



EUROPEAN UNION

MARKING GUIDELINES FOR BALTIC FOREST HIKING ROUTE IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Lauku ceļotājs, 2020



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Hiking routes and route marking

According to the European Ramblers Association, the importance of hiking trails in the tourism industry has increased over the past century. The origins of route marking in Europe date back for 140 years. These traditions have been in place for decades in those countries that are proud of rambling traditions, and this is internationally known.

Based on the previously described, the aim of these guidelines is to establish a unified marking system for Baltic forest hiking routes in Latvia and Estonia. The guidelines are intended to be distributed to all institutions that are involved in setting up and maintaining the routes (state and local governmental institutions, businesspeople and non-governmental organizations that operate near the forest, etc.).

By planning and implementing route marking, it is important to remember that the main goal is to help travelers to orient in their way. Particularly in this route the main focus is on places where the route moves away from the route and marked places where travelers can receive necessary services – a way out from the forest to populated area where there are dining facilities, food stores, public transportation stops, etc.

It is important to make sure of the route marking to be well maintained that is based on successful co-operation among all involved parties – disabled persons, hikers, businesspeople, NGOs, state and local institutions and local residents.

The aim of marking is to help orientate in the specific route but it should not lower the quality of the landscape.

Colours in the pictures (there are examples with green, blue, yellow and red colours in the pictures) has illustrative meaning and they picture the main principles of other hiking routes in Latvia and Estonia.



Watch video tutorial of marking process:

<https://youtu.be/wnJ1BPQgo5M>

1. Symbols for marking Baltic forest hiking routes in Latvia and Estonia

The symbol for route marking along Baltic forest hiking routes in Latvia and Estonia is a three-line sign that is white - orange - white, with the orange line always between the white lines (Image 1). Measurement of orange line is 150x40 mm, white lines – 150x25mm, with no space between them. To make sure of the measurements, special stencils need to be used (can be found in the attachment of the guidelines).

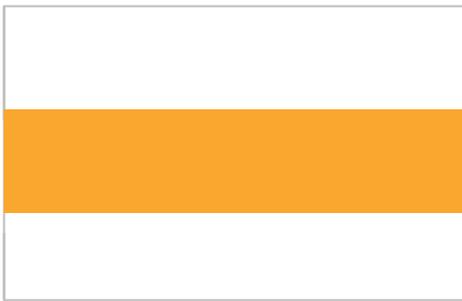


Image 1



If a route changes its direction, this sign is necessary before the turnoff (Image 2):

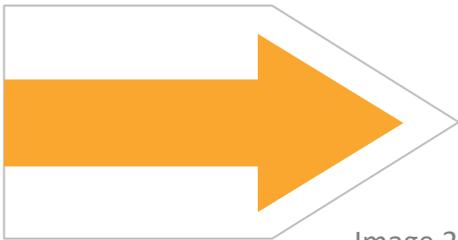


Image 2



To mark places where a hiker has gone in the wrong direction or where the route cannot be continued (private property, end of the route, dead end, etc.), use this marking (Image 3) at the appropriate location.



Image 3

Remember that primarily hikers need to be guided by using  and/or   signs, and the wrong direction sign  needs to be used only in cases when the previous signs are not enough to ensure successful orientation in the route.

Where possible, particularly in forested and populated areas, make the markings with paint, brush and stencils on trees, posts, large rocks and other visible surfaces. In places where this is not possible or it is prohibited, use special rainproof stickers (if there is an appropriate surface) or wooden posts with the white-orange-white symbol stuck into the ground.

2. Color codes and description

To ensure that all markings are the same and to preserve the visual identity, a unified color code must be applied:



CMYK – 0/34/100/0
 RGB – 240/171/0
 PANTONE – 130C



CMYK – 0/0/0/0
 RGB – 255/255/255
 PANTONE - WHITE

- The color can be either oil based or water based, if the latter is suitable for outdoor painting;
- Color should be applied with a brush, as in most cases trees will be used as marking objects.

If it is not possible to find the colors according to the given description, a color palette can be used to find a similar color and then it can be toned with a white color to get the needed orange color tone. When mixing the color tone according to the CMYK and Pantone scales in paint or building material stores, it can differ significantly, therefore, when mixing the color tone, the tone must be chosen according to the NCS color scale **1080Y30R**.



3. Forest Trail E11 - Guidelines for E-path marking, signing and informationboards

An agreement have been made with European Ramblers Association that Forest trail will be a part of the E11 – European long-distance hiking path. It is already allowed to use E11 logo in Forest trail marketing materials.

