

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Central Baltic programme 2014-2020 projects that supported the development of natural and cultural resources into sustainable tourist attractions in Central Baltic region.



Project **DefenceArch** created a guide to 11 tourist destinations under the title “Explore the coastal past” in English, Finnish and Swedish. The guide introduces bunkers, battles, ruins and seals in the Baltic Sea Archipelagos.

The photo shows a computer simulation of the Bomarsund fortress by Henrik Juslin, Graham Robins and Sebastian Sodergardh (CC-BY-SA 3.0).


What are result packages?

Result packages are part of the 2014-2020 programmes' capitalisation strategy. They promote programme achievements in logical entities by providing summaries of results and examples of good practices. They are all structured in the same way.

In total, there are 10 packages that summarise different thematics addressed by the Central Baltic programme. The themes of the different packages are:

- Export
- Labour market
- Sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas
- Vocational education
- **Sustainable tourism**
- Integrated urban planning
- New business development
- The development of transport corridors
- Small ports development package
- Water

Project LiviHeri involved over 4000 persons in their project activities which resulted in the creation of 5 new joint tourist attractions. The aim was to 'preserve the spirit of the city' while creating the new attractions. These included, for example, "A cup of coffee" where local homeowners invite tourists into their yards and a archeological walking route in a local neighbourhood. The project was granted the **European Year of Cultural Heritage** label in April 2018.




Welcome to Kuldīga!


Everyone who has ever been to Kuldīga will say – it is a special place! Historic places are an integral part of Kuldīga. Due to the special historical heritage in 2011 the Old town of Kuldīga on the banks of the picturesque river Venta was included in the Latvian list of UNESCO World Heritage. The nature and historic buildings of the town create a unique ensemble that has no equivalents both in Latvia and Europe. The history of Kuldīga is very rich: 775 years ago Kuldīga was first mentioned in documents. The coat of arms of Kuldīga depicts the patroness of the town – St. Katherine. From 1596 till 1616 Kuldīga was the official capital of the Duchy of Courland. Duke Jacob during whose reign the Duchy flourished the most was born in Kuldīga.

You have accepted a challenge to play the game that will help you get to know Kuldīga with the help of the town map! Therefore we recommend you to put on your most comfortable shoes and discover Kuldīga on foot. To fulfil the tasks, you will need pencils or any other writing tool.

Start your walk in the **Kuldīga Town Hall Square** (Rātslaukums)! Here, quietly murmuring past ancient walls flows the Alekšupīte river, inviting you to enjoy the ancient and mysterious town. The Town Hall Square is an ancient meeting place for people, it was used as a marketplace in ancient times.

Find 
the UNICORN
in Kuldīga!

You begin the game at **4 Baznīcas street** where you can see a water pump! Fill your water bottles! Once there were 28 water pumps scattered around the narrow cobbled streets of Kuldīga. Nowadays there are just seven of them. Water pumps help people refresh themselves on hot summer days.




ANCIENT TIMES NOWADAYS

task 1
Think of a completely new and unseen type of a water pump that could be built in Kuldīga. Draw it!

Now we are going to go down **Liepājas Street** (Liepājas iela) surrounded by buildings of different ages. The building where pub "Stenčers" is located at 3 Liepājas Street is one of the most ancient wooden houses of our town.

task 2
To get to know what was situated in this building in the 20th century, guess the riddle!

A 38-8=	G 20-9=	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
N 40+9=	R 18-1=	11	17	30	49	30	17 18
Y 12+6=							



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Scope of the package

This package contains information about Central Baltic project results that supported development of the natural and cultural resources into sustainable tourist attractions in Central Baltic region.

In the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions was selected as one of the specific objectives (SO 2.1) under the priority sustainable use of common resources (2). The aim of the specific objective was to develop cultural and natural resources into joint tourist attractions and products by taking into account the sustainable use and development of these locations.

