



Developing quality tourism products in protected nature areas



Asnāte Ziemeļe

Latvian Country Tourism Association

Conference “Quality Counts – Benefits for Nature and People”.

Bad Urach , Germany, September 24, 2011

Latvian Country Tourism Association

Legal form: NGO

Founded: 1993

Members: ~350 (rural tourism providers)

Staff: ~10

Office: in Riga



Functions:

- RT product development
- Quality control and labelling
- Provider training and consultations
- Promotion and marketing (brochures, maps, Internet)
- Lobbying for interests of members
- Project implementation

Sharing experiences in Europe

Project STEPPA – Sustainable Tourism in Enterprises, Parks and Protected Areas

<http://uef.fi/mot/steppa>

Project goal: to **promote and strengthen the cooperation between the different** experiences and certification initiatives for small and micro tourism enterprises working with (Charter) protected areas, through the sharing, leveling and **enhancement of their sustainability practices and criteria, and strengthen their competitiveness through the development of working** partnerships between these initiatives and specialized research and support centres for tourism sustainability.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CONFERENCE 2011

Relationships in sustainable tourism development

Savonlinna, Finland, October 19 – 21, 2011

10 partners from 7 countries:

- University of Eastern Finland (Finland), Leeds
- Metropolitan University (UK),
- EUROPARC Federation (Germany),
- Consejería de Medio Ambiente (Andalucía, Spain),
- Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime (Italy), Parco Naturale Adamello Brenta (Italy)
- State Nature Conservancy of Slovak Republic (Slovak Republic),
- Latvian Country Holidays (Latvia),
- Nationalparkverwaltung Harz (Germany), and CoaST (UK).