- Marking and signing of E-paths are two different issues. Signing is an indication of, which route you follow. Marking leads you along a trail without getting lost.
- **Signing** of E-paths should follow these guidelines:
 - a) The E-path logo must be collated in: informative panels of the routes; publications (topographies) and maps that describe the tralis; electronic sources
 - b) It is highly recommended to place the E-path sign: on the directional poles: on some of the wooden signs of the tour
 - c) It is recommended that the E-path icon have the dimensions of 9 x 7 cm or 10 x 10 cm. It can be represented larger and smaller, if the ratio is preserved.
 - d) Every publication promoting E-paths must include the ERA logo and ERA website address <http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/era/download/>.
- **Marking** of E-paths follow the national rules for the specific trail, that the E-path follows. E.g. where an E-paths is following a *GR-route, the marking will be the GR-marking. Where an E-path does not follow another trail, the E-path is marked according to national rules and ERA General Principles for signing and waymarking.
- **Informationsboards** should follow these standards:
 - a) ERA logo incl. website address (bit.ly/e-paths)
 - b) The E-path logo, QR code to the E-path
 - c) Europe map (small)
 - d) Local map (big)
 - e) Physical data e.g. description of the local E-path, length, time to walk, elevations, photos
 - f) Member organisation responsible
 - g) At least two languages

Download E-path way-marks: <http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/walking-in-europe/e-paths/e-paths-marking/>

Steen Kobberø-Hansen
ERA E-path Coordination Group



**GR – route is a network of long-distance foothpaths in Europe, mostly in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain. The tralis in France alone cover approximately 60,000 kilometres.*

3.1. General principles for signing and marking footpaths by ERA

- Waymarks should be placed in the direction of the route so that they are clearly visible from a distance
- Waymarks should be positioned on an object so that the whole mark is visible from the point of view of the approaching walker, by ensuring that the surface of the mark forms an angle of more than 45° with the line of route.
- The route should be waymarked in both directions, with two clearly separate marks. Each of these marks should be positioned with respect to one direction only.
- Junctions are places where paths cross, join or diverge from each other. When carrying out marking, special attention must be paid to junctions where the walker could leave the marked path by mistake. For this reason, all junctions must be marked in both directions.
 - a) A waymark indicating the correct direction should be placed no more than 10m after the junction so that it is clearly visible from the junction and indicates the change of direction unambiguously. This mark is called the guidance mark.
 - b) Another mark should be placed a little further along the correct route. This is called the confirmation mark.
- Long sections of routes without junctions should be provided with reassurance marks. The distance should not exceed 250m. This distance should be shortened in difficult or mountainous terrain.
- If the marked route turns off on another path or changes direction suddenly, an arrow should be used, with the point of the arrow indicating the new direction.
- Increased attention should be paid to the signing of routes in built-up areas, and in particular along sections leaving built-up areas.
- Directional panels or fingerposts indicating the route of the marked path should be placed at the starting/ending points of the route, at junctions and at other necessary places along the route.
- Fingerposts and directional panels should indicate one or more destination along the marked route and the distance in km (miles) or hours. If a destination is shown on a fingerpost or panel, it must be shown on all other subsequent fingerposts or panels until the destination itself is reached.

ERA-EWV-FERP 2015

4. Basic principles for marking

4.1. General guidelines

- The markings need to be seen clearly from distance. It is recommended to put them approximately 1,50 – 1,60 m above the ground;
- The route needs to be marked in both directions;



Image 4. To use the route in both ways, markings need to be applied in a way to be seen from opposite directions.



Images 5,6. On narrow trees or other surfaces with small circumference, the color has to be applied in a way that the color covers up all the circumference of the surface.



Images 7,8. If the surface is parallel to the route (for example – a sign or stone) and it is well seen from the route, it is enough to use only one marking sign.



Images 9,10. A stone or a sign (stickers) that is parallel to the route. The marking can be in one plane (parallel to the route).

- The distance between two signs in a complicated area (populated places, forest route with many different trails, etc.) must be short enough so that the next sign would be seen from the previous one, but not less than 250 m.



Image 11. The marking signs need to be in a distance (not less than 250 m) so that the hiker cannot get lost. Most of them usually are on crossroads and on sidings of a trail. If there are no crossroads for a while, a confirmation sign needs to be applied.



Image 12. The sign needs to be well seen from a distance. Bushes, plants or other trees should not cover it. It is advised to do the marking in the middle of summer when nature is in its prime. A pine forest is the most convenient marking habitat.

- In cases when the route goes in a well understandable “corridor” (shore, forest road, trail, street in a populated area etc.), marking must be applied only in confusing places, like crossroads, trail sidings and places where the direction changes.
- In places where there are informative stands with the route information, there must be a sign which indicates the nearest direction to the route.
- Before marking a route, the weather forecast should be appraised. Do not mark in rainy weather! If the paint does not dry out and it rains, water-based paints will fade or wash off the surface. The paint is applied to the surface in nature only if the air temperature is not lower than 10⁰ C.



