

**Interreg**



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**Estonia – Latvia**

# **“River Networks”**

Joint Seminar of Estonian & Latvian Task Forces

Ādaži Port Hotel

19<sup>th</sup> of November 2025

# Let's start with getting to know each other

- Name and organisation
- First idea regarding Emajõgi and/or Gauja

# Today's goal

- Discuss and agree upon the aspects of the joint strategy and action plan for Emajõgi and lower Gauja river areas.
  - Vision and goals
  - Feasible actions to be executed together
  - Cooperation model

# Agenda

## **Part I: 11.00-13.00**

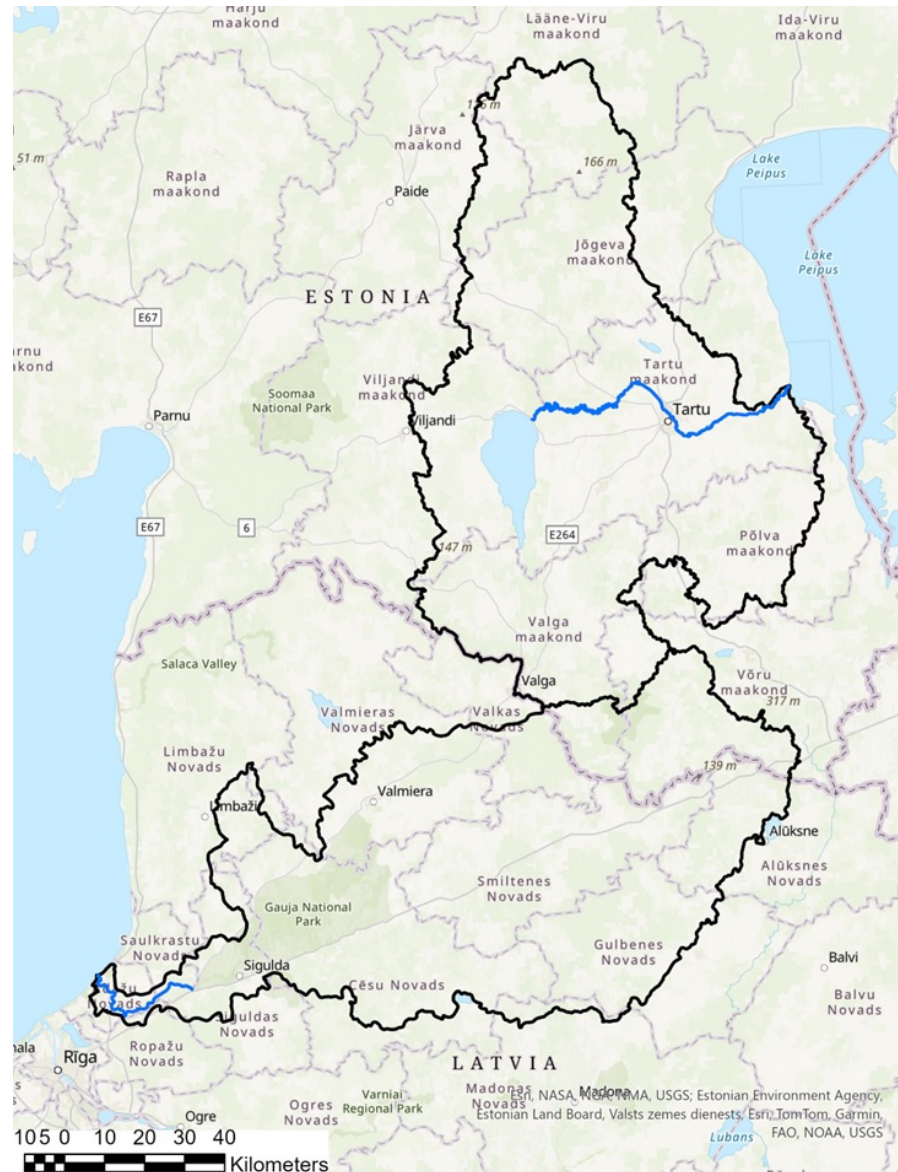
- Brief overview of the project activities (done & ahead)
- Introduction of the common strengths & challenges, vision & goals in Estonia and Latvia
- Group discussion #1: joint vision & goals
- Group discussion #2: activities: what activities should jointly be undertaken to meet the goals?