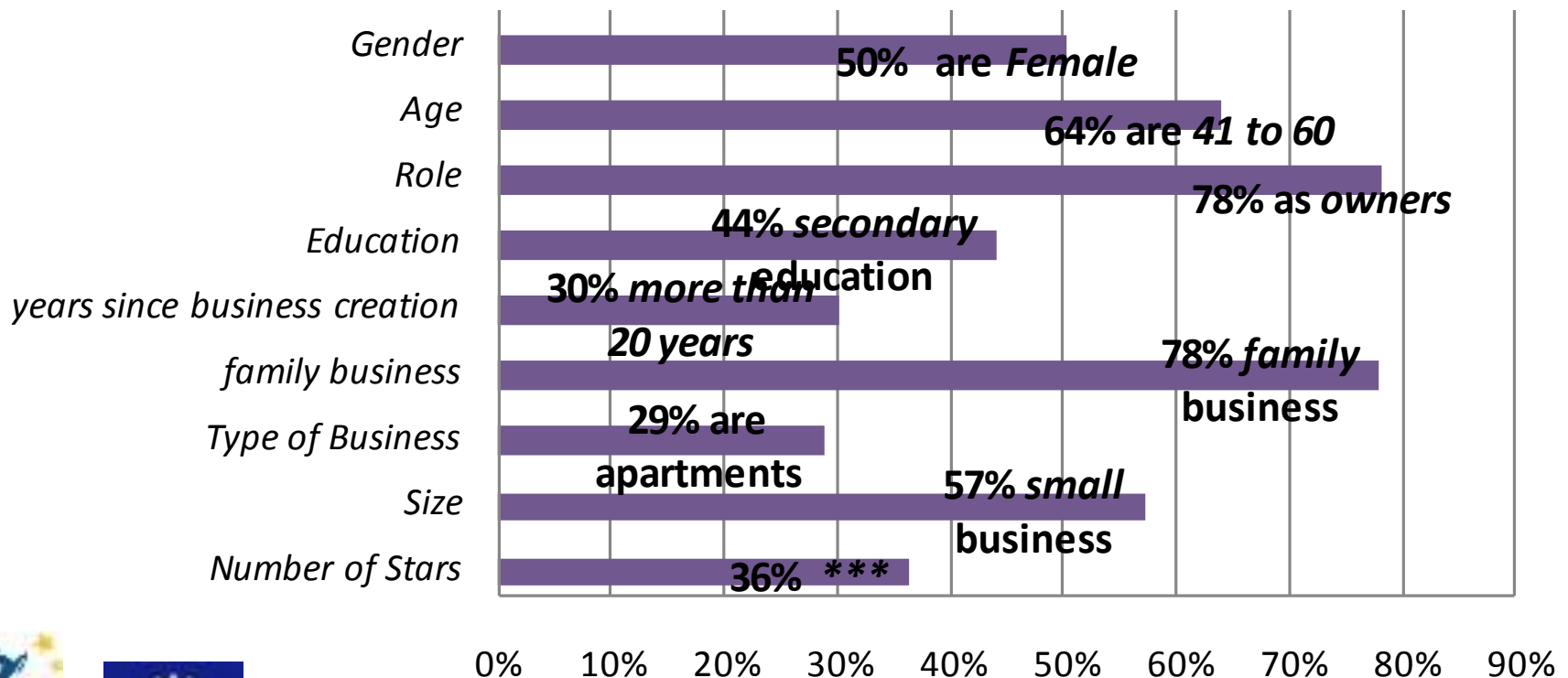


THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF EUROPE'S PROTECTED AREAS

PROJECT STEPPA: survey of nearly 900 tourism and hospitality businesses from 59 European protected areas

Research by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, United Kingdom

Business Model



AIM OF THE SURVEY:

To find out if businesses that are more sustainable also perform better financially.

RESULT:

Businesses generally perform better (but same seasonality problems, and differences high/low season in prices)

They are more satisfied with their business performance

They take sustainability decisions based on lifestyle and altruistic (not economic) reasons.



HOW IS BUSINESS?



62% of respondents: the establishment's financial health is about average,
24% of respondents: good,
14% of respondents: poor.

Visitor (previous and potential) survey

~700 respondents from Italy, Spain, Germany, Latvia, Finland