Within SO 2.1, 15 projects were funded:

- All together 15 joint tourist attractions were developed
- The Number of visits in developed cultural and natural heritage sites has been increased by over 300 000 visits during the implementation of the projects

Background

The strategy and action plan adopted by the European Commission “Europe, the world’s No. 1 tourist destination - a new political framework for tourism in Europe” (2010)¹ the same aspects than set for the SO 2.1. The Document stresses the importance of sustainability, responsibility and high-quality in the development of the tourism destinations. For example, investments to accessibility, utilisation of the ICT as well as joint actions between regions are seen important and valuable.

Tourism is an important sector for all the Central Baltic regions, both urban and rural and peripheral territories. The region is a preferred tourism destination both within and outside the region. Growing numbers of foreign tourists mainly from other parts of Europe and recently also from Asia, visit the Central Baltic countries. One of the major challenges for the tourism sector is seasonality. Specifically coastal and maritime tourism represents a significant potential and natural co-operation opportunity within Central Baltic region.

This specific objective aimed to develop cultural and natural resources into joint tourist attractions and products in order to improve the attractiveness of living and visiting environment. The development processes and actions towards tourism attractions aimed to bring economic value and benefits for the region while also taking into account the aspects of preserving the nature and cultural values. Thus, finding the balance between preserving and developing the natural and cultural resources has been in core of financed projects.

1. https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/policy-overview_en_highlights

Timeline

Projects from all 5 application calls of the Central Baltic programme 2014-2020 are included in this capitalisation package, first projects stated in 9-2015 and the last project is finalised by the end of the year 2022.



Timeline of projects

Achieved results and effect

The financed sustainable tourism projects covered tourism experiences which goes under water, out to the sky, deep forest, local food tasting, variety of handcrafts and local products, beauty of unique islands and whatever one can imagine in the Central Baltic region. But still projects under the SO2.1 can be grouped under four different categories:

- Nature tourism and hiking,
- Shared history, cultural heritage and rural tourism,
- Archipelago and islands and
- Specific group of people.

Nature tourism and hiking destinations that were developed by the projects focused strongly on improvement of existing routes and extending them both from viewpoint of length and visiting experience. Similar shared history (for example Hanseatic time, historical pilgrim routes), locations (for example archipelago, islands, lake districts, countryside) or selected approach (for example accessibility for all, bird watching tourism) created added value to implement the activities together across the borders. Besides the shared theme joint implementation gave a great opportunity for benchmarking and unification of locations based on local needs.

Several projects developed digital tools (apps, webpages etc.) which improved the visiting experience in the destinations. In addition, many tools give a nice possibility to visit the developed locations online and to learn about the nature and/or history of the location. Developed tools have also created opportunities to protect the nature of the destinations for example by guiding visitors to use existing paths, by telling about natural and historical values, and by giving a change to monitor the possible changes in area due to increased use.

In addition to actual tourist destination development, several projects documented their co-working and co-creation processes. Made publications offer tools and models to develop new similar type of tourist destinations in sustainable manner and give chances to improve visiting experiences in these new locations.

Experiences and lessons learned

Projects which had a clear shared theme and similar type of locations managed to create the best shared identity and working practises towards the joint tourist attraction. This enabled successful joint marketing opportunities for the project. The joint marketing created bigger volume and visibility towards stakeholders and target groups. For example, potential tourists from far destinations are more reachable when individual Central Baltic country is blocked as a bigger entity - Northern Europe, Baltic Sea region, or specific theme - and after this individual destination can become interesting to visit, see and experience. Joint marketing and dissemination activities also gave a greater visibility in European wide tourism events were several projects participated.

Project funding gave opportunity to improve several already existing tourism destinations and attractions. Majority of the investments increased the accessibility to the location even though the accessibility was not the main aim of the activity. Several hiking paths as well as other destinations are now accessible for bigger group of people than before the projects. At the same time the made investments increased the sustainable use of the tourist attractions for example by guiding people how to visit the place in sustainable manner. Visiting experiences are now both more inclusive and sustainable.

