



LEADER Programme in Tartu County



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**Texts: Eda Tagamets, Kristiina Tammets,
Triin Nõmm, Heili Petkin, Meeri Maastik, Erkki Peetsalu**

**Photos: Sven Začek, Terje Atonen, Robi Zuts,
Mana Kaasik, Sander Silm, photo archive of Tartu**

County Development Association

Translated by: Keelestudio OÜ

Design by: Triinu Sarv

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*Tartu County breathes in the rhythm
of the Emajõgi River!*

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Priit Lomp

Member of the TAS Board since 2015,
Chair of the TAS Board since 2018

Tartu County development projects show the way

Breathing in the rhythm of the Emajõgi River, Tartu County has recognised that flexible action in harmony with nature puts food on the table and a smile on the face. I have followed the same principle – promoting local life in my home region and representing state affairs in Toompea. As the chair of the Tartu County Development Association (TAS), I am pleased that our projects are succeeding and attracting interest from further afield.

Naturally, the success of TAS' development and cooperation projects is not due only to the spirit of the Emajõgi, but to a strong team. Our team has launched and implemented large and complex projects, tackled challenges, and inspired local entrepreneurs, communities, and municipalities to work together for the development of Tartu County.

The public is looking for success stories about people and initiatives to follow. Our projects, based on the long-term strategy of the LEADER local action group and the regional development vision, have succeeded thanks to thorough planning and skilled management. From the beginning, TAS' activities have gone beyond implementing LEADER measures. With high ambitions and extensive development experience, we have become a true pacesetter among development organisations. TAS' projects have even earned a saying: Tartu County development projects show the way!

Indeed, the summary of activities from 2014 to 2024 turned out to be so extensive that it barely fit into this book of acknowledgements. A look back is always necessary to recognise great people and remarkable deeds – after all, only each person knows how many work hours and sometimes sleepless nights went into their achievements. That makes it even more meaningful to take joy in what we have accomplished together to improve life in our home region.

According to the summary of the completed period, TAS' five most impactful projects were: the implementation of the Youth Fund, the Smart Villages concept, the launch of the Tartu County Food Network, the development of the Emajõgi Network, and the implementation of the Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme. The latter was our contribution to the success of the European Capital of Culture through the active involvement of South Estonian communities.

The Tartu County Development Association has become an organisation capable of delivering large and influential projects, because we work inclusively and through co-creation. As of 2026, TAS has 79 members: 9 municipalities, 32 enterprises, and 38 civil society organisations. We thank all members and partners for contributing to the development of Tartu County!

The directions for the next period are set, and we are moving forward together!





Kristiina Tammets
CEO of TAS since 2007

Tartu County Development Association – Catalyst for good initiatives

Dear partners, entrepreneurs, municipalities, and communities – everyone who has contributed to the development of life in Tartu County! You deserve sincere thanks and recognition. This book of acknowledgements briefly summarises the development and cooperation projects carried out in Tartu County from 2014–2024 with LEADER support – to show thanks and highlight our shared success stories.

We can all give a pat on the back to one another and ourselves, for there is every reason to do so. Over the past decade, so many new and inspiring initiatives have been launched, and so many successful development and cooperation projects realised in Tartu County that they cannot all be listed at once. All this has happened thanks to our joint effort and collaboration!

Tartu County Development Association (TAS), active since 2006 for the benefit of regional development, has channelled millions of euros of development funding – through LEADER and other programmes – to boost the work of Tartu County’s smart entrepreneurs, flexible municipalities, and vibrant communities. We have focused strongly on ensuring that each project is purposefully, fairly, and transparently evaluated and funded so that every euro spent brings the greatest possible benefit to the region.

Operating collaboratively, TAS follows jointly agreed upon principles: amplifying Tartu County's uniqueness, acting with innovation, adopting a sustainable and resource-conscious mindset, and fostering community. For the next period, we have chosen three focus areas: community and youth, local resources and entrepreneurship, major projects, and cooperation initiatives.

Like the Emajõgi River, flowing calmly along its course and shaping the local ecosystem, the development of Tartu County proceeds steadily in collaboration with partners across Tartu County and South Estonia. The Tartu County Development Association has reached maturity as an organisation, and as always, growth brings both achievements and challenges from which to learn and gain experience. As we approach our 20th anniversary, we do so as a strong development organisation, ready to continue supporting and fostering good initiatives in Tartu County. We have clear goals, secured funding sources, and many ideas for further promoting Tartu County's development.

I wish you momentum and joy in your efforts,
and success with your new ideas!





Tartu County Development Association

Tartu County Development Association team

Executive employees



Kristiina Tammets
CEO



Heili Petkin
Office Manager



Triin Nõmm
Consultant/
Project Manager



Anna Borševitski
Accountant



Management Board

From 26 June 2024



Priit Lomp
Chairman of the
Management Board
MTÜ Kõivuküla Selts



Kairi Kell
Vice-Chairman of the
Management Board
MTÜ Rõka Külaselts



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MTÜ Meeri Küla
Arendamise Selts



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Tartu Rural Municipality
Government



Priit Värv
Elva Rural Municipality
Government



Piibe Koemets
Peipsiääre Rural
Municipality Government



Karin Sild
OÜ Rahvamatkad



Esta Tamm
OÜ Semu Aed



Sven Särki
OÜ Slaker

Evaluation Committee*

Piibe Koemets

Peipsiääre Rural
Municipality Government

Karin Sild

OÜ Rahvamatkad

Sven Särki

OÜ Slaker

Gea Järvela

Vapramäe-Vellavere-
Vitipalu SA

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Kogukonnaköök

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MTÜ Uhti Küla Süda

Kristi Kull

Kambja Rural
Municipality Government

Heli Lätt

MTÜ Stellaarium

Taivo Prants

MTÜ Koduvald Kambja

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MTÜ GPS Abi Inimestele

Lembit Toru

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Looduskeskus

Tõnis Tõnissoo

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Küllli Pann

Tartu County Village
Movement

Kadri Pau

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Rahvakultuuri
Keskselts

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OÜ Andre Farm

Gaili Kangur

SA Luke Mõis

Viljam Viljasoo

Tartu Business Advisory
Services

Merike Kaunissaare

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OÜ Skycorp

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SA Alatskivi Loss

Alar Ilp

MTÜ Mäeotsa Külaselts

Raido Tamm

OÜ Koosalaane

Imants Trofimov

OÜ Tesmasan

Juhan Ojamaa

Farmbalt OÜ

Mart Keerutaja

Kastre Rural Municipality
Government

Kaidi Randpõld

Association of
Municipalities of
Tartu County

Revision Committee

Aivar Aleksejev

Kambja Rural
Municipality Government

Sirje Jõgiaev

MTÜ Külaselts Kawershof

Kristel Kiisla

OÜ Leetsi

Members**

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OÜ SnäkiSõbrad

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Kaimi Linnutalu OÜ

Märt Reinbusch

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„Nurmenukk“

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MTÜ Uhti Küla Süda

Kai Paks

OÜ Skycorp

Marek Alliksoo

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Priius**

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Ain Avi

MTÜ Jaago Sõbrad

Inga Talvis

MTÜ Kõivuküla Selts

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Selts**

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MTÜ Kavastu kogukond

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Vitipalu**

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SA Luke Mõis

Aivar Kuuskvere

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OÜ Viinamärdi Talu

Annemari Polikarpus

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MUNICIPALITY**

**Peipsiääre Rural
Municipality Government**

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OÜ Slaker

Sven Särki

SA Alatskivi Loss

Laura Lillepalu-Scott

MTÜ Vara Maarahva Selts

Ene Kukk

MTÜ Alajõe Külaselts

Küllike Kuusik

OÜ Koosalaane

Raido Tamm

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Jelena Ainsoo

OÜ Maitseaed

Tatjana Punga

MTÜ lidne

Priit Allas

**MTÜ Peipsimaa
Kogukonnaköök**

Tauno Laasik

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MUNICIPALITY**

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Municipality Government**

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**MTÜ Meeksi Maanaiste
Selts**

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OÜ Empreste

Margus Narusing

OÜ Meistrite Kool

Toivo Aalja

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OÜ Pastaheaven

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UÜ Mailaat

Peeter Riba

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**Tartu Rural Municipality
Government**

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OÜ Forevi

Ülle Puusta

**MTÜ Sootaga Maanaiste
Selts**

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OÜ Amme Park

Tiit Sarapuu

OÜ Latikas

Ilmar Metsanurk

Nutitalu OÜ

Madis Jaaniste

MTÜ Piirissaare Turism

Maie Koitmäe

OÜ Juulamõis

Eneli Kaasik

OÜ Seljamaa Talu

Elle Armi

**CROSS-REGIONAL
MEMBERS**

SA Tartumaa Turism

Annika Ojasaar

**MTÜ Tartumaa
Rahvakultuuri Keskselts**

Ants Johanson

MTÜ Tartu Jahindusklubi

Jaak Volmer

MTÜ Sibulatee

Liis Lainemäe



The LEADER method:
region-based,
bottom-up initiative,
public-private partnership,
innovation,
integrated and multi-sectoral approach,
networking, and
promotion of cooperation.

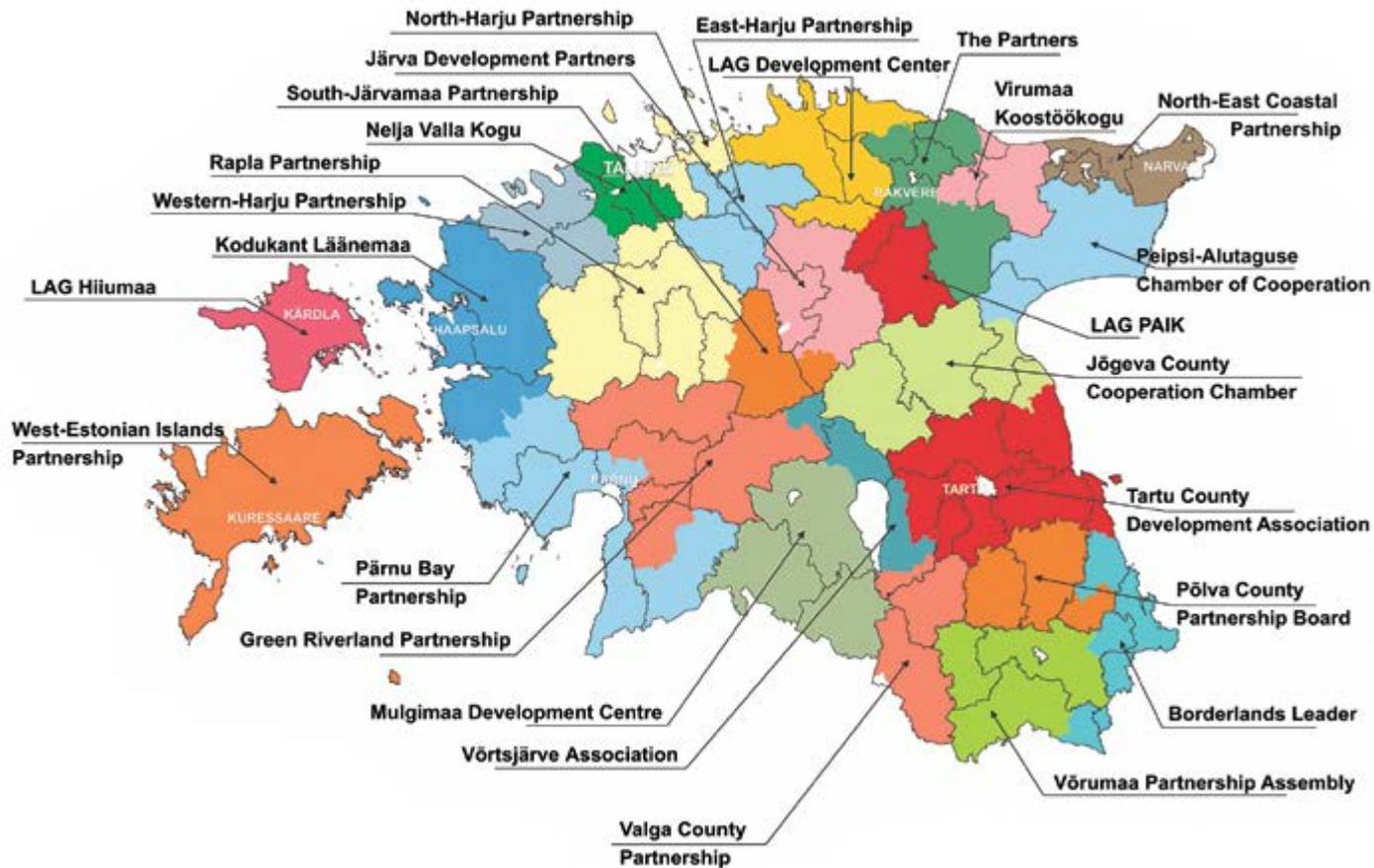
About the LEADER programme

LEADER is one of the European Commission's most successful rural development initiatives. It was launched in 1991 and has now undergone five periods: LEADER I, LEADER II, LEADER+, the 2007–2013 and 2014–2020 programming periods, and the 2021–2024 transition period. The idea of partnership reached Estonia earlier, but LEADER was officially implemented in Estonia in 2006. During the period 2007–2013, the LEADER budget in Estonia was EUR 85.7 million, and for 2014–2024 it was around EUR 121 million.

