace of modern life, urbanization, and technological development have significantly changed people's daily routines and movement habits. As sedentary work increases and physical activity decreases, related health problems become more evident – the growing prevalence of chronic diseases, reduced productivity, and poorer emotional well-being. This trend poses challenges not only to public health but also to the social and economic development of the state.

Walking – a simple and accessible form of physical activity – has become an effective way to address these challenges. It is not only an easy and adaptable means of daily movement but also a tool to strengthen community bonds, promote a culture of healthy living, and foster a sustainable approach to physical activity as an integral part of everyday life. Studies show that even a small increase in daily walking can significantly improve physical and mental health, as well as overall quality of life.

This document has been prepared as a regulation and methodological guide, defining the key principles, technical requirements, and organizational guidelines for international step challenges. Its scope of application covers cross-border, regional, or local-level physical activity initiatives aimed at encouraging population movement, engaging diverse target groups (municipalities, organizations, educational institutions, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities), and ensuring transparent data collection and result evaluation. The document can be used as a methodological tool for planning, implementing, and evaluating step challenges, as well as for developing long-term physical activity initiatives.

This publication has been prepared as a practical guide for municipalities, organizations, communities, and all those who wish to contribute to the promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyles. It presents international examples of walking initiatives, analyzes the situation of physical activity in Lithuania and Latvia, discusses technical and methodological aspects of project implementation, and provides recommendations on how to engage communities and ensure the sustainability of such initiatives.

The **purpose of this publication** is not only to regulate the implementation process of the project but also to inspire long-term, community-based wellness initiatives that contribute to building a more active, healthier, and socially responsible society.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN THE WORLD

Walking is the most universal form of physical activity – it requires no special equipment and is accessible to people of all ages and social groups. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that regular, moderate-intensity movement – such as daily walking – reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancer, strengthens bones and muscles, and improves mental health and emotional well-being. However, despite these well-known benefits, many people are still not moving enough.

According to WHO data, physical inactivity remains high among both adults and adolescents. Worldwide, about 31% of adults do not reach the recommended level of physical activity – at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week. The problem is even greater among adolescents: about 80% fail to meet the daily recommended amount of physical activity – 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity per day. These figures show that a large portion of the population leads a sedentary lifestyle, and a simple activity like daily walking can serve as an effective tool for improving health and preventing disease.



In the European context, the situation also remains a challenge. The latest Eurobarometer 525 survey (2022) shows that 45% of Europeans report never engaging in sport or physical activity, while only 38% say they do so regularly (at least once a week). The same study reveals an alarming fact – 15% of respondents admitted that during the entire week, they did not spend even 10 minutes walking on any day. This means that a significant portion of Europe's population remains inactive.



These numbers indicate that, both globally and across Europe, the lack of physical activity is a serious public health issue. Walking, as the simplest and most accessible form of movement, can be an effective solution to this problem. Even small amounts of daily walking can have a significant impact on both physical and psychological health.

To draw attention to this issue, various countries and organizations have developed large-scale walking initiatives. One of the most famous is Australia's

“10,000 Steps” program, launched in 2001, which has reached millions of people. Participants use a dedicated platform to track their daily steps and join community and workplace challenges.

Research shows that those who join such initiatives increase their physical activity by an average of more than two and a half hours per week, which has a major positive impact on health.

Another global initiative is “World Walking”, a virtual platform that allows people to “walk around the world” by logging their steps during daily activities. It enables individuals and communities to form groups, monitor collective progress, and even virtually “walk” famous routes such as the Great Wall of China or a journey around the world. Another annual initiative, “World Walking Day”, has been organized since 1991 by TAFISA (The Association For International Sport for All) to promote physical activity and



community spirit worldwide. Every year, on the first Sunday of October, the event brings together hundreds of thousands of participants from dozens of countries who, in various ways – walking, running, cycling, or even swimming – contribute to a global 24-hour relay, “Around the Globe.” The idea is simple yet powerful: to move together, promote a healthy lifestyle, and spread messages of solidarity, sustainability, and community. Although the activities take place in different locations, the symbolic passing of the baton through social media connects participants into a unified global movement, reminding us that even simple walking can become a symbol of global health and unity.



