



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Action Plan for Management and for Sustainable Development of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Vidzeme Region

2018-2020

ABBREVIATIONS



Landscape

(Source: law on “European Landscape protection”, entry into force 19.04.2007.)

An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Landscape plan

(Source: Landscape Policy Guidelines for 2013–2019)

Territorial development planning document, landscape management plan, developed as thematic planning of the national, regional or local level. Purpose – to make recommendations for the protection, restoration or creation of new landscapes in line with socially important needs and demands of society. A landscape plan can be used as a basis for the planning and coordination of financial and other support.

LPG2019

Landscape Policy Guidelines for 2013–2019

Natural heritage

(Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Entry into force in Latvia 01.04.1995.))

- Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- Geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- Natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

NCA

Nature Conservation Agency

ME

Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia

EU

European Union

EUR

Euro

VIA HESPI

Institute of Social, Economic and Humanities Research of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

Inland waterways (within this document)

Historical waterways, which has a cultural heritage value (ship waterways within, inland waters used for lost economic activity (for example, ramming of timber) and older settlements on the banks of the inland waters where cultural monuments can be seen), as well as rivers and lakes that are nowadays used for recreation and transport.

Inland waters

(Source: Water Management law, entry into force 15.10.2002.)

All standing and flowing water on the surface of the land, as well as all groundwater on the landward side of the baseline (basic line from which the breadth of territorial waters is measured).

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| MC | Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia |
| CPG2020 | Cultural Policy Guidelines 2014–2020 “Creative Latvia” |
| LSDS2030 | Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 |
| Cultural heritage (Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Entry into force in Latvia 01.04.1995.)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; • Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; • Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. |
| LTDG2020 | Latvian Tourism Development Guidelines 2014–2020 |
| LEPF | Latvian Environmental Protection Fund |
| Landscape of national importance (Source: Landscape Policy Guidelines for 2013-2019) | Protected landscape areas, national and nature parks |
| NHB | National Heritage Board |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| SO | Specific objective |
| SWARE | Project <i>Sustainable heritage management of WATERways REgions</i> |
| Intangible cultural heritage (Source: Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Entry into force in Latvia 20.04.2006.)) | The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. |

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|------------------|---|
| MEPRD | Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia |
| ViA | Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences |
| VKKF | State Culture Capital Foundation |
| EPG2020 | Environmental Policy Guidelines 2014–2020 |
| VPR | Vidzeme Planning Region |
| VPRDP2020 | Vidzeme Planning Region Development Programme 2015–2020 |
| LAGs | Local action groups |
| VTA | Vidzeme Tourism Association |
| ZPR | Zemgale Planning Region |
| % | Percent |

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GENERAL INFORMATION



Project | Sustainable heritage management of WAterways REgions

Abbreviation | SWARE

Lead partner | Association “Regio Water” (The Netherlands)

Partner organisation | Vidzeme Planning Region

State | Latvia

NUTS2 region | Latvia

About project | The involved partners in the SWARE project seek to achieve a better balance between the protection and sustainable use of natural and cultural resources. Based on the transfer of good practices from other countries, project partners are seeking to improve their regional development programmes and policy documents, which are currently hampered by various constraints, such as a fragmented management structure without appropriate forms of cooperation. Therefore, within SWARE project the tools that will stimulate creation of new participation forms in management are being looked for, to ensure an effective policy for sustainable regional development. The overall benefit of the project will be the change of the knowledge and attitudes of decision makers, public and private individuals as well as citizens regarding the protection and sustainable use of cultural and natural values.

The inland waterway regions involved in the SWARE project have natural and cultural heritage of a great value, which makes the regions' landscape attractive, raising the interest of travellers. Therefore, it is important to highlight and update issues that are important for those natural and cultural heritage managers who want to be active in the field of tourism and use the natural and cultural heritage as a joint resource.



Action Plan will affect:

- Investment programme “Growth and employment”
- The European Territorial Cooperation Programme
- Other instruments of regional development policy

Policy document title | Operational Programme “Growth and employment” Specific Objective 5.5.1. “Preserve, protect and develop significant culture and natural heritage and promote the services related thereto”.

By taking part in the SWARE project, VPR aims to develop recommendations, suggestions, as well as identify specific actions, based on SO 5.5.1., so that the existing and future financial instruments contribute to the bottom-up involvement in the management of natural and cultural heritage and encourage cooperation between public and private partners to develop services related to natural and cultural heritage.

The Action Plan during its elaboration was discussed with MC, which is the responsible authority for planning and implementation of SO 5.5.1., and MEPRD, which is involved as a collaboration partner of MC in the planning and implementation of SO 5.5.1. These ministries are well-informed and involved in the development of the Action Plan and aim to become involved in its implementation to the extent possible.

