Sharing solutions for better regional policies

Vidzeme Tourism Development Strategy 2018-2025

Action Plan 2018-2019

New projects and improved governance in the areas of interpretation and digitization for increasing popularity, accessibility and sustainability of intangible and industrial heritage in tourism

VIDZEME UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES

VIDZEME TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

2018 EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
#EuropeForCulture

Executive Summary

Boundaries of the Latvian cultural regions are different from the planning regions of Kurzeme, Zemgale, Latgale, Vidzeme and Riga that have been established for administration of the regional development. Vidzeme as a tourism destination is formed both by the boundaries of the cultural region and functionality in tourism – accessibility and location. Vidzeme tourism region can be considered as part of Latvia that is located on the East from Daugava River and on the North from Aiviekste River; the Western border is drawn by the Gulf of Riga and the City of Riga. The area fully covers Vidzeme Planning Region, part of the Riga Planning Region, as well as the municipalities of Aizkraukle, Koknese, Plavinas and Skriveri in Zemgale Planning Region.

In the Vidzeme Region Sustainable Development Strategy the vision for tourism in 2030 indicates to increased variety and added value of tourism offers therefore this action plan contributes to new product development and adding value by new approaches in interpretation and promotion of the intangible and industrial heritage in the region.

Vidzeme has rich intangible cultural heritage; however, its potential in tourism is not fully used and the positive impact of tourism on preservation of the intangible heritage for the next generations is not enough appreciated. Regarding incorporation of intangible heritage into the tourism offers, there are challenges related to human resources. Specific knowledge is needed for interpretation of the intangible heritage, while availability of such experts is limited; moreover, in case of the incoming tourists there is also a language barrier. Likewise, the human resource factor is affecting accessibility of the industrial heritage.

During elaboration of the action plan several ideas where considered resulting in four solutions that are the most appropriate in the given situation. Keeping in mind that the actions should be implemented by the end of 2019, the proposed plan is based on a realistic evaluation of the availability of financial, time and other resources. The action plan includes two local municipality-based projects for establishment and testing of new interpretation and digitization solutions that might be further applied in other parts of the region. One of the projects was applied for the Pilot Action funding within the CHRISTA Project. Also in the action plan there are two activities aimed to improved governance of intangible and industrial heritage. Idea transfer from the other European regions that are represented in the CHRISTA Project as well as the experts' guidelines are used in the action plan (see the matrix on the next page).

When planning tourism development for Vidzeme, it is important to keep in mind that currently the biggest share of the tourism demand in the region is formed by the local tourism: almost 70% of the guests in the accommodation establishments in Vidzeme are from Latvia. The main incoming tourism markets are the neighbouring countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Russia) as well as Germany. All activities within the action plan are aimed to establishing quality offer not only for local but also for incoming tourists, acknowledging Vidzeme's potential both in growing total number of tourists and in increasing the share of incoming tourists.

Action	"4I" – intangible heritage / industrial heritage / interpretation / innovation & digitization	New project / Improved governance / Structural change	Experience and idea transfer from the CHRISTA Project partners and experts
DIGITAL INTERPRETATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE. PILOT ACTION "CARNIKAVA LAMPREY TABS"	Intangible heritage Interpretation Innovation/Digitization	New project	Veneto Region, Italy
INTERPRETATION OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE. PILOT ACTION "SEDA PEAT"	Industrial heritage Interpretation	New project	Region Västra Götaland; Rijeka University – experts' guidelines
GRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF INTANGIBLE AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE	Intangible heritage Industrial heritage Interpretation	Improved governance	Sibiu Country Tourism Association, Romania; Interpret Europe – guidelines.
DIGITIZATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE	Intangible heritage Innovation/Digitization	Improved governance	Burgas Municipality, Bulgaria

Part I – General information

Project: CHRISTA Index Number: PGI00057

Partner organisation: Vidzeme Tourism Association

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): n/a

Country: Latvia

NUTS2 region: LV00

Contact person: Raitis Sijāts

         email address: raitis.sijats@gmail.com

         phone number: +371 29175314

Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:	☐	Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
	☐	European Territorial Cooperation programme
	X	Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Vidzeme Tourism Development Strategy 2018-2025

Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1. DIGITAL INTERPRETATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE:

PILOT ACTION "CARNIKAVA LAMPREY TABS"

- **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The idea is based on the experience of Veneto Region's lagoon islands where the tour dedicated to the local fishing traditions is supplemented with a digital interpretation on tablets. During the excursion the tourists meet with local fishermen who not always communicate in English therefore an application is elaborated for providing additional information in 4 languages. The tablets are provided by the tour organizers. The application is available offline.