4.2. Surfaces for marking



Images 13,14,15. **Trees.** Spruces, black alders and trees and bushes with sleek trunks are the most suitable for marking. Pine trees and spruce are the most common on this route.



Image 16. **Stones.** If possible, it is advised to choose stones with sleek surfaces which are located in open areas and are well seen (not covered by grass and bushes in summer).



Images 17,18. **Information stands, signs and similar objects.** Paint must be applied in places where it does not interfere and cover already existing information. Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Images 19. **Infrastructure object in nature and populated areas.** Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Image 20. Houses, buildings etc. Prior approval by the object manager must be received, avoid any actions that would lower the value of the object.



Image 21. Road surface (asphalt). Prior approval by the object manager must be received.



Image 22. The bottom line (limestone). This principle applies only in Estonia.



4.3. Surfaces for marking with stickers

Use the same general principles mentioned before. Mainly use the surfaces of road signs and other existing direction signs, light poles, traffic light poles and other technical objects. Stickers must be applied in a way to be seen from both sides. Frequency of the stickers should be observed. Most importantly, the stickers must be correctly applied on the crossroads, as described above.



Images 23,24. The stickers show the direction and are well seen to the hikers coming from both sides.



Image 25. Crossed sticker under a road sign shows that the route does not continue in this direction.



Images 26,27. A sticker on a road sign shows that the hiker is on the correct route.



Images 28,29. E11 path stickers together with Forest trail stickers.

4.4. Marking on the crossroads

- It is important to pay particular attention to places where a hiker can miss the correct route. All crossroads must be marked in both directions;
- On the closest possible surface after each crossroad a sign confirming the right direction of the route must follow. Furthermore, additional sign must follow the previous one, in case the previous sign gets damaged/destroyed;
- If the route suddenly changes its direction, it is important to use an arrow which indicates the turning point. If possible, it is recommended to put the signs on natural elements. If it is not possible, a special sign must be placed;
- It is highly important to clearly mark the places where the route goes into populated areas and vice-versa. It is possible to use already existing signs by adding the route markings (stickers or color markings, depending on the situation). In cases where there are no pre-existing signs to be used, it is recommended to set up a new sign.



Image 30



Image 31



Image 32



Image 33



Image 34

5. Marking in places where it overlaps with previous markings

In cases where the route overlaps with other already marked routes, it is advised to use the same object for marking, if possible.

When using already marked objects (trees, stones etc.), a new marking must be applied in a way that would clearly indicate that there are two (or more) routes crossing this point. Previous markings or their parts should not be used for new markings.

In cases when it is planned to use industrial elements, e.g., light-poles, with existing previous markings, it is important to leave at least 1 cm space between the old and the new marking.



Images 35,36. If at some parts the route overlaps with another route, the new marking needs to be applied above, below or next to the already existing sign, depending on each situation.



6. The process of marking

6.1. General guidelines

- In Latvia and Estonia **trees** (primarily, pine trees and spruce) and **stones** are the most commonly used objects for marking. It is forbidden to put marking on trees, stones, sandstone and dolomite outcrops and other nature and cultural history objects with a nature or cultural monument status. Likewise, it is not allowed to put markings on objects which do not have this status but have local significance and/or have an aesthetic or scenic value.
- If possible, it is recommended to put the marking on trees and stones which are well seen from distance, removing unnecessary bushes which might cover them. If there is a choice, apply the marking on trees which have surface as smooth as possible, for example, spruce, black alder etc. An ax and/or a saw must be used to remove unnecessary branches. Removing branches from trees with scenic value and a status of cultural monument is not allowed. Special ointment should be applied on places of the removed branches.
- Before applying the paint of the marking, the spot on the tree must be carefully cleaned. Use a simple drum brush for this purpose.

6.2. Applying paint on the surface

The application of the paint is done with two small brushes and a pre-prepared stencil (see the stencil in the attachment of the guidelines). One brush and one stencil are meant for the white color and the other for the orange color.

The marking symbol on the trees is painted around 1,50 – 1,60 m above the ground. As far as possible, all markings along the route should be made at the same height, so that a hiker would know where to look for them. This height is also practical for maintenance of the route – restoration of marking can be done by one person without any additional equipment.