The priority actions included in the Action Plan are targeted towards improvement of policy planning and its instruments, with a special emphasis on the SO 5.5.1. of the National Operational Programme, but without excluding other policy instruments that are essential for promoting integrated management of natural and cultural heritage, both locally and regionally (Vidzeme Cultural Programme, LEADER approach activities primarily funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and Regional Policy Guidelines).

The Action Plan is designed to initiate and implement the following measures:

- 1)** To improve integrated management of natural and cultural heritage in the territory of Vidzeme region (emphasizing natural and cultural heritage sites along inland waterways);
- 2)** To promote further sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage in the territory of Vidzeme region and to improve the regional tourism development policy.

“Vidzeme region” in this Action Plan is the administrative territory of the Vidzeme Planning Region and its adjoining functional territory.

The activities and recommendations included in the plan are based on the discussions conducted in the thematic working groups within the framework of the SWARE project, good practices of the project partners, as well as the situation analysis of integrated management of natural and cultural heritage in Vidzeme and Latvia.

Latvia is comparable to one of the richest countries in the world in terms of water resources, with Gauja River Basin district in Vidzeme occupying 20,2 % of the territory of Latvia. Although there are no inland waterways in Latvia corresponding with their common definition around the Europe and the world, where it relates to the functions of passenger and freight transport, inland waters in Latvia are often used in tourism, offering services created in connection with their cultural and historical value (ancient shipping routes, disappeared economic activities, such as logging, etc.) and recreational possibilities. However, the attraction of tourists is primarily driven by cultural heritage objects, for example, architecture, archaeological elements, building groups, etc., located on the banks of inland waters. In Vidzeme region, most of the existing natural and cultural heritage objects are located near these inland waters, therefore, within the framework of the SWARE project, it is important to raise the issue of integrated management of natural and cultural heritage to ensure the sustainable development of these objects.

During the Action Plan elaboration, 3 thematic working groups were organized, where the SWARE project experts from VPR and representatives of local municipalities of VPR, of government institutions (MC, NHB, NCA), of NGOs (LRF), of research institutions (ViA HESPI) and of external consultant (LLC “Civitta Latvija”)

took part. The current problems in Vidzeme region in relation to management of natural and cultural heritage, as well as the SWARE project good practice transfer possibilities were analysed jointly by the discussion participants, and their recommendations are included in the range of activities to be implemented.

Examples of project partners' good practices were summed-up after knowledge exchange sessions to Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands, organised within the SWARE project, where SWARE project experts from VPR joined by representatives of the relevant stakeholders (VPR municipalities and ViA HESPI) and national managing authorities took part.

Conclusions obtained in the situation analysis of the integrated management of natural and cultural heritage in Vidzeme and Latvia were based on interviews with representatives of 19 VPR municipalities (Alūksne County, Amata County, Ape County, Beverīna County, Burtnieki County, Cēsis County, Ērgļi County, Gulbene County, Jaunpiebalga County, Kocēni County, Līgatne County, Lubāna County, Madona County, Priekule County, Rauna County, Rūjiena County, Valka County, Valmiera Municipality, Varakļāni County), interviews with representatives of MC and MEPRD, as well **analysis of policy planning documents at national and regional level** (LSDS2030, EPG2020, CPG2020, VPRDP2020, LPG2019, LTDG2020) **and analysis of publicly available statistics and other field-related sources.**

By collecting the opinion of experts and representatives of institutions involved, insufficient cooperation and lack of synergy between the activities of state institutions, local municipalities and owners of natural and cultural heritage objects was identified. The landscape was recognized as the unifying element of the parties involved, the preservation and restoration whereof promote a balanced cooperation between these parties. On the other hand, the sustainability aspect is based on whether the natural and cultural heritage is used to improve the well-being and socio-economic environment of the local society, which is directly affected by how systematic and uniform is the approach applied to include natural and cultural heritage in a wider tourism destination.

The Action Plan includes 4 actions to be implemented or initiated by the VPR Administration. The VPR Administration will do it independently or in cooperation with authorities of local municipalities, educational and research institutions, NGOs and other interested parties.

The content of the document is based on justification of each action, identifying the activities and measures to be implemented, incl. opportunities for good practice transfer, and recommendations for local municipalities, as well as the role of stakeholders and institutions in the implementation of priority activities.

Each action line has the following details:

 **The background** (problems identified within the SWARE project and summarized suggestions that serve as arguments) of the priority action.


