


## EPICAH results


Cultural and nature tourism in  
Estonian-Latvian border area

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### Major changes in border tourism due to:

- COVID-19,
- Understanding of urgent need for more green policies, sustainability (→ good news for rural/ nature tourism, local producers; desire for authentic, local culture),
- Digital revolution (→ more individual tourists, spontaneous decision making; more need for updated info).

2020 in Estonian tourism 16% less domestic / 68% less foreign accommodation compared with 2019.

- Mostly domestic tourists and from neighbour country.
- Individuals, small groups.

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## COVID impact to EstLat border areas tourism

### State support to tourism sector:

2020 spring: 25 mil. Euro/ 2000-60 000 eur per business, in the end of the year additional support

2021 spring: 44 mil. Euro

2021 summer, 20- 200 000 eur per business to develop new products, services in new market situation

Estonia, Latvia have had quite different COVID restrictions, entry rules.

Currently non-vaccinated people need to stay for self-isolation.

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## EstLat border area

Est-Lat border area is mainly rural, covered with forests and bogs, common sea coast (population density 16-17 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>). 343 km long land border.

Cross border cooperation "hot spot" is twin town Valga/Valka



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## Interreg EstLat 2014-2020

Budget -36.27 million euros were divided between 4 priorities, 52 different projects.

Priority 1: Active and attractive business environment;

Priority 2: Clean and valued living environment

**SO 2.1 – More diversified and sustainable use of natural, cultural heritage** -7 projects. Total ERDF support for this specific objective is 6 MEUR /ca 17% of the programme funds).

Priority 3: Better network of harbours;

Priority 4: Integrated labour market.



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### Livonian Culinary Route

Design and promotion of tourism product based on Livonian culinary heritage

[Read more](#)



### Military Heritage

Latvian - Estonian Common Military Heritage Tourism Product

[Read more](#)



### Garden Pearls

Diversifying garden tourism offer in Estonia and Latvia

[Read more](#)



### Green Railway

Revitalization of former Narrow Gauge Railway lines through environmentally friendly route

[Read more](#)



### Coastal Hiking

Hiking route along the coastline in Latvia - Estonia

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## EPICAH lessons learned, benefit to EstLat CBC



### Good examples:

Synergies to all parties (incl service providers, tourists, development associations), CBC branding - evident in famous Tokaj, Bavaria or Douro border regions.

→ Good capitalisation ideas to overcome low impact and sustainability of single projects in EstLat area and work of integration and capitalisation of tourism projects/products – using common marketing, digital tools, branding.

In EPICAH project we worked with national tourism portals to improve cross-border cross-marketing of the products and routes

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## EPICAH lessons learned. New projects



New tourism project Military Heritage (2020-2022)- Military heritage locations in Latvia/Estonia have been renovated; visitors can learn about how the two countries obtained and restored their independence during the period between the beginning of World War I in 1914 and 1991



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## EPICAH lessons learned, benefit to EstLat CBC



### Good examples:

In Czech – German border small-project fund financing schemes during last 2 decades, currently short-term program fund.

→The inhabitants of the EstLat border municipalities have significant interest towards the option to carry out local /small cross-border cooperation within Estonia – Latvia Programme 2021-2027.

Small-scale projects would be a useful and popular tool for promotion of local cultural and natural heritage and tourism.

EPICAH team and our stakeholders have made lobby and there is impact to new program period.

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## Plans for Interreg VI-A Estonia-Latvia programme 2021-2027



PO1 - A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity

PO2 - A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards zero carbon economy

PO3 - A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility

PO4 - A more social and inclusive Europe

**PO4(vi)** enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation: 4.13 MEUR

Specific Objective 1 - A better Interreg governance

SO (ii) enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and admin cooperation and cooperation between citizens, CSOs: 1.8 MEUR

SO (iii) build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions: 0.76 MEUR

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**More on Interreg Estonia-Latvia Programme:**  
**<https://estlat.eu/>**

**Center for Transboundary Cooperation:**  
**[ww.ctc.ee](http://ww.ctc.ee)**