



TRANSPORDIAMET



KLIIMAMINISTEERIUM

LIIKLUSSURMADETA  
EESTI  
2050

# ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME 2026–2035















































etc.). Wearing a helmet<sup>26</sup> can reduce head injuries in the event of a traffic accident or fall.

Knowing the usual pedestrian traffic rules is not sufficient for riding a bicycle or micro-vehicle as it involves additional rules, responsibilities, accountability, and risks. It is important to provide road users with training and information on safe riding. From a safety perspective, the issue of preventing two or more people from riding on a single micro-vehicle needs urgent attention. Establishing traffic rules for micro-vehicles, such as setting age limits, requiring the wearing of helmets, setting and specifying different speed limits, and specifying where and when they are not allowed to be driven, can reduce the risk of collisions and the severity of injuries. Road surface markings and vertical markings for micro-vehicles will be introduced to ensure clarity and safety in traffic management.

### SAFETY OF MOTORCYCLE RIDERS

Motorcycling is a high-risk form of transport – statistics show that motorcyclists are up to 40 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured in traffic accidents than people travelling the same distance by car.

Despite the risks, motorcycling is growing in popularity – the number of motorcycles is increasing faster than that of cars. It is therefore important to focus on reducing traffic hazards and mitigating risks.

Main areas of activity:

1. **Lifelong learning and awareness raising.** Promoting voluntary training programmes that support the awareness and riding skills of motorcyclists. Such programmes help to shape responsible behaviour and strengthen a culture of safety.
2. **Increasing visibility and safety.** Improving the visibility of motorcyclists is critical – wearing brightly coloured and specialised riding gear, protective gear, and reflective vests/straps, as well as raising awareness among other road users.

<sup>26</sup> A meta-analysis of 52 empirical studies <https://tinyurl.com/pn3je3d8> does not support the hypothesis that wearing a bicycle helmet leads to more risky behaviour, and although making bicycle helmets compulsory may lead to fewer people cycling, the reduction is usually not significant or long-lasting, as there are many other factors that have a much greater impact on bicycle use.

3. **Monitoring.** Traffic monitoring must focus on preventing dangerous behaviour and ensuring compliance with safety requirements. Efficiency is achieved by using automatic monitoring capabilities.

4. **Changes in the traffic environment and behaviour.** With climate change and the driving season getting longer, motorcycles are being used more often, so all motor vehicle drivers need to be aware of two-wheelers all year round. There is a need for awareness-raising activities that emphasise mutual attentiveness and improving traffic culture.

### SAFETY OF MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVERS

Safe driving begins with being aware of one's responsibility. This does not only mean following the rules, but also caring and paying attention to every road user. As the owner of a greater source of danger, motor vehicle drivers have the greatest impact on road safety compared to other road users. A good driver understands that their driving behaviour and vehicle can pose a danger not only to themselves but also to all other road users.

Driver training is a logical continuation of general basic and primary education in road safety. The aim of driver training is to create the conditions for the development of responsible driving behaviour and for the development of safe, independent, considerate, and environmentally friendly behaviour on the part of drivers.

Driving schools play a central role in driver training. A competence-based approach is preferred, where the qualification requirements for motor vehicle drivers are linked to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be assessed, and the assessment criteria for examinations are clearly defined. The application for a driving licence must be based on an assessment of actual competence rather than the amount of compulsory training completed. Curricula, tests, and teacher training must be based on the same principles, which ensures uniform interpretation of the rules and guarantees the quality of training. Special attention is paid to the preparation of persons with a limited right to drive, which focuses not only on technical skills but also on shaping attitudes, developing risk awareness, and assessing their own abilities. The aim is to develop a system where applying for a driving licence is based on an assessment of actual competence rather than the amount of compulsory training completed, allowing for flexible learning methods. The requirements are designed to be minimal, substantively justified, and applicable from the point of view of the learner.

In motor vehicle driver training, including moped and motorcycle training, it is important that the training period is intensive and that the trainee gets as much regular driving practice as possible before applying for a driving licence. The supervision of educational institutions and quality control of examiners must be consistent and aimed at improving learning. Instructors must undergo a mandatory preliminary check – to obtain an instructor’s certificate, they must pass a theory exam or complete a certain number of driving lessons, or both. Instructors must have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The aim of driving schools is to ensure that graduates can drive independently, safely, and responsibly in traffic.