 Examples of transferable **foreign partner good practices**.

 Specific **activities** to be implemented,

 and their **result indicators**.

 **Parties involved** or institutions involved in the implementation of priority actions as well as the role of these organizations.

 **Timeframe**, during which the identified priority actions should be implemented.

 **Costs and funding sources** or the necessary financial resources for the implementation of identified priority actions within the set timeframe.

The 4 Actions identified in the Action Plan are:

1. Improving the Specific Objective 5.5.1. "Preserve, protect and develop significant culture and natural heritage and promote the services related thereto" performance
2. Strengthening the cooperation and developing common understanding among the parties involved in management of natural and cultural heritage
3. Involving society in a joint and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage
4. Improving local development strategies for Local action groups in the territory of VPR

The activities included in the Action Plan mainly cover the following topics:

- Top-down involvement
- Bottom-up involvement
- Marketing, PR and destination development

The Action Plan has a monitoring plan with monitoring indicators to follow its implementation, which will be the responsibility of the VPR Administration. The monitoring of the Action Plan implementation is scheduled to be carried out till September 2020.



Improving the Specific Objective 5.5.1. "Preserve, protect and develop significant culture and natural heritage and promote the services related thereto" performance

This action includes activities aimed at improving the performance results of policy instrument SO 5.5.1. "Preserve, protect and develop significant culture and natural heritage and promote the services related thereto". This is to be achieved by organizing trainings for stakeholders to increase SO 5.5.1. result indicators and provide opinions on local municipalities' development planning documents, assessing whether the activities included in them are in line with integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.

 **Background**

- Investing in the development of the territory by restoring natural and cultural heritage objects and improving the infrastructure necessary for their development contributes to increasing the quality of life of both rural and urban inhabitants, as well as enhancing the attractiveness of the territory. The aim is to increase the number of tourists and consequently increase the demand for various products and services in the areas of tourism, catering, accommodation, transport, health care, entertainment, commerce, construction, etc that support return on investment and the socio-economic development of the area.
- Preservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage objects in the form of cooperation projects, facilitates the implementation of integrated ideas tailored to the specific needs of each territory. Implementation of cooperation projects involving several municipalities and different owners of natural and cultural heritage is considered as a basis for promoting investment synergy and ensuring the sustainability of project results.
- Within the framework of SO 5.5.1. cooperation projects were selected by the main criteria of natural and cultural heritage object influence on the development of the socio-economic potential of the territory, providing the opportunity for local municipalities to implement the ideas of projects based on their development programmes.
- Existing SO 5.5.1. volume of investments per one supported object is sufficiently large to ensure the expected impact on the socio-economic development of the territories and to achieve result indicators, which include 15 newly created services

in the objects of natural and cultural heritage and an increase in the number of visits, in comparison with 2015 - not less than 140 000 visits. However, the impacts can be further enhanced by implementing educational activities in which would be trained, for example. SO 5.5.1. project implementers (in the territory of the VPR they are Alūksne, Cesvaine, Gulbene, Cēsis, Amata and Pārgauja county municipalities, and Smiltene, Valmiera, Rubene and Cēsis Evangelical Lutheran congregations) in order to create new, complex tourism products and ensure the sustainable development of the services they create.

- By telephone interviews with representatives from 19 local municipalities and analysing 26 VPR municipal development programmes during the situation analysis development, it was ascertained that the local municipalities of the VPR are aware of the importance of the management of natural and cultural heritage in the development of their territory, but they do not sufficiently use such aspects as the development of cooperation, the development of natural and cultural heritage services, the definition of result indicators and the linking of investments with other public and private investment.

Transferable good practice of partners

Good practice of **Lake Lough Derg (Ireland)** aims to develop a new tourism destination by offering tourists the opportunity to use it for recreation and other activities at the water. To implement the project, a partner policy planning group between public and private parties was set up with the aim to jointly develop activities for the development, organization and promotion of tourism. The integrated destination management approach has considerably increased the amount of services and products offered, as well as the number of visiting tourists.

Local municipalities of VPR, when transferring this practice:

- With the participation of representatives of local municipalities, should set up a cooperation group to organize regular meetings of the group. It is advisable to involve natural and / or cultural heritage specialists who work in the NCA and / or the NHB.
- Should set up a cooperation group, which includes local municipalities and private sector representatives who are interested in developing tourism. The team should invite tourism experts who can plan the marketing of the site, for example, representatives of the ViA HESPI.
- The cooperation group should develop recommendations to supplement local development programmes with activities related to services related to natural and cultural heritage objects and promote their conservation, protection and development by including private sector representatives as cooperation partners.