- **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

The project is aimed at the digital interpretation of the intangible heritage. Within the project it is planned to elaborate an offline application for interpretation of lamprey fishing and cooking in Carnikava Municipality. In further development stages an online version of the application might also be considered. In 2015 Carnikava Lamprey obtained the European Protected Geographical Label that confirms the significance of the intangible heritage related to it. Carnikava Municipality is actively involving in promotion of the traditions of lamprey fishing and culinary. At present in the municipality there are about 9 fishermen who attractively introduce visitors to lamprey fishing and cooking; however, they mostly speak only in Latvian, which means that for the incoming tourists there are limited opportunities to get acquainted with this heritage of European significance. For this reason, within the project it is planned to learn from the experience of Veneto Region in maintaining interpretation of fishing and culinary heritage in foreign languages with help of an application available on mobile devices. In addition to the elaboration of the application it is planned to purchase 10 tablets for maintaining availability of the application in local fishermen sites. It is planned to implement the project as a Pilot Action within the CHRISTA project. After implementation of the project the experience in Carnikava Municipality will be evaluated and solutions to other municipalities in Vidzeme will be offered.

The aim of the project is to develop innovative and sustainable approach to fostering popularity and accessibility of intangible heritage in Vidzeme.

Results:

- Application elaborated for maintaining foreign languages and quality replenishments in lamprey fishing and cooking interpretation in the fishermen sites of Carnikava Municipality;

- Availability of mobile devices (10 tablets) maintained for using the application in fishermen sites of Carnikava Municipality;

- Project's experience evaluated and solutions offered to other municipalities in Vidzeme.

Objectives:

- To adopt the experience from Veneto Region regarding the digital interpretation of the intangible heritage;

- To elaborate contents and IT solution (application) for interpretation of Carnikava lamprey fishing and cooking traditions;

- To maintain equipment (tablets) for using the application in the fishermen sites of Carnikava;

- To train the local lamprey fishing and cooking tradition representatives for using the application and tablets in the interpretation;

- To promote the project and the tourism offer created within it;

- To evaluate the project's experience and to offer solutions for other municipalities in Vidzeme.

Activities:

- Formation of an expert group with representatives from Vidzeme Tourism Association, Carnikava Municipality and Veneto Region;
- Elaboration of an application: specification, tendering for the IT expertise, cooperation with the IT experts, user training, testing;
- Purchase of mobile devices (tablets): specification, tendering for the supplier, user training, testing;
- Promotion of the project and the tourism offer created within it;
- Evaluation of the project's experience and defining development opportunities in Carnikava and other municipalities in Vidzeme.

Result indicators:

1 application elaborated for interpretation of intangible heritage in 4 foreign languages in 1 municipality in Vidzeme;

10 mobile devices (tablets) acquired to be used for interpretation of intangible heritage in 1 municipality in Vidzeme;

10 local lamprey fishing and cooking tradition representatives trained for using the application and tablets in the interpretation of the intangible heritage;

Development opportunities based in the project's experience transferred to other municipalities in Vidzeme (at least 5 municipalities with similar issues of intangible heritage).

- **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Vidzeme Tourism Association – coordination of the project, maintaining experience transfer from Veneto Region.

Carnikava Municipality – cooperation with Vidzeme Tourism Association in implementation and evaluation of the project's activities, experience transfer to other municipalities in Vidzeme.

Other municipalities in Vidzeme – adopting the experience learned from the project in Carnikava.

- **Timeframe**

Activity	Oct-Dec '18	Jan-Mar '19	Apr-Jun '19	Jul-Sep '19	Oct-Dec '19
1. Expert group's work: Vidzeme Tourism Association, Carnikava Municipality; Veneto Region.	██	██	██	██	██
2. Elaboration of the application: specification, tendering for the IT expertise, cooperation with the IT experts, user training, testing;	██	██			
3. Purchase of mobile devices (tablets): specification, tendering for the supplier, user training, testing;		██			
4. Promotion of the project and the tourism offer created within it;			██	██	██
5. Evaluation of the project's experience and defining development opportunities in Carnikava and other municipalities in Vidzeme.					██

- **Costs** (if relevant)

Costs	Amount EUR
External expertise (elaboration of the application)	12 500
Equipment (10 tablets)	5 500
Travel costs (Veneto Region experience transfer)	1750
Total	**19 750**

- **Funding sources** (if relevant):

Pilot Actions, Project CHRISTA, PGI00057

ACTION 2. INTERPRETATION OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE.