## **Lunch: 13.00-14.00**

## **Part II: 14.00-16.00**

- Group discussion #2: activities continues
- Group discussion #3: management & monitoring
- Conclusion, next steps

Lower Gauja – 40 km



Emajõgi – 100 km

# Brief overview of the project activities

- **Done so far:**
  - 3+3 stakeholder seminars in Estonia and Latvia:
    - 2.06 in Estonia: strengths and weaknesses, roles, pilots
    - 1.07 in Latvia: the same
    - 25.08 in Estonia: vision and goals, concrete initiatives, management model
    - 25.09 in Latvia: the same
    - 3.11 in Estonia: validation of the strategy, action plan, management model
    - 3.11 in Latvia: the same
  - Analyses of the current situation in Estonia and Latvia
  - Synthesis of the analyses of the current situation in Estonia and Latvia
  - Additional meetings with partners from adjacent areas
  - Compilation of the preliminary strategies
  - **Seminar in Latvia (19.11) to sort out the joint goals and activities**
- **To be done:**
  - Finalizing the strategies, additional discussion(s)
  - Translation of the documents

# Common strengths

- Unique aquatic–terrestrial networks that naturally support nature values and ecosystem connectivity
- The cultural and historical attachment to water (fishing, boating, festivals) provides a shared sense of place and motivation for stewardship
- Areas feature distinctive natural and cultural landscapes that are attractive for sustainable tourism
- Municipalities, NGOs, entrepreneurs, local communities, public institutions, and universities are involved in water management in various ways

# Common challenges

- Nutrient enrichment from agriculture and settlements lead to algal blooms and deteriorating ecological status
- Limited accessibility of water areas, including deficiencies in tourism and recreational infrastructure
- Growing recreational use (boating, bathing, festivals), often without corresponding capacity for waste management
- Changing temperature and precipitation regimes affect hydrology, ice cover, and ecosystem stability
- Multiple actors lack clear agreements on development, marketing
- Site-specific data, impact assessments, and long-term records necessary for the sustainable use of water resources are incomplete



## Joint vision for 2035

- The Emajõgi and lower Gauja regions are recognizable destinations celebrated for their sustainable tourism practices, where unique natural and cultural values unite.
- The regions feature accessible waterways and waterfronts, ensuring the careful preservation of their natural and cultural heritage alongside the active protection of the environment.

# Joint goals

## 1. An Accessible and Functional Waterway Network

- The region features a coherent, safe, and accessible waterway network. Functional infrastructure, including harbours and recreation sites, is developed to support sustainable boating, recreation, and local mobility.

## 2. A Protected Environment and High Environmental Awareness

- The region's environmental condition is improving, achieved by balancing nature conservation and economic activities. Efforts are focused on enhancing water quality, restoring fish stocks, and actively promoting environmental education and awareness among residents and visitors.

## 3. Preserved and Celebrated Cultural Heritage

- The unique cultural and historical heritage associated with the waterways is actively preserved, showcased, and integrated into tourism, educational programs, and community life, strengthening the local identity.

## 4. A Recognizable Sustainable Tourism Destination

- The region is developed as a unified and recognizable destination (brand) for sustainable tourism. It offers diverse, high-quality services and authentic experiences based on its distinct natural and cultural values.

## 5. Strong Cooperation and Community Engagement

- The region's development is driven by a strong, broad-based cooperation network involving municipalities, entrepreneurs, and local communities. This collaboration ensures coordinated planning, sustainable resource management, and active community participation.

# Group discussion #1: joint vision & goals

- Please discuss, reflect and bring concrete proposals to amend the joint vision and goals.
- Mark your ideas/proposals on the paper.
- Time: 20 minutes

# Joint vision & goals

- **Vision**
  - The Emajõgi and lower Gauja regions are recognizable destinations celebrated for their sustainable tourism practices, where unique natural and cultural values unite.
  - The regions feature accessible waterways and waterfronts, ensuring the careful preservation of their natural and cultural heritage alongside the active protection of the environment.
- 1. **An Accessible and Functional Waterway Network**
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- 2. **A Protected Environment and High Environmental Awareness**
  - The region's environmental condition is improving, achieved by balancing nature conservation and economic activities. Efforts are focused on enhancing water quality, restoring fish stocks, and actively promoting environmental education and awareness among residents and visitors.
- 3. **Preserved and Celebrated Cultural Heritage**
  - The unique cultural and historical heritage associated with the waterways is actively preserved, showcased, and integrated into tourism, educational programs, and community life, strengthening the local identity.
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  - The region is developed as a unified and recognizable destination (brand) for sustainable tourism. It offers diverse, high-quality services and authentic experiences based on its distinct natural and cultural values.
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  - The region's development is driven by a strong, broad-based cooperation network involving municipalities, entrepreneurs, and local communities. This collaboration ensures coordinated planning, sustainable resource management, and active community participation.

# Joint activities (1)

NO	ACTIVITY	FINANCING	TIME	EXPLANATION	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>1. AN ACCESSIBLE AND FUNCTIONAL WATERWAY NETWORK</b>					
	EST: Development of the area map application, including integration with existing platforms			Preparation/coordination of website/app content, including object information and descriptions, navigation data, historical texts, etc.	
<b>2. A PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT AND HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS</b>					
	EST: Launching a cooperation model with research and environmental institutions to increase awareness of the environmental status of the area			Organizing joint seminars etc.	
	EST: Implementation of pilot activities aimed at improving environmental conditions			Defining and implementing possible joint pilot activities to improve environmental conditions	
	LAT: Promotion of nature and environmental education in cooperation with schools and kindergartens			Introducing and implementing existing environmental education programmes for schools and kindergartens in the region, and creating new programmes	
<b>3. PRESERVED AND CELEBRATED CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>					
	EST: Organizing events that introduce and promote historical and cultural heritage			Workshops, other events, hikes, inland waters festival, taste journeys etc.	
	EST: Audio guide (EST, ENG, LAT)			Stories (e.g., thematic books) and their narratives and summaries for use on vessels etc.	
	LAT: Popularizing regional cultural heritage			Exchange visits (e.g. boat restoration, sailing and rafting on rivers etc.)	
	LAT: Modern festivals and their success stories			Onion festival, lamprey festival, perhaps for the creation of other new festivals - for example, a dill festival	
	LAT: Development and marketing of joint routes				

# Joint activities (2)

NO	ACTIVITY	FINANCING	TIME	EXPLANATION	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>4. A RECOGNIZABLE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION</b>					
	EST: Development and marketing of a fishing tourism product			Developing a new product to promote fishing tourism in the VEP area, possibly linked with the river trip concept	
	LAT: Implementation of the marketing plan				
<b>5. STRONG COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>					
	EST: Participation in international cooperation networks and projects				
	EST: Marketing activities			Experience exchange trips on branding, joint implementation of marketing activities	
	LAT: Strengthening cooperation with the academic world				
	LAT: Sharing and distributing information materials in tours information centres in Estonia and Latvia				

# Group discussion #2: activities: what activities should jointly be undertaken to meet the goals?

- Please discuss and amend the joint action plan – is this the action to be undertaken jointly? Also:
  - Possible financing
  - Timeframe
  - Clarity (explanation)
  - Responsibility
- Take a look at the action plan proposed by the Latvian stakeholders and discuss, whether some of the activities should be added to the joint action plan.
- **Discussion in 2 blocks:**
  - Activities under the goals no 1–3 before lunch
  - Activities under the goals no 4–5 after lunch

# Management model in Estonia

- Network-based approach with 3 main parties:
  - Tartu County Development Association (TAS)
    - Strategy execution and development activities
  - Association of Municipalities of Tartu County (TOL)
    - Coordination of the investments together with the municipalities
  - Visit Tartu (South-Estonia Tourism Cluster)
    - Marketing



# Group discussion #3: management and monitoring

- How should the joint strategy be executed?