Activities

1. Organize training for interested parties for the creation and development of a complex cultural and natural tourism product to promote the growth of SO 5.5.1 result indicators (objective – effective return on investment).
2. When giving opinions on the compliance of the local municipalities' development programmes of the VPR to the territorial development planning documents of the region and the requirements of the regulations, the VPR shall pay attention to whether the activities included in the development documents correspond to the integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.
3. Follow up with the mid-term evaluation of the policy instrument and submit the necessary proposals to the responsible institutions with the recommendations developed within SWARE project for SO 5.5.1. improvement and / or submit recommendations for the development of new policy tools on the development of natural and cultural heritage in the post-2020 period.

Result indicators

- Organized training regarding the complex development of complex cultural and natural tourism, which will result in the creation of new products or services (at least 1 training).
- At least one conclusion has been issued that proposes to incorporate actions corresponding to the integrated management of the joint natural and cultural heritage in municipality development documents.
- Submitted proposals for responsible institutions with recommendations developed within SWARE project.

Parties involved

VPR Administration – organizing training, providing opinion on development programmes of the municipalities of the VPR; submitting proposals to the responsible institutions with the recommendations developed within the SWARE project.

VPR municipalities – participation in the training organized by the VPR, supplementing or modifying development programmes, including activities consistent with the integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.

Tourism entrepreneurs from VPR municipalities, VTA, and other stakeholders – participation in training organized by the VPR.

Timeframe

Activities are planned to be carried out until the IV quarter of the 2019.

Costs and funding sources

Administrative expenses of the VPR Administration and collaborative projects implemented by VPR, such as the ERASMUS+ programme project "Professionals in the field of cultural heritage and attractive living environments"



Strengthening the cooperation and developing common understanding among the parties involved in management of natural and cultural heritage

This action includes activities aimed at strengthening cooperation and developing a common understanding among natural and cultural heritage managers. This is to be achieved by ensuring the work of the Multi-Level Intersectoral Cooperation Platform, organizing thematic meetings and developing proposals to improve integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.

Background

- SO 5.5.1. is administrated by two responsible ministries – MC and MEPRD. They support cooperation projects submitted by several municipalities and natural and cultural heritage object owners, thus promoting investment synergy and positive impact on territories larger than administrative territory of a single municipality. This type of projects provides significant contribution to joint tourism offer development and improvement of the international competitiveness.
- In the situation analysis, telephone interviews were conducted with 19 VPR municipalities. They all indicated that they do not recruit a constantly-accountable person who is responsible for communicating with the public authorities on issues related to the management of natural and cultural heritage. In fact, this responsibility is either split between several employees in different departments of local municipality, or it is fulfilled, for example, by museum staff.
- Areas of nature, landscapes and cultural and historical territories are territories that unite Latvia's unique cultural and natural heritage. In accordance with the Landscape Policy Guidelines for 2013–2019, the landscape plan is a Territorial Development Planning Document, a Landscape Management Plan that is developed as a thematic planning document at a national, regional or local area. Its aim is to make recommendations for the protection, restoration or creation of new landscapes for landscapes in line with socially important needs and demands of society. A landscape plan can be used as a basis for the planning and coordination of financial and other support ¹.
- The LPG2019 assigns MEPRD "To develop methodological guidelines for landscape planning at regional and local level, including the explanation in extended terms in them and the characterization of the main types of landscapes of Latvia"².

¹ *Landscape Policy Planning Guidelines for 2013-2019. Available: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4427>*

² *See previous source*

- In telephone interviews with representatives of the MEPRD Spatial Planning Department, it has been clarified that ZPR and the Baltic Environmental Forum in cooperation with MEPRD are currently developing guidelines for landscape planning at regional and local level. In 2019, it is planned to discuss and improve the guidelines project in cooperation with the planning regions and the parties involved.
- To protect landscapes, restore or create new landscapes in accordance with the society's wishes and demands, landscape planning guidelines should promote the establishment of multi-level cooperation between state institutions, planning regions.

Transferable good practices of partners

Good practice of **Green & Blue Futures projects (Ireland)** envisages that, for the development of project applications, the national charitable fund for waterways (Canals & Rivers Trust) collaborate with employees of local municipalities in coordinating local municipalities' activities with activities supported by the fund. As a result, the inhabitants were involved in the improvement of the natural and cultural heritage sites on the banks of the rivers, so that it could be used for recreational activities.