PILOT ACTION "SEDA PEAT"

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

Seda Marsh is located in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve. The peat extraction in Seda is estimated to continue for about next 20 years making tourism a secondary activity. In the marsh there is an industrial railway network, which is still partially used but partially disassembled.

In the *Policy Learning Guidelines on Industrial Heritage Tourism* (ed. Mihič and Makarun, 2018) within the Latvian case studies the town of Seda is evaluated as a site that has high cultural tourism potential and is accessible to all visitors. The overall aim of the *Thessalia Charter for Sustainable Cultural Tourism* (ECTN, 2016) is to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism policies and actions across Europe and beyond, through engaging culture and heritage with innovation and cohesion. In the UNESCO World Heritage List there are 10 categories of the industrial heritage, according to which peat mining belongs to extractive industry.

The future development in Seda Marsh is dependent both on the natural processes in the marsh and the peat mining activity. Any production and natural changes have significant influence on tourism product development therefore evaluation and development planning is very important.

The experience of the CHRISTA partner Region Västra Götaland was considered. In Västra Götaland the industrial heritage sites are connected with walking and cycling trails. Attention is paid to the availability of the information online as well to the guide training. In Seda Marsh the sites of interest are spread over larger area therefore good ways of connectivity are important. Information and guiding is also crucial as currently production, not tourism is the primary function there.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

The action is aimed at the involvement of a peat mining town in tourism, both local and incoming, by using the town's specific architecture, the peat extraction infrastructure, and the history exposition at the town's culture house.

The aim of the project is to evaluate the current situation and available resources for developing a complex tourism offer in the town of Seda by involving different stakeholders, i.e. the municipality, the peat mining company, the Nature Conservation Agency, and the land owner Joint Stock Company "Latvia's State Forests".

On-site evaluation is especially needed in the nature reserve of Seda Marsh where the condition of the tourism infrastructure and accessibility, as well as the landscape has changed due to the activities of the land owner and the peat mining company, as well as due to natural processes.

As a result, thematic tour brochure will be available online that will be elaborated according the following criteria: stimulation of the visitor's interest (keenness to discover and understand); easily perceptible contents (visual effects, limited texts); suitability to all age groups; various options for the length of the visit (2 to 6 hours, with or without an overnight stay); availability regardless seasonality and human resource limitations; free of charge material; availability in foreign languages – English, Russian, German, Estonian.

Objectives:

- To coordinate the stakeholders for using the marsh in tourism;

- To evaluate the current situation and available resources;

- To develop a complex tourism product in the town of Seda by involving private and public partners, i.e. the peat mining company, the land owner, and the municipality;

- To include the new product in the local, regional and national tourism offer as a unique and authentic experience.

Activities:

- On-site evaluation of the available infrastructure as well as the natural processes and selecting the most suitable solution for elaboration of a tourism offer in long term;

- Elaboration of a tour route;

- Elaboration of a brochure;

- Translation of the brochure;

- Provision of the brochure online;

- Guide training (4 persons);

- Promotional activities;

- Feedback collection & analysis;

- Proposal preparation and submission for inclusion into the national industrial heritage list.

Result indicators:

Number of specialists trained: 4

Number of thematic tour brochures: 1

Number of foreign languages used: 4

Number of websites where the brochure will be available: 3

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Vidzeme Tourism Association (coordination, advising)

Strenci Municipality (Seda Town, Seda Culture Centre – exposition)

Nature Conservation Agency (the supervisor of the Seda Marsh nature reserve)

Joint Stock Company "Latvia's State Forests" (the land owner)

Joint Stock Company "Seda" (the peat mining company)

4. **Timeframe**

Activity	Oct-Dec '18	Jan-Mar '19	Apr-Jun '19	Jul-Sep '19	Oct-Dec '19
Evaluation of the current situation and selecting the most suitable solution for elaboration of a tourism offer.	██				
Elaboration of a tour route & brochure, translation of the brochure.	██	██			
Guide training.		██			
Provision of the brochure online, promotional activities, feedback collection.			██	██	██
Feedback analysis.					██
Proposal preparation and submission for inclusion into the national industrial heritage list.					██

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

On-site evaluation of the available infrastructure ~ EUR 400

Tour guide training (4 persons) ~ EUR 400

Elaboration of the online brochure (contents, translations, design) ~ EUR 400

Coordination, monitoring, evaluation

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):

Budgets and in-kind contribution of the stakeholders.