A very different perspective on promoting walking is offered by the international Walk21 initiative, which focuses on urban planning and community well-being. Its conferences bring together experts from various fields to share experiences on how to design environments that encourage daily walking – from reducing car traffic to creating “school streets” that allow children to travel safely on foot. In this way, walking is presented not only as a source of individual health but also as an essential element in building sustainable and vibrant cities. The initiative highlights that achieving lasting change requires not only encouraging people to move more but also creating environments where walking is safe, convenient, and a natural part of everyday life.

In summary, global experience clearly shows that walking is one of the most effective tools in addressing the problem of physical inactivity. From Australia to Europe, from virtual challenges to urban planning strategies – everywhere we see that walking not only strengthens health but also unites communities, inspires shared goals, and brings joy through the simplest of actions – a single step.

2. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SITUATION IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

Lithuania and Latvia face the same challenges as many other European countries – the lack of physical activity among the population remains a significant issue affecting public health and quality of life. Despite growing attention to healthy lifestyles, many people in these countries still move too little and do not devote enough time to physical activity. As a result, the growing number of initiatives and digital apps encouraging daily movement are becoming increasingly important in addressing this problem.

According to data from the Eurobarometer 525 survey, 53% of Lithuanians and 33% of Latvians report that they never engage in sports or any other physical activity. Another considerable portion of the population is physically active only occasionally – about 15% in Lithuania and 28% in Latvia. These figures show that in both countries, many residents do not exercise regularly, and physical activity often occurs sporadically and at levels insufficient to maintain good health.



Another important issue is the lack of physical activity in everyday life. Around 19% of Lithuanians and 12% of Latvians say that their daily routine involves no movement at all – not even simple activities such as walking, cycling, or gardening. This means that a substantial part of the population leads a highly sedentary lifestyle, which over time increases the risk of chronic diseases and negatively affects both physical and mental health.



In both countries, similar factors influence the level of physical activity – long working hours, sedentary lifestyles, lack of time, insufficiently developed infrastructure for movement, and lack of motivation. People living in cities tend to spend more time sitting, while in rural areas physical activity is often related to daily chores rather than intentional exercise.

In summary, the situation regarding physical activity in Lithuania and Latvia remains challenging. The majority of the population does not meet the minimum recommended levels of movement, which highlights the need to raise public awareness, promote daily physical activity, and create environments where an active lifestyle becomes a natural part of everyday life.

On a positive note, both countries are seeing a rise in national initiatives aimed at encouraging movement and daily physical activity. Increasingly, people are joining step-counting apps and challenges such as those offered by Walk15. For instance, in Lithuania, the National Mobility Challenge, organized annually since 2021, invites cities, towns, schools, universities, communities, and Lithuanians around the world to move actively, promote sustainable mobility,

and foster healthy lifestyles. In 2024, more than 160,000 participants joined the challenge, collectively taking over 45 billion steps.



In the spring of 2025, Latvia organized a national step challenge called “Solis tuvāk Latvijai” (A Step Closer to Latvia) to mark the 35th anniversary of the restoration of Latvian independence. The initiative invited people across the country to be active and symbolically unite Latvia. More than 20,000 participants from 36 municipalities and 7 cities, including Latvians living abroad, joined the challenge. It lasted about two months, with the collective goal of reaching 3.5 billion steps – and participants exceeded expectations by taking over 6 billion steps in total.

In conclusion, while the lack of physical activity remains a pressing issue in both Lithuania and

Latvia, initiatives such as Walk15 and community-based challenges demonstrate that people are ready to move more when given accessible tools and engaging ways to do so.