Today, nearly 2,700 LEADER local action groups operate across Europe, covering approximately 80% of the EU territory and about 30% of the population. The 2023–2027 period will bring around EUR 5 billion to LEADER in Europe from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), with additional contributions from other funds. On average, EU Member States allocate 7.7% of their Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plan to the implementation of the LEADER method, while Estonia contributes nearly 12%, one of the highest shares in the EU.

In Estonia, 26 local action groups are active. The total budget for implementing the 2023–2027 strategies of Estonian groups from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), together with national co-financing, is EUR 59.5 million. Additionally, EUR 7 million from the European Social Fund (ESF+) and national funding will support strategy implementation.

LEADER local action groups in Estonia



Base map: Estonian Land Board
 2015–2019 Data: maainfo.ee/leader



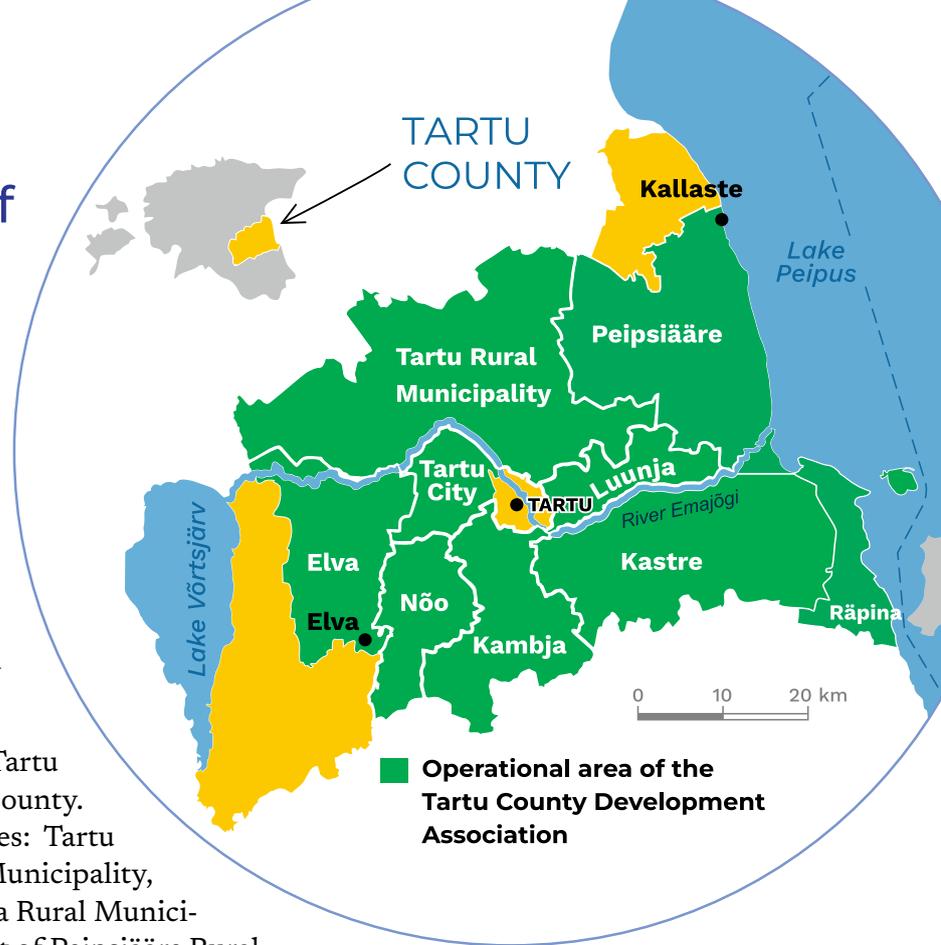
Tartu County Development Association (TAS) was established on 27 July 2006. From 2006–2008, TAS operated with funding from Measure 3.6 of the Estonian National Development Plan, and subsequently under the LEADER measure regulation for 2007–2013 and 2015–2020. During 2007–2013, TAS' budget was approximately EUR 5 million. From 2014–2020 and the 2021–2024 transition period, the total budget reached nearly EUR 7.6 million.

TAS aims to develop local life in its operational area through cooperation between the public, private, and third sectors. TAS has operated according to the seven LEADER principles, evaluating funding applications and making decisions locally. In addition, TAS has proactively launched dozens of development projects and participated as a partner in various national and international cooperation activities. TAS' planned LEADER funding for 2023–2027 is approximately EUR 3.46 million, of which at least 75% will go to support measures. ESF+ funding amounts to EUR 627,016. In addition to implementing LEADER and ESF+ measures, TAS aims to secure additional funds from other schemes to carry out development projects in the region. With applicants' co-financing, the total volume of strategy implementation will reach approximately EUR 6.8 million.



Operational area of the Tartu County Development Association in figures

- As of 2026, Tartu County Development Association (TAS) has 79 members: 9 municipalities, 32 enterprises, and 38 civil society organisations.
- TAS' territory covers most of Tartu County and a small part of Põlva County. The TAS operational area includes: Tartu Rural Municipality, Kastre Rural Municipality, Kambja Rural Municipality, Luunja Rural Municipality, Nõo Rural Municipality, part of Peipsiääre Rural Municipality, part of Elva Rural Municipality (including Elva Town), part of Tartu City, and part of Räpina Rural Municipality.
- The total area of TAS' region is 2,974 km², which constitutes more than three-quarters of the county's total area.
- As of 1 January 2026, about 62,000 people lived in TAS' region. The total population of Tartu County is 162,734.
- Over the past 15 years, the population in TAS' region has increased by more than 13,500 people.



TAS strategy 2015–2025

Vision	TAS region has smart and specialised entrepreneurship and a vibrant community			
Strategic thematic areas	1. Development of entrepreneurship based on local uniqueness and resources		2. Strengthening the capacity of communities	
Measures	1.1 Development of small-scale production and services	1.2 Development of tourism entrepreneurship	2.1 Preservation and promotion of local traditions	2.2 Youth activation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of products and services based on local resources • Processing and development of local food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of tourism entrepreneurship highlighting regional uniqueness • Development of supporting tourism infrastructure and publicly accessible tourism sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation, promotion, and exhibition of cultural heritage • Organisation of innovative and/or tradition-based regional, national, and international events • Development of innovative social services • Preparation for and implementation of the European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024 • Implementation of the Smart Villages concept • Development of publicly accessible facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of entrepreneurship • Development of practical skills for youth • Investments in resources supporting youth activation
	1.3 COVID-19 support measure			

Strategic horizontal area	3. Development of major projects and cooperation networks		
Measures	3.1 Development of major projects	3.2 Creation and development of networks within TAS region	3.3 Promotion of regional and international cooperation
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of publicly accessible facilities in TAS region that have a wider regional impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of existing region-specific cooperation networks • Development of new region-specific cooperation networks (e.g. joint marketing, renewable energy projects, information networks, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of existing regional and international cooperation networks • Development of new regional and international cooperation networks, including collaboration with the cities of Tartu and Elva to ensure service provision • Development of international cooperation
<p>Overarching principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new and innovative products and services • Environmentally friendly and resource-efficient management • Highlighting and strengthening Tartu County's uniqueness 			
Organisational development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of TAS as a development organisation, including support for innovation and knowledge transfer • Strengthening the cohesion between areas within TAS region and reducing socio-economic disparities, including through various project implementations • Development of the project evaluation system and strategy monitoring 			



During 2016–2024, 260 projects were funded, of which 250 were under the LEADER measure and ten under the European Union Recovery Instrument.
Total value of funded projects –
EUR 10,986,962
Total amount of grants –
EUR 6,354,186

Overview of strategy implementation

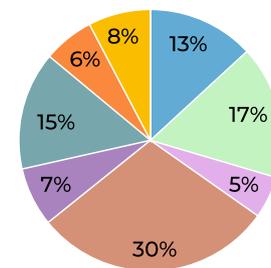
TAS' strategy for 2015–2020 was approved at the General Meeting on 2 November 2015. The implementation of measures began the following year, and according to the approved strategy, application rounds were held until 20 February 2019, when the strategy was amended. On 7 October 2021, the strategy was revised more extensively – its validity was extended to 2025 and additional funds were added. A completely new COVID support measure was also introduced.

Of 615 applications submitted in the previous period, 260 projects received support. The success rate for project applications during this period was therefore around 42%, indicating fairly strong competition. The total cost of funded projects was nearly EUR 11 million, of which the grants covered EUR 6.35 million.

Measure	Number of projects	Total amount	Funding amount
1.1 Development of small-scale production and services	44	1,819,762	841,672
1.2 Tourism entrepreneurship development	41	1,776,917	1,065,695
1.3 COVID-19 support measure	10	485,652	303,403
2.1 Preservation and promotion of local traditions	77	2,729,412	1,902,318
2.2 Youth activation	48	564,941	419,563
3.1 Development of major projects	5	2,405,679	922,323
3.2 Creation and development of networks within TAS' region	18	548,787	409,674
3.3 Promotion of regional and international cooperation	17	655,812	489,538
Total	260	10,986,962	6,354,186

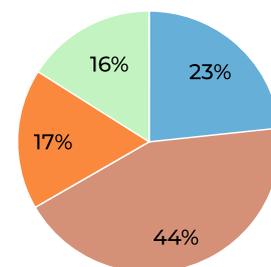
Table 1. Funded projects by measure*

Most of the funding was allocated to the measures for preserving local traditions, developing tourism entrepreneurship, and developing major projects. Measure 2.1 (development of local traditions) supported the highest number of projects – 77; measure 2.2 (youth activation) – 48; and measure 1.1 (development of small-scale production and services) – 44.



- 1.1 Development of small-scale production and services
- 1.2 Tourism entrepreneurship development
- 1.3 COVID-19 support measure
- 2.1 Preservation and promotion of local traditions
- 2.2 Youth activation
- 3.1 Development of major projects
- 3.2 Creation and development of networks within TAS' region
- 3.3 Development of regional international cooperation

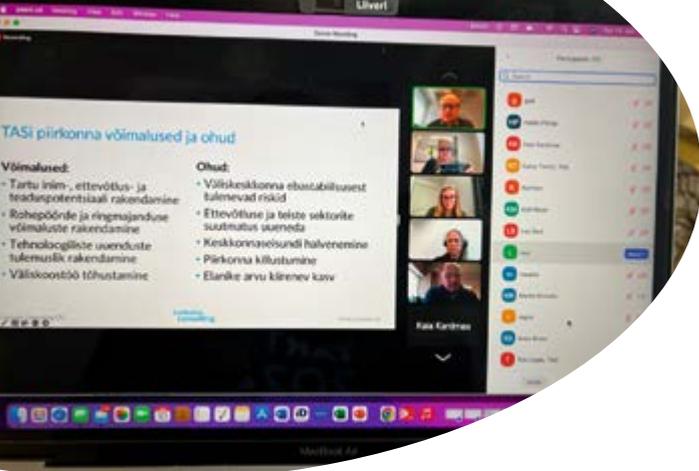
Figure 1. Amount of funding for supported projects (%) by measure



- Companies
- Foundations
- Non-profit organisations
- Local governments

Figure 2. Funded projects (%) by sector

*Agricultural Registers and Information Board, 8 Jan 2025



By municipality (including businesses and NGOs), the largest funding allocations were received by: Kastre Rural Municipality (approx. EUR 1.14 million), Nõo Rural Municipality (EUR 1.10 million), Elva Rural Municipality (EUR 816,000), and Luunja Rural Municipality (EUR 754,000) (see Table 2 and Figure 3).

