

# Tourism development in the Central Baltic Area: **BOOSTED** experience

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Photo: Visit Finland

The project BOOSTED (1.11.2016–31.10.2019) aims at providing an aligned and relevant skillset for the Central Baltic region to grow as a coherent tourism destination. It boosts tourism business competitiveness through higher professional education in Finland, Estonia and Latvia.



## THE BOOSTED-PROJECT

is about

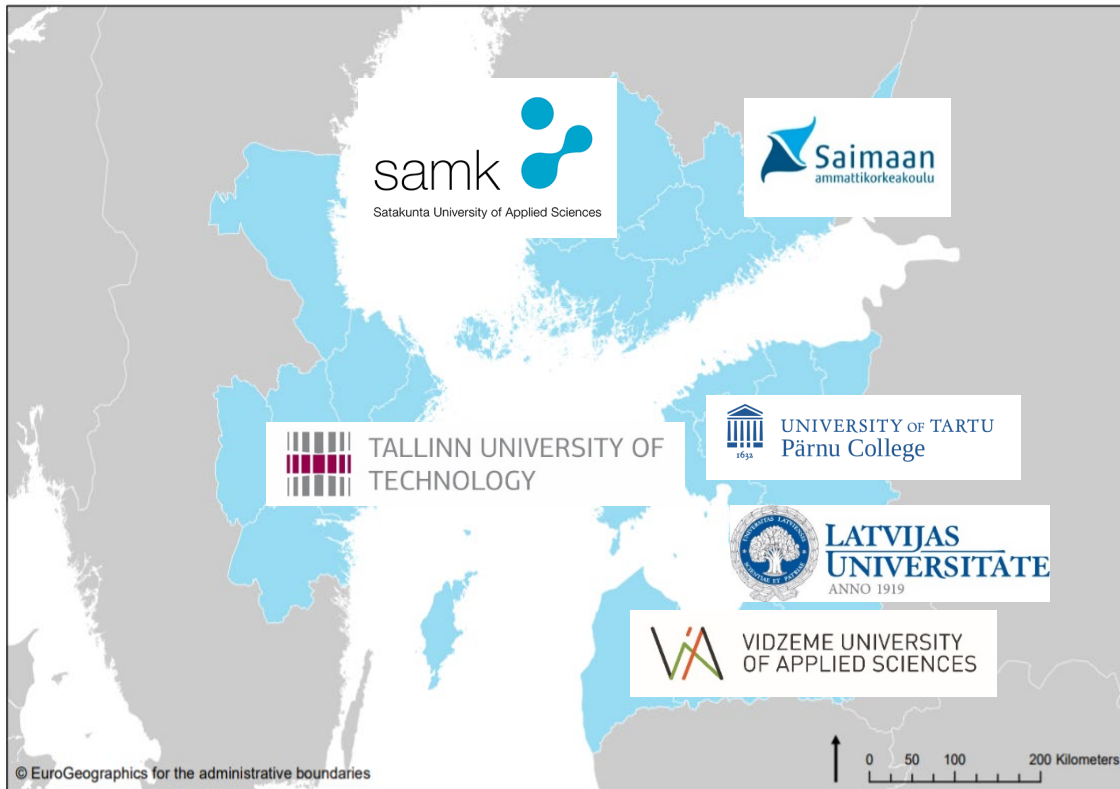
Identification and alignment  
of the skills in tourism business  
development

Designing a joint curriculum  
of advanced tourism  
business development

Implementing  
the curriculum  
as a joint study  
programme

SUPPORTING  
THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE CENTRAL  
BALTIC REGION AS A  
COMMON TOURISM  
DESTINATION!

“Tourism curriculum should be developed with those who are influenced by and who can influence the direction of tourism development at the destination.”



## How the curriculum was developed?

- **103** interviews of industry professionals
- Review of the existing curricula
- Review of the national tourism strategies and sector reports

# Skills identification and alignment: What are the necessary skills in tourism business development the Central Baltic Area?

Product and  
experience  
design and  
development

Multi-channel  
marketing  
communi-  
cation and  
sales

Multi-  
sectorality,  
cooperation  
and  
networking

Management  
of business  
operations

Cultural  
awareness  
and  
internationalisation

Digitalisation, personal development, language skills

## *Product and experience design and development*

- Developing innovative and authentic tourism products and experiences of high quality
- Designing and offering diversified products to specific segments
- Developing versatile offerings from the interfaces of tourism and other fields; use of local natural and cultural heritage
- Tackling the challenges of seasonality; offering off-season products
- Using ICT as part of a tourism product
- Strengthening economic sustainability in product development

## *Multi-channel sales and marketing communication*

- Understanding buying behaviour in tourism
- Using digital tools to enhance online visibility of destinations and products: use of social media, mobile technology and interactive websites
- Designing creative, high quality visual materials
- Using thematic sales channels and models for searching and selling products online
- Improving personal selling skills