A person with a limited right to drive, regardless of age, has little experience driving the relevant type of vehicle. It should be noted that when starting using a new mode of transport, all road users are initially inexperienced, which entails certain risks. As drivers gain experience, it is reasonable to promote a lifelong learning attitude in terms of both knowledge and skills to adapt to changes in traffic rules over time and to cope with driving and changing conditions.

The actors influencing safe behaviour among motor vehicle drivers are as follows.



**Driving speed.** An important factor in traffic accidents, associated with 10% of traffic accidents and 30% of fatal traffic accidents.<sup>27</sup> Higher speed reduces the ability to react in time. Due to speed, the consequences of a collision become more severe, and the safety systems of the vehicle and the human body must cope with a greater amount of kinetic energy. Speed is not always the cause of a traffic accident, but the consequences of a traffic accident always depend on speed.



**Alcohol.** Alcohol affects neurochemical processes in the human brain, causing deterioration in the functioning of various areas of the brain. When driving after consuming alcohol, errors in driving and perceiving situations become inevitable. Reaction times slow down and the driving style becomes inconsistent, even uncontrollable. If a drunk driver encounters a real hazard – whether other road users or an obstacle – a traffic accident becomes inevitable.



**Distraction.** Distractions are caused by the motor vehicle driver themselves (sending messages, making phone calls, using the screen for other purposes, operating the navigation system, eating), others road users, and external disturbances (e.g. non-traffic-related information media, including advertisements). Often, drivers get distracted due to a combination of all these factors.



**Use of seat belts.** Although most drivers fasten their seat belts, there are a small number who do not and who are therefore at high risk in the event of a traffic accident.



**Fatigue.** Driving a motor vehicle while tired seems normal. However, when the driver is tired, their driving becomes more passive and automatic, which affects their information processing, motor skills, and alertness. Fatigue cannot be overcome by willpower, experience, or motivation. The consequences of these accidents are fatal, as they occur at full speed without the driver braking.



**Mental health.** Stress is an invisible cause of dangerous traffic situations. When the human body is under physiological stress and produces stress hormones, the brain is unable to cope with emotions at a certain point and may behave dangerously in traffic.



**Medicines.** Thousands of motor vehicle drivers who take medication on a daily basis participate in traffic, even though the side effects of these medications are contraindicated for driving motor vehicles. Certain medicines may cause side effects such as drowsiness, blurred vision, and fatigue. Particularly dangerous groups of medicines include sedatives, sleeping pills, strong painkillers, and some cough, cold, and allergy medicines.



<sup>27</sup> TRB (1998) Managing speed; review of current practice for setting and enforcing speed limits. Special report 254. Transportation Research Board (TRB). National Academy Press, Washington, DC

## 4.5. Safe driving for work

Over a third of fatal road accidents are related to at least one of the parties involved using the vehicle for work purposes or being a passenger in such a vehicle. Company vehicle fleets are an important part of the Estonian vehicle market, accounting for nearly half of all registered cars. Every day, hundreds of thousands of road users participate in traffic in connection with their work duties. Some of them work as professional drivers, transporting passengers or goods. Others drive vehicles as part of their main job or as platform work. In companies and organisations where employees spend a large part of their working time in traffic, there is considerable potential for developing a safety-based management culture within the organisation. Greater attention needs to be paid to the safety of vehicles used for transporting children, passengers, and goods, as well as to the obligations and responsibilities of operators. Companies and organisations have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that driving for work is safe for their employees and the public.

Work-related road safety is a critical issue for the programme, not only because of the scale of the problem, but also because companies have a real opportunity to improve road safety across the entire supply chain and in many sectors. For example, the ISO 39001 standard sets basic requirements for road safety management systems, which state agencies, road owners, and private companies can use to certify their management systems. The standard is intended for both public and private organisations that are involved in the transport system and on which road safety depends, even to a small extent.

Until now, the potential of organisations to influence road safety has largely remained untapped. The public sector could set an example of how organisations contribute to road safety in public service procurement. Local governments may stipulate requirements for reducing traffic risks and

complying with traffic rules when purchasing public transport and school bus services and when issuing and maintaining operating licences for taxi services. Employers can significantly reduce traffic risks by purchasing safer vehicles equipped with driver assistance systems and by setting requirements for employees and contractual partners. Every human life must be protected in the best possible way.