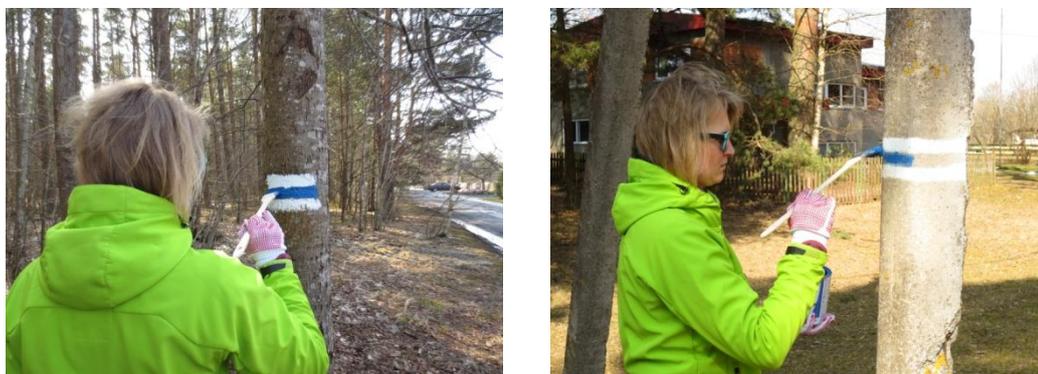


Image 37,38. Three different lines can be applied on the surface, but it must be done carefully and with a suitable brush, to avoid colors being mixed together.



Image 39. The stencil is needed to remember the size and proportions of the sign. Sometimes it might be difficult to apply the colour with a stencil, but it is useful as a benchmark.



Image 40. The colour needs to be applied with a brush at an eye level.



Image 41. Before marking the route, it is recommended to train on different surfaces to get the first skills. Spray paint can also be used, but one must make sure that it will not drain. A stencil is needed to apply the marking with a spray paint.



Image 42. The birch is not a good surface if the marking contains white colour.

Inventory needed:

- Colours;
- Easily sealable containers for color storage and carrying during the marking process;
- Several brushes;
- Stencils;
- Brush for surface cleaning;
- Work clothes and gloves;
- Colour solvent and rags;
- Pruning sealer/paint to be painted onto the area where the tree have been cut back;
- An old bag to carry the inventory;
- An ax and a saw to cut trees and brushes around the marking spot;
- A map with a clear marked route or a person who knows the route well.



Image 43



Image 44



Image 45

7. Marking maintenance and renewal



Image 46. Color, depending on the surface, remains in the nature for several years, but once in one to two years it is advised to inspect the condition of the object on which the signs were applied.



Image 47. Carefully recolor each line to remark the already existing sign.

8. Signs to sightseeing objects and service providers

- Signs indicating nearby objects of interest, resting areas and service providers should be placed along the route. Indication signs are required when the route goes out from large populated areas.
- In cases where the route goes along a populated area, one sign is required from the route to the center of the populated area and it should display information (shown in pictograms) about services a hiker can receive.
- In case when a sightseeing object or a service provider is not on the main route, marking leading all the way to the object should be applied.



Image 48

9. Marking ethics and cooperation with all partners

Local population must be involved in the marking process - entrepreneurs, local government and tourism information center employees, representatives of the planning regions, local associations, enthusiasts and also hikers who are the main users of the route.

People who apply marking should be familiar with the route. They can divide into several groups and divide the labor to make the process faster and more effective. In linear routes it is important to rethink logistics so that they can be transported to the start point at the end. Before proceeding with the marking process, they must hear the instruction.



Images 49,50. Local residents involved in the marking process.



Images 51,52. Instruction before the marking.

We respect existing laws and ethics in the marking process. Do not use vast trees, old trees, great stones, nature objects that have the status of cultural monument (protected natural object) and other objects with cultural monument status or other significant status as objects for marking. Do not mark the parts of the route that passes through the beach, but mark the exit from the beach and the places where the route goes back to the beach. When marking, we evaluate whether the quality of the place/landscape is not reduced. We use a creative approach and logic in the labeling process.

Contact information

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www.baltictrails.eu/forest



Lauku Ceļotājs

Baltic Country Holidays

List of information sources

- Guidelines for E-path marking, signing and informationboards by ERA (2019). Available: http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenter/Walking_in_Europe/E-Paths/E-paths_marking_and_signing.pdf
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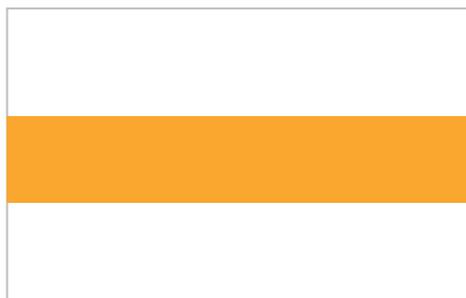
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Available: https://www.daba.gov.lv/upload/File/VienotaisStils/IADT_VienStils_2011_05-markejums-takas_LC.pdf
- Marketing guidelines for the hiking route along the Baltic Sea coastline in Latvia and Estonia (2017).
Available: https://coastalhiking.eu/g/www/cms/c00002/CoastalHiking_Marking_Guidelines_en.pdf

Photos: J. Smaļinskis, picture archive of „Lauku ceļotājs”.