- Visitors of protected areas are willing to act according to many sustainable activities while traveling
- Ecolabels are found to be a good indicator of environmentally friendly products and businesses,
- Not sure to have visited green certified businesses or areas or used ecolabelled products
- Indicate to increase the favoring of green certified services and products



Asking businesses about their sustainability practices

Actively finding out sustainable measures undertaken in the business/destination

Buying local products

Using locally produced food

Participating activities enhancing the state of the environment

Give financial contribution to protect the environment

Give my contribution to social initiatives

Save water and energy

Use services of businesses that consider environment in their activities

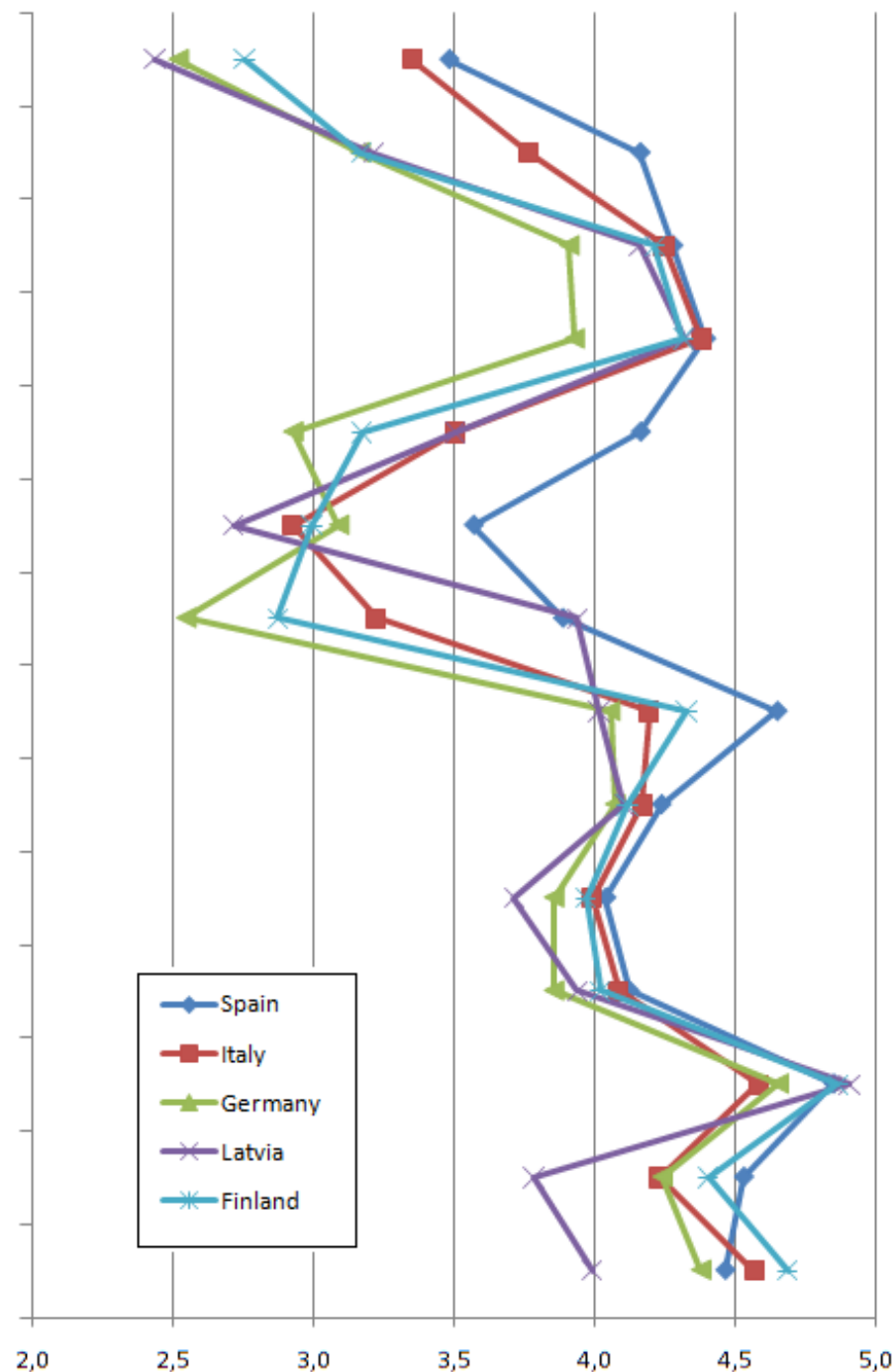
Use services of businesses that are socially responsible