ACTION 3. GRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF INTANGIBLE AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The idea is based on the experience of the ASTRA museum in Sibiu that was learned within the CHRISTA project workshop on 19 to 21 September 2017 in Romania. ASTRA is a spacious open-air museum covering 132 hectares and including more than 300 buildings. Various interpretation methods are used in the museum including guided tours, workshops and performances; however, great role is also played by the unassisted interpretation tools, which can be used by the visitors without help from the museum's staff. There are 10 thematic tours and a treasure hunt activity offered in a leaflet form that follows several criteria:

- Easily perceptible contents (visual effects, limited texts);
- Suitability to all age groups;
- Short to medium visitor time use (up to 2 hours);
- Availability regardless seasonality and human resource limitations;
- Free of charge material;
- Availability in foreign languages.

Also in the vast area of Vidzeme there are many cultural assets, including intangible and industrial heritage, which are of limited accessibility for visitors due to human resource limitations – availability of the guides and in case of foreign visitors also availability of interpretation in foreign languages.

Within the CHRISTA project the partners are advised to follow guidelines by the Interpret Europe (*Engaging your visitors. Guidelines for achieving excellence in heritage interpretation.* Available at: http://www.interpret-europe.net/top/material.html). In these guidelines the interpretation is defined as follows:

Interpretation is not information. It is not filling visitors with facts – it is designed to help them come to an understanding of what have been called 'hidden truths'. The aims of interpretation can be summarised as to relate (to visitors), to reveal (new understanding) and to provoke (thought and enquiry).

Selection of the information and stimulation of the interest plays big role. Instead of providing information and answers, the visitor should be guided through his or her own discoveries.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

The experience at the Sibiu ASTRA museum shows that the graphic information materials have increased visitors interest about the museum as well as improved availability of high quality attractive interpretation (including foreign languages) regardless the human resource limitations. Transferring such experience to Vidzeme would lead to improved governance of intangible and industrial heritage. ASTRA museum experience

transfer in Vidzeme will include elaboration of unified style graphic interpretation materials **with an aim to foster availability and popularity of intangible and industrial heritage in Vidzeme.**

As a result, thematic tour leaflets will be available at the websites of the involved municipalities, museums and Vidzeme Tourism Association that will follow the criteria learned from the ASTRA museum in Sibiu: stimulation of the visitor's interest (keenness to discover and understand); easily perceptible contents (visual effects, limited texts); suitability to all age groups; visitor time use up to 2 hours; availability regardless seasonality and human resource limitations; free of charge material; availability in foreign languages – English, Russian, German and Estonian.

Objectives:

- To train tourism specialists at the municipalities and museums in Vidzeme for elaboration of graphic interpretation materials;

- To elaborate unified design graphic interpretation materials for Vidzeme that would be available in Latvian and 4 foreign languages at the websites of Vidzeme Tourism Association and involved municipalities and museums;

- To promote the graphic interpretation materials in the marketing communication channels of the involved municipalities and museums as well as Vidzeme Tourism Association;

- To evaluate the impact of graphic interpretation on the popularity and accessibility of the intangible and industrial heritage.

Activities:

- Training for tourism specialists at the municipalities and museums in Vidzeme for elaboration of graphic interpretation materials (infographics) – training provided by interpretation and graphic design experts in line with the Interpret Europe guidelines;

- Elaboration of the contents for the graphic interpretation materials (infographics) by the tourism specialists at the involved municipalities and museums in Vidzeme;

- Translation in the foreign languages (external expertise);

- Designing the graphic interpretation materials (external expertise);

- Promotion of the graphic interpretation materials at the websites and other communication channels of the involved municipalities, museums and Vidzeme Tourism Association;

- Feedback analysis regarding elaboration and use of the graphic interpretation materials and its impact on the popularity and accessibility of the intangible and industrial heritage (conducted by Vidzeme Tourism Association).

Result indicators:

10 specialists trained

10 graphic interpretation materials elaborated

4 foreign languages used in the graphic interpretation materials

10 websites providing the graphic interpretation materials

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Vidzeme Tourism Association – overall coordination, maintaining the training, unified graphic design, online availability of the materials, promotion and evaluation.

Museums and municipalities in Vidzeme (Turaida Muesum Reserve, Aluksne, Ape, Ergli, Gulbene, Strenci, Vecpiebalga and others) – participation in the training, elaboration of the contents for the graphic interpretation materials, translations and graphic layouts, promotion at the websites and other communication channels, feedback collection).