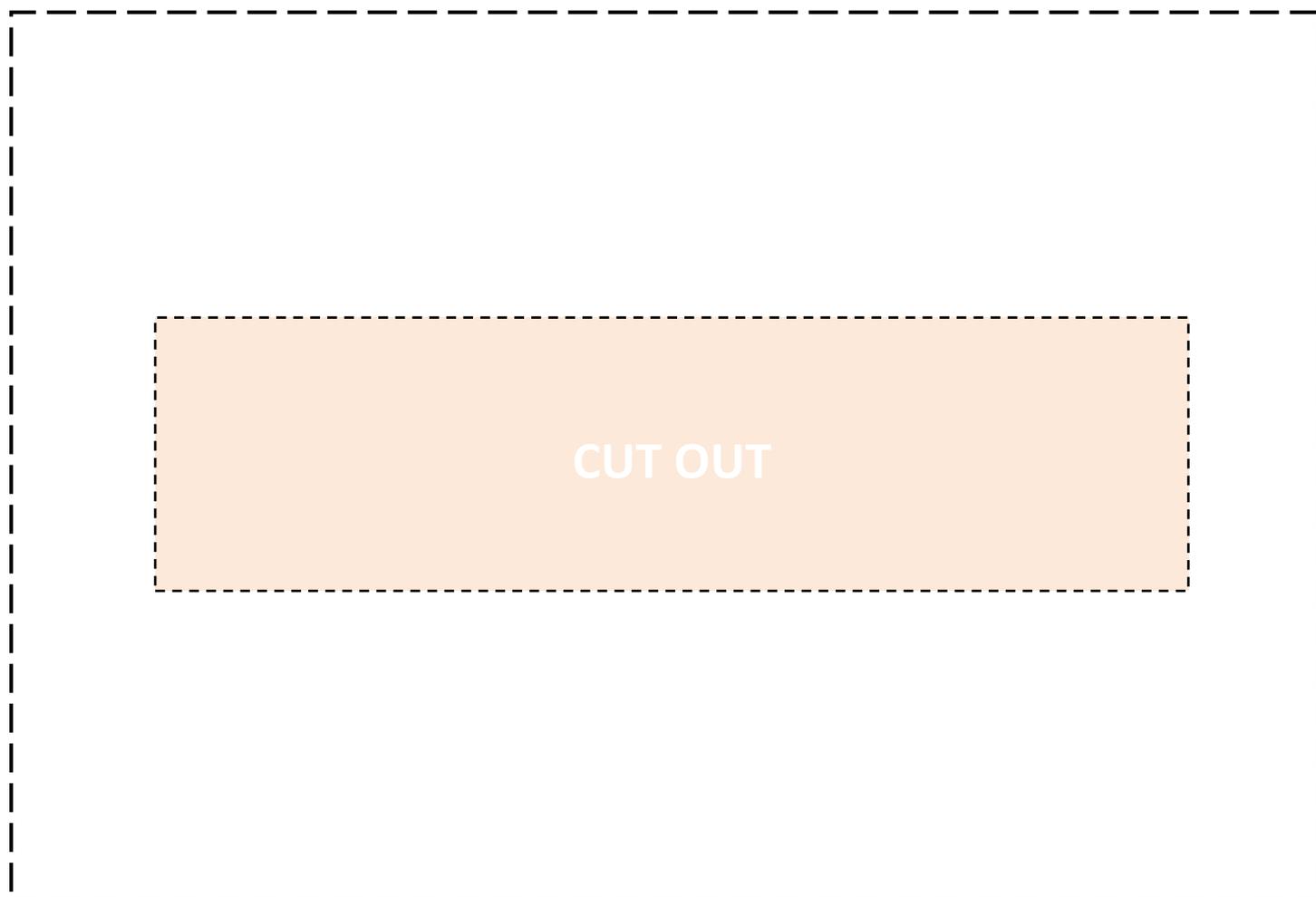


Attachment – marking sign stencils



Marking sign 150 x 90 mm

Orange colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 130 mm)