Use services of businesses that are supporting local economy

Consider the environment when I'm in nature

Use environmentally friendly products

Waste recycling



Ecolabel guarantees the good quality of product/service

Ecolabels ensure that tourism in an area supports the quality of life of local residents

Ecolabels encourage to use specific tourism products which enable discovery and understanding of the area

Ecolabels communicate special qualities of an area or product features

Ecolabelled services guarantee a high quality experiences when I'm travelling

I can trust that ecolabels show that products/services /businesses follow sustainability criteria

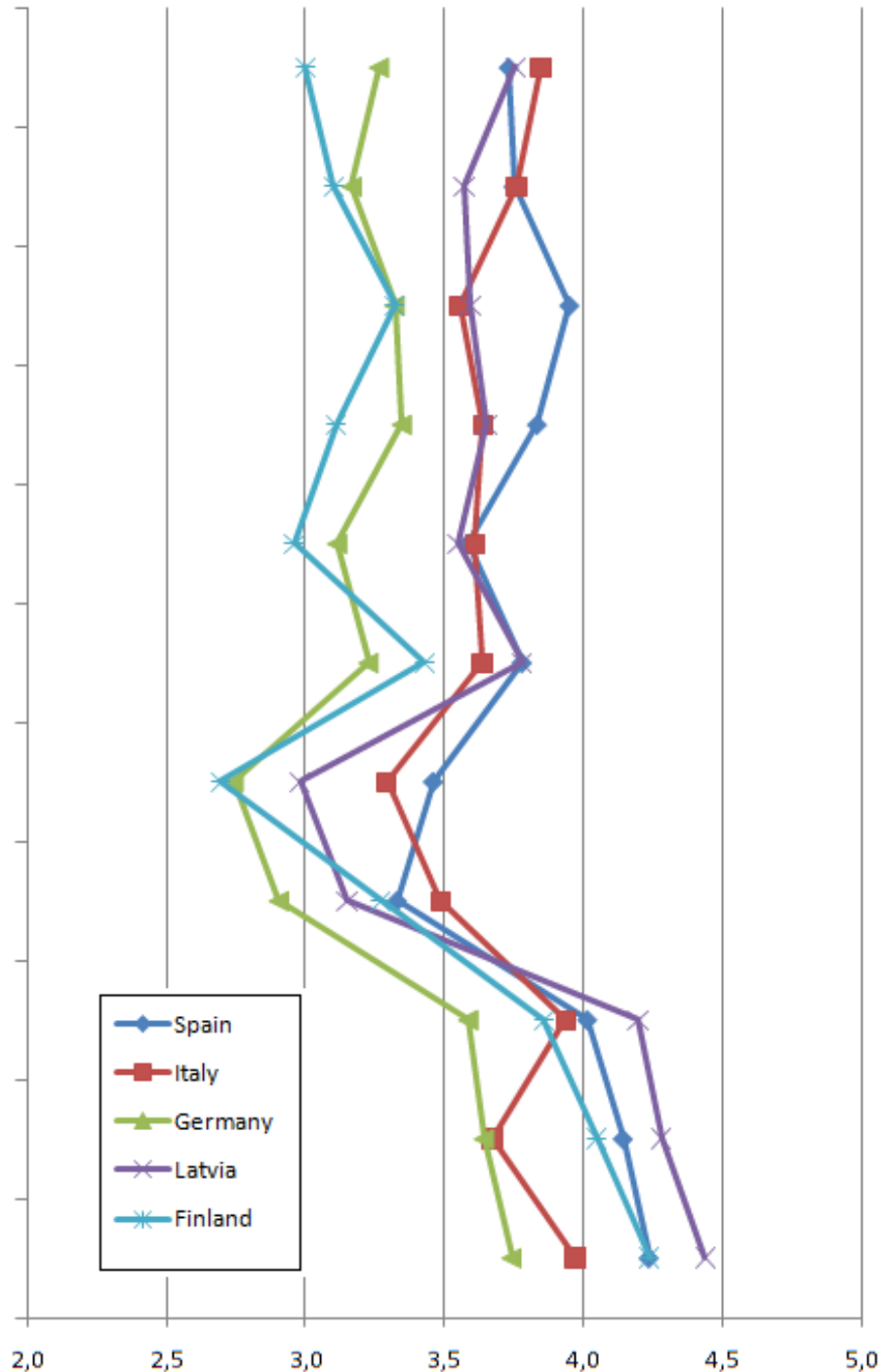
Ecolabels and sustainability schemes have increased my knowledge concerning the local people and culture

Ecolabels and sustainability schemes have increased my knowledge concerning environmental issues

By purchasing ecolabelled product or service I feel that I help the nature conservation

An ecolabel helps me to choose and favour sustainably run businesses

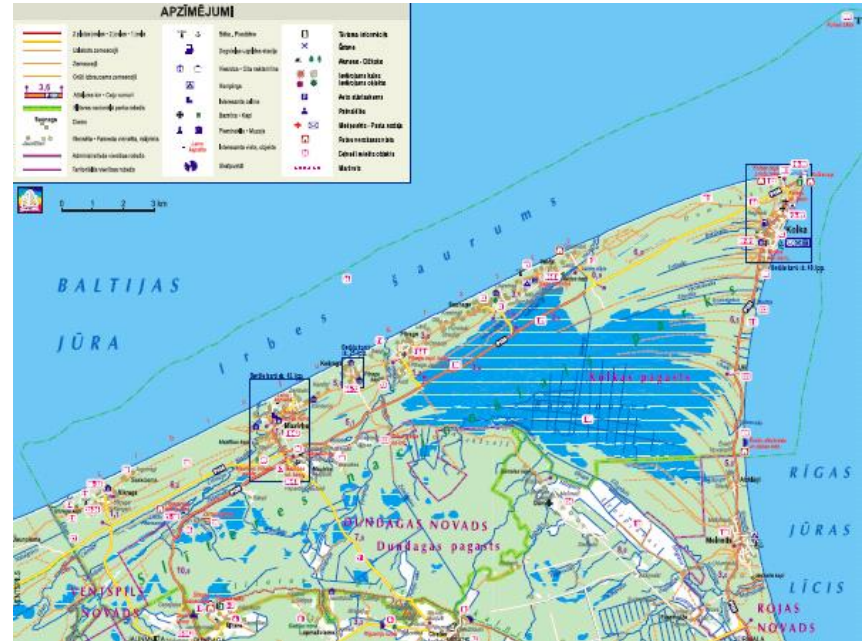
Ecolabels help me to recognize environmentally friendly products/services