Creating a safety culture is most effective when an organisation fosters a positive and responsible attitude towards employee road safety, setting clear targets in the development strategy, identifying and mitigating risks, collecting and analysing safety data, and training employees to raise their awareness of road safety.

**ISO  
39001**

## 4.6. Rapid and effective post-accident assistance



In the event of a traffic accident, receiving and providing assistance is of vital importance. Rapid and appropriate response to accidents and threats reduces damage to people, property, and the environment.

In the event of an accident, the speed of assistance can reduce the final severity of injuries. Studies<sup>28</sup> show that up to 50% of people killed in traffic accidents die at the scene of the accident or while being transported to hospital. Most of the rest die within 24 hours despite receiving medical attention. Both the response time of the ambulance service and the quality of care play a significant role in surviving traffic accidents.

In the event of a collision, rapid, appropriate, and well-coordinated emergency response is essential for the effective treatment of seriously injured people. Monitoring the speed of assistance is a good input for harmonising the emergency response chain and further developing the emergency medical system. Improving emergency response can help prevent traffic fatalities and life-changing injuries.

<sup>28</sup> <https://etsc.eu/reducing-serious-injuries-on-european-roads-pin-flash-48/>

It is important to maintain comprehensive first aid training in the driving school curriculum and to offer all road users the opportunity to acquire knowledge and first aid skills.

## 4.7. Data-driven management of road safety

Evidence-based decision-making and data support are the foundation of modern management. In the field of road safety, this means collecting, storing, analysing, and disseminating road safety information on a much broader scale than before. In order for decisions, measures, and investments relating to road safety to have the desired effect, preliminary analyses must be based on reliable and relevant data collected in accordance with privacy and data protection provisions.

In the new decade, road safety management must become proactive. This means that regardless of the risk of traffic accidents or the absence thereof, all necessary data about the infrastructure is collected and archived. In the event of traffic accidents, in addition to traditional accident statistics, information about the time and place of the accident, road user behaviour, road and traffic conditions, infrastructure status, and environmental impacts will be added to the database. This approach makes it possible to identify hidden hazards, assess the impact of interventions more reliably, and manage road safety proactively based on knowledge rather than consequences.

### **BETWEEN 2026 AND 2035, THE FOLLOWING WILL REMAIN OR BECOME IMPORTANT:**

- ▶ traffic accident data must be accurate and correct, data collection must take into account new types of vehicles (bicycles, micro-vehicles, self-driving vehicles), there should be a way to determine the severity of injuries sustained in each traffic accident, a workable solution must be found to underreporting of traffic accidents involving human injuries so that information about victims reaches the traffic accident information system from healthcare providers. A more thorough investigation of serious traffic accidents should enable us to identify the root causes;
- ▶ both periodic and real-time traffic flow, traffic conditions, and driver behaviour monitoring data;
- ▶ road safety performance indicators;
- ▶ data affecting the safety of the road network, results of road network safety assessments;
- ▶ data concerning road and traffic monitoring;
- ▶ feedback from the public and the community (e.g. reports from road users about dangerous locations);
- ▶ automatic data collection systems (e.g. data collected by vehicles, eCall, vehicle diagnostics, ITS platforms).

The objective of the new period is to develop an **integrated, real-time data ecosystem** that enables the cross-use of different data sources, supports proactive decision-making, allows for the analysis of road safety developments at both national and regional levels, and supports local governments and partners in making data-based decisions.

Data-driven management requires cooperation between various parties – the Police and Border Guard Board, the Transport Administration, the Ministry of Social Affairs and healthcare institutions, research institutions, local governments, and the private sector. Investment in **digital capabilities, analytical tools, and skills development** is also important. The aim is to create a **dynamic and learning safe traffic system**, where data is not used just for reporting, but for continuous improvement and saving lives.

## 4.8. Involving the community in road safety



Road safety is not solely the responsibility of the state, local governments, or state agencies – it also involves a **social agreement and shared responsibility**, in which every community and road user has an important role to play. A truly effective and safe traffic system can only be created if communities are involved in its design. Many citizens' initiatives are born and take place in communities, among friends, acquaintances, and neighbours. Communities have considerable power to influence road safety, and it is time to recognise and leverage this resource.