3. WALKING BENEFITS

Walking is one of the few activities that simultaneously improves both physical and mental health, while being simple, accessible, and completely free. It does not require special equipment, facilities, or advanced physical preparation, which makes it suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. Walking can be easily incorporated into daily routines — for example, by choosing to walk to work, taking short walking breaks during the day, or going for a walk in the evening. Due to its accessibility and numerous scientifically proven benefits, walking is recognized as one of the most effective and sustainable forms of physical activity for improving overall health and quality of life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Regular walking reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity walking per week (equivalent to about 7,000–8,000 steps per day) can lower the risk of heart attack or stroke by up





to 30%. Walking has also been shown to help regulate blood pressure, reduce levels of “bad” cholesterol, and improve respiratory function.

Scientific studies show that people who walk at least 8,000–10,000 steps daily have a significantly lower risk of developing diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis. For example, a Harvard University study that followed 16,000 women found that even those who were moderately active (walking 5,000–7,000 steps per day) had a lower risk of premature death compared to those who were less active.

MENTAL HEALTH

Walking not only strengthens the body but also calms the mind. Regular walking is associated with a reduction in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Studies by British psychologists have shown that spending just 20 minutes walking in nature each day can improve mood, boost creativity, and enhance productivity. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, have even introduced the practice of “green prescriptions” – where doctors prescribe regular walks in parks instead of medication.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Walking also has a community-building effect. Group walks or step challenges strengthen the sense of belonging and foster social connections across generations. Research shows that people who participate in community walking programs feel more motivated to stay active, as they are supported and encouraged by those around them.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

It is also important to mention the economic aspect. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), diseases caused by physical inactivity cost the world approximately 54 billion USD in healthcare expenses and an additional 14 billion USD in productivity losses every year. Even small increases in population-level physical activity could significantly reduce these costs.

4. "BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE" PROJECT MODEL

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the international “**Billion Steps Challenge**” is to promote daily physical activity and foster collaboration between residents of **Latvia and Lithuania**, providing opportunities to compete both at the regional level and individually. The challenge aims to:

- Raise public awareness about the importance of physical activity;
- Create a motivating environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle;
- Enable fair and transparent comparison of achievements between regions and participants.

The objectives include designing the challenge structure, organizing the participant registration process, integrating step counters, visualizing and comparing data, conducting awareness campaigns, and consistently monitoring results.

PARTICIPANT GROUPS

The challenge invites participants from the following cities and regions in **Lithuania** and **Latvia**:

Lithuania: Šiauliai city, Ignalina district, Biržai district.

Latvia: Rēzekne city, Daugavpils city, Balvi district, Augšdaugava district, Krāslava district, Līvanu district, Ludza district, Preiļi district, Rēzekne district, South Kurzeme district, Liepāja city, Ventspils district, Ventspils city, Talsi district, Saldus district, Kuldīga district, Tukums district.

Upon joining the challenge, participants are invited to join the “team” of their respective city or district. This ensures fair and motivating competition, as achievements are accumulated at the team level, and participants can see their individual contribution to the overall results.

PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Participants register through the app:

1. Download the app to their smartphone.
2. Sign up as a participant.
3. Scan QR code, or use access code in the app to join “**Billion Steps Challenge**”
4. Join their team – city or region they are from.

The challenge will run from the **beginning of 2026 to the end of 2026**, and all step data will be collected in a centralized database, allowing both individual and regional results to be tracked.

DATA REPRESENTATION AND COMPARISONS

In the app, participants will be able to see:

- Their personal step counts;
- The total number of steps accumulated by their region (municipality or city);
- Comparisons between different regions.

This setup allows participants to track their own progress, monitor the results of other regions, and stay motivated in the competition, regardless of the size of the teams or the number of participants.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PROMOTION STRATEGIES

Walking challenges are more than just a way to promote physical activity – they are a unique opportunity to bring communities together. People of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can join in, sharing the experience of moving toward a common goal. The key to a successful challenge lies in creating a sense of inclusion, motivation, and shared purpose.

