

THE LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN SOUVENIRS AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE – DRAFT CRITERIA

*Project: “Promoting the use of cultural heritage
in service design of rural tourism”*

Objective: to promote traditions of souvenir making for tourism accommodations in the rural tourism by developing criteria to help tourism businesses make quality, marketable and representing identity of the Latvian and Estonian cultural heritage souvenirs.

Current situation: In both countries – Latvia and Estonia, by souvenirs there are commonly understood specially designed items with a country or city symbols and artisan wares made in Latvia, Estonia. They are commercially available in tourist information centers, souvenir shops and fairs. The rural tourism has not developed a tradition of souvenir making, giving as a gift and sale with the symbols of the overnight accommodation, banqueting house or catering place. From the existing types of souvenirs that are available in both countries overnight accommodations, there can be mentioned: pens, bathroom accessories: soap, toothpastes in small packages, brochures or postcards with the contact information and symbols. However, these items are more common in hotels or large guest house complexes and they are available for free as a service component.

Advantages of souvenirs: a souvenir serves as an emotional memory of the place or the object that is visited by the guest and who wants to have something in memory of the place or give it to a close person. The souvenir key advantage is their ability to carry a long-term identity of the place or the object, complementing the human emotional narrative with a visual, touchable or practical information in some other way. If the souvenir has been successfully made, it can carry the place’s or object’s advertising both in the long run for many years and quantitatively getting new potential clients.

Criteria for a successful souvenir

(the criteria are not specified in succession)

- **FUNCTIONAL, EASY TO USE AND HIGH QUALITY**

A souvenir, that is practical to use and supports a real need of a person, lasts longer and it is more often used and shown to acquaintances and friends. In parallel with functionality, you should rethink its usability. For example, a pocket knife, which is nice and theoretically functional but for folding it open there should be used a great strength and finesse, won’t be practical and it will soon be thrown away. In order the souvenir is functional in the long run, it must also be of a sufficient quality to serve well for some period of time.

! A souvenir of poor quality and uncomfortable to use can serve as an anti-advertisement.

- **A SOUVENIR HAS ITS OWN STORY, JUSTIFICATION**

Souvenir making is related to a story, legend, belief or place's name; the souvenir will help this story become "popular". For the story being powerful, it must be to some extent true, believable and exciting. It may be a story with a mystical overtone, a story that reflects history and values of the family or the place or just a story associated with the name of the place. The main thing is that the souvenir in any way- visually or functionally reflects the story.

- **CARRIES A CERTAIN NATIONAL REGIONAL OR LOCAL IDENTITY**

Any place or object that is located in Latvia or Estonia carries not only a local identity but also the regional and national identity. This does not mean to use the national symbols or the flag colors everywhere. It is very important not to be in conflict with the values that are identified with the Latvian or Estonian, national or regional. For example, in making souvenirs to use materials that you can get in your own country, which have traditionally been used in the region, and make them in cooperation with the local artisans. If it is possible to use colors or signs, use the national patterns or colors that are associated with Latvia, Estonia or a specific region. If you are using an animal, plant or other symbols, choose those that live and grow in your country or those that are highly distributed regionally or locally.

- **MODERN AND INNOVATIVE**

For the purpose of attracting contemporary people ideologically and in terms of the design a souvenir must be tasteful and functionally adequate for the modern man's needs and requirements. The souvenir can be made from traditional materials or in a traditional design but the functionality is still recommended to be modern. No matter how interesting is the theme or the idea but most visitors, however, satisfying the functional needs would choose shoes instead of *pastalas* or matches rather than two stones. If you can be innovative and impress visitors with a souvenir idea, offering something that until now hasn't been seen, the visitor will certainly be proud of the purchased souvenir and he will want to show it to the maximum number of people.

- **APPROPRIATE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RELAXATION IN NATURE**

Both functionally and associatively, the rural tourist souvenirs are essential in publicizing the Latvian and Estonian countryside and nature. This can be achieved both by ideas, materials and design and tastes and scents. It is recommended to use natural materials, rough shapes, functionally choose such souvenirs that people need in the countryside or traveling and relaxing in nature.

- **LOW COST PRODUCTION**

In the interests of both the host of the tourism accommodation and the visitor is that the souvenir is economical. It may be more expensive than a mass item of a similar function but it should not reach the value of a piece of art. Souvenirs for sale should not be taken as a business but as an additional service and promotional activity in the tourism accommodations.

- **ASSOCIATED WITH A RURAL TOURISM HOLDING: NAME, INTERIOR OR OFFER**

A tourism accommodation souvenir is a small part of the overall offer of the holding, therefore, it is essential that it complements the interior design, offering complex, name, etc..If the farm specializes in active leisure activities, it is recommended that you choose souvenirs according to the needs of the active holiday lovers. If the farm offers a wide range of services in the bathhouse or SPA services, we recommend that you make souvenirs for wellness and beauty.

Ideas for souvenirs:

Beer bottle openers or wine bottle corkscrews, glass and cup mats with a local hiking trail map, multifunction pocket knives, thermoses, mugs, t-shirts, bath hats and other accessories, tea selection from the local meadows, kitchen wooden utensils: wooden boards, spoons, spatulas, etc., torches, magnifying glasses, fly whips, key rings, backpacks or bags, butterfly nets, berry picking and mushroom picking baskets, raincoats, homemade soap, rubbers with the use of local plants, homemade products: wine, cheese, honey, jam, etc., jewelry, textiles from natural materials, knitted socks with Latvian patterns, mittens, pile caps, scarves, etc..