Communities know their environment best – they see the risks, sense the changes, and notice where things need to be changed. Therefore, community initiatives play an important role in both preventing hazards and creating a safe traffic environment. Parents or grandparents can help younger schoolchildren in the community cross the road or get to the school bus safely in the mornings by acting as traffic controllers during rush hour. The community can raise the issue of infrastructure safety, organise safety information events, or contribute to neighbourhood watch schemes.

Non-profit organisations and civil society organisations whose activities are based on knowledge of local conditions, trust, and voluntary cooperation are valuable partners in the development of road safety. They work for the good of society, including safer traffic. Non-profit organisations can contribute to road safety in several ways:

- ▶ **awareness-raising and educational activities** – organising training courses, campaigns, workshops, and information days for different target groups (e.g. children, the elderly, cyclists);
- ▶ **community initiatives** – marking dangerous locations, organising bicycle days, or submitting proposals for infrastructure improvements;
- ▶ **voluntary monitoring and experience-based advice**, acting as the voice of the community in identifying local traffic risks and proposing solutions;
- ▶ **cooperation with authorities and local governments**, helping to implement the road safety programme at community level;
- ▶ **supporting target groups** such as children, the elderly, people with special needs, or those with little experience of traffic.

# 5.

## Impacts of implementing the road safety programme



The state needs a long-term programme to keep its sights set on the goal and to plan and prepare activities that will make traffic safer. In the transport sector, significant reforms and investments take years. This also means agreements between government coalitions and maintaining focus. It is important that the change process is organised in such a way that the long-term vision, strategic objectives, and planned activities are maintained, enabling the journey towards a safe traffic system to continue. There is a demand for safety and a willingness to contribute in society, so all decision-makers must set the goal of ensuring maximum road safety. Ensuring road safety must be seen as a social agreement.

The road safety programme is implemented through four-year implementation plans that are updated annually. The cost of the implementation plan consists of the total cost of the activities for which funding has been allocated in the state budget and which are the responsibility of ministries, agencies, and local governments. **A more detailed implementation plan and cost estimate is prepared each year during the state budget planning process.** The activities of the implementation plan are carried out using state budget funds, including measures from the European Structural Funds and other external funds.

In order to implement the planned activities and achieve the objectives, a long-term cross-coalition funding strategy is needed, for which the necessary resources must be secured for the duration of the programme.

A prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the programme is the construction of the Tallinn–Tartu section of the Tallinn–Tartu–Võru–Luhamaa road and the Tallinn–Pärnu section of the Tallinn–Pärnu–Ikla road, which are part of the TEN-T core network, in accordance with the requirements and modern

conditions, and that the financing of the road network maintenance is ensured at a minimum of 75% of the maintenance needs identified in the strategic analysis<sup>29</sup> of the financial needs for the maintenance of state roads. It must also be ensured that the construction and commissioning of all major infrastructure projects (including Rail Baltica) do not have any additional negative impact on road safety.

It is important to note that activities aimed at different target groups often have partially overlapping effects. Therefore, the combined effect of the activities is not a linear sum of the individual effects: the combined effect is usually smaller than the arithmetic sum of all measures. These activities have a direct impact on reducing the number of serious injuries and contribute to perceived road safety. .

Direct and measurable impacts are only part of the overall spectrum of impacts. The actual road safety benefits extend beyond the calculated impact presented in the table, as the quantitative impact of many activities cannot be accurately assessed and some of the impacts are realised indirectly and over a longer period.