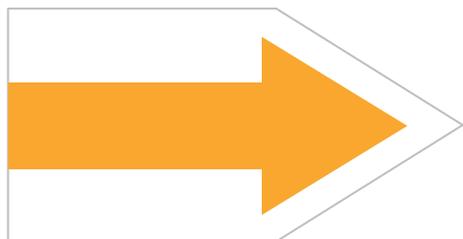




Marking sign 150 x 90 mm

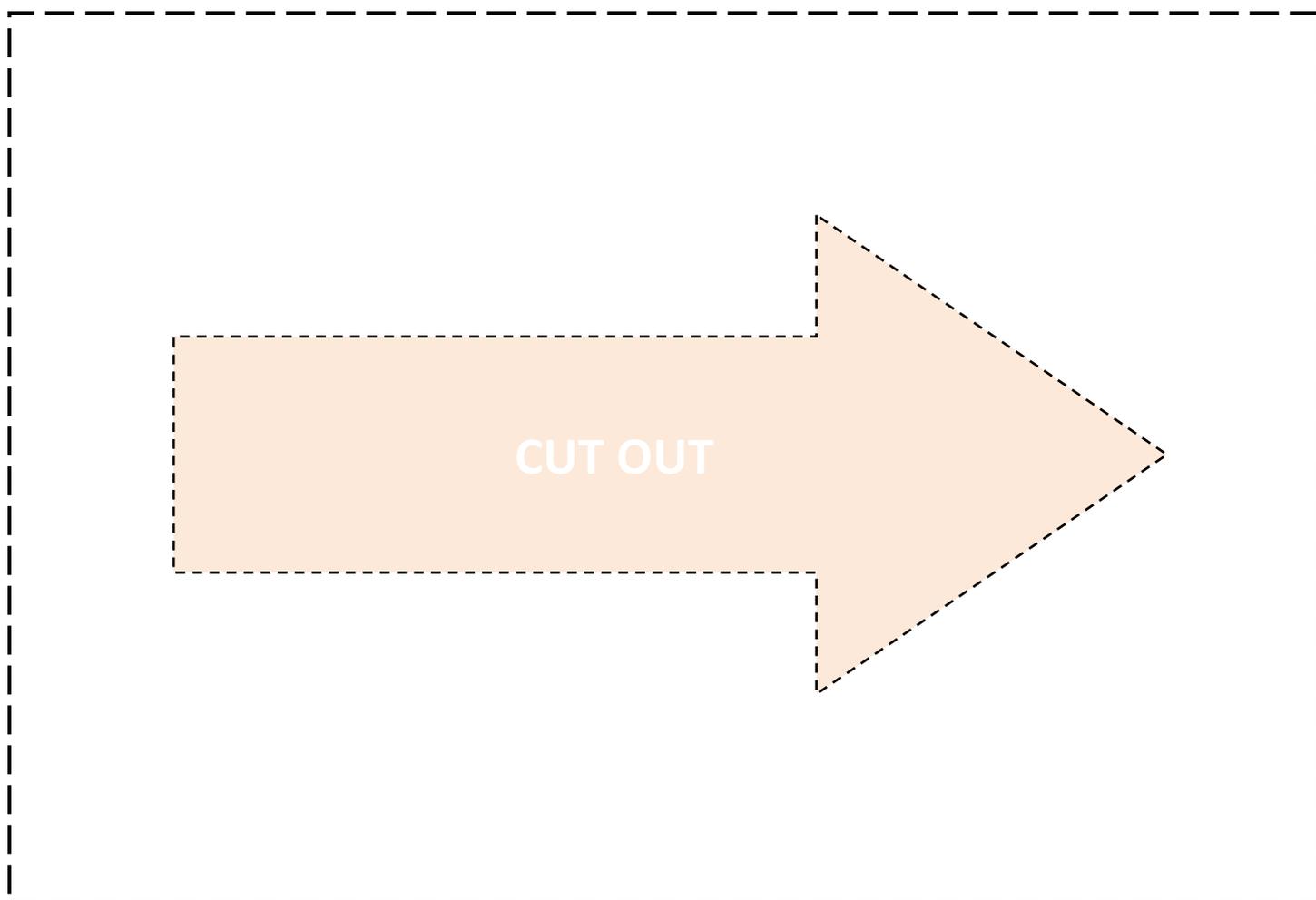
White colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 130 mm)