Developing quality tourist services in Slītere National Park, Latvia

Background:

- Former restricted military area and a protected nature site
- Growing pressure from unorganised tourism
- Local conflicts (residents versus NP administration)



The goal:

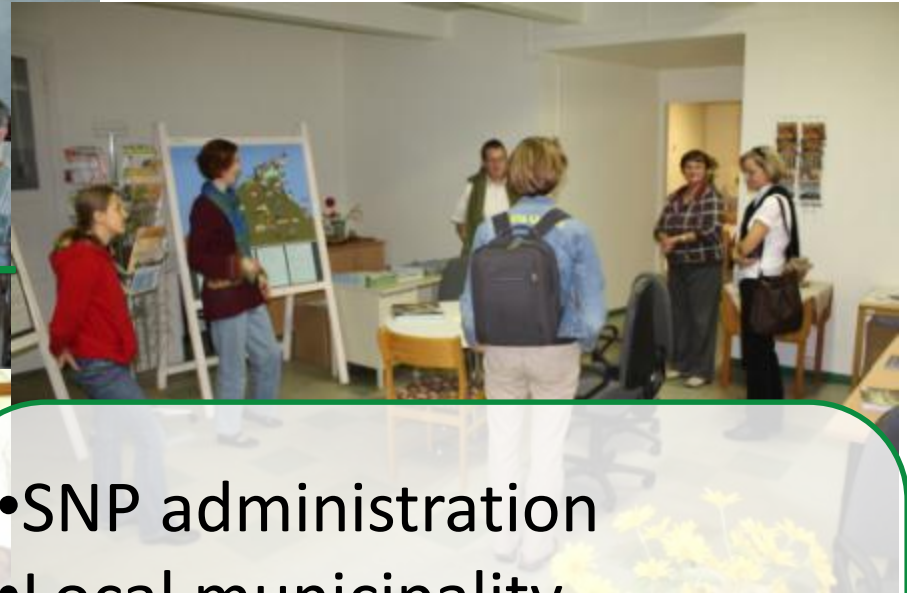
To ensure contribution from tourism in the local economy while preserving the nature values in the protected nature territory

Established:

- In 1957 as a Nature Reserve
- In 2000 as a National Park
- Area:
Land – 16 360 ha,
Sea – 10 130 ha



COOPERATION at all levels involved – the key of success



- SNP administration
- Local municipality
- local NGOs
- Tourism entrepreneurs
- Other active local people

To start with: sustainable tourism development vision

- On-site visits (project staff, EU experts)
- Summary of problems, finding solutions (administrative, technical, etc.)
- Product development seminars with local stakeholders – discussing resources and opportunities, suggesting the products

New tourism products/routes

Why start with routes? – the benefits:

- No large investments in service provision required
- Large local participation achieved in itinerary development
- Routes well tested, reliable product
- An example of professional product description created
- Product development experience documented in guidelines



FOR ANIMAL WATCHERS

ANIMALS IN THE SLITERE

Welcome to Slitere!

In the Slitere National Park, except for restricted areas, you may walk freely through it to look for plants, animals and landscape. To look for mushrooms and berries, to go swimming, to go fishing, to go cycling, to go on a horse, to go on a bike or a boat. While doing it, later you will see the nature value!



0 2 4 km

BALTĪJAS JŪRA

Irbes šaurums

RĪGA

JŪRAS LĪCIS

OBSERVABLE SPECIES OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR

Here, we refer to animals only in terms of the recommended time to look for them (April-September).

At this dark line means that you are only or less guaranteed a look at the animal, while a broken line means that you'll have to be lucky to spot one.

Species	Place to spot	Month					
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1 Beaver	Floating water						
2 Wild boar	Fields, meadows						
3 European roe deer	Fields, meadows						
4 Eurasian elk	Open areas in forests						
5 Fox	Fields, meadows						
6 Red deer	Fields, meadows						
7 Wolf	Fields, meadows						
8 Lynx	Edges of forests						
9 Eurasian badger	Fields, meadows						
10 European pine marten	Edges of forests						
11 Otter	Floating water						



The roe deer is one of the most common large mammals in the park. During the spring it feeds out in the open and can be easily spotted.