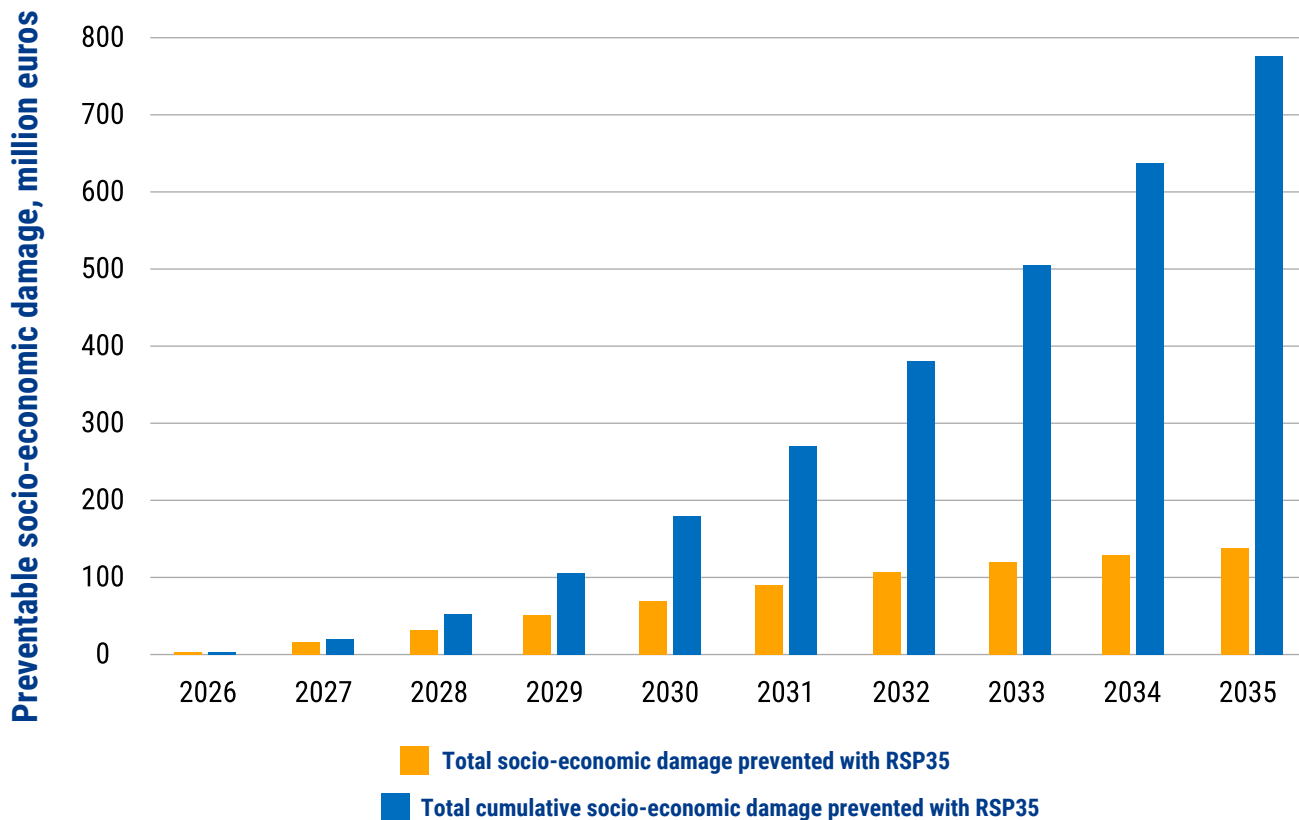
**Table 3.** Estimated total impact of measures

Set of measures and activities	Estimated reduction in the number of fatalities by 2035*
Activities to reduce pedestrian fatalities in settlements	-12
Activities to reduce traffic fatalities among children under 16	-10
Influence system for systematic offenders	-7
Elimination of traffic hazards	-7
Establishing safe driving speeds on roads	-5
Making level crossings safer	-3

\* The combined effect of various measures and activities, including the impact of implementing safe speeds.

<sup>29</sup> <https://transpordiamet.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/Strateegilise%20rahavajaduse%20l%C3%95PPARUANNE.pdf>

In 2024, the average cost to society of a single **road fatality** was **3,156,993 euros** (including medical expenses, loss of productivity, funeral expenses, and risk value) and the average loss caused by **injury** was **41,193 euros** (including medical expenses, loss of productivity, and risk value). Achieving the RSP35 targets will prevent socio-economic damage to the country amounting to approximately 800 million euros and save lives.