Municipality	Number of projects	Total amount	Funding amount
Elva	32	1,386,322	816,164
Kambja	24	650,319	377,427
Kastre	35	2,276,569	1,137,699
Luunja	25	1,334,866	753,953
Nõo	38	1,582,702	1,096,903
Peipsiääre	34	775,210	501,344
Räpina	3	217,828	140,837
Tartu City	8	264,696	141,432
Tartu Rural Municipality	35	1,616,256	737,247
TAS' region	26	882,194	651,181
Total	260	10,986,962	6,354,186

Table 2. Distribution of funded projects by rural municipality (including businesses and NGOs)

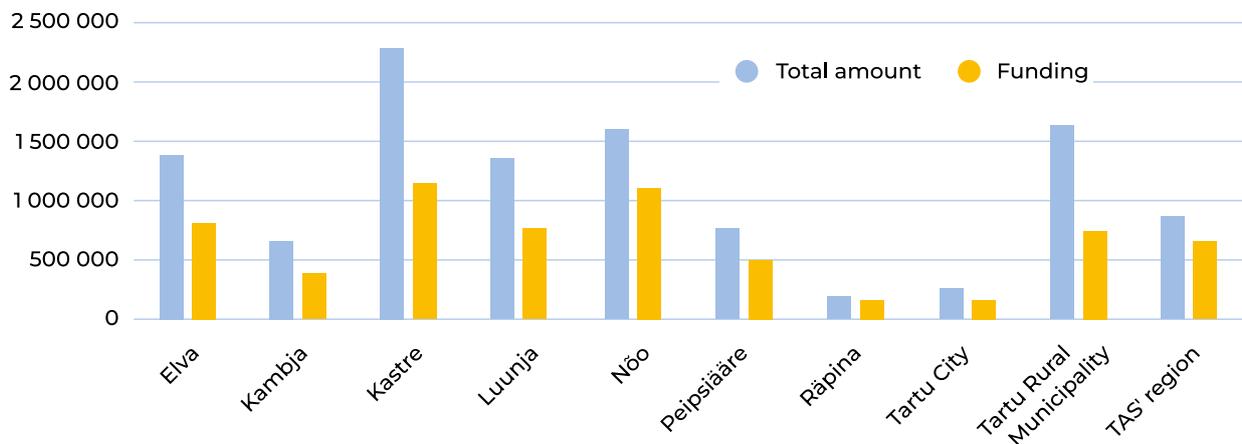


Figure 3. Distribution of funded projects by rural municipality

In the previous period, the highest funding per capita was in R pina Rural Municipality and N o Rural Municipality, followed by Elva Rural Municipality and Kastre Rural Municipality. In municipalities with larger populations (Kambja Rural Municipality and Tartu Rural Municipality), funding per capita was below the average (see Figure 4).

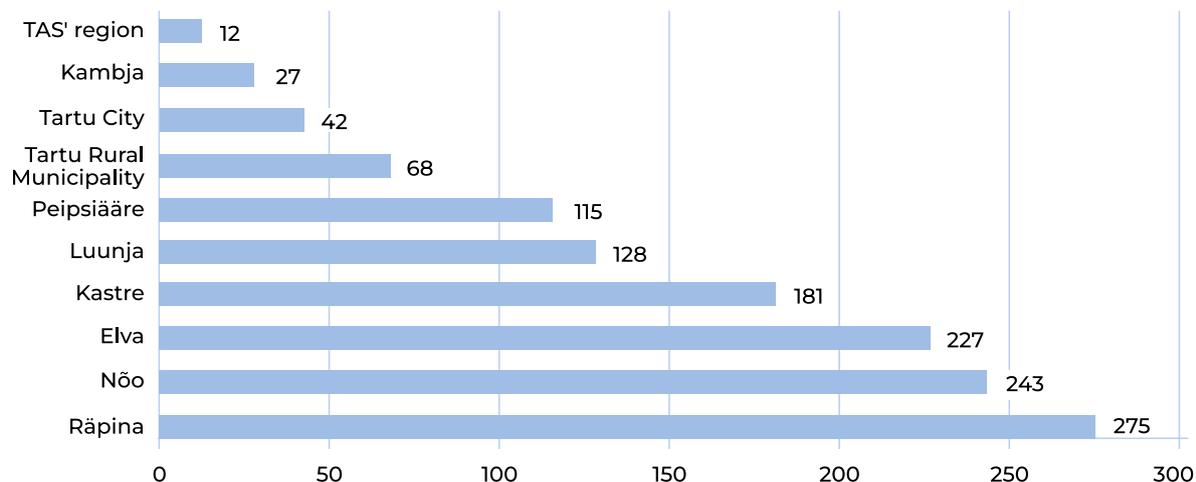


Figure 4. Amount of grant per capita





Tartu County Development Association joint strategy 2023–2030

The strategy is based on the region's challenges and development potential, considering TAS' past experience as well as the wishes and expectations of the community. Activities are guided by the general objective of LEADER intervention set out in the CAP strategic plan: **the comprehensive development of attractive living and business environments and active, cohesive local communities in rural areas, following the LEADER approach.** As an innovation, TAS also implements a measure using the European Social Fund+ in addition to LEADER funding.

VISION 2030

The operational area of the Tartu County Development Association is characterised by smart communities, enterprising and healthy youth, and entrepreneurship that is both resource-efficient and innovative. Opportunities in the green and circular economy are applied in a smart way across the region. Local cooperation networks and new initiatives are sustainable and recognised both in Estonia and abroad.

With TAS' support, the quality of life and well-being of people in the region have improved!

During strategy implementation, four cross-cutting principles are followed (WISE):

- **W**isely using Tartu County's uniqueness
- **I**nnovation and smart solutions
- **S**ustainability and green transition
- **E**ngagement of communities

Based on the vision, TAS' strategy has three focus areas, each with a defined strategic objective. The strategy is implemented through measures, with three measures in each focus area.

FOCUS AREA 1

Community and youth

(share of the focus area from the LEADER measures: 40%)

Strategic objective 1: Communities in TAS' region are smart, and youth are enterprising and healthy.

Measures:

- **Measure 1.1: Smart community solutions** (maximum grant EUR 80,000, minimum grant EUR 20,000, support rate 80%)
- **Measure 1.2: Enterprising and healthy youth** (maximum grant EUR 20,000, minimum grant EUR 3,000, support rate 80%)
- **Measure 1.3: Small community projects** (maximum grant EUR 20,000, minimum grant EUR 3,000, support rate 80%)





FOCUS AREA 2

Local resources and entrepreneurship
(share of the focus area from the LEADER measures: 35%)

Strategic objective 2: Entrepreneurship in TAS' operational area is resource-efficient, community-serving, and innovative, while the tourism potential is developed based on the region's unique characteristics.

Measures:

- **Measure 2.1: Local small-scale production and business services** (maximum grant EUR 80,000, minimum grant EUR 10,000, support rate 50%)
- **Measure 2.2: Tourism and leisure opportunities** (maximum grant EUR 80,000, minimum grant EUR 10,000; support rate 60% for investments, 80% for network projects)
- **Measure 2.3: Innovation and piloting** (maximum grant EUR 40,000, minimum grant EUR 10,000; support rate 60% for entrepreneurial projects, 90% for others)

FOCUS AREA 3

Major, umbrella, and cooperation projects

(share of the focus area from the LEADER measures: 25%, plus ESF+ funding)

Strategic objective 3: With TAS' support, collaboration across different levels and sectors in the region has strengthened, and social inclusion has increased.

Measures:

- **Measure 3.1: Major projects** (maximum grant EUR 200,000, minimum grant EUR 100,000, support rate 50%)
- **Measure 3.2: TAS' cooperation projects** (amounts and support rates based on LEADER regulations)
- **Measure 3.3: Increase of social inclusion** (maximum grant EUR 10,000, minimum grant EUR 1,000, support rate 100%)



TAS strategy 2023–2030

Vision	<p>TAS operational area is characterised by smart communities, enterprising and healthy youth, and entrepreneurship that is both resource-efficient and innovative. Opportunities in the green and circular economy are applied in a smart way across the region. Local cooperation networks and new initiatives are sustainable and recognised both in Estonia and abroad.</p> <p>With TAS' support, the quality of life and well-being of people in the region have improved.</p>			
Focus areas 1, 2	1. COMMUNITIES AND YOUTH (share from the LEADER measure: 40%)		2. LOCAL RESOURCES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (share from the LEADER measure: 35%)	
Measures and strands	1.1 Smart community solutions (24%)	1.2 Enterprising and healthy youth (8%)	2.1 Local small-scale production and business services (14%)	2.2 Tourism and leisure opportunities (14%)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments necessary for implementing the Smart Villages concept Development of facilities and infrastructure important for communities Investments to enhance community safety and resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for youth entrepreneurship and own initiatives Development of practical skills for youth Support for the physical and mental health of young people Implementation of joint projects involving youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local food, including support for the implementation of the Tartu County Food Strategy Other small-scale production utilising local resources Business services aimed at the local community, including services in fast-growing or underserved areas to reduce forced migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of services and infrastructure related to the Emajõgi River Development of tourism products and services highlighting regional uniqueness, including accommodation and catering Development of tourism networks, including packages and comprehensive tourism products Development of recreational infrastructure for public use
	1.3 Small community projects (8%)		2.3 Innovation and piloting (7%)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and piloting of the Smart Villages concept, including strategies and pilot activities Support for community initiatives that enhance local capacity Development of services and infrastructure for the local community, including small-scale investments in underserved areas Development of community-focused information platforms and other innovative solutions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot projects in the green and circular economy Innovation projects in high value-added sectors (including energy, ICT & electronics, bio and health sectors, chemistry, and materials) Projects aimed at raising innovation awareness 	



Focus area 3	3. MAJOR PROJECTS AND COOPERATION PROJECTS (share from the LEADER measure: 25%, plus measure 3.3 funding in the amount of EUR 627,016 from ESF+ funding)		
Measures and strands	3.1 Major projects (15%, EUR 400,000)	3.2 TAS' cooperation projects (10%)	3.3 Increase of social inclusion (EUR 627,016)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in large-scale facilities or infrastructure intended for public use and planned in cooperation with the three sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of local, regional, and international cooperation projects, including associated investments and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative services, events, and activities based on the needs of target groups, ensuring accessibility Bringing communities closer together, raising awareness, and fostering community recognition Support for specialists and people with care responsibilities Support for mental and physical health

Overarching principles (WISE)			
Wisely using Tartu County's uniqueness	Innovation and smart solutions	Sustainability and green transition	Engagement of communities



TAS cooperation projects:
EUR 1.14 million,
including approximately
EUR 370,000 from the LEADER
programme, supporting
20 development projects across
various areas: youth, innovation,
entrepreneurship, tourism,
regional development,
local food, development
cooperation, and
others.

Tartu County Development Association's development activities – promoting progress in our region

From the beginning, TAS' distinctiveness has been **its clear positioning not only as an implementer of the LEADER support measure, but as a development organisation**. Over the years, this has meant initiating and implementing dozens of international, regional, and local development projects with significant positive impact both on TAS' region and the wider area.

A key focus of TAS, guided by previous strategies, **has been the development of local, regional, and international cooperation networks**, some led by TAS and others supported through relevant measures. Good examples include networks supporting tourism development, such as the Onion Route, as well as cooperation networks in Peipsimaa, the Elva recreation area, and along the Emajõgi River and Lake Võrtsjärv; the Tartu County Food Network launched under the international cooperation project 'Food Corridors'; networks for green festivals; the Tartu County youth worker cooperation network supporting youth development; regional cooperation

networks such as Tasty South Estonia, Yellow Windows, and the Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme. Funding from other sources (e.g. URBACT, Erasmus) has also been used to support network-related projects.

In addition to networks, TAS has led numerous other cooperation initiatives. Success stories include **the implementation of the Tartu County Youth Fund (supporting youth initiatives), introducing and applying the Smart Villages concept in Estonia, cooperation between regional airports, and development cooperation with third countries** (promoting LEADER principles in Moldova).

Beyond the previously mentioned cooperation projects, TAS has implemented several other international cooperation projects, for example: the ‘Searching for Innovation’ international project to develop innovation and the ‘Crowd4Region’ international project to strengthen the region’s self-sufficiency and co-financing capacity.