Important geographical element of the Central Baltic programme regions is the Baltic Sea. The programme has two Specific objectives which can be seen as a complementary one from the perspective of sustainable tourism - how sea and coastal areas are used and utilised for sustainable tourism. Besides the Specific objective 2.1 (Natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions), the Specific objective 3.2 (Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development) had strong links to tourism destination development by having a focus on visiting experience and sustainability in small harbours. These two themes created great synergies when developed tourism attractions were located close to the Baltic Sea and the archipelago area.

Development after the projects ended

Majority of development activities took place in already existing tourist attractions. Thus, infrastructure and know-how to maintain and further develop the attractions were in place. Developed attractions are maintained and they are attracting and serving the visitors continuously.

Many developed tourism attractions are integrated as part of the in bigger networks. Visibility as well as wider use of the destinations are guaranteed through these. Implemented projects are for example part of the locations with UNESCO world heritage status, Hanseatic network, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, pilgrim routes or other well-known hiking routes.

Participating projects

- **NATTOURS** - Sustainable urban nature routes using new IT solutions

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/30>

- **HANSA** - Hanseatic Approach to New Sustainable Alliances

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/20>

- **SmartZoos** - Cross-border services for creative adventure learning in the zoos of Central Baltic Region

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/11>

- **LiviHeri** - Living cultural heritage

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/10>

- **Lights On!**

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/22>

- **St Olav Waterway**

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/65>

- **DefenceArch** - Footprints of Defence in the Archipelago

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/58>

- **Archipelago Access**

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/103>

- **URBAN ECO ISLANDS** - Urban and Smart Island Tourism Destinations

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/105>

- **BALTICAR** - Baltic History Beneath Surface: Underwater Heritage Trails In Situ and Online

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/67>

- **Rural Lifestyle** - Creating attractive rural lifestyle destinations

<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/132>

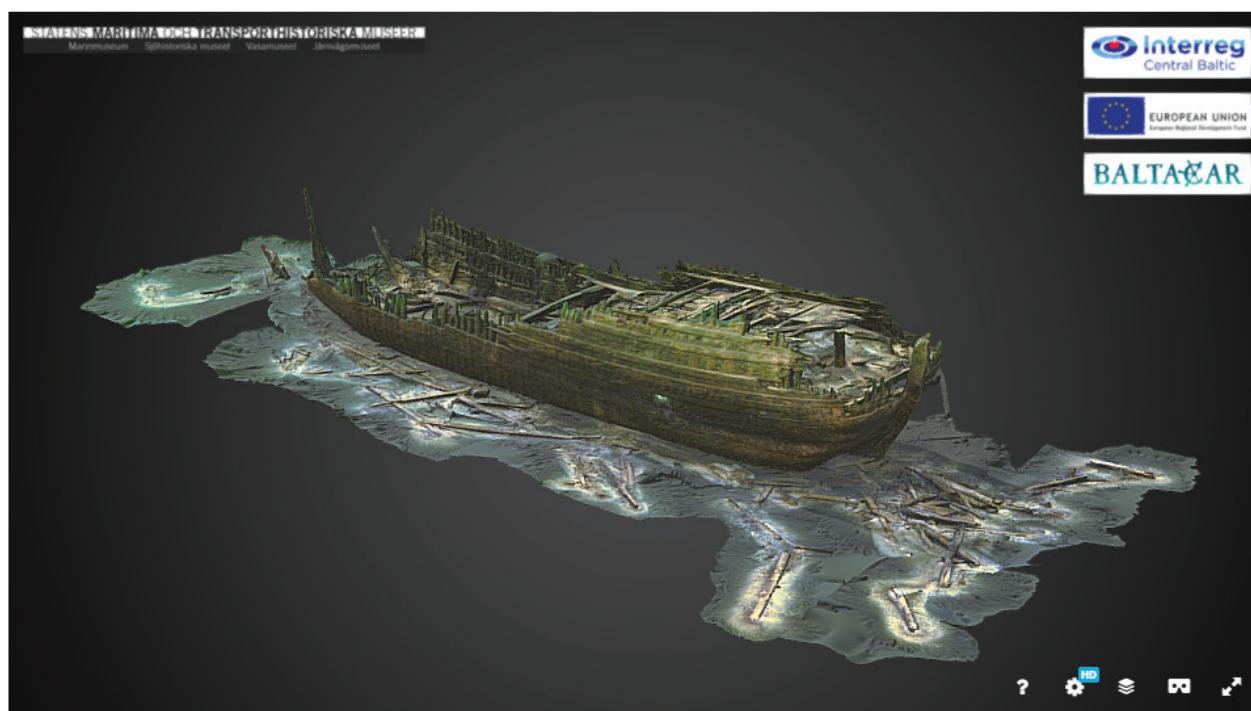
THE UNIQUE CULTURAL UNDERWATER HERITAGE

By Ester Laurell, Contact Point Åland

A cold winter night on February 6th, 1709 a fire broke out on a ship in the harbour. The merchant ship Anna-Maria, built in 1694, sank at the quay with cargo and everything. Since then, she has been lying there on the bottom, partially destroyed by the fire. She is 38 meters long and 8 meters wide, and invisible to most people - at least to non-divers.

She is just one of up to 100,000 wrecks found in the Baltic Sea. The cold and brackish water without shipworm preserves the wrecks. Ships that are wrecked in the Baltic Sea can lie at the bottom for hundreds of years, with cargo, masts and maybe cannons, completely unaffected by the passage of time. They are real time capsules, and at the same time a finite resource, for there will be no more 17th century ships. They constitute a unique cultural heritage.

The Baltacar project wants to increase the accessibility to wrecks in the Baltic Sea. In Sweden, they have 3D-documented three wrecks from the 17th and 18th centuries in Dalarö diving park. Anna-Maria is one of them. They have gathered exhibition materials, produced diving trails and digital signs and moored buoys so that visiting ships do not accidentally anchor in the wrecks and destroy them. They have also started training scuba divers to become cultural-historical guides, with the aim of reaching both accustomed divers and culturally interested beginners.



NEW DIVING GUIDES

One of the new diving guides is Krister Jonsson. Krister's first diving experience was at Malta in 2007, and he experienced a mixture of horror and delight and got stuck. He took a diving certificate in Sweden the same autumn, joined a diving club and eventually became an instructor.

A few years ago, Haninge municipality invited to activities arranged within the project Baltacar. Krister participated and was inspired. Together with three other divers he started a business association to make Dalarö Dive Park accessible to more people. *"Thanks to Baltacar, I took the step"*, says Krister.

"There were many good workshops with committed and enthusiastic people. Through participating in the annual diving fair, we got completely new customers. It's about reaching out, and everyone who have been here are happy. The Baltic Sea is considered 'extreme diving' - it is cold, dark and poor visibility. A journalist from England said that he had never dived to a real wreck before where the cannons were still on deck, and his visit resulted in several articles."

"We have several different types of services, both for beginners and experienced, from 5 to 50 meters deep, and we work together to meet customer's needs. We have a common website where you book a dive - and then it's one of us who drives. It's great fun to convey the story of the wrecks", says Krister.

He sums up: *"You need entrepreneurs and boats to make a project like this work. I chose to invest in the future, my dream is to be able to live on diving all year round, to make my hobby my livelihood. And demand is increasing. Now my wife and i bought a hostel, so we can offer packages with both boat and accommodation. The best time to dive is autumn-winter-spring. And then we can invest in another type of customers during the summer."*

BALTACAR

Programme Priority: P2 Sustainable use of common resources

Duration: 01.01.2017 - 31.12.2019

ERDF: €1 172 908

Main achievements: 17 wrecks/sites in three countries more accessible, Handbook on how to create a dive park and Baltic History Beneath Surface - an editorial publication of research and underwater tourism tools.