VPR, when transferring this practice:

- Should establish a dialogue with a governmental or NGO organisation that supports and promotes the implementation of the planned activities of the municipalities of the VPR (e.g. LEPF and VKKF);
- Should organize meetings during which local municipalities are presented with development guidelines on how environment and infrastructure development and community involvement is planned at national level;

Good practice **Rotterdam Tidal Park (The Netherlands)** envisages a joint initiative for the implementation of the project for river delta and coastal access, restoration of the natural base, as well as recreational planning in it. This is done with a clear visualization and involving a wide range of people in further discussion.

Local municipalities of VPR (near inland water banks) when transferring this practice:

- Should organize meetings of public and private partners involving several neighbouring municipalities along the shared inland waterways to form a united initiative for the development of the territory, for the development of suitable infrastructure and the improvement of social life quality and prosperity through the use of natural and land resources;

- Should establish a dialogue with a governmental or non-governmental organization that supports or encourages the involvement of the public in the implementation of the planned activities of the municipalities of the VPR (e.g. LEPF and VKKF);
- Should create common tourism trails on the banks of inland waters in the territories of municipalities by implementing a joint initiative.

Good practice **Waterdriehoek (The Netherlands)** states that ten public and private partners cooperated in the project with the aim to improve the accessibility and visibility of the three rivers. The organisation of the project was not institutionalized, and the parties held joint meetings to decide on the division of responsibilities and tasks.

Local municipalities of VPR, when transferring this practice:

- Should organize meetings of the public and private partners, informing them about the experience gained from good practices in Latvia and abroad and the cooperation models of stakeholders, as well as the benefits to partners and society;
- At the meetings, public and private partners should jointly plan the tasks for infrastructure improvement to ensure the accessibility of natural and cultural heritage objects, creating recreational trails, cycling trails, docks for water transport (boats, water motorcycles, etc.), etc. and marketing campaigns to attract both tourists and locals to use waterways.

Leonardo trails (Italy) envisaged that for the management of the project, three municipalities set up a single executive committee to carry out administrative issues. Representatives of public organizations were involved in their work to participate in the development of a strategic partnership plan. Using stories of prominent persons, a new tourism destination was created between municipalities, which includes objects related to these stories (natural monuments on the banks of water bodies, cultural and historical buildings, etc.).

Local municipalities of VPR, when transferring the practice:

- Should establish an executive committee of several local municipalities interested in cooperation;
- Should attract a tourism expert to carry out the activities;
- Should collect stories and historical information about prominent persons;
- Should establish common tourism trails, combining both natural and cultural heritage objects, creating a tourism destination in the territory of several municipalities.

Activities

- 1.** Establish a Multi-Level Interdisciplinary Cooperation Platform (involving experts from both natural and cultural sectors from the NCA and the NHB, representatives of VPR local municipalities and the private sector). Involve new interested parties (e.g., LEPF, VKKF, UNESCO, Latvian Rural Forum, Baltic Environmental forum, Latvian Association of Large Cities, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia's State Forests, private sector etc.). The Cooperation platform established based on the Stakeholder group within the framework of the SWARE project.
- 2.** Involve new interested parties (e.g., LEPF, VKKF, UNESCO, Latvian Rural Forum, Baltic Environmental Forum, Latvian Association of Large Cities, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia's State Forests, private sector etc.)
- 3.** Organize thematic meetings of the Cooperation platform on the issues as defined in the first phase of the SWARE project:
 - The role of natural and cultural heritage objects in the development of local municipalities and the necessary support for their management;
 - Improvement and planning of landscape policy;
 - Issues related to inland waterway management;
 - Involvement of citizens in the management of natural and cultural heritage;
 - Developing cooperation between local municipalities and private sector partners in tourism destinations.
- 4.** In the Cooperation platform, prepare and submit proposals to the responsible industry authorities to improve the integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.
- 5.** Initiation of new cooperation projects and activities between the parties involved in the Cooperation platform (ensuring synergy with the activities and results of the SWARE project).

Result indicators

- Establishing a Cooperation platform of the parties involved.
- Involvement of new interested parties (at least 5).
- Organised 5 thematic meetings of the Cooperation platform.
- Proposals submitted by the Cooperation platform to the responsible institutions on the sectors (5 proposals).
- Collaborative projects and / or events initiated by the Cooperation platform.

Parties involved

VPR Administration – creation of a Multi-Level Interdisciplinary Cooperation Platform of parties involved, involvement of new stakeholders, organization of thematic meetings of the Cooperation platform, compilation of proposals.

VPR municipalities – cooperation with the VPR Administration, delegating 1–2 representatives, who plan to participate in the thematic meetings.