The European roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) is the most common deer in Latvia, and it is the most common deer in the Slitere National Park.



The roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) is the most common deer in Latvia, and it is the most common deer in the Slitere National Park.



The roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) is the most common deer in Latvia, and it is the most common deer in the Slitere National Park.



The roe deer (Capreolus capreolus) is the most common deer in Latvia, and it is the most common deer in the Slitere National Park.

3 hiking routes

2 cycling routes

1 canoeing route

1 self-drive route

2 nature watching products (birds and animals)

Marking the route in the nature/Guidelines



5 outdoor panels in Slītere NP

Specialty  Book 

Guidelines for interpretation based on practical experience in the
Slītere National Park

The content of the outdoor information stand



Lauku Ceļotājs, ECEAT
-2010-

POLPROJ: NATURA Nr. LIFE02/ENV/LV/000982

SLĪTERES NACIONĀLAIS PARKS

NACIONĀLAIS PARKS

MAZIRBE (IRAI)



Mazirbe, kas raksturojama ar savu senāku (1387. g.) koka lūša būvniecību, kas ir kļuvusi par Mazirbes pilsētu. Vēl pirms pilsētas - ar senāku mazirbes un lūša būvniecību. Mazirbe ir kļuvusi par lūša būvniecību un lūša būvniecību.

The name of Mazirbe appears in historical documents dating back as far as 1387. At one time it was the largest Lu fishing village on the Kurama shoreline. It now means more, it has been an important centre for fishing and shipping. Today Mazirbe is known as the Lu People's Centre and an annual Lu Festival.

 MAZIRBE UN TUNARU APGABALU VĒLĀKĀ SENĀTĀJĀJĀ UN MAZIRBE
YOU CAN GET YOUR BEST LOOK AT
MAZIRBE AND 18 BUILT-UP AREAS ON FOOT

MAZIRBE UN TUNARU APGABALU VĒLĀKĀ SENĀTĀJĀJĀ UN MAZIRBE
YOU CAN GET YOUR BEST LOOK AT
MAZIRBE AND 18 BUILT-UP AREAS ON FOOT



- several hundreds of stands analysed
- all players involved – local ownership
- focus on practical information

Product development

Seminars



www.celotajs.lv

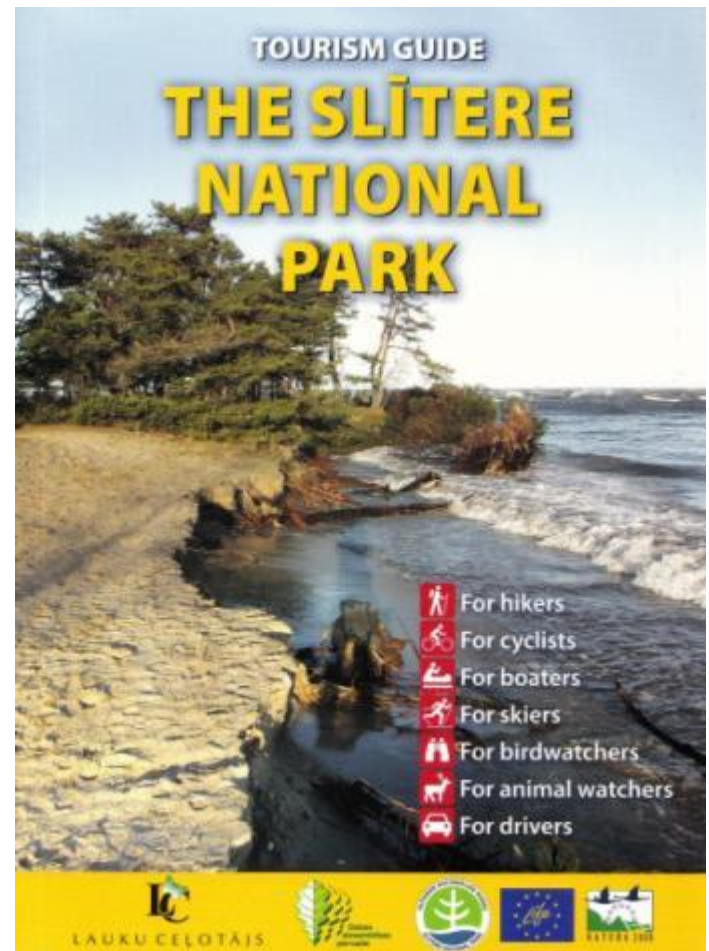
Guidelines



The Slītere NP Tourism guide

+ guidelines how to develop a guide of a national park

- Based on local stories (> 30 interviews)
- The first tourism guide of a NP in Latvia (developed together with the Slītere people)
- History interacts with life today
- Stories of the Liv minority
- Services and facilities
- Tour Maps