TAS’ network of partners is wide in carrying out development activities. In addition to municipalities, non-governmental organisations, and entrepreneurs, key local and national partners have included the Association of Municipalities of Tartu County, Tartu County Youth Council, Tartu County Youth Workers’ Association, Tartu County Tourism Foundation, TÜ Taluturg, Tartu Business Advisory Services, Tartu Science Park, University of Tartu, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonian Aviation Academy and Tartu Airport, Tartu Vocational College, Tartu 2024 Foundation, South Estonia Tourism Cluster, South Estonia LEADER local action groups, and LEADER groups in the Peipsi region. Under LIFE projects and the new period, cooperation is strengthening with the Tartu Regional Energy Agency.

International cooperation projects have been carried out with LEADER local action groups and other partners from Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Ireland, Spain, Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal, Greece, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Moldova, and Georgia.

During the development of TAS’ new period strategy, the effectiveness of development projects was evaluated by strategy consultant Mihkel Laan.



As a result of the evaluation, the most impactful projects can be summarised as follows:

- **Implementation of the Youth Fund** – nearly 200 youth-led initiative projects have been funded, clearly activating young people in TAS’ region. This initiative has also received multiple recognitions.
- **Launch of the Tartu County Food Network** – systematically utilises local resources. The corresponding cooperation network involves over 150 organisations, including food producers, processors, caterers, R&D institutions, and commercial enterprises.
- **Development of the Emajõgi Network** – focuses on enhancing local distinctiveness. The network involves around 60 organisations and addresses a topic of strategic importance for the entire county, which is also highlighted in the county’s development strategy.
- **Launch of the Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme** – one of the largest and most significant activities engaging communities across the entire Southern Estonia region within the European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024 programme.
- **Implementation of the Smart Villages concept** – supports innovation in communities, has attracted nationwide attention, and has been identified as one of the priorities for LEADER activities in Estonia in the next period.

It is also worth noting that a key strength of TAS development projects is the ability to secure funding from sources beyond the LEADER measure, including URBACT, LIFE, Interreg, Erasmus, and others.



Youth projects

Tartu County Youth Fund

Since 2010, Tartu County Development Association has supported initiatives by young people aged 12–26 through the Tartu County Youth Fund. Young people with limited project experience often find it challenging to compete directly for LEADER programme support, but the opportunity to implement their own ideas is crucial for engaging youth with their home region and community. Applying for support from the Youth Fund provides practical skills and experience that are valuable in the labour market and for entrepreneurship.

The Youth Fund operates on a peer-to-peer principle – the Tartu County Youth Council coordinates it and young people are involved in project evaluation. Over the years, nearly 200 small projects have received support from the Youth Fund, including various events, training sessions, hobby clubs, poetry book publications, environmental initiatives, study trips, and company visits. Priority areas include entrepreneurship, health, sustainability, collaboration, and learning. Grants for individual projects range from EUR 200 to EUR 1,000.

The Youth Fund has been showcased beyond Estonia at several European Commission events and in other member states – the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Finland, Latvia, and Portugal – where this model of youth-led activities and funding has attracted significant attention.

Youth Fund partners: Tartu County Development Association, Tartu County Youth Council, Tartu Business Advisory Services, Tartu County Youth Workers’ Association, Association of Municipalities of Tartu County. In the new period, TAS will continue implementing the Tartu County Youth Fund.



Implemented youth sector projects	TAS budget (EUR)
Active and Enterprising Youth of Tartu County 2018–2021	42,000
Erasmus Youth Project	17,100
Implementation of the Tartu County Youth Fund 2022–2024	35,000



Local resource and regional development projects

Food networks (Food Corridors)

The Tartu County Development Association implemented the URBACT-funded cooperation project 'Food Corridors' with international partners from 2019 to 2022.

The project established the Tartu County food network. The network includes large and small producers, caterers, markets, hotels, universities, development agencies, municipalities, tourism networks, and Tartu 2024, among others.

With the network's participation, the Tartu County Food Strategy was developed, covering multiple sectors (over 100 organisations took part in discussions). As a first step, focus group interviews were conducted in spring 2021, and a background study on the county's food sector was prepared.

The strategy focuses on the sustainable use of local ingredients and better connections between producers and consumers. The county's particular strength lies in product development and innovation, leveraging the expertise of local universities and research institutions. Plans include creating a brand to highlight regional uniqueness and support marketing.

As a pilot activity of the cooperation project, a green festival experiment was implemented, during which several training sessions were held and an individual sustainability plan for the events was developed. The programme included river trips 'Discover Emajõgi', the festival 'Tartu



Car-Free Avenue', the Estonian Movement and Sports Festival, Tartu Hanseatic Fair 2022, events organised by Tabivere Community Centre at Tabivere Beach, Nõo Best Grill Fest, the Graduates' Reception at Priiuse Society House, the Ülenurme Autumn Fair and the 'Pedigree Animal' exhibition, Tartu City Marathon, the Inland Waters Festival, Maarja Fair, Tartu Student Days, the 'Delicious Food Route' in Kastre Rural Municipality, and the Apraaditehas Festival.

Partners: The Tartu County Development Association (Tartu City and County), Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região de Coimbra (Portugal), Municipality of Larissa (Greece), Municipality of Szécsény (Hungary), Business Support Centre Ltd, Kranj (Slovenia), Municipality of Alba Iulia (Romania), and Unione dei Comuni della Bassa Romagna (Italy).

The joint strategy of TAS' operational area for 2023–2030 supports the development of Tartu County's food region and food network. In addition to TAS' own measures, other funds are also used to support the implementation of these activities. To implement the Tartu County Food Strategy, TAS carries out the following projects: LEADER joint projects 'Series of Tartu County Food Events and Development of the Food Network' and 'Development of the Tartu County Food Region'; the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020: measure 16.4 support project 'Development of Marketing Opportunities for Agricultural and Food Products through Short Supply Chains or Local Markets'.

Implemented local resource and regional development projects	TAS budget (EUR)
URBACT international cooperation project 'Food Corridors'	91,460
LEADER international cooperation project 'Establishing a European Airport Cooperation Network and Promoting Collaboration with Chinese Partners'	50,520
LEADER cooperation project for the development of business relations, tourism, and aviation in cooperation with the Seinäjoki region in Finland	33,760





Tourism sector projects

Emajõgi River and Lake Võrtsjärv cooperation network

Tartu County is unique among the counties of southern Estonia in that it is entirely navigable by boat. This may not be immediately obvious, but experienced boaters confirm that Tartu County is like an upside-down Hiiumaa – both around Hiiumaa and within Tartu County, there are over 300 km of shoreline accessible by boat.

The Emajõgi Cooperation Network, which brings together riverside entrepreneurs, non-profit organisations, and municipalities, works collectively to guide regional development.

The Emajõgi River, Lake Võrtsjärv, and Lake Peipus are strategically important natural resources for Tartu County, and their potential utilisation is emphasised in both TAS' strategy and the Tartu County Development Strategy. Approximately 60 organisations are involved in the Emajõgi network, focusing on areas such as tourism, environmental protection, investment in recreational infrastructure, and joint marketing initiatives. Regular network meetings and collaborative activities take place, with a shared commitment to promoting the region and its offerings.



As a joint initiative of the network, the river excursion series ‘Discover Emajõgi’ was launched in 2021 to showcase recreational opportunities along the river. The excursions invite participants to explore river life during all four seasons while also encouraging contributions to the preservation of the local ecosystem. Organised by Tartu County Development Association, the river excursion series was included in the main programme of the European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024.



The Emajõgi network has also successfully launched another collaborative initiative: the annual Emajõgi cleanup campaigns. Volunteers have been cleaning the Emajõgi River for four consecutive years. The campaigns have taken place at six locations: Kavastu-Praaga, Luunja, Rebase Harbour, Lodjakoda, Reku, and Jõesuu. Each year, hundreds of volunteers participate, resulting in the cleaning of 100 kilometres of the river annually.

Partners: Tartu County Development Association (TAS), Võrtsjärv Association, Võrtsjärv Fisheries Area, and the Peipsi Fisheries Area Developers’ Association.

In TAS’ 2023–2030 joint strategy, a key focus is the development of services and recreational infrastructure related to the Emajõgi River, as well as strengthening the cooperation network and promoting joint activities.

TAS is implementing the ‘River Networks’ project, funded by the Estonia-Latvia Programme, in cooperation with the Koiva River region in Latvia, and participates as a partner in the Tartu County Association of Municipalities’ RTK project ‘Development of the Võrtsjärv–Emajõgi–Peipus Network and Waterways’. In addition, TAS continues to coordinate the Emajõgi river excursion series and river cleanup days.



Implemented tourism sector projects	TAS budget (EUR)
Emajõgi River and Lake Võrtsjärv cooperation network	30,000
Targeted marketing of the Peipsi region	40,032
Lake Peipus Festival II and III	14,500
Lake Peipus Festival and Peipsimaa Cooperation Forum	20,000
Lake Peipus Festival VI and VII	26,000



Tartu 2024

European Capital of Culture

A.LeCoq

Beverage Partner

Delfi

Media Partner

Tartu 2024 South Estonia
Community Programme

Regional cooperation projects in South Estonia

Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme

Within the Southern Estonia Community Programme, a total of 20 projects with around 250 value-based events were organised in 2023 and 2024, attracting participants from Estonia, Europe, and beyond. The community programme aimed to boost cooperation and strengthen Southern Estonia's regional identity. As part of the main programme of the European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024, the community programme helped showcase the entire region based on values important to local people and communities. All selected events highlighted South Estonia's values – clean nature, diverse cultural heritage, local food and crafts, healthy lifestyles, sustainable and innovative solutions, and active, vibrant communities.

Community events, supported through an open call as part of the Southern Estonia Community Programme, included: river excursion series 'Discover the Emajõgi River!', Tartu County food event series 'Tirin', Community play 'Leevaku Gold Miner', 'SetoKostipäivä year-round event', Community festival 'I Know Where My Food Comes From', Tartu County



theme days ‘Inherited Survival Arts’, Rõuge project ‘Sanna!’, Spatial design conference ‘Create or Quit!’, ‘Winter Trails Emajõgi–Suursoo’, Scenic landscape hiking series in Otepää, pilgrimage performance ‘Garden of Eden’, I Kodavere Song Festival (laalupido), documentary performance ‘Air Between Us’, Seto Dance Festival ‘Kad’ah Kavvökösö’, Navi Village Community Festival, Rose Festival in Kaagjärve, Peipsi Food Street – 175 km, South Estonia Inspiration Festival ‘Creativity Creates Hope!’, ‘Undiscovered Antsla Treasures – Lakes’, Urban space performance ‘Through the City: Valga+Valka’. The events were supported through the LEADER measure and the budget allocated to the Southern Estonia Community Programme by SA Tartu 2024.



The Southern Estonia Community Programme, which was part of the main programme of the **European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024**, originated in 2013 from the LEADER-initiated project by South Estonia’s local action groups, ‘Living on the edge’, also known as the ‘Yellow Windows’ project.

Partners: Tartu County Development Association (TAS), Valga County Partnership, Võru County Partnership, Piiriveere Liider MTÜ, Tartu City, Elva Town, Võru Town, and Valga Town.

In the new programme period, a cooperation project is planned to reimagine the ‘Yellow Windows’ concept in collaboration with partners from South Estonia, Spain, the Netherlands, Finland, and Northern Ireland.

Implemented regional cooperation projects	TAS budget (EUR)
Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme	48,500 LEADER programme*, 200,000 SA Tartu 2024
‘Living on the edge II’ (Yellow Windows II)	55,523
International cooperation project: ‘Strengthening communities and promoting tourism with National Geographic’s Yellow Windows’ (Yellow Windows III)	47,400

*An additional budget of EUR 121,500 has been allocated from the projects of other South Estonia local action groups, along with supplementary funding from the operational costs of the local action groups.



Community and innovation promotion projects

Smart Villages Development Programme

Smart Villages is a European Commission initiative designed to promote cooperation among local residents and encourage the use of various EU and national support measures and opportunities, thereby improving the quality of life and prospects in villages and communities.

Tartu County Development Association coordinated the national LEADER cooperation project Smart Villages Development Programme, which aimed to provide support and training activities for participating villages in creating their own smart village strategies and implementing innovative pilot activities.

In Estonia, 24 areas participated in the Smart Villages Development Programme cooperation project, including Luunja Rural Municipality and Meeriküla Village in Tartu County. During the programme, training sessions were organised on digital, green, and social innovation. Study visits to Denmark and Austria provided opportunities to observe how rural development is promoted in other countries and regions today.



