

Project:	Knowledge-driven Baltic Cider Production and Branding for Growth and Competitiveness of SMEs
Project ID and acronym:	EE-LV00145 – BALTIC CIDER

2nd PROJECT PARTNER MEETING

12-13 November 2024, Polli Horticultural Research Centre, Estonia

MINUTES



1. Introduction and Welcome

Asnāte Ziemele, representing the Lead Partner, opened the meeting by welcoming all participants to the 2nd Project Partner Meeting. The objectives of the meeting were to review progress across project work packages (WP1, WP2, WP3), share preliminary analysis results, and plan the next steps for 2025.

2. Agenda and Key Presentations

Day 1: 12 November 2024

WP1: Solution Development

1) WP1 Overview and Plan:

Iveta Skilina from LC outlined the activities planned under WP1, focusing on developing a Baltic Cider Terroir Map and conducting chemical analyses of apple and cider samples. She detailed the sample collection process, which includes soil, apple, and juice samples from cider production sites in Latvia and Estonia. The timeline (2024- 2025) for WP1 includes:

- Completion of sample collection by the end of December 2024.
- Analysis and presentation of preliminary results by April 2025.
- Planning for the Terroir Map in mid-2025, informed by the 2024 analysis cycle.
- Initiation of a second cycle of apple, juice, and soil sample collection in Q3-Q4 2025 and analysis of the collected cider.
- Collection and analysis of cider samples, produced from the juice samples collected in 2024, will take place in fall and winter 2025.

2) Preliminary Results of Soil and Juice Analysis:

Edgars Rubauskis and Daliņa Segliņa from LatHort presented findings from soil and juice analyses. The key findings were:

- Soil properties (pH, organic matter, mineral content) significantly influence juice acidity, pH, and aromatic compound levels.
- Auksis and Dabinet apple varieties showed high potential for cider production based on juice characteristics.
- Regional differences in soil properties were linked to variations in juice yield and flavour.

During their presentation, LatHort suggested the need for questionnaires targeting cider producers and cider consumers. These questionnaires are intended to gather specific data, such as fertilization practices and other relevant details, to support the planning and development of the terroir map.

Next Steps:

- Complete 2024 sample analysis and share results with producers.
- Incorporate horticultural and meteorological data to refine insights.
- Map a cider road, including descriptions of related climate, soils, and relief.
- Develop questionnaires for cider producers and consumers by early 2025, which will be shared with producers for comments before finalization.

3) Discussion and Input from Cideries:

The discussion was initiated to address two key topics:

✓ **Readiness of Cider Samples:** Producers provided specific timelines for cider sample readiness in 2025:

- Herbsts Cidery (Latvia): Ready by November 2025.
- Tālava Cidery (Latvia): Ready by August 2025.
- Abuls Cidery (Latvia): Ready by November 2025.
- Mr. Plūme Cidery (Latvia): Ready by March 2025 and November 2025.
- Mūrbūdu Cidery (Latvia): Ready by November 2025 and later.
- Kodas Cidery (Estonia): Ready by winter 2024.
- Tori Cidery (Estonia): Apple juice was not provided this year; it will be supplied next year for analysis.

✓ **Selection of Producers for Experimental Ciders:**

Participants discussed which producers could take on the task of making experimental ciders. It was agreed that a single producer would be responsible for producing all six experimental cider batches: three using Latvian apple varieties and three using Estonian apple varieties, with the varieties Auksis, Dabinet, and Sinap Orlovskij from the 2025 harvests. The required total volume per cider batch is approximately 4-5 liters. The production method will be at the discretion of the producer, but all ciders must be dry. Each cider will consist of 1-2 bottles (~0.33L) per institute, totalling 4 bottles per experimental batch for analysis.

WP2 Solution Piloting

Piloting: Iveta Skilina provided an overview of the piloting activities under WP2. Each participating SME will produce a pilot cider batch from the 2025 apple harvest, using apples from their own orchards or supplied by research institutes. The pilot ciders will be based on analysis results and will be ready for tasting at the 2026 Know-how Baltic Cider conference. Producers will explore new apple varieties and fermentation methods, with data shared to evaluate quality improvements. Production costs will be reimbursed up to €500, with subcontracts finalized for each SME. Ten cideries from Latvia and Estonia are participating in the piloting phase.