MEPRD, MC, ME, NCA, NHB, Latvian Association of Large Cities, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, LEPF, VKKF, Latvian Rural Forum, UNESCO, Baltic Environmental Forum, Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia's State Forests – cooperation with the VPR Administration, each delegating one representative to take part in Cooperation platform meeting, agreeing with the VPR Administration and the VPR municipalities on further proposals to improve the integrated management of natural and cultural heritage.

Timeframe

Activities are planned to be carried out until the IV quarter of 2020:

Organize a meeting of the Cooperation platform in the I quarter of 2019 “The role of natural and cultural heritage objects in the development of local municipalities and the necessary support for their management”.

- Organize a meeting of the Cooperation platform in the II quarter of 2019 “Planning and improvement of the landscape policy”.
- Organize a meeting of the Cooperation platform in the III quarter of 2019 “Issues related to inland waterway management”
- Organize a meeting of the Cooperation platform in the I quarter of 2020 “Involvement of the people in the management of natural and cultural heritage”.
- Organize a meeting of the Cooperation platform in the II quarter of 2020 “Formation of cooperation between local municipal and private partners in tourism destinations”.

Costs and funding sources

The administrative expenses of the participants of the Cooperation platform, within the scope of their budget, ensuring the attendance and participation of representatives in Cooperation platform meetings.

Expenditures on the Cooperation platform meeting rooms provided by the VPR Administration or one of the involved parties on a voluntary basis.



Involving society in a joint and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage

This action includes activities aimed at involving society in a joint and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage. It is supposed to be achieved by supplementing the Vidzeme Cultural Programme with the activity directed towards involvement of the society in development of natural and cultural heritage by organizing educational activities and informing society about the possibility to voluntarily carry out the identification and maintenance of the values of natural and cultural heritage.



Background

- In the situation analysis, telephone interviews were conducted with 19 VPR municipalities. They mentioned that the sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage is hindered by the fact that the inhabitants of local municipalities who are landowners with the objects of natural and cultural heritage on their land (hereinafter – owners of natural and cultural heritage objects) are too passively involved in the management of natural and cultural heritage for reasons such as the lack of confidence in the ability of the objects to attract tourists, the lack of information about examples of good practice on how to develop privately-owned objects in an important tourism service, lack of funding for maintaining a tourism service, etc.
- Effective society involvement in the management of natural and cultural heritage is important for several reasons:
 - The society will adopt and follow management initiatives more effectively if it is involved in the process of developing initiatives;
 - Significant projects will be implemented successfully if a dialogue between the local municipalities and its inhabitants is established during their development and implementation;
 - Natural and cultural heritage experts should consider the society's opinion regarding the preservation and development of natural and cultural heritage, because the inhabitants are those who are able to provide information about the history of the objects, ongoing processes, daily functions, etc.

Transferable good practices of partners

Within the project, natural and cultural heritage objects around **River Suir (Ireland)**, one of the main Irish waterways, were identified, and were included in a common map available to all interested parties.

Local municipalities of VPR, when transferring the practice:

- Should organize regular meetings with the inhabitants on whose territory the exploratory waterways are located, and which are used daily;
- Should encourage people to explore watercourses and to identify local natural and cultural heritage objects;
- Should encourage people to collect historical stories about natural and cultural heritage objects on the courses of the waterways;
- Should promote education of the people on the importance of cultural and natural heritage in cooperation with the VPR, educational institutions, etc.;
- If possible, should ensure that any interested inhabitant, public organization or entrepreneur can engage in communication and discussion on the management of natural and cultural heritage sites through an online communication platform (for example, Irish experience of the Public Participation Network – www.ppntipperarty.org)

The De Rotte River Development Organization (The Netherlands) has succeeded in successfully implementing society engagement and self-initiative examples in the Netherlands, where the De Rotte River Development Authority has been established, involving both private and public parties on a voluntary basis. The operations of the organization are related to the implementation of various activities that promote the quality of life of people living on the banks of the river. New cultural and entertainment events are organized on the water, various forms of entrepreneurship supported, for example, boat movement on the river, which is interesting for tourists. With the support of this organization, the restaurant has started its business, which is a good example of social entrepreneurship.

Activities

1. To include in the Vidzeme Cultural Programme activity (one of the supported priorities), aimed at the involvement of society in the development of natural and cultural heritage.
2. Organize educational activities incl. seminar (-s) on the possibilities of involvement of the society in the development of natural and cultural heritage for

the municipalities implementing the SO 5.5.1. activities, as well as other sector-related specialists, owners and managers of natural and cultural heritage objects.