When village residents lacked the necessary skills or knowledge, expert mentors provided guidance.

In Luunja Rural Municipality, the community aims to create a virtual map application featuring local producers and service providers. They found that residents often do not know what products and services are offered by entrepreneurs in nearby villages.

Luunja also has a rich cultural heritage that could be showcased to tourists. More tourists, in turn, mean more clients and consumers for local businesses. Participation in the project provided new skills and ideas for how to better utilise the Emajõgi River, which runs through Luunja, for recreational purposes.

MTÜ Meeri Küla Arendamise Selts has explored ways to utilise local nature as a development resource. A smart application is also planned to highlight local hiking trails and the plants and wildlife found along them. The Keeri-Karijärv Nature Reserve is located right next to Meeri. Village residents are highly motivated, interactions among them have become more frequent, and this engagement alone is already a significant value.





Partners (13 LAGs): Tartu County Development Association (lead partner), Valga County Partnership, Lääne-Harju Cooperation Association, Jõgeva County Cooperation Chamber, Võru County Partnership, Pärnu Bay Partnership, Järva Development Partners, PAIK, Ida-Harju Cooperation Chamber, Põlva County Partnership, Green Jõemaa Cooperation Association, Põhja-Harju Cooperation Association, Viru County Cooperation Association.

Participating villages/areas in the programme: Eassalu-Neitsi Villages area, Kamari Village, Kilingi-Nõmme area, Kiltsi-Ebavere-Väike-Maarja area, Koeru area, Kose-Uuemõisa Village, Kriilevälja Village, Kuremaa Small Town, Kääpa Village, Lubja Village, Luunja Rural Municipality, Lääne-Harju community, Meeri Village, Navi Village, Neeme Village, villages of Otepää Rural Municipality, Purtse Village, Ravila area, villages of Green Jõemaa, Taevaskoja Village, Taheva area, Uuesalu Village, Vajangu area, Venevere-Paasvere-Laekvere area.

As a result of the cooperation project, most Estonian local action groups incorporated activities related to Smart Villages into their strategies for the new programming period. TAS' strategy supports projects that contribute to the implementation of innovative, value-creating activities through the funding measures 'Smart Community Solutions' and 'Small Community Projects'.

Collaboration continues with the Europe-wide Smart Rural 21 network. To support the sector, various projects are being implemented: the 'e-Rural Resilience' project under the Central Baltic Interreg programme to enhance digital capacity and the 'Renoverty' LIFE programme project in cooperation with the Tartu Regional Energy Agency. An international cooperation project is also being planned to support the implementation of the Smart Villages concept.

Implemented community and innovation promotion projects	TAS budget (EUR)
National LEADER cooperation project 'Smart Villages Development Programme'	10,994
International LEADER cooperation project 'In Search of Innovation'	48,000
An international LEADER cooperation project 'Crowd4Region' that focuses on developing the region's self-sufficiency and co-financing capacity	33,880

Development cooperation projects in Moldova

Through TAS' development cooperation project 'Innovative and Digital Solutions for the Development of Rural Areas in Moldova', support was provided for the creation of a LEADER e-application system in collaboration with Polish partners (Polish Solidarity Fund). In cooperation with the Moldovan LEADER network, a call for applications was also organised to implement digital solutions in rural areas.

The following applicant projects received funding: a local action group web platform; software for accommodation and catering management for tourism businesses; an interactive map and information platform for identifying new owners and investors for disused buildings; software and equipment for efficient management of a fruit orchard; establishment of a robotics classroom in a local school; a municipal document management platform to improve transparency and workflow; virtual visitor routes and a web platform to enhance the digital literacy of the local action group; creation of digital databases and a monitoring module. The project was supported by the Estonian Centre for International Development Cooperation.

Partners: Tartu County Development Association (TAS), Moldovan LEADER network, Polish Solidarity Fund.

In addition to the above, TAS implemented an Estonian National Foundation of Civil Society Development Leap project during the previous period, which included the preparation of TAS' communication plan. Several new cooperation projects are also underway, including Interreg projects under the Estonia-Latvia and Central Baltic programmes.

Implemented development cooperation projects in Moldova	TAS budget (EUR)
Development cooperation project in Moldova: 'Application of the LEADER Method and Implementation of Calls for Application'	216,905
Development cooperation project in Moldova: 'Innovative and Digital Solutions for the Development of Rural Areas in Moldova'	159,200



LEADER PROJECTS SUCCESS STORIES



Rhubarb and gooseberries return to the taste map

OÜ Rabafarm

Location: Kaimi Village
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Leo Kivitar
+372 5648 1480
rabafarm@gmail.com
rabafarm.eu

Rhubarb cultivation has a long tradition around Tartu, but about 20 years ago, when the former Tartu canning factory stopped sourcing rhubarb in large quantities, most growers abandoned their plots. Leo Kivitar, however, did not give up – his grandfather, Evald Paju, had planted the first rhubarb bushes in 1965, and this heritage could not be lost. Today, the persistently tended plantation has expanded to six hectares.

In cooperation with researchers from the Estonian University of Life Sciences, gooseberry varieties have been selected to enrich production. With a thousand bushes, more substantial harvests are now arriving.

In recent years, both rhubarb and gooseberry flavours have become popular in Estonia and neighbouring countries, with juices and wines

receiving awards. Processors are waiting for high-quality raw materials. OÜ Rabafarm's equipment now allows the production of pasteurised juice and raw juice for other producers, as well as delicious rhubarb nectar for end consumers (brand name Rabarby). With LEADER project support, Rabafarm has established a new plantation covered with raised beds and installed a perimeter fence. In such a plantation, berries and rhubarb grow cleaner, yield a larger harvest, are easier to pick, and require less fossil fuel during production.

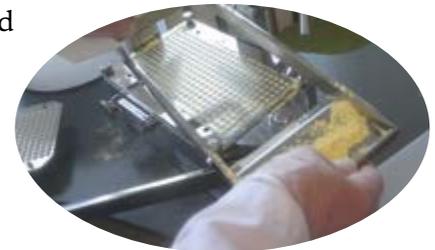
Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of equipment and interior setup for processing rhubarb products	2017–2018	7,994.14	15,988.32
Modernisation of rhubarb and gooseberry product production	2020–2021	3,859.37	7,992.82
Development of rhubarb and rhubarb juice production	2023–2025	44,615.10	89,230.21





Colostrum for food and health

When a cow gives birth, its milk in the first days after calving is especially rich in beneficial bioactive compounds. This milk is called colostrum. Surplus colostrum left after feeding calves is not accepted by dairy processors, so this valuable resource has largely gone to waste. OÜ Teadus ja Tegu was the first company in Estonia to produce colostrum powder products. The founders are experienced food technology engineers and researchers with doctoral degrees.



Teadus ja Tegu OÜ
Location: Märja Small Town
 Tartu Rural Municipality
 Tartu County
Contact: Väino Poikalainen
 and Lembit Lepasalu
 +372 505 7038
 info@teadusjategu.ee
 teadusjategu.ee

Today, the product portfolio includes colostrum powder for human consumption, calf feed, colostrum powder for pets, and capsules and tablets as dietary supplements. Antibodies extracted from colostrum were used in the production of a nasal spray against COVID-19. Concentrated colostrum whey protein powders and isolates are under development for use in innovative pharmaceutical and cosmetic products. With support from LEADER, colostrum preservation and pre-processing equipment was acquired, necessary for implementing the novel drying process. Equipment was also procured to ensure production quality throughout the process.

The project serves as an example of zero-waste valorisation of previously unused raw materials, reduces environmental emissions, and enriches the food sector with new products. Colostrum products also have strong export potential.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Valorisation of colostrum and acquisition and implementation of colostrum powder production equipment	2017–2019	3,858.85	8,088.24



Estonian cheeses to reach world-class quality

Andre Juustufarm OÜ sells cheese in the European Union under the protected brand Andre Farm and has received international quality certifications for its products. Previously, employees had to lift cheese moulds weighing over 13 kg by hand from the cheese vat, which was a significant strain, especially on their backs. In addition, the cheese curd had to be manually shaped before pressing, which was demanding for the wrists.

Now, with support from LEADER, a pre-press vat has been acquired. The entire cheese mass is poured into this vat via a pipe, where whey is removed, the curd settles, and pre-pressing occurs. The pre-press vat allows the production of high-quality, long-aged cheese, ensuring minimal whey and air between the curd grains. Mechanical pre-pressing takes place in the vat, and appropriately sized pieces can be conveniently placed into moulds, covered, and sent to the press. This accelerates cheese production and eliminates technological errors.

Andre Juustufarm OÜ

Location: Talvikese Village
Kambja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Erika Koroleva
+372 5304 9809
erika@andrefarm.ee
andrefarm.ee
facebook.com/andrefarm

Overall, the project support has improved cheese quality and sped up the production process, increasing the cheese dairy's output: previously, about 45 tonnes of milk per month were processed into cheese, while after the project, the volume immediately rose to 70 tonnes, with plans to reach 120 tonnes.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of the cheese farm pre-press vat	2016–2017	11,499	22,990





Alatskivi Mõisamaitset OÜ

Location: Alatskivi Small Town
Peipsiääre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Külli Must
+372 5740 0987
must.kylli@gmail.com
alatskivimaitset.ee

Birch sap promoted to lemonade

Küllli Must has long been a driving force behind the economic and cultural life in the Alatskivi area. Her company, OÜ Alatskivi Mõisamaitset, produces artisanal wines from local fruit, berries, and honey. It also offers exciting soft drinks, such as lemonade made from birch sap. Innovative products include fermented Ivan tea blends made from fireweed and grape leaves. They are made using a by-product of the wine-making process which would otherwise simply be composted.

Visitors to Alatskivi Manor have given high ratings to these beverages during tastings, but production volumes were previously limited by the lack of proper equipment. With LEADER project support, the company acquired a fruit crusher, press, and dryer to produce berry powder from pressing residues. More powerful and higher-quality equipment promotes consistency in product quality, and you can be sure that the fermentation of fireweed leaves is carried out at a controlled temperature and humidity level. A carbonation device adds a refreshing, fizzy touch to the lemonade.

As a result of the project, a full-time product technologist position was created in the company. Additional income opportunities have also emerged for local berry and fruit growers, as well as wild berry pickers.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Upgrade of production equipment at Alatskivi Mõisamaitseed	2020	5,621.18	11,438.94





VIINAMÄRDI
TALU & MEIEREI

OÜ Viinamärdi Talu
Location: Luke Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Denis Pretto
+372 5628 1180
denis.pretto@gmail.com
viinamarditalu.ee

Delightful sheep cheeses at Viinamärdi Farm

Denis Pretto, the CEO of OÜ Viinamärdi Talu, has vocational and higher education in agriculture and food technology from Padua, Italy, where he also worked on dairy farms. He furthered his expertise in Sweden and New Zealand, and is likely one of the few food producers in Estonia with a professional doctoral degree.

Viinamärdi Farm began producing Italian-style cheeses from its own sheep milk in 2018. To this day, it is the only producer in Estonia making *pasta filata* cheeses, which have attracted growing demand, increasing both sales and production volumes. There are plans to start producing mould-ripened cheese from sheep milk.

As the cheese production expanded, the need for newer and better equipment arose, given the technologically demanding nature of the field, where everything must be fresh, clean, and carefully controlled. Viinamärdi Farm identified the need for a pasteuriser, a yogurt filling and *mozzarella* shaping machine, and cheese aging racks. With LEADER support, these were acquired.

The pasteuriser increased production capacity and made milk processing significantly less energy- and time-intensive. Yogurt packaging now requires less time and labour. Forming *mozzarella* balls was previously physically demanding for employees, as the curd is hot, but now the machine shapes the tasty balls more quickly and efficiently.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of cheese processing equipment and refrigeration equipment for a delivery van	2020–2022	25,811	64,049.53





OÜ Järiste Veinitalu
Location: Aiamaa Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County
Contact: Kristel Sööt
+372 5373 8564
veinitalu@gmail.com
jaristeveinitalu.com

Järiste Winery expands production

In Aiamaa Village, Nõo Rural Municipality, in the former Luke Manor tavern, operates OÜ Järiste Veinitalu, i.e., Järiste Winery, where grape varieties best suited to our climate ripen in uniquely designed greenhouses. Winemaker Martin Sööt began making homemade wine in 2010, and since 2014, production has taken place at Kõrtsi Farm, where 200 grapevines are grown alongside apple trees. All work is done by hand, making each vintage unique. Martin and his wife Kristel have gained knowledge in wine and cider production from both northern countries and scientists at the Estonian University of Life Sciences.