To start, it is important to set a clear and achievable goal and communicate it in an inspiring way. A simple message, such as “Step by Step – Healthier Together!” or “Let’s Move Together!” immediately conveys that everyone can participate, no matter their fitness level or daily routine. Emphasizing that every step counts – even the smallest contributions – helps potential participants feel that they are making a meaningful impact from the very beginning.



Engaging different groups requires understanding their unique needs. Children, for example, can be motivated through playful activities such as treasure hunts or step-based games, while adults may find it easier to incorporate walking into their daily routines, whether during work breaks or family outings. Seniors may benefit from shorter, safe routes that also provide opportunities for social interaction, and people with disabilities should be offered accessible routes and support that allows them to participate comfortably and confidently.

Communication and visibility are central to motivating participation. Information about the challenge can be shared through a variety of channels, including social media, local news outlets, posters in community spaces, and newsletters. Collaboration with schools, local organizations, senior clubs, and sports or cultural centers ensures that the invitation reaches a wide

and diverse audience. Clear, appealing visuals and simple language help make participation easy to understand and encourage people to take the first step.

Another essential element is creating opportunities for personal engagement and direct contact. Organizing local events, workshops, or community gatherings allows people to learn more about the challenge, experience the motivation firsthand, and feel part of a collective effort. During these activities, participants can see others walking, hear stories from peers, and be inspired to join. This personal experience often motivates people to not only participate themselves but also to encourage friends, family, and colleagues to take part, expanding the reach of the initiative naturally.



By combining widespread communication, direct engagement, and an inclusive approach, a walking challenge can transform from a simple activity into a shared community experience. The emphasis is on making it accessible, welcoming, and inspiring, so that everyone feels invited to take part and contribute, step by step, to a healthier, more active community.

COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY OF THE „BISTEPS“ PROJECT

To illustrate these strategies in action, the “A Billion Steps Challenge” project in Lithuania and Latvia provides a comprehensive approach to communication and community engagement. The project uses a combination of traditional and digital communication channels, complemented by educational and promotional events. All activities are guided by the slogan: **“Every Step Makes You Stronger”**, highlighting that regular movement strengthens the body and motivates a healthier lifestyle.

The project reaches participants through multiple communication channels:



- **Posters** – displayed in public institutions across participating areas.
- **Social media** – regular updates and posts on Facebook, sharing news and stories from the challenge.
- **Press articles** – in regional media outlets to raise awareness and promote participation.
- **Promotional video** – designed to inspire people to register and join the challenge.

These communication channels are complemented by a variety of **educational and promotional events**, which play a crucial role in directly engaging participants:

- **Trainings for municipal managers** – to raise awareness about healthy lifestyle promotion within organizations and encourage employees to be more physically active.
- **Public education sessions** – informing local communities about the benefits of physical activity, safe exercise practices, and healthy living.
- **School-based activities** – promoting physical activity among children and encouraging the formation of healthy habits from an early age.
- **Volunteer training** – preparing healthy lifestyle volunteers who can support local initiatives and inspire community members to participate.

Attending these events provides participants with **knowledge, practical tips, and motivation** to adopt a more active lifestyle. The interactive and hands-on nature of trainings and sessions makes learning enjoyable and memorable, helping participants feel personally involved in the challenge.



Beyond individual benefits, the events foster a **strong sense of community**. Participants connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and support each other's efforts. The enthusiasm generated during events often spreads beyond the attendees themselves, inspiring them to invite friends, family, and colleagues to join, further amplifying the challenge's reach.