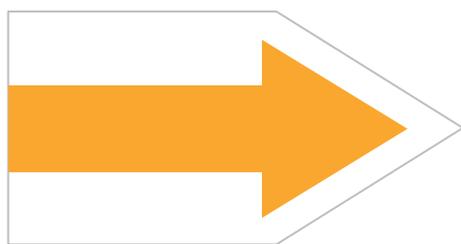




Marking sign 160 x 90 mm

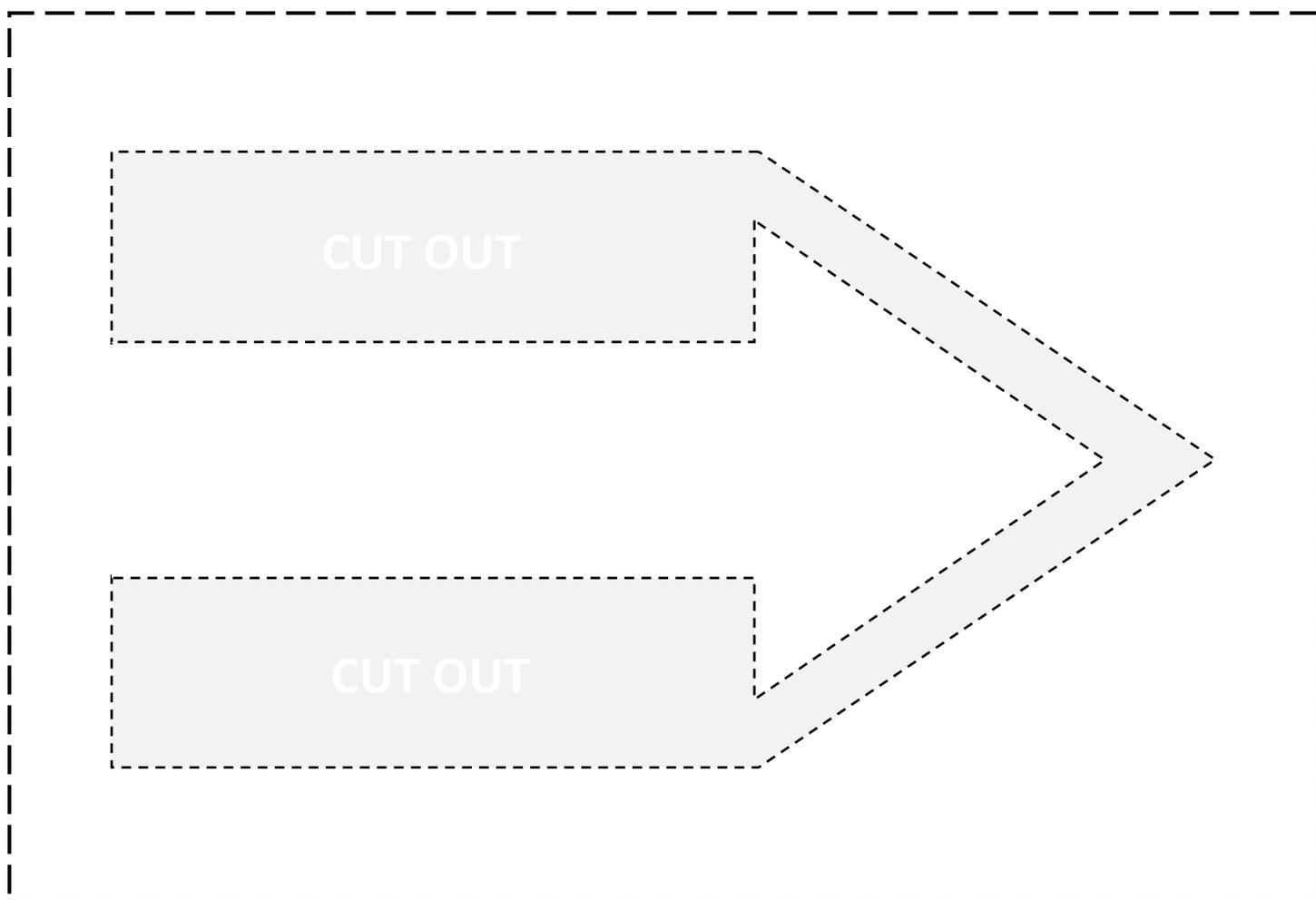
Orange colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 130 mm)