Järiste's wines have received recognition both domestically and abroad: at the Baltic Wine Competition 2017, they won first place in both the red wine and overall grape wine categories.

The farm is part of the Estonian Wine Route network and welcomes wine tourists – visitors can tour the vineyards, enjoy a meal, and of course, taste a variety of wines and ciders. Collaboration is carried out with Taluturg and the Estonian Association of Grape Growers and Winemakers.

With LEADER project support, the winery's production area was equipped with modern equipment: several-hundred-litre tanks, a crusher, a juice press, and a labelling machine. The farm was officially registered as a small-scale alcohol producer and obtained a sales permit. As production expands, new jobs are created, initially for a gardener to care for the vines and apple orchard. Juice press services are available to local apple and berry growers. In the future, the family plans to build additional greenhouses and increase beverage production to 15,000 litres per year. They see wine production and wine tourism as an exciting new sector in Estonia, enriching both our culinary experiences and leisure opportunities.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Launch of wine and cider production and service development at Järiste Winery	2018–2020	4,882.82	9,765.65
Increase in production capacity and quality improvement of products at Järiste Winery	2024	6,021.63	12,216.20





Õnne OÜ

Location: Alasoo Village
Peipsiääre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Keity Raudmäe
+372 5900 9234
keity.eres@gmail.com
facebook.com/onnemesi

Smooth honey from a vending machine



Who would not enjoy drizzling golden honey from a spoon into a cup of hot tea on a cold winter evening? Unfortunately, honey solidifies over time at room temperature. Luckily, fans of smooth honey found a clever solution – a warming cabinet keeps honey liquid, so sweet lovers do not have to struggle with a hard spoon. Õnne OÜ also acquired a honey warming cabinet, but they took it a step further.

During COVID, when fairs and market sales stalled, the entrepreneur had to find a way to deliver healthy, smooth honey to customers contact-free. The solution was a honey vending machine! Thanks to this, a significant decline in sales was avoided, and with support from TAS' COVID-19 European Union Recovery Instrument, two additional vending machines were procured. While machines cannot yet fully replace humans in managing beehives, they can efficiently handle handing over honey jars and accepting card payments.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of honey vending machines	2022	6,822	11,370.03

Painting robot and a new production line

Avi Puutöökoda in Kastre Rural Municipality has produced custom furniture and interior elements, including from Estonian birch wood, for over 25 years. With LEADER support, the workshop introduced cutting-edge technology – a painting robot that enables faster and more sustainable production. The used lacquers and paints are water-based, thereby reducing their environmental impact.

Another production innovation was a computer-controlled line with a workbench and press, allowing, for example, the creation of 45-degree joint frame doors up to ten times faster than by hand. The new production line allows for a significant increase in output, and opens the door to export markets. There is less waste and scraps, and more jobs created for local people.

Avi Puutöökoda OÜ
Location: Hammaste Village
Kastre Rural Municipality
Tartu County
Contact: Ain Avi
+372 527 9673
email@aviptk.ee
avivabrik.ee



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of a furniture door production line	2017–2018	27,163.68	60,274.10
Acquisition of a painting robot	2018–2020	69,550	139,100



Wood splitter fills the holiday house downtime

In 2021, TAS updated its strategy and introduced a COVID-19 measure. With support from the European Union Recovery Instrument, OÜ Guitop acquired a wood splitter with a conveyor belt. It enables the production of firewood and kindling. From the company's perspective, this new product line helps profitably cover the low season at its main place of business, the Palu Holiday Centre.

Firewood has proven resilient in Estonian rural life, and when renovating old houses and installing modern heating, it is recommended to include at least one wood-burning stove or oven. Saunas and fireplaces are even more popular, both in the countryside and cities.

In the past, a stove owner in the countryside would usually buy firewood in long logs and saw, split, and dry it in their own yard. Today, many people prefer to buy already split wood, either loose or packaged. The wood splitter operates quickly and efficiently, turning domestic timber unsuitable for construction or furniture into cosy home heating.



**PALU
PUHKEKESKUS**

OÜ Guitop

Location: Meeri Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Lembit Toru
+372 5556 0888
lembit@tmsl.ee
palupuhkekeskus.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Acquisition of equipment to start a firewood supply and sales service	2023	3,145	5,241.67

Increasingly taller buildings made from cross-laminated timber panels

OÜ CLTEST applied for support from the LEADER entrepreneurship measure to acquire a crane and a containerised boiler house to begin producing cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels.

CLT panels are made from at least three layers of glued timber, with the grain of each layer oriented perpendicular to the adjacent layers. This creates a strong, fire-resistant building material suitable even for earthquake-resistant multi-storey buildings and high-rises. Panels, precisely cut to the required dimensions using a computer-controlled bench, allow for rapid construction, reducing labour costs. In the United Kingdom and Australia, CLT buildings over 30 metres tall have already been constructed. In Canada, a 160-metre bridge has been built from CLT panels.

In Estonia, CLT panels are among the most in-demand building materials, as all new buildings are required to meet energy class A standards. Producing these panels is also an excellent way to utilise locally sourced timber from Tartu County.

CLTEST OÜ

Location: Nigula Village
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Margus Vassiljev
+372 506 2677
margus@clt.ee
clt.ee



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Launch of the CLTEST OÜ production facility	2019–2020	69,991.45	149,460.07



Horse breeding in Luunja

Majestic and beautiful riding and driving horses captivate people around the world, and equestrian sports and horse breeding are prestigious fields. The South Estonia equestrian centre is located in Luunja, where horse breeding has been practised for more than a quarter of a century. Several young horse champions originate from this region. However, competing with top horse breeders in Western Europe has so far been limited by technological gaps. Until recently, Estonia lacked the capacity for horse embryo transfer, which allows valuable mares to produce multiple offspring per year.

Talliteenuste OÜ applied for a LEADER project grant to establish embryo transfer facilities in Luunja. Collaboration was carried out with the Estonian University of Life Sciences' Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, which will use the project results in its research. The activities also supported the objectives of the Estonian Sport Horse Breeders' Association breeding programme.

Talliteenuste OÜ / Luunja Stud OÜ

Location: Luunja Small Town
Luunja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Sven Šois
+372 511 1106
sven@horsemarket.ee
FB: LuunjaStud

The project team dreamed that Ibelle, a horse competing at Grand Prix level in show jumping in Europe, could be joined by at least ten equally talented siblings. These opportunities have now been created, and time will reveal the results.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Advancing Luunja horse breeding to an international level through embryo transfer I	2017–2018	4,500	22,500
Advancing Luunja horse breeding to an international level through embryo transfer II	2022–2023	22,500	45,000
Biotechnology tourism in Estonia – establishing a horse embryology lab in Luunja	2022–2025	67,540	116,666.69
Renovation of the embryo centre's facade, parking area, and manure storage, and acquisition of a power bank and an illuminated advertisement	2023–2025	30,965	61,930
Acquisition of a micro-manipulation system for horse cloning and in vitro embryo production	2025	18,412.43	36,824.86





Kolkja recreation area

Kolkja Village, located on the shore of Lake Peipus, has long attracted visitors with its museum, visitor centre, and restaurant. However, visitors have often been surprised to find that the lakeside village offered little opportunity to enjoy the beach. Although the lake – sometimes referred to by locals as the ‘sea’ – has a sandy shore, there was no proper beach area.

With support from the LEADER programme, a recreation area was established in Kolkja, featuring a volleyball court, barbecue area, and playground. Picnic tables and an outdoor toilet were installed, and pedal boats were made available for rental. The revitalisation of the lakeside area also inspired a local entrepreneur to begin offering sauna services. This first initiative is hopefully only the beginning. Improved recreational opportunities along the shore of Lake Peipus bring joy to both residents and visitors from near and far.



Peipsiääre vald

**Peipsiääre Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Kolkja Small Town
Peipsiääre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Raimond Võimre
+372 5448 0580
raimond.voimre@peipsivald.ee
peipsivald.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Improvement of the Kolkja recreation area	2018–2019	4,542.52	5,678.15

Ulila landing area

Residents of Tartu County have long remembered Ulila as a beloved excursion spot, where visitors were attracted by a beautiful summer garden. Accessible by boat along the Emajõgi River, the landing area had fallen into neglect and was not particularly attractive to either visitors or locals. Elva Rural Municipality took the initiative, engaging the local community and MTÜ Sooveere to launch a development project supported by the LEADER programme.

With LEADER funding, the cheese house (keesikoda) of Suur-Ulila Manor, located on the site, was restored and conserved. A protective shelter was built over the ruins to preserve the area's historical heritage. This created a valuable public space for the community, which has already hosted several events. In addition to benefiting local residents, the restored landing area also delights boaters navigating the Emajõgi River. A more welcoming waterway is expected to attract increasing numbers of visitors to Tartu County in the future.



**Elva Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Ulila Small Town
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Prit Värvi
+372 5149 508
elva@elva.ee
elva.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support*	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Construction of an outdoor gym and playground	2017–2018	10,160.86	14,088.60
Integration of a robotic lawnmower into educational activities	2017–2018	3,400	4,260
Annikoru skatepark	2019–2023	20,352	25,800
Enhancement of the functionality and attractiveness of the Ulila landing area	2020–2022	48,180.67	68,576.88
Diversification of opportunities at Puhja Youth Centre to promote youth entrepreneurship	2022–2024	2,824.49	3,530.62
Low adventure course at Konguta School	2023–2024	13,454.16	16,817.70
Restoration of the Ulila waterbody	2023–2025	8,377.92	10,472.40
Development of the Puhja playground	2023–2025	28,383.36	35,479.21

*In addition to tourism projects, this also includes community and youth initiatives implemented by Elva Rural Municipality.





**R pina Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Mehikoorma

Small Town

Meeksi Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Enel Liin

+372 526 5057

enel@rapina.ee

rapina.ee

Mehikoorma beach area gets a promenade

Mehikoorma is a cosy, quiet lakeside small town surrounded by pristine nature, welcoming both visitors and potential future residents. What draws people here? Primarily, a pleasant living environment.

With support from the LEADER programme, R pina Rural Municipality developed a promenade along the Mehikoorma beach near the harbour to enjoy the charms of Lake Peipus. Three different types of pathways were constructed: a 240-metre elevated wooden walkway, a 500-metre low boardwalk, and a 520-metre paved cycle and pedestrian track. The elevated walkway offers scenic lake views, while the low boardwalk allows visitors to observe local wildlife up close, from plants to frogs. Together, the paths form a 1.3-kilometre circle, serving as both a tourist attraction and an enhancement of the living environment for local residents.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Construction of walking and footpaths at Mehikoorma beach area	2018–2021	69,991.63	94,188.72



Luke Manor – more than a dollhouse park

Luke Manor Park is one of the most beautiful in Estonia, featuring a dollhouse-like coach house, a charming pavilion, a cascade of ponds, and unique park architecture. To preserve the park’s cultural heritage, the coach house and ponds have been restored, and a pavilion and parking area built. Locals envision a complete, attractive manor complex hosting cultural events and community gatherings, which require larger spaces.

The old steward’s house already had a renovated roof, reinforced walls, and new floors. Now, with LEADER support, the exhibition hall has been restored: historic barrel vaults, deep windowsills, and door openings were reconstructed, new windows and doors installed, and electrical work and interior finishes completed. The manor’s historic hall can now host café evenings, small theatre performances, and stylish weddings. After years of quiet under the park trees, the manor has come alive again.



SA Luke Mõis

Location: Luke Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Gea Järvela
+372 508 8359
info@lukemois.ee
lukemois.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Reconstruction of the performance and exhibition hall at Luke Manor’s steward house	2018–2020	70,000	90,785.06
Reconstruction of the I floor at Luke Manor’s steward house	2020–2023	69,995.11	105,383.40
Creating a higher-quality and safer capacity for outdoor events at Luke Manor	2022–2023	50,405.25	77,174.13
Development activities at Luke Manor’s steward house	2023	69,987.33	91,188.72
Improvement of tourism service capacity in Luke Manor Park	2024–2025	18,602.56	23,253.20



SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum

Location: Lange Village
Kastre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Mati Meos
+372 513 5490
info@lennundusmuuseum.ee
lennundusmuuseum.ee

Aviation museum inspires future engineers

The Estonian Aviation Museum displays 28 airplanes and 4 helicopters, along with anti-aircraft guns, rockets, and other equipment. Visitors can enjoy trampolines, skydiving, roller coasters and pilot simulators, as well as a catapult. The museum focuses on children and youth, showcasing modern technology and promoting engineering education. It collaborates with the Estonian Aviation Academy, the Estonian Air Force, and the nearby Lange Motocenter.