In this way, the combination of media outreach and interactive events ensures that participants feel informed, inspired, and naturally drawn to take part in the challenge, creating a shared and inclusive experience that promotes healthier lifestyles and long-term engagement across communities.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT APP FOR A STEP CHALLENGE

When creating a step challenge, it is crucial to select a digital tool that not only tracks steps but also helps achieve the broader project goals: promoting physical activity, strengthening community, engaging participants of all ages, and ensuring smooth administration. The app becomes the central element of the entire process – it connects participants, provides information, displays results, and creates a motivating environment.

When choosing an app, several key aspects should be considered:

- **Accessibility for different user groups.** Children, adults, seniors, or people with disabilities need a simple, clear, and intuitive solution.
- **Language adaptability.** Local language support ensures participants can comfortably use the tool and understand the information provided.
- **Support for both team and individual activities.** The app should accommodate teams, leaderboards, and encourage friendly competition.
- **Ability to manage large-scale challenges.** Participant numbers should not be limited, and administration should remain straightforward.
- **Technical compatibility with phones and smartwatches.** Accurate step data is essential for the success of any challenge.
- **Data and statistics availability.** Organizers need tools to monitor progress, analyze results, and make informed decisions.
- **Motivational potential.** Participants should see their progress and feel that every step contributes to a shared goal.
- **Ease of administration.** Creating the challenge, sending messages, forming teams, and tracking results should be simple and clear.



A well-chosen app allows participants from different organizations and countries to engage, ensures smooth communication, motivates daily activity, and fosters an active and friendly community.

When creating the BISTEPS challenge, it was especially important to choose an app that met all these needs – engaging participants, providing technical accuracy, and offering convenient administration for organizations. These criteria formed the basis for selecting the features essential to the success of the entire project.

THESE FEATURES WAS THE MAIN FOCUS FOR BISTEPS CHALLENGE:

1. ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The app must ensure:

- Participants can use it in Lithuanian, Latvian, and English;
- The challenge name and description are available in these languages;
- The user interface functions equally in all three languages.

This allows smooth participation from Lithuania and Latvia, regardless of age or technological familiarity.

2. SECURITY, PRIVACY, AND CHALLENGE STRUCTURE



organization-to-participant communication.

To ensure reliable and transparent challenge organization, the app must provide:

- Private login via code, link, or QR;
- Customizable challenge branding with the organization's logo;
- Registration availability from the challenge creation date;
- Flexible challenge duration of up to 12 months;
- Unlimited participant numbers;
- Internal messaging functionality for

This creates a safe, closed, and easily manageable environment for both participants and organizers.

3. TEAM CREATION AND RESULTS TRACKING

Team dynamics are a key motivational element of the BISTEPS project. The app should enable:

- Creation of unlimited teams;
- Each team to have a name and logo;
- Viewing team results – total and average steps;
- Monitoring participant activity.

This strengthens community, fosters friendly competition, and allows participants to track their progress in real time.

4. TECHNICAL FUNCTIONALITY AND STATISTICS

Technical Features:

The app must provide:

- Step synchronization with major phone and smartwatch providers;
- Customer support in Lithuanian and Latvian

Statistics and Data Reports:

The app should provide an internal challenge statistics page where the organization can:

- View overall, team, and individual results;
- Select different time periods;
- Download data in Excel format, including challenge goals, step counts, team results, and individual participant metrics.

This enables consistent progress monitoring, data analysis, and transparent challenge evaluation.

7. PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING THE RESULTS OF STEPS

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTING THE CORRECT CALCULATION METHOD

When comparing the results of different teams or cities, it is essential to apply a fair and objective method. Teams differ in size, demographics, and engagement levels; therefore, comparing only the total number of steps is not reliable. Larger groups naturally accumulate more steps, even if their members are less active on average.



To ensure equal competition conditions, relative evaluation methods should be used – methods that take into account the size and engagement level of each team.

OFFICIAL METHOD USED IN THE BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE

AVERAGE STEPS METHOD

In the **BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE**, the official scoring approach will be the **Average Steps Method**.