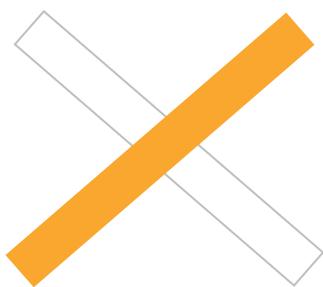




Marking sign 160 x 90 mm

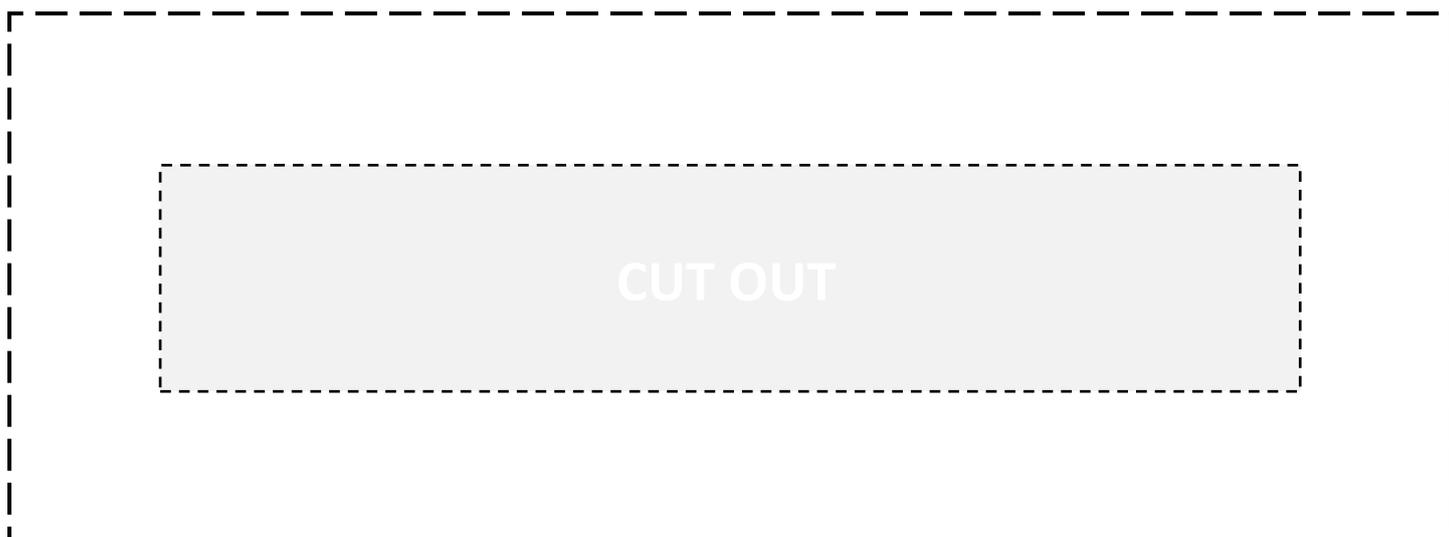
White colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 130 mm)



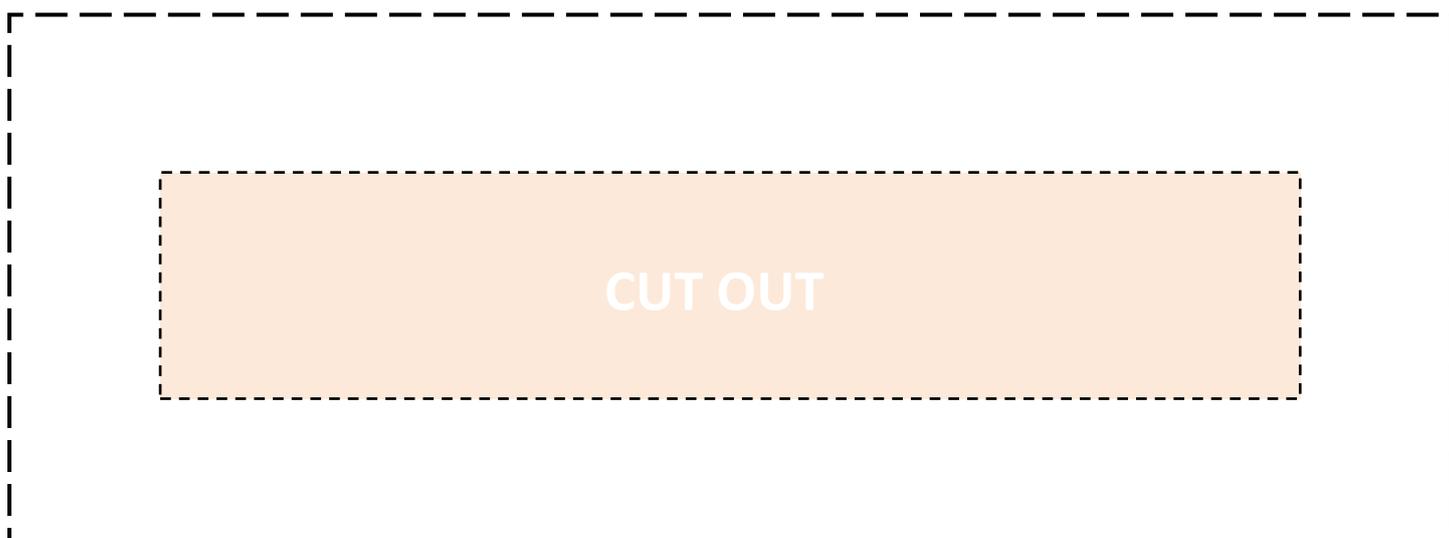


Marking sign 150 x 30 mm

White colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 70 mm)



Orange colour stencil, 1:1 (190 x 70 mm)



Attachment - E11 path stickers together with Forest trail stickers



The minimum distance between the marks

Min. 25. mm



The minimum distance between the marks