With support from a LEADER project, the museum acquired a Panavia Tornado fighter jet. This aircraft, developed by the UK, Italy, and Germany, is the only variable-sweep wing type in Western Europe.

The jet premiered at the 2019 Estonian Aviation Days, attracting over 16,000 visitors.



From 2018–2019, five more sea containers were purchased for exhibit storage, along with an electric patrol vehicle for monitoring the grounds and transporting people with mobility needs. A large set of accessories for displaying aircraft, a heat lamp for the information point, and a remote-controlled main gate were also acquired. These investments made the museum more visitor-friendly and improved access to exhibits. Whereas visitors previously could not enter airplane cabins, they can now explore them. In recognition of its development, the museum received the title of Most Visitor-Friendly Museum from Enterprise Estonia in 2019.



EESTI LENNUNDUSMUSEUM

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Improvement of visitor and exhibition conditions and working conditions	2018–2019	24,625.20	52,335.88
World Technical Culture Heritage – Panavia Tornado with variable-sweep wing	2018–2019	66,933.39	136,348.14
Assurance of the sustainability of the Aviation Museum	2023	69,413.45	93,486.51
Aviation Museum activities and projects for Tartu 2024 events	2023	49,276	62,495
Aviation Museum activities and projects for Tartu 2024 events, phase 2	2023–2024	58,351.43	73,107.35
Estonian Aviation Museum 25: compilation and restoration of the air defence department exhibition	2025	12,855.20	16,069





SA Saadjärve

Location: Äksi Village
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Kristi Saksing
+372 5911 3318
info@jaaaeeg.ee
jaaaeeg.ee

Ice Age Centre expands its range of experiences

At the Ice Age Centre, visitors of all ages can enjoy an immersive overview of how the world and Estonia's natural environment have evolved over millennia. The exhibition presents the causes and impacts of the Ice Age on the Earth, Estonia, and the Vooremaa region, explores the development of Estonia's nature and human settlement after the last Ice Age, and explains the causes of climate change and its study.



Based on visitor feedback, the centre’s guides and managers developed the concept of a colouring wall, currently the only interactive activity area of its kind in Estonia. The experience ‘Flight with the Northern Lights’ uses high-quality video projection to provide a realistic simulation of seeing the aurora borealis. Drawing inspiration from local folklore, the ‘Kalevipoeg Stone-Throwing Game’ has been updated with a newer, more reliable console. With support from a LEADER project grant, the game now features improved motion detection, enhanced graphics, and more robust software.

Investments in these enhancements have increased the centre’s attractiveness, which is reflected in the growing number of visitors.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Creation of the colouring wall concept and construction at the Ice Age Centre	2017	7,166.66	14,333.33
Kalevipoeg Stone-Throwing Game	2017–2018	6,408	12,816
Ice Age Centre ‘Flight with the Northern Lights’ in Äksi	2018	14,941.50	29,883
Creation of a children’s activity room at the Ice Age Centre	2020–2021	12,540	25,080
Creation of an interactive visitor companion at the Ice Age Centre	2022	6,195	24,910
Why is Lake Saadjärv unique in Estonia and Europe? Exhibition at the Ice Age Centre	2023–2024	20,060	40,413.34
Improvement of seminar services at the Ice Age Centre and creation of raft seminars as a product	2024–2025	3,976.14	7,952.29
Transformation of the Ice Age Centre café into a family-friendly café-restaurant	2025	7,484.60	14,969.24



HOLLYFOOD



OÜ Kaitsmarger

Location: Valmaotsa Village
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Katri Pettai
+372 5349 9275
info@hollyfood.ee
www.hollyfood.ee

Dining at Hollywood

There are few dining options along the Tallinn–Tartu–Luhamaa highway, and even fewer with parking for international transport trucks, where drivers can take their legally required breaks.

OÜ Kaitsmarger, running a restaurant with a large parking area below Hollywood Hill since 1994, saw an opportunity to expand. In 2018, the new, larger HollyFood restaurant opened, with kitchen equipment, dining furnishings, and tableware funded through a LEADER project. The restaurant now serves daily meals to nearby Valio employees and hosts party evenings for local residents. The focus is on fresh local food rather than fast food, which is typical for roadside restaurants.

‘We are truly grateful that we could implement our project with LEADER support, as it is very difficult for young people to start a business alone and relying solely on their own funds. Even a good idea can remain unrealised,’ sisters Katri Pettai and Maarja-Liisa Pettai-Pluum say and welcome everyone to dine with them.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Purchase of kitchen equipment for Kaitsmarger OÜ to provide catering services	2017–2018	13,338	26,676
Purchase of catering building furnishings for Kaitsmarger OÜ	2018	28,537.45	57,074.90

Cross-marketing and signage for Tartu County tourism

With LEADER support, five new outdoor maps were installed in Tartu County, replacing five outdated and damaged ones. Directional signs based on cross-marketing were placed at 10 tourist attractions and 25 indoor locations received brochure holders. The idea is simple – a craft shop encourages visitors to try a café, the café points them to a botanical garden, the garden shows the way to a goat farm, and the farm promotes the craft shop. Everyone benefits!

During the project, tourism entrepreneurs and developers, as well as local business owners, became better acquainted with each other’s successes and challenges. Moving forward, businesses themselves will keep the brochure holders stocked with fresh materials. The goal is to keep contacts active and inspire new ideas. SA Tartumaa Turism, i.e., Tartu County Tourism, plans to continue developing cross-marketing in the future.

visit TARTU

SA Tartumaa Turism

Location: Tartu County

Contact: Annika Ojasaar

+372 744 2111

info@visittartu.com

visittartu.com



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Cross-marketing and signage for Tartu County Tourism	2017-2019	16,816.80	21,021



EELK Puhja Congregation
Location: Puhja Small Town
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County
Contact: Tiit Kuusemaa
+372 5556 3876
puhja@eelk.ee
puhja.eelk.ee

Puhja Church tower and attic

The 15th-century Puhja St Dionysius Church is not only home to the local Lutheran congregation but also an active concert venue and tourist attraction. Unfortunately, time had taken its toll on the building, and the congregation lacked funds for repairs. LEADER support made it possible to restore the choir roof and repair the tower floors. The plan was to open the tower as a viewing platform, giving visitors a panoramic view of the surroundings. The attic was intended as an exhibition space to enrich local cultural life.

Today, the Puhja Church tower is a popular attraction, and the attic hosts a lively gallery, including youth events. The second floor of the clergy house, empty for 30 years, now provides accommodation for travellers along the Pirita-Vastseliina

pilgrimage route. Meeting rooms have been created for choir rehearsals and training sessions, along with a small museum space. Congregation leaders note that well-maintained spaces greatly support their work, as all public buildings in Puhja are heavily used.

With this momentum, new plans are already underway – the tower spire requires renovation and an emergency exit is planned. Early successes have strengthened confidence in these next steps.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Renovation of Puhja Church facade and window openings	2018–2020	43,089.02	96,762.75
Restoration of the choir roof and tower of Puhja Church	2018–2020	14,408.75	42,912
Renovation of the Puhja Clergy House	2018–2021	69,119.72	87,194.33
Development of the Puhja Pilgrimage Centre	2022–2024	49,810.69	73,553.89
Improvement of the Puhja Churchyard	2023	8,064.44	10,080.56
Enhancement of Puhja Church	2024–2025	23,462.10	79,913.70





Nõo Church square gains a dignified look

Martin Lipp, author of the lyrics of ‘Eesti lipp’ (Estonian Flag), served as pastor of Nõo congregation from 1884–1923. In 2021, Nõo Rural Municipality created a flag square in front of the church, installing and blessing a memorial stone dedicated to the flag song. The Estonian tricolour now proudly flies there, illuminated 24/7. Prior to this, with LEADER support, the EELK Nõo congregation built attractive walkways and a parking area.

EELK Nõo St Lawrence Congregation

Location: Nõo Small Town
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Mart Jaanson
+372 745 5195
noo@eelk.ee
nookirik.ee

Since then, the church and surroundings have become the true centre of Nõo Small Town. One of the paths leads to a rebuilt outbuilding, also funded by LEADER, which has housed a summer café since 2021. It has become a popular gathering place for both locals and visitors alike. Thanks to the project, visitors to the church and café can also enjoy modern, well-equipped toilets. These seemingly small improvements together enhance the quality of life and encourage people to stay in rural areas.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Exhibition of cultural heritage related to Nõo St Lawrence Church	2018–2020	29,098.08	52,756.20
Reconstruction of the auxiliary building of Nõo St Lawrence Church	2019–2021	43,252.80	55,440
Renovation of the interior of Nõo St Lawrence Church	2022–2024	32,748.70	97,669.85
Restoration of the window openings at Nõo St Lawrence Church	2023–2025	67,944	84,930



MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts

Location: Lohkva Village
Luunja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Kaire Vahejõe
+372 5615 8379

lohkva.kulaselts@gmail.com
FB: MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts

Lohkva youth evenings gained a sporting focus

Are young people glued to their phones all day? Congratulations, you have noticed the problem – the first step towards finding a solution. But do they actually have a nearby place to meet and connect? MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts asked the same question: where would young people like to gather, and what would they do there?

With LEADER support, the first-floor rooms of Lohkva Community Centre were renovated and furnished for an open youth centre. All young people are welcome. They can socialise, develop social skills, and explore themselves and their interests. A long-awaited gym with supporting rooms was created, along with a mini-skatepark with a ramp. Opportunities for active movement help break the screen addiction and benefit both physical and mental health.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Youth knows what they want	2018–2019	11,472	14,340
Partial renovation of Lohkva Community Centre	2019–2020	33,001.88	42,781.80
Partial renovation of Lohkva Community Centre, phase II	2020–2021	41,206.44	71,976.32

Active playground keeps phones in pockets



Toivo Ärtis, the Head of Extracurricular Activities at Kambja School, noticed that pupils waiting for the school bus often got bored and caused mischief in the schoolyard. But what could they do outside? Together with colleagues, he concluded that better opportunities for active play and movement were needed. The decision was made to think big – build a playground with activities for all village residents. Suitable attractions were brainstormed, and pupils contributed by drawing sketches and submitting suggestions. Finally, a climbing village set and a trampoline were selected.

Today, the Kambja playground is widely used, attracting youth of all ages and interests. Active breaks, skill-developing competitions, and outdoor lessons with movement are held for pupils. During breaks and after classes, pupils enjoy free time while improving their physical abilities. In summer, the playground is used by Kambja student brigades and youth centre camps. The project has also inspired the local community to initiate further development projects to enhance life in the area.



Kambja Rural Municipality Government
Location: Kambja Small Town
 Kambja Rural Municipality
 Tartu County
Contact: Kairi Keskpalu
 +372 5393 5836
kairi.keskpalu@kambja.edu.ee
kambja.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Construction of a movement playground in Kambja Small Town	2020–2022	13,848	17,430
Expansion of the Kambja Small Town movement playground for different community groups	2022–2024	21,148.80	26,436
Kambja Choir Academy	2023–2024	10,064.55	12,695
Acquisition of traditional Kambja Parish costumes for the performance attire of the mixed choir Läte	2025	7,417.60	9,272



‘Vunki Mano’ comes to Tartu County: community hackathon

The Tartu County Community Hackathon were held on two occasions: in 2020 at Nõo Basic School and in 2021 at Kõrveküla Basic School. These events brought together the county’s enterprising community-minded individuals with innovative ideas for change.

As a result, initiatives such as ‘Digiõpsid’ were launched, activities at the Kodavere Heritage Centre gained momentum, the ‘Little Village School’ was started, and projects such as Hollywood Hill, Kriimani Manor Cinema, Õ-tiim, and the Cultural Citizen Academy were developed further.

In total, 119 participants took part, alongside numerous organisers, contributing 2,325 hours to the development of Tartu County. The Community Hackathon were implemented following the example of Võru County’s ‘Vunki Mano’, in close collaboration with the Võru County experts, Helen Avarlaid and Kadri Kangro (2020), and Kristi Vals and Mai Timm (2021) from the Võru County Development Centre. Project partners included the Association of Municipalities of Tartu County, Tartu Business Advisory Services, Tartu County Tourism Foundation, and Foundation Tartu Centre for Creative Industries.