Formula:

Average steps = Total steps of the team ÷ Number of active participants

Why this method is chosen:

- creates equal and fair conditions for differently sized teams and cities
- focuses on the actual physical activity of participants
- results are simple to understand, communicate, and verify
- supports transparency in scoring
- allows smaller cities and communities to compete equally with larger ones

- encourages both participation and consistency

Why a minimum participant threshold is necessary:

When applying this method, it is recommended to set a minimum number of participants required for a team to qualify. This prevents statistical distortions, ensures representativeness, and guarantees that results are based on a sufficiently large and active community. Without such a threshold, very small teams could achieve disproportionately high average results, which would undermine fairness.

Important qualification rule for this challenge:

Only teams that gather at least **250 participants** will qualify to participate in the challenge. This ensures a fair and meaningful comparison between teams of similar size.

OTHER COMMONLY USED EVALUATION METHODS



ACTIVITY INDEX METHOD

This method evaluates how active a city or organization is relative to its total population or membership. It takes into account both accumulated steps and the broader size of the community.

Formula:

Activity Index = Total steps of the team ÷ Total number of residents (or members)

Advantages:

- shows which communities are most active relative to their size
- encourages wider engagement beyond a small core group

Limitations:

- small towns or organizations may appear inactive if participation is low

COMBINED (WEIGHTED) METHOD

This approach integrates both the average step result and the participation level, creating a balanced indicator. It allows for fair comparison between large and small teams by combining individual performance and collective engagement.

Formula:

Final score = Average steps $\times$ Participation rate (participation rate = participants $\div$ total population)

Example:

City A: 10,000 average steps $\times$ 0.05 = 500

City B: 7,000 average steps $\times$ 0.12 = 840

→ City B wins because a higher share of residents participated actively.

Advantages:

- balances individual activity with inclusiveness
- rewards both consistency and community engagement

Limitations:

- more complex to communicate publicly
- requires reliable demographic data

8. COUNTING EVERY STEP

In step-based initiatives, various methods can be used to determine who qualifies as an active participant, such as setting minimum daily averages, defining the required percentage of active days, or excluding statistically lowest performers. These methods are commonly applied in sports-oriented competitions where the main objective is to maximize team averages and ensure strict comparability between teams.

However, the **BILLION STEPS CHALLENGE** follows a different, inclusive philosophy.



OUR APPROACH

Because the target groups include children, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities, the challenge focuses on encouraging movement among all participants, regardless of individual capacity. Guided by the principle “**Every Step Makes You Stronger**”, the initiative aims to

promote health, motivation, and community involvement rather than excluding those who move less.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

- All participants who record more than 0 steps during the challenge period are included in the final calculations.
- Only participants who register 0 steps throughout the entire period are considered fully inactive and therefore not counted in team results.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This inclusive approach ensures that:

- Every effort is recognized, no matter how small;
- Participation is accessible to all population groups;
- Municipalities can still compare results fairly while contributing toward the shared goal of reaching **one billion steps**;
- The challenge strengthens long-term motivation and community engagement rather than competition alone.

By counting every step, the initiative emphasizes genuine participation and supports the broader mission of building a more active, healthier, and socially responsible society.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data form the foundation for understanding the actual impact of the project and planning future initiatives. Data analysis should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Quantitative indicators:

- Number of participants by region and in total.
- Total number of accumulated steps.
- Average number of steps per participant.
- Participation rates by city, region, or age groups.
- Growth trends — the increase in the number of participants during the challenge, comparison with previous challenges (if similar challenges were held).

Qualitative indicators:



- Participant feedback.
- Involvement of various institutions within the region.
- Reported improvements in well-being, daily activity, or community engagement.
- Visibility of the initiative in the media and communication channels.

These data help assess which methods or communication tools were most effective and identify areas needing improvement. Comparing data between Lithuania and Latvia also provides valuable insights into cultural or regional differences in promoting physical activity. All collected data must be processed in accordance with data protection regulations, ensuring that personal information remains confidential and is used solely for statistical or analytical purposes.

INTERIM (QUARTERLY) RESULTS AND NOMINATIONS

To maintain participant motivation and engagement, it is important to regularly evaluate and publish interim results. In the “Billion Steps Challenge,” interim results will be published quarterly, i.e., every three months.

At the end of each quarter:

- The app will continue tracking step counts,
- However, official competition calculations will restart from zero — meaning all teams begin each quarter on equal terms.

This model ensures that:

- Each quarter becomes an independent competition stage,
- Even a team that finished last in the first quarter can become a winner in the second,
- Motivation remains high throughout the year, as the opportunity to succeed is renewed each quarter,
- Participants are not demotivated by early differences between municipalities.

QUARTERLY EVALUATION STRUCTURE

Official quarterly results:

- Total number of steps accumulated during the quarter.
- Comparison of cities/municipalities and identification of leaders.



Quarterly nominations:

To encourage engagement across all age and ability groups, each team will recognize four symbolic winners every quarter:

- Most active adult participant,

- Most active senior,
- Most active child,
- Most active participant with a disability.

Since the app does not include an option to select an age category, top participants will receive a greeting message along with a short request to indicate their correct group. This approach ensures accurate category assignment while respecting privacy.

COMMUNICATION OF INTERIM RESULTS

All quarterly results will be:

- Published on the official challenge platform or website,
- Shared on social media and partner communication channels.

When evaluating interim results, it is important to consider not only the number of steps but also:

- Number of active users,
- Average number of steps per participant,
- Changes in engagement over time.

These indicators help organizers detect trends early — for example, reduced motivation or the need to strengthen communication.

Awards are symbolic or practical and may include items such as certificates, commemorative medals, reusable bottles, caps, notebooks, T-shirts, and similar items. Participants may also be invited to public events to acknowledge achievements and strengthen community engagement.

Public recognition of participants' efforts encourages continued engagement and reinforces the core message: every step contributes to the shared goal of building a healthier and more active society.



REFERENCES

- Barton, J. (2009). The health benefits of walking in greenspaces of high natural and heritage value. *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 19(6), 417–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19438150903378425>
- Barton, J., & Pretty, J. (2010). What is the best dose of nature and green exercise for improving mental health? *Environmental Science & Technology*, 44(10), 3947–3955. <https://doi.org/10.1021/es903183r>
- CQUniversity Australia. (n.d.). 10,000 Steps program. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.10000steps.org.au/>
- European Commission. (2022). Special Eurobarometer 525 – Sport and physical activity. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2668>
- Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2023). Walking for exercise. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/walking/>
- Latvian State Audit Office. (n.d.). Physical activities in local and regional governments are for a narrow group of residents. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.lrvk.gov.lv/en/news/physical-activities-in-local-and-regional-governments-are-for-a-narrow-group-of-residents>
- López-Sánchez, G. F., Emeljanovas, A., Miežienė, B., Díaz-Suárez, A., Sánchez-Castillo, S., Yang, L., Roberts, J., & Smith, L. (2018). Levels of physical activity in Lithuanian adolescents. *Medicina*, 54(5), 84. <https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina54050084>
- Pacer. (n.d.). Pacer app. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://mypacer.com>
- StepUp. (n.d.). Stepup app. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://thesteppupapp.com>
- Sweatcoin. (n.d.). Sweatcoin app. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://sweatco.in>
- TAFISA. (n.d.). World Walking Day. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.worldwalkingday.org/>
- Walk15. (n.d.). Walk15 app. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://walk15.app>
- Walk21. (n.d.). International Charter for Walking. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://walk21.com/resources/international-charter-for-walking/>
- World Health Organization. (2018). Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241514187>
- World Health Organization. (2024). Physical activity – Fact sheet. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>
- World Walking. (n.d.). World Walking. Retrieved October 22, 2025, from <https://worldwalking.org>