3. Involve the society in identifying the value and significance of natural and cultural heritage.

4. Send at least 150 e-mails to residents of Vidzeme region, incl. owners of natural and cultural heritage objects to inform them about the sustainable use of the unique natural and cultural heritage.

Result indicators

- Included activity / priority in The Vidzeme Cultural Programme aimed at society involvement in the development of natural and cultural heritage (involvement of the local community in common promotion of natural and cultural heritage).
- Organized at least one workshop on society participation in the development of natural and cultural heritage.
- The society involved in identifying the values of natural and cultural heritage (Vidzeme landscape list documented and published on the VPR website and Landscape treasures of Latvia homepage by the representatives from society).
- At least 150 e-mails sent to residents of Vidzeme region, including owners of natural and cultural heritage objects, informing them about the sustainable use of a joint natural and cultural heritage.

Parties involved

VPR Administration – to supplement the Vidzeme Cultural Programme, organize a seminar (-s), involve the society in identifying the values and significance of natural and cultural heritage, and send out electronic letters to the residents of Vidzeme region.

VPR municipalities - participation in seminars organized by the VPR Administration.

Timeframe

Activities are planned to be carried out until the II quarter of 2019.

Costs and funding sources

The administrative expenses of the VPR Administration.



Improving local development strategies for Local action groups in the territory of Vidzeme Planning Region

This is to be achieved by meeting with the representatives of the Latvian Rural Forum, informing the Rural Development Programme Monitoring group on the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage by participating in the annual conference of the Latvian Rural Forum and sending recommendations to the LAGs of the VPR on complementing their action strategies with actions related to sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage.



Background

- Local municipalities indicate that they face a shortage of human resources that would be knowledgeable specialists in the field of nature and culture and conduct regular activities in the management of objects (surveying, identification, etc.), and prepare project applications for funding. In the meantime, natural and cultural heritage objects play an important role in shaping people's belonging and creating a united community identity that promotes the well-being of the population.
- In cooperation with the LAGs, the VPR municipalities can agree to supplement their local action strategies with points related to the sustainable development of inland waterways such as:
 - Cooperation with educational institutions on involvement of young people by integrating cognitive and educational activities on objects of natural and cultural heritage in the content of education and out-of-school activities, etc.;
 - Support of local opinion leaders' initiatives that want to carry out and organize inland waterway management activities (river bank inspection for necessary maintenance and infrastructure adjustments, identifying and preserving the intangible cultural heritage associated with waterways, and educating the rest of the population and young people through activities such as competitions or traditions (talks, solstice celebrations, etc.)).



Transferable good practices of partners

The identified good practice **Sloepennetwerk (The Netherlands)** envisages the creation of a single 400-kilometer network of waterways, involving both public and private parties and local inhabitants.

Local municipalities of VPR, when transferring this practice:

- Should engage people to participate in the development of projects for the development of natural and cultural heritage objects, enabling them to volunteer to participate, for example, in gathering information, discussion of problems and solutions, etc.
- The network of stakeholders should be increased, as far as possible, in cooperation with other municipalities and regions to ensure the sustainability of the project;
- Should establish a unified information exchange system for ongoing projects of the municipalities of VPR and VPR related to the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage by organizing regular meetings with stakeholders;
- Stakeholders (regions, entrepreneurs, LAGs) should be informed about the benefits of projects implemented by municipalities as well as on the business opportunities they create.

Activities

1. Meeting with the representatives of the Latvian Rural Forum with an aim to inform about the importance of sustainable development of a joint natural and cultural heritage.
2. Informing the Rural Development Programme Monitoring group on the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage.
3. Preparation of a report on the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and participation in the annual conference of the Latvian Rural Forum.
4. Preparing recommendations to local LAGs of the VPR area, calling for support to sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage to be included in their development strategies.

Result indicators

- Organized meeting with Latvian Rural Forum aimed to inform about the importance of sustainable development of joint natural and cultural heritage.
- Rural Development Programme Monitoring group informed on the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage.
- Participation and preparation of a report at the Latvian Rural Forum annual conference on the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage.

- Suggestions sent to VPR LAGs (8 LAGs in total) to include sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage in their development strategies as one of the support actions.



Parties involved

VPR Administration – organizing a meeting with the representatives of the Latvian Rural Forum, informing the Rural Development Programme monitoring group, participating in the annual conference of the Latvian Rural Forum, sending recommendations to the VPR LAGs.

Latvian Rural Forum – cooperation with the VPR Administration, by participating in the meeting and including the VPR Administration report at the annual conference.

VPR LAGs – consideration of the recommendations of the VPR Administration on complementing their development strategies.