Travel Day to Slītere

- Initiative from the local people
- All players at the negotiation table
- Become a regular event
- New products launched, the existing ones improved for The Day
- Feedback and analysis in follow-up meeting



HANDBOOK FOR ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC EVENTS

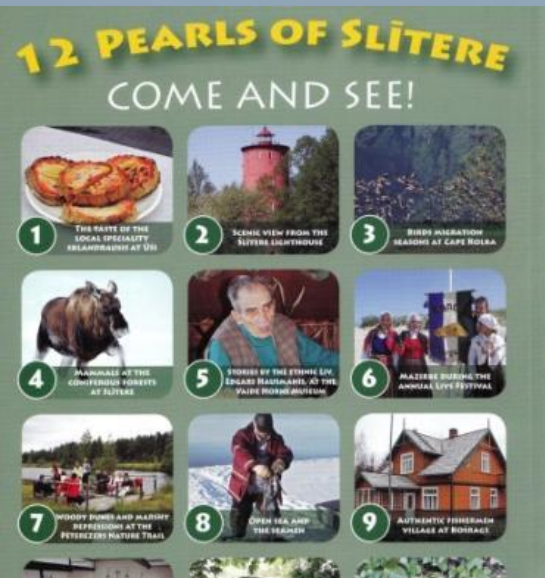
Practical example – Travel day to Slītere on 12th june, 2010

Tiekamies! ▶

Slīteres **ceļotāju** dienā
2011. gada 4. - 5. jūnijā



Free excursions offered by local guides, local businesses



How to develop tours

- contacts with specialised tour operators
- visit specialized trade fairs (Bird fair in UK etc.)
- develop products following tour operator specification
- fam tours for tour operators



Linking touring routes with info on NATURA2000 sites



[Home](#)
[Accommodations](#)
[Tours](#)
[Nature](#)
[Professional information](#)
[Conferences](#)
[About us](#)

[News](#)
[Tours](#)
[Worth seeing](#)
[Car rental](#)
[Ferries](#)
[Map](#)
[Publications](#)
[Links](#)
[Contact us](#)

Individual cycling tours

Soft adventure in the [Gauja National Park](#) **BEST SELLER**
cycling, canoeing, hiking
Latvia (8 days)

This tour begins and ends in Riga, featuring six days of active recreation in the Gauja National Park. You will take a train from Riga to Valmiera, where you will spend the first day hiking the area's forest trails. For the next five days, you will ride your bicycle along the banks of the Gauja River, with short hikes along the way to look at sandstone cliffs and caves, to swim in local lakes, and to canoe down the river through the Līvānu Nature Park with its wealth of Baltic wildlife. You will cross the river at one point on Latvia's only wood transport ferry, which is carried along by the river. Finally you will end up in the lovely town of Sigulda, from where you will take the train to get back to Riga.
Read more about [protected nature areas](#) en route in the description below.
[To read feedback about this tour please click here.](#)

1st day / Arrival
Arrival in Riga Airport/ Transfer to the Pick up the info package with maps in Riga. [Hotel ABC](#) ([www](#)) or [Hotel M](#)

Natura 2000 [any description from the hotel reception. Overnight in a hotel at Līvānija.](#)

2nd day / Riga - Valmiera
Breakfast at the hotel/ Pick up the bicycle in the morning take train: Riga - Strēlni (2 h, 2 [Cycling: Strēlni - Valmiera](#) (35 km, 10% Asphalt, brewery of "Brenču") with niche small open-air Overnight in a hotel in Valmiera [Hotel Valmiera](#)
[To see more photos from this day please click](#)