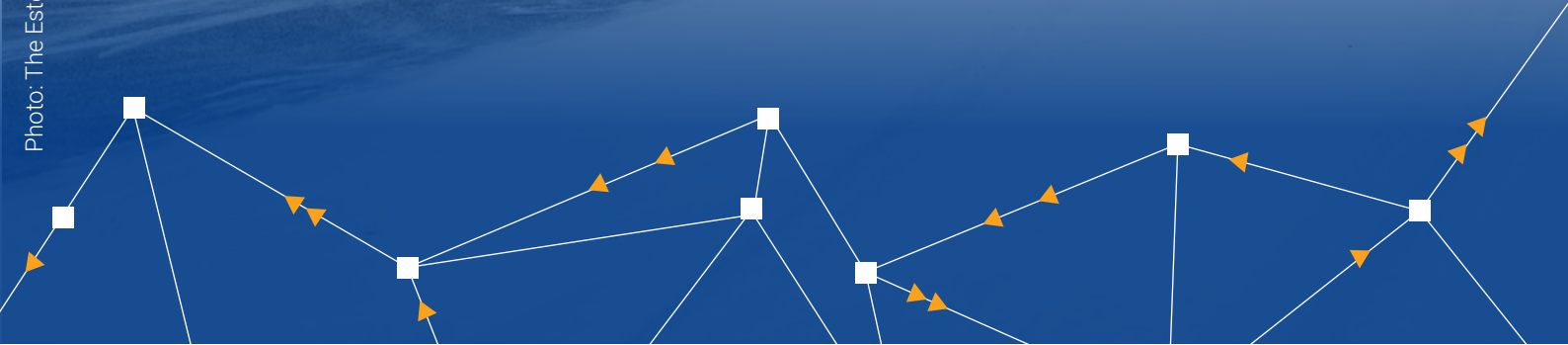
**Figure 3.** Socio-economic damage prevented with the achievement of RSP35 objectives

# 5.

## Road safety programme governance



Photo: The Estonian Transport Administration



In order to achieve the strategic objectives of RSP35, road safety must become a stable priority at national level, supported by fiscal policy decisions and a clear governance framework.

RSP35 is approved by the government, whose task is to develop national road safety policy. A traffic committee has been created at the government. Its tasks include coordinating activities in this field, advising the government and making proposals for resolving issues related to road safety, setting strategic goals and priorities for road safety, and, as an additional task, approving plans for the implementation of the road safety programme. The traffic committee has the right to involve representatives of state and local governments and non-governmental organisations, experts in the relevant field, foreign experts, and other persons in the resolution of issues reviewed by the committee, and to form working groups.

The chair of the traffic committee (Minister of Infrastructure) submits to the government by 1 July each year an overview of the activities (and their implementation) of the implementation plans approved by the committee, as well as proposals, together with the recommendations of the traffic committee, for additional activities that require additional earmarked funds from the state budget strategy or decisions at the government level.

An interim evaluation of the programme will be carried out in 2031. The government may make changes to the objectives and implementation plan if it is found that the desired impact will not be achieved or that the prerequisites for implementing the relevant action proposal are not met. The final report on the implementation of RSP35 will be drawn up no later than 2036.

The task of the Transport Administration in implementing and directing RSP35 is to organise the work of the traffic committee and general monitoring, coordinate the activities of various parties, and organise reporting.

The budgetary implementation of the implementation plans will take place within the framework of the TERE programmes of government agencies. Other participants in RSP35 will implement the programme in accordance with a coordinated plan.

RSP35 activities will be covered by a four-year implementation plan. The implementation plan is in line with the state budget strategy and has a rolling cycle, which means that each year, one planned year is added to the implementation plan. A preliminary impact assessment will be added to the new activities planned for the year, concerning the reduction in the number of road fatalities and injuries and the financial costs required for implementation. The implementation plan will be coordinated with the ministries and approved by the traffic committee.

The RSP35 implementation plan describes the activities and indicators necessary to achieve the objective. Each activity has an owner who is responsible for initiating, promoting, and coordinating the implementation of the activity, even if the implementation of the activity requires cooperation with other parties. If there are several responsible persons, they all have equal and independent responsibility for the implementation of the activity.

In order to obtain an overview of the achievement of RSP35 objectives, the implementation of the implementation plan is assessed annually. The ministries and agencies involved in the implementation of RSP35 prepare an annual report on the activities within their remit and submit it to the Transport Administration by 1 February of the following year at the latest. The Transport Administration prepares a report on the implementation of the implementation plan and submits it for approval to the traffic committee of the government. The report is included in the annual review submitted to the government.