## *Multi-sectorality, cooperation and networking*

- Cooperation between different stakeholders and different sectors
- Theme-based cooperation
- Establishing, managing, and evaluating cooperation
- Using innovative cooperation models
- Collaborative product development, marketing communication and sales

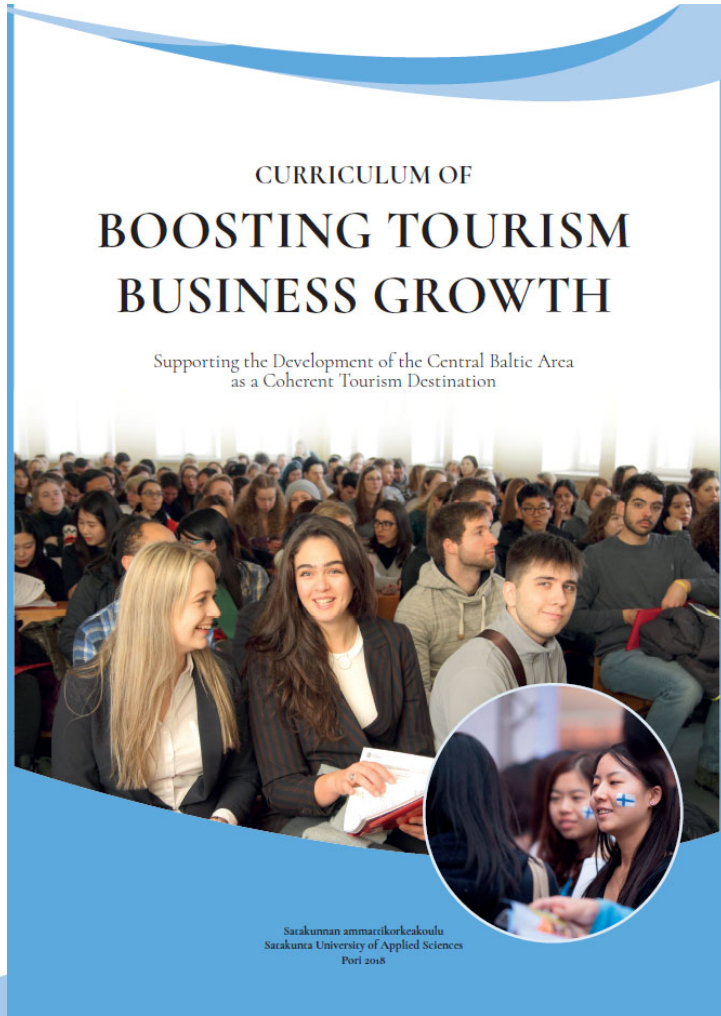
## *Cultural awareness and internationalisation*

- Identifying international target groups
- Applying customer know-how and market knowledge
- Understanding the special characteristics of different cultures and their impact on business activities
- Enhancing international customer service skills
- Knowledge of the special features of one's own culture

## *Managing business operations*

- Managing human resources, especially the younger staff members
- Understanding the key pricing factors and factors related to a profitable tourism business
- Implementing risk management strategies
- Identifying the operating environment with all its sectors and actors
- Developing analytical foresight skills and awareness of trends
- Developing an entrepreneurial attitude
- Using digital technologies in business operations

# Curriculum of Boosting the Growth of Tourism Business



- Tourism Product and Experience Design
- Digital Marketing Communication and Content Management
- Increasing Competitiveness by Cooperation,
- Boosting Sales in Tourism
- Cultural Competence in Customer Service
- Forecasting Tourism in the Age of Uncertainty
- Proactivity and Creative Performance
- Innovation Camp in Product Development

# ”The big picture”

- International tourism is growing
  - Foreign overnights grew 17% in FI in 2017, 14% in LV and 7% in EE.
- **Skills development is the key to destination competitiveness**
  - Especially the SMEs are the backbone of tourism development in the CB Area
- Internationalisation brings new competence requirements at destination and business level:
  - Skills have to be identified and redefined to respond to the change.



# Value of cross-border cooperation

- Growing understanding of the specific characteristics and joint USP of the tourism industry in CB Area
- Understanding that meanings people attach to tourism differ in the CB Area e.g. wellness tourism
- Internationality in HEIs is changing – joint curricula
- Sharing expertise: tourism development, pedagogical methods
- Attracting international students together – exchange students participating to the project

# Long-term effects and sustainability

- Different forms of cooperation have increased to support the growth and competitiveness of the tourism industry in the CB Area:
  - Teacher exchange
  - Joint intensive, online courses for industry professionals
  - Joint research activities: journal articles, conference papers
  - Study programme integrated in the curricula
  - Joint Masters'

# CB as an attractive tourism destination

- Focus is too much on operational level.
- **Strategic management, planning and development in destinations and businesses requires strengthening.**
- **Long term vision** for tourism development and conforming that with **destination policy: engaging all the different stakeholders in the development.**
- Economic sustainability – business profitability, destination level measurement, assessment
  - **”Not only to do something, but to first think holistically what should be done. It is not a hobby, it is business.”**



# Thank you!