3rd day / Valmiera - Cēsis
Breakfast at the hotel.
[Cycling: Valmiera - Cēsis](#) (50 km, 5% Asphalt, white sandstone cliffs and Engu red sandstone free time in Cēsis - visit to the Livonian On traditional jeweller is recommendable.
Overnight in a guest house near Cēsis "[Birzē](#)
[To see more photos from this day please click](#)

[Home](#)
[Accommodations](#)
[Tours](#)
[Nature](#)
[Professional information](#)
[Conferences](#)
[About us](#)

[News](#)
[Tours](#)
[Worth seeing](#)
[Car rental](#)
[Ferries](#)
[Map](#)
[Publications](#)
[Links](#)
[Contact us](#)

Territory - Gaujas Nacionālais parks

Territory - Gaujas Nacionālais parks - Latvia, Vidzeme , Cēsu region No 10005

[Territory](#)
[Activities](#)
[Map](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Info](#)

[View photo album](#)

Gaujas Nacionālais parks

The Gauja National Park, established in 1973, was Latvia's first national park, and it has a wealth of tradition in environmental protection and tourism. Indeed, the GNP is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia. The main "artery" of the park is the ancient Gauja River valley, which was left behind when Ice Age glaciers receded. The valley is 95 kilometres long, with many tributaries that are also in deep ravines with massive sandstone cliffs from the Devonian period. The deepest part of the river valley is at Sigulda, where it is 63 metres deep.

The territory has a great diversity of species – some 900 plant species in all. The Gauja is Latvia's most popular river for water tourism, and many tourist accommodations are found along its shores. The Gauja National Park is one of the best-appointed protected territories in Latvia in terms of nature trails and tourism routes. Nature trails at Līvāni pass along paddocks of wild animals – the largest and most complete object of its kind in the Baltic States. The park also features cultural monuments of pan-Baltic importance – the Turaida Museum Reserve, the medieval old town of the city of Cēsis with its famous castle ruins and St John's Church, the lake castle at Arāle, etc. Visitors centres are found in Sigulda, along the Līvāni nature trails, and at the Zvārtu rock. The administration of the GNP is building a new and modern visitors centre in Sigulda.

© Ceļotāji (CELOTAJI) - info@celotaji.lv, 996 14 1040, Latvia, tel.: +371 (0) 7637600, fax: +371 (0) 7637645, e-mail: info@celotaji.lv

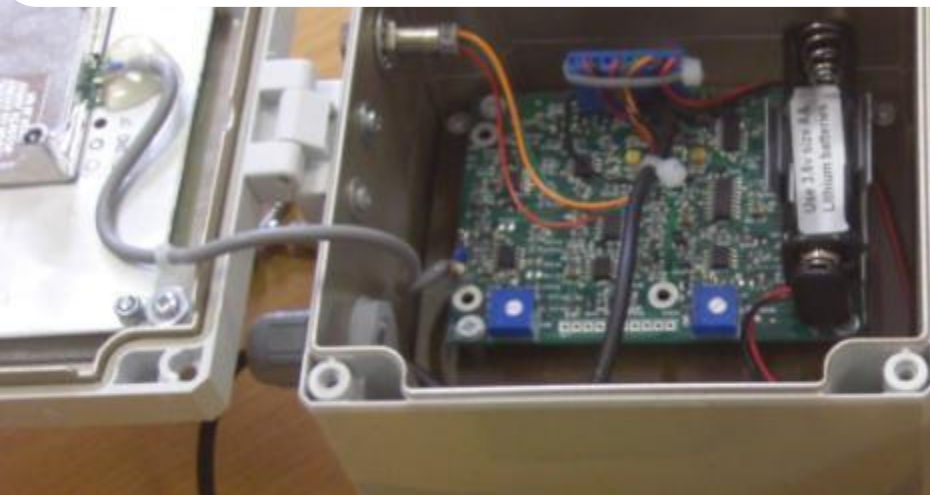
http://www.celotaji.lv/content/view/full/103000_celotaji
www.countryholidays.lv

Guidelines for Tourist Monitoring Methodology in the SNP



- Visual monitoring
- Photo monitoring
- Questionnaires
- Electronic visitor counting – first time in Latvia

Electronic visitor counting



Thank you!



Asnāte Ziemele
Latvian Country Tourism association
asnate@celotajs.lv
www.countryholidays.lv