Experience Exchange and Training: Six combined events (three in Latvia and three in Estonia) will include partner meetings, experience exchange, and training sessions for SMEs. Key topics will focus on applying WP1 findings to cider marketing and production, as well as insights into apple cultivation methods, seedling selection, and terroir factors.

Know-how Baltic Cider Conference: This conference, to be held in Latvia, will bring together 80 participants (including international cider experts) to discuss cider quality impacts, define the unique taste of Baltic Cider, and foster international recognition through networking and cooperation.

WP3 Baltic Cider brand promotion for competitiveness

Baltic Cider Route: Iveta Skilina presented the planned activity of the Baltic Cider Route within the project, explaining its objectives and significance. The route aims to showcase the unique characteristics of Baltic Cider and connect cider producers in the region. Examples of route maps and educational visual materials, such as food pairing posters, terroir maps, and tasting wheels, were presented to illustrate how these tools can enhance visitor engagement and highlight the uniqueness of Baltic Cider.

Promotional Materials: The planned activity of developing promotional materials for the Baltic Cider brand was presented. Its objective is to support the brand identity and improve visibility. Several examples, such as coasters and tote bags, were shown and discussed with cider producers. Feedback on these designs was collected to ensure they align with promotional goals.

Promotional Video: The concept of a Baltic Cider promotional video was introduced that will showcase cider makers' stories, piloting activities, and the unique terroir of the Baltic region. The video is planned for use at promotional events and on social media platforms.

Participation in International Fairs: A list of international fairs and events for 2025 was presented, aimed at increasing the international presence of Baltic Cider. Cider producers will consider relevant

fairs and events and submit their suggestions via email to iveta@celotajs.lv for participation opportunities that could best support Baltic Cider recognition.

Participation at CiderCon 2025, taking place on February 4-7, 2025, in Chicago, Illinois, USA, is planned. The Lead Partner, Lauku ceļotājs, will represent Baltic Cider at the event to raise its profile and showcase its unique qualities. This global event will provide an opportunity to showcase Baltic Cider to an international audience and enhance its recognition.

Additional Information: Australia Project

Asnāte Ziemeļe provided an update on the status of the project application for the Australia Project, officially titled “Exports of the Baltic and Finnish craft ciders to Australia” (BALT-FIN-CIDER), under the Interreg Central Baltic Programme. The project aims to establish Baltic and Finnish ciders in the Australian market through workshops on export logistics, participation in trade events, and developing a regional identity. Approval is expected in early 2025, with activities commencing mid-year.

Training Session: Sensory Evaluation of Juices and Ciders

The session took place at Klaara-Manni Holiday Centre on November 12 as part of Day 1 activities led by the Polli Horticultural Research Center. Participants from research institutions and cider producers engaged in practical exercises on evaluating cider aroma, acidity, and flavor. This hands-on training aimed to enhance sensory analysis skills, guiding participants in assessing flavor profiles and quality to inform experimental cider production methods.

Day 2: 13 November 2024

Next day a visit took place at Tori Cider and Wine Farm in Estonia, providing hands-on insights into cider and wine production techniques and quality control processes. Participants engaged in informal discussions with the farm owners, exploring various aspects of cider production and operational practices. The visit served as an opportunity to explore cider and wine production techniques, with participants engaging in informal discussions about production methods, quality control, and industry challenges.

3. Decisions and Agreements:

- Cider producers agreed to consider who could take on the task of preparing experimental batches of cider and to provide their input.
- Producers will review potential fairs and events for 2025 and submit their suggestions via email to iveta@celotajs.lv.
- It was agreed that LatHort will develop questionnaires for cider producers and consumers by early 2025. These questionnaires will be shared with producers for comments before finalization.

4. Next Meetings:

- Online coordination meeting scheduled for late March or early April 2025.
- 3rd Project Partner Meeting scheduled for July 2025 in Latvia.

Minutes prepared by: Iveta Skilina, Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku ceļotājs"