Association of Municipalities of Tartu County

Location: Tartu County

Contact: Kaidi Randpöld

+372 5326 8963

kaidi.randpold@tartumaa.ee

tartumaa.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Tartu County community hackathon	2020–2022	24,948	33,000
Tartu County community accelerator ‘Creative Rural Municipality’	2022–2024	17,600	26,800

From craft farm to green lifestyle centre

Jaago Craft Farm is located in Kurista Village, Tartu County. Workshops and craft camps here focus on reuse, resource efficiency, and sustainable practices. With LEADER support, the farm has established a craft barn that has become a true community hub – hosting regular clubs, training sessions, village meetings, as well as concerts and performances. Visitors from afar can experience the charm of rural life and hands-on creativity, while children enjoy activities in the garden and yard.

The family at the Jaago Farm is aiming for the farm to be recognised locally and nationally by 2028 as a centre for environmentally conscious living, offering smart, science-based, practical, green, and sustainable learning experiences. By sharing knowledge, participants engage in hands-on creation, reuse, sustainable building, waste minimisation, green gardening, growing their own food, planting pollinator-friendly areas, and composting – embracing sustainability in every possible way.

MTÜ Jaago Sõbrad
Location: Kurista Village
 Kastre Rural Municipality
 Tartu County
Contact: Inga Talvis
 +372 529 7919
 inga.talvis@gmail.com
 jaagotalu.ee



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Installation of heating and sewerage system in Jaago Farm craft barn	2017–2018	14,865.59	18,671.66
Community day for the Smart Garden and launch of the Smart Garden web platform	2024	10,951.53	13,551.42
Development leap of the Smart Garden: construction of the covered cultivation area	2025	10,019.95	13,980



MTÜ Sootaga Maanaiste Selts

Location: Lääte Small Town
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Urve Kaasik
+372 5341 2408
urvekaasik@hotmail.ee

The Lääte women’s choir costumes were inspired by the folk dress of their home parish

The Lääte women’s choir is part of Sootaga Maanaiste Selts MTÜ and will soon celebrate its 30th anniversary. To look dignified at song festivals and municipal celebrations, the dedicated singers decided to acquire new performance costumes. On the initiative of the society’s chairwoman, Urve Kaasik, support was applied for from the LEADER programme and Tartu Rural Municipality.

Fabrics, colours, and design options were thoroughly studied. The final choice was a wrap-style jacket and skirt, decorated with a cord embroidery motif taken from the traditional Äksi women’s coat. The costumes were designed by choir member Merike Kaunissaare and sewn by Tiina Zukker of Tinza Stúdio OÜ. The choir has performed in their beautiful new outfits at numerous concerts both in Estonia and abroad. At the 2023 Estonian Female Choirs’ Competition, the jury described the Lääte choir’s performance as a beautiful and radiant ensemble. A unified and elegant look certainly gives the singers extra motivation and may even attract new members.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Performance costumes for the Lääte Women’s Choir	2018–2020	4,000	5,000

Ceramics made at the manor craft workshop



Luke Manor is one of Tartu County's brightest examples of how a local community can revive cultural heritage long forgotten. The restoration started with park paths and the coach house café, followed by the main hall of the steward's house. With LEADER support, the distillery worker's house has been converted into a craft workshop. At least 1,400 hours of voluntary work went into its construction, with dozens of locals participating and various funds providing financial support.

Today, the workshop is authentically restored and fits seamlessly into the manor environment. It hosts active community activities, including workshops and a regular ceramics club. Women at the workshop have created stylish manor-patterned tableware, now used to serve local delicacies at the coach house café. Residents and visitors have discovered the building, and the Luke community is pleased that the earned income now covers the maintenance costs.



SA Luke Mõis

Location: Luke Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Gea Järvela
+372 508 8359
info@lukemois.ee
lukemois.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Reconstruction of the craft workshop at Luke Manor	2017–2019	70,000	90,893.16
Reconstruction of the craft workshop and the II floor at Luke Manor	2019–2020	20,729.76	25,912.20
Practical skills for youth through the programme 'From Old to New'	2020–2022	7,161.56	9,315





**Peipsiääre Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Peipsiääre Rural
Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Raimond Võimre
+372 5448 0580
raimond.voimre@peipsivald.ee
peipsivald.ee

The living environment along Lake Peipus becomes richer

For decades, Estonia's eastern shoreline has been seen as a quiet and sleepy region with little happening. Local communities, however, strive not only to preserve traditions but also to offer meaningful experiences for modern visitors. To keep people living in the region, jobs and a pleasant living environment are essential. Tourism can help create these jobs, but that requires attractions and activities for visitors.

With support from the LEADER programme, Peipsiääre Rural Municipality built a 7-metre-high, two-storey observation tower in Kolkja with a view of Lake Peipus. Its roof platform is suitable for birdwatching. The tower is also accessible to visitors with reduced mobility.

In Kallaste, outdated and unsafe playground structures were replaced with a modern and safe playground,





where both toddlers and teenagers can find activities and play opportunities. A public recreation area was established in Koosa, featuring a barbecue area, children's play attractions, and outdoor fitness equipment for health and exercise. In Alatskivi, an outdoor gym with lighting was opened, accessible to both young people and seniors, expanding local opportunities for physical activity.

Viewed individually, these developments may not seem particularly grand, but together they create a cohesive impact in the region, strengthening people's confidence that life in their community continues to thrive and develop.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Construction of an outdoor gym in Alatskivi	2019	10,974.72	17,261.29
Construction of a viewing tower in Kolkja	2019–2020	20,941.44	26,176.80
Kallaste playground 'Friendship'	2019–2020	22,658.68	28,323.36
Creation of a recreation area in Koosa	2020	12,522.33	15,652.92
Inspirational landscapes of Juhan Liiv	2023–2024	62,304	77,880
Cultural-historical trail of Kodavere Parish	2023–2025	7,232	9,040
Bridge over the pond at Alatskivi Manor	2025	3,510	5,850





Quick and expert help on the Emajõgi River

MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste

Location: Luunja Small Town
Luunja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Sten Šois
+372 5622 2313

sten@horsemarket.ee

FB: Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste

Each year, more and more water travellers visit the Emajõgi River – in canoes, inflatable boats, motorboats, and ships. Where there is traffic, accidents can happen. Or an inattentive fisherman may fall into deep water. In any case, trained rescuers must be ready to help.

Volunteer rescue traditions in Estonia date back to the national awakening, but river rescue is a new initiative. It requires special skills, equipment, and technology.

With LEADER support, Tartu County volunteer river rescuers built a floating pier at Luunja Harbour and acquired rescue, search, and safety equipment to improve waterway safety. According to the rescuers, around 2,000 boats operate regularly in Tartu and nearby areas. Added to this are casual visitors, swimmers, and fishermen – all needing the assurance that expert help is available in case of an accident.

Life-saving services, searches for people in distress, underwater and near-shore searches, technical assistance and river towing are all now ensured. Security is also provided for river events, such as boat rallies or fishing competitions. Volunteers completed maritime rescue training on their own initiative and continue to pass their knowledge on to new members.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Quick and expert help on the Emajõgi River	2017–2018	14,308.03	17,885.13
Quick and expert help on the Emajõgi River, phase 2	2018–2019	14,466.42	18,083.03
Nothing is lost if you know how to search	2018–2019	6,312	7,890
Renovation of the waste-cleaning and pollution-control boat for MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	2022–2025	36,363	45,454





Karijärve String Orchestra brings together young musicians from Estonia and Norway

Karijärve Keelpilliorkester MTÜ

Location: Karijärve Village
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Katrin Tamm
+372 525 0624
katrin.tamm@ut.ee
FB: karijarve

The Karijärve String Orchestra was founded by violin teacher Eveli Roosaar to offer children and youth from large families in Tartu County opportunities to learn music, socialise, and perform. The orchestra has around 40 musicians aged 5–21. Concerts are held in county schools, at village festivals and in churches, and sometimes abroad.

In rural areas, opportunities for serious performances, gaining stage experience, and meeting other young musicians are limited. LEADER support enabled young musicians from Tartu County to meet students from music schools in Oslo and Bærum, participate in joint training camps, and perform concerts together. Violin teachers from Norway and Estonia also exchanged pedagogical and methodological tips.

For the young musicians, the international joint project was an exciting experience that broadened their horizons, language skills, and musical perspective, while teaching teamwork and follow-through. International collaboration has continued beyond the project: Milutin Petrovic, leader of the ensemble Romus and violin teacher, has participated in Karijärve Orchestra's summer school several times, mentoring Estonian youth and inspiring local teachers.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Development of international cooperation for young string instrument players	2018–2021	11,223.20	14,029





**Kastre Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Kurepalu Village
Kastre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Kastre Rural
Municipality Government
+372 744 6524
vald@kastre.ee
kastre.ee

Entrepreneurial studies at Sillaotsa School

At Sillaotsa School, extracurricular clubs were primarily aimed at younger students, leaving pupils in grades 5–9 feeling that they did not have enough opportunities to develop their own ideas or interests. The rural municipality noticed that young people were becoming passive and reluctant to take part in shaping local life. The main goal of the project ‘Entrepreneurial Studies at Sillaotsa School’ was to activate and motivate youth.

Over two academic years, a total of 83 pupils participated in the programme. Working in teams, they developed their own products and presented them at the local Christmas fair. The teams were supported through training and mentoring, and gained inspiration during visits to the Entrepreneurship Village and SPARK MakerLab workshops. They also met local entrepreneurs, who shared their personal journeys and provided feedback on the pupils’ work.



Projects funded with LEADER support*	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Entrepreneurship education at Sillaotsa School	2017–2020	5,769.60	7,840
Disc golf course for the youth of Võnnu	2017–2018	3,008.77	3,960
Diversifying leisure opportunities for young people and developing practical skills	2018–2019	6,727.41	8,410.47
Preservation, development, maintenance, and promotion of local folk culture	2018–2019	7,784.62	9,732
Preservation, development, maintenance, and promotion of local folk culture	2019–2020	12,528	15,660
Promotion of joint activities and practical skill development for youth in Kastre and Nõo Rural Municipality	2019–2023	5,700.48	11,246
Furnishing and mentorship programme at Melliste Youth Centre	2020–2022	14,370.61	17,779.07
Expansion of artificial snow-covered ski trails at Vooremäe Health Sports Centre	2023–2025	69,990.83	142,200
Enhancement of the technical park for cultural activities in Kastre Rural Municipality	2024–2025	19,203.50	24,004.38

* Includes, in addition to youth projects, community projects implemented by Kastre Rural Municipality.





Jõe- ja Järvehuntide Akadeemia – nature studies in nature

MTÜ Jõe- ja Järvehuntide Akadeemia

Location: Tartu City
Tartu County

Contact: Linda Saare
+372 5559 9100
joehundid@gmail.com
www.joehundid.ee

MTÜ Jõe- ja Järvehuntide Akadeemia brings together the environmental education activities of MTÜ Emajõe Lodjasetels. The organisation's mission is to introduce the nature, cultural heritage, and boating traditions of Estonia's inland waters and their surroundings.

Through a LEADER project, over 70 outdoor learning trips focused on inland waters and wetlands were conducted, nearly half of them on the Viking ship Turm. 'The best way to raise local river and nature enthusiasts is to show them, from an early age, how exciting and unique their home region is,' the project leaders say.

The trips and camps reinforced school biology lessons and broadened knowledge of boat construction and history. Older students actively contributed by developing programmes and mentoring others.

Jõe- ja Järvehuntide Akadeemia believes the project support gave them confidence to grow into a true nature school: 'It was wonderful to have our ideas supported, gaining both courage and collaboration experience, while also accomplishing key development tasks. The four learning programmes developed during the project are still running today and continue to attract participants, proving their success!'



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Water-themed learning activities for youth	2018–2020	10,765.41	18,590.80





MTÜ Spordiklubi A.L.O. Crew

Location: Luke Village
Nõo Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Alo Veenpere
+372 5663 8775
alo.veenpere@gmail.com
alocrew.com

Journey to becoming an acrobat

Luke Village is home to about 80 young people, who previously had few opportunities for active leisure. A survey showed interest in gymnastics and acrobatics, but training options were limited. Modern gymnastics requires a special floor covering to reