

INTERREG IV B project
AGORA 2.0
(2009.-2012.)



http://www.celotajs.lv/cont/prof/proj/Agora2.0/Agora2.0_en.html

The aim of this project is to focus on fostering the common identity of the Baltic Sea Region by highlighting and promoting substantial parts of the Baltic Sea Region natural and cultural heritage (woods, stones, red-brick Gothic architecture, castles, shifting sand dunes, etc.) as business environment and outstanding strength of the region.

The project includes 24 NGOs, government institutions, representatives of business and scientific institutions all of them representing 10 countries which surround the Baltic Sea. Within the scope of this project, **"Lauku Celotājs" (Latvian Country Tourism Association)** in cooperation with the Latvian Fund for Nature, carries out pilot project exploring Latvian forest areas with high ecological and biological diversity and nature tourism potential.

Aim of the pilot project is to use forests as the Baltic Sea Region nature and cultural heritage in tourism development promoting social and economic sustainability of the region and creating the common identity of the Baltic Sea Region.



Activities and results of the pilot project:

- **Identified forest areas having ecological value, biologic diversity and areas that may be used for nature tourism** - create a publicly accessible electronic database www.celotajs.lv about forest resources interesting for tourists.
- **Developed nature tourism products.** Walking, cycling, motor and complex tourism routes will be developed. All tourism products and services will be available on the Internet at www.celotajs.lv un www.ldf.lv.
- **Developed forest travel guide**, which will include the forest areas tourism map, illustrated advice for tours / vacations in the nature, list of species identified in the forest areas with the relevant animal and plant descriptions. The guide will be available in printed form and e-form at

www.celotajs.lv and www.ldf.lv.

- **Developed training manual for nature tourism products development** - will compile the best experience of nature product guides, skill necessary for guides, developed guidelines for sustainable nature product development. Informative material will be available on Internet - macies.celotajs.lv and www.ldf.lv.
- **Prepared an evaluation of forest's non-timber resources** – determined the variety of values of forest's non-timber, the potential of its usage and its economic benefit. The evaluation will be publicly available at www.celotajs.lv and www.ldf.lv.
- **Promoted marketing of the Baltic Sea Region natural and cultural heritage.**

Leading project partner:

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www.agora2-tourism.net



Project AGORA (2005.-2007.)

The aim of the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme project "AGORA - Network Sustainable Tourism Development in the Baltic Sea Region" (NI 0084) (hereinafter - the Project) was to implement the BALTIC 21 Strategy (An agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region) for sustainable development of the tourism sector:

- promote cooperation between public and private sectors at local and regional level;
- identify and integrate the knowledge and experience in sustainable tourism and make it available to the Baltic Sea Region and Europe;
- provide a comprehensive set of tools with proven methodology and practice-oriented guidelines;
- consolidate competence and capacity of all the parties involved;
- stimulate rural development and investment in sustainable tourism;

- build a long-term network structure of sustainable tourism.

Within the scope of this project, "Lauku Ceļotājs" (Latvian Country Tourism Association) carried out of the pilot project. Its results:

- developed criteria for sustainable tourism products;
- developed e-system for verification of compliance with sustainability criteria;
- developed database for sustainable tourism products;
- offer was surveyed, compliance was assessed and information was included in the database;
- developed and promoted the brand of sustainable tourism product (printed materials, Internet).

Application and planned results of the project Agora 2.0 are based on the results of this project.



Forests in Latvia

Forests in Latvia occupy 2, 965, 118 ha. According to SFS (State Forest Service) information, forest coverage is 50.3%. As against to other European countries, Latvia is among the forest-rich countries (average coverage in Europe is 33% of the land area).

Forest land consists of:

- Forest (45.9%);
- Marshes (2.8%);
- Glades (0.54%);
- Flooded plains (0.2%);
- Infrastructure objects (0.8%).

Compared to the year 1923, when forest coverage was 23% in Latvia, with the course of time to this day it has doubled and reached 50.2%. Increase of forest coverage in the future is expected, because natural overgrowing of unused agricultural lands, as well as artificial afforestation thereof.

Latvian forests mainly consist of coniferous trees, however, other species make the substantial part. For most dominant forest tree species are coniferous trees - pine and spruce. Coniferous trees occupy 55% of all growing areas, birch - 30%, white alder - 7% and aspen - 4%.

More information: www.vmd.gov.lv

Pilotproject partners in Latvia:



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