4. **Timeframe**

Activity	Oct-Dec '18	Jan-Mar '19	Apr-Jun '19	Jul-Sep '19	Oct-Dec '19
1. Training for tourism specialists at the municipalities and museums in Vidzeme for elaboration of graphic interpretation materials (infographics).	■	■			
2. Elaboration of the contents for the graphic interpretation materials (infographics) – contents, translations, design.	■	■			
3. Promotion of the graphic interpretation materials at the websites and other communication channels of the involved municipalities, museums and Vidzeme Tourism Association.			■	■	■
4. Feedback analysis regarding elaboration and use of the graphic interpretation materials and its impact on the popularity and accessibility of the intangible and industrial heritage.					■

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

Coordination, monitoring, evaluation – in-kind contribution of Vidzeme Tourism Association;

Elaboration of the contents – in-kind contribution of the involved municipalities and museums;

Training (remuneration, facilities) ~ EUR 100 for every institution involved;

Unified graphic design ~ EUR 50 for every institution involved;

Translation ~ EUR 100 for every institution involved;

Layout design ~ EUR 100 for every institution involved.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):

Training and unified graphic design – involved municipalities and museums (shared costs from the marketing budgets). Taking into consideration the financial limitations, distance learning & training can be organized. Support from the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia can be considered for the training.

Translation & layout design – involved municipalities and museums from the marketing budgets.

ACTION 4. DIGITIZATION OF THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The practice of Burgas Region in Bulgaria confirms how significant the role of digitalization is in the process of heritage conservation and usage. For instance, Burgas Museum of Archeology organized Wikipedia Days, during which youngsters edited Wikipedia articles and shared pictures that are related to the museum and its exhibitions. The practice of the region suggests that digitalization is the most effective way of giving people access to cultural heritage. The practice of Burgas Region combined two different worlds – those of sea and fishing tradition, and digital information and the Internet – by videos that popularized fishermen's traditions on the coast of the Black Sea and built bridges between fishermen communities and other inhabited areas struggling to maintain their traditional craftsmanship. This is how technologies help to transfer authentic fishermen skills to the younger generations.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Digitalization of heritage is a widespread practice in memory institutions – in archives, libraries, and museums. However, nowadays heritage digitalization is not a matter for memory institutions exclusively, but for any organization that is involved in the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, including tourism.

The rich history of Vidzeme region makes intangible heritage a significant tourism resource (for instance, the Bread Day in Āraiši, the Raftsmen Festival in Strenči, etc.). However, the potential for documenting and promoting this heritage in a digital environment has only been realized in a very limited way.

The action plan suggests that the management of intangible heritage be improved by documenting heritage digitally – by digitizing pictures and documents, and by recording cultural phenomena on audio and video with the aim to spread such content online. The platform suggested here for this purpose is *Europeana*, the digital platform for cultural heritage created by the European Commission. The content of *Europeana* can be used for different purposes, including the development of tourism. With its effective search system, *Europeana* provides access to over 50 million digitized units – books, music, art works and other content (European Commission, 2018). To publish content online, content developers have to meet the technical and recording quality standards stated in the *Europeana Publishing Guide.* Publication of the content created by data partners is mediated by data aggregators. The Latvian National Library is the main contact point in Latvia. So far, the Latvian National Library and several museums, including one of the most significant museums in Vidzeme Region – the Turaida museum reserve – have published content on *Europeana*.

The digitization of intangible heritage contains the following activities:

- Informing municipalities and other organizations involved in the preservation of cultural heritage in Vidzeme Region about the opportunities to deliver digitized content on *Europeana*.

- Providing training on how to prepare content for digitization and upload it on *Europeana* (outsourced service).

- Supporting digitization, e.g. filming (outsourced service).

- Digitizing intangible heritage in municipalities and other tourism related organizations that are involved in heritage conservation.

- Uploading the digitized content on *Europeana*.

    The approach to content digitalization should be determined by each organization itself – it can be rather simple (audio recording or picture scanning) or can involve more advanced video shooting, montages, editing, etc.

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The *Europeana* platform is used by several memory institutions in Latvia, but this practice should also be facilitated in municipalities and other organizations involved in heritage preservation and in tourism. Consequently, the number of organizations that might benefit from *Europeana* is broad – e.g. Strenču municipality, fishermen companies, etc.

4. **Timeframe**

There are no limits to how much data can be uploaded on the *Europeana* platform, and data can be uploaded at any time. Still, it should be remembered that content digitization has time restrictions – for instance, the best time for shooting video about Gauja raftsmen is the Festival of Gauja Raftsmen that takes place once per year.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

The costs of heritage digitization depend on how each organization wants to digitize the content – that is, how extensively and in which form digitization is to be done. Therefore, costs are not fixed. It is possible to fund the digitization of heritage from organizations' annual budget.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant)

The budget of organizations involved.

Date:_____

Signature: _____

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____