Timeframe

Activities are planned to be carried out until the IV quarter of 2020.



Costs and funding sources

Costs and funding sources Administrative expenses of the VPR Administration.

MONITORING PLAN FOR THE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



VPR Administration will be responsible for the monitoring of the Action Plan implementation. Once a year, the opinion of the Cooperation platform on the implementation of the Action Plan and recommendations or improvement of cooperation will be summarized.

| Action | Monitoring indicator | How to evaluate | Responsible |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| <p>No. 1. Improve results of the Specific Objective (SO) 5.5.1. "To preserve, protect and develop important cultural and natural heritage, as well as to develop related services"</p> | <p>1. Organized training (at least 1 training)</p> <p>2. At least one conclusion that proposes to incorporate actions corresponding to the integrated management of the joint natural and cultural heritage in municipal development documents has been sent to municipalities</p> <p>3. Proposals to the responsible institutions with the recommendations developed within SWARE project for SO 5.5.1. improvement and/or submitted recommendations for the development of new policy tools on the development of natural and cultural heritage in the post-2020 period</p> | <p>1. Agenda</p> <p>1.2. List of participants</p> <p>2. Mailing list of conclusions recipients</p> <p>3. List of prepared and submitted proposals</p> | VPR Administration |
| <p>No. 2. Strengthening the cooperation and developing common understanding among the people involved in management of natural and cultural heritage</p> | <p>1. A Cooperation platform set up for interested parties</p> <p>2. Newly involved interested parties (at least 5)</p> <p>3. Cooperation platform meetings organized (at least 5)</p> <p>4. Recommendations prepared (at least 5)</p> | Cooperation platform Meeting Protocols | VPR Administration |

| Action | Monitoring indicator | How to evaluate | Responsible |
|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| <p>No. 3. Involvement of society in a joint and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage</p> | <p>1. Supplemented Vidzeme Cultural Programme</p> <p>2. Seminar organized</p> <p>3. Landscape list</p> <p>4. At least 150 electronic letters sent to residents of Vidzeme region, including owners of natural and cultural heritage objects</p> | <p>1. Vidzeme Cultural Programme, incl. tender regulations</p> <p>2.1. Agenda</p> <p>2.2. List of participants</p> <p>3. The Vidzeme Landscape List published on the VPR website and Landscape treasure homepage</p> <p>4. Mailing list</p> | <p>VPR Administration</p> |
| <p>No. 4. Improvement of local development strategies for Local action groups in the territory of Vidzeme Planning Region.</p> | <p>1. Meeting organized with the Latvian Rural Forum</p> <p>2. Informed Rural Development Programme Monitoring group</p> <p>3. Participation in the annual conference of the Latvian Rural Forum</p> <p>4. Recommendations sent to the LAGs of VPR</p> | <p>1. Meeting notes</p> <p>2. Letter sent</p> <p>3. Participation in the conference (list of participants)</p> <p>4. E-mails sent (mailing list, number of e-mails)</p> | <p>VPR Administration</p> |



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European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Project: Sustainable heritage management of Waterway Regions (SWARE), PGI00294

Action plan: Action Plan for Management and for Sustainable Development of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Vidzeme Region

I hereby confirm that Vidzeme Planning Region as a partner of the SWARE project with this Action Plan has defined priority actions targeted towards improvement of policy planning and its instruments that are essential for promoting integrated management and further sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage in Vidzeme region.

Signature of representative of the relevant organization:

Head of Administration
of Vidzeme Planning Region

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Guna Kalniņa-Priede".

/Guna Kalniņa-Priede/





Kultūras ministrija
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia

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Rīga, 20 January 2019
No. 4.3.2-1/119

Vidzeme Planning Region
Purva 12A
Valmiera, LV-4201

*Letter of Recommendation for the
Vidzeme Planning Region*

On behalf of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the Ministry of Culture) as the Responsible Authority of the Operational programme “Growth and Employment” 5.5.1. Specific Objective “To preserve, protect and develop important cultural and natural heritage, as well as to develop related services”, I herewith confirm that the project “Sustainable heritage management of Waterway Regions” (hereinafter – the Project) has been successfully implemented by the Vidzeme planning Region.

I would like to express support to the Vidzeme Planning Region by approving Action Plan for Management and for Sustainable Development of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Vidzeme Region developed within the Project.

The Ministry of Culture recognizes the significance of the Project in the promotion of collaboration between the project partners and development of the action plan which demonstrates a realistic approach to improve the sustainable heritage management in the Vidzeme Planning Region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Zanda Saulite'.

Zanda Saulīte
Head of European Union Funds Department