

# Proposals for environmental policy and governance based on demonstration of environmental, social and economic benefits from tourism in the Slitere national park – a NATURA 2000 territory

(2009 – 2012)

The **purpose of this project** is to draft proposals on how tourism can be developed and environmental protection policies can be documented based on the example of a sustainable tourism destination – the Slitere National Park, a Natura 2000 site. New tourism products are established in that area, while also ensuring monitoring of the tourism impact on natural, social and economic aspects. All stakeholders are invited to join in this process.

## Key activities and results

- **Five environmentally friendly tourism products developed** – cycling, walking, bird-watching, nature and cultural tourism, with relevant routes developed in the territory of the Slitere National Park. These would be popularised by publishing the “Slitere Guide” for the park.
- **A practical, informational and educational tourist information outdoor stand will be designed and installed in the park as a prototype, presenting the Slitere National Park as a Natura 2000 site.** The stand would present information about “Natura 2000,” the natural values of this site, the need to protect them, about facilities and services for tourism in the area. Stands related to the five aforementioned tourism products and to the relevant objects and territories will be designed and installed at the Slitere National Park.
- **A model for sustainable tourism established.** With the involvement of local residents, the organisers of the project will monitor visitors to identify the way in which tourism has an effect on environmental, social and economic aspects of the territory. The data will be used to determine benefits related to tourism, also helping to consider ways in which local businesses can benefit. The methodology for the monitoring and the experience of the area as a sustainable tourism model will be described in a publicly available document.
- **The plant finder developed, listing plants that are commonly found in the area of tourist accommodations,** as an example helping to educate tourists about biological diversity in the “Natura 2000” territories.
- **Recommendations drafted concerning tourism development and environmental protection for those who prepare national policies and relevant norms.** The document will include recommendations on the development of sustainable tourism, ensuring the preservation of biological diversity in protected nature areas. It will be presented to policy makers, local governments, managers of protected territories, as well as businesspeople who work and live in those territories. This will promote public debate and encourage better co-operation between the environmental sector and the tourism sector.
- **A handbook on environmentally friendly nature tourism written** as an example of best practice. The handbook will provide information about this project, as well as about examples of similar projects in other European countries.
- **Publication of a guide to national parks in the Baltic States,** with information about tourism offers in the 14 Baltic national parks that are also “Natura 2000” sites.
- **The Baltic Nature tourism conference organised** to promote and disseminate the project and its results in Latvia, the Baltic States and Europe.

### Project leader:



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### Project partner:



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### Co-financing for the project:



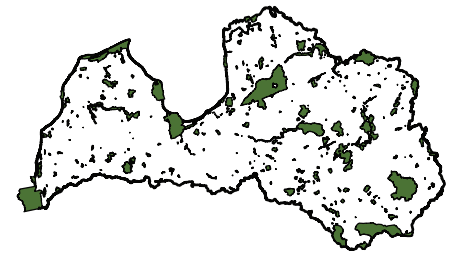


## Natura 2000

"Natura 2000" is a European network of protected natural territories – a system which, in Latvia's case, was based on existing protected natural territories, but involved the addition of 122 new territories. The primary goal for establishing the network of "Natura 2000" sites has been to protect rare and threatened plants and animals, as well as their habitats and biotopes. This is necessary because the economic activities of human beings have substantially affected and even irreversibly destroyed countless natural treasures over the last several centuries – entire ecosystems, habitats and species. "Natura 2000" sites have been identified in all 27 EU member states, and they cover approximately 20% of the EU's total territory.

Information about "Natura 2000" sites:

[www.daba.gov.lv](http://www.daba.gov.lv) [www.vidm.gov.lv](http://www.vidm.gov.lv) [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv)



Marked in green on the map are "Natura 2000" sites.

Source: Environmental Protection Board



### Project demonstration:

The project will be run at the Slitere National Park, which is a "Natura 2000" site and was selected as a demonstration site for project activities and results. The oldest part of the park is an area in which there has been no economic activity at all for the last 80 years – this applies to 1,100 hectares of land. The current boundaries of the park were

defined in 2000, with 16,360 hectares of land and 10,130 hectares of sea. The territory offers a great amount of geological and biological diversity, with forests, swamps, dunes and hollows. The area is all but untouched by humankind, because there are few residents, but also because it was a closed military zone from the end of World War II until the 1990s.

The Slitere National Park is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination. The territory is perfect for demonstrating how a model for environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism can be implemented in protected natural territories, even as the number of visitors to such territories increases substantially.



The project has been designed in co-operation with the administration of the Slitere National Park. Both parties have signed a memorandum of understanding to identify the things that will be done at the Slitere National Park as part of the project.

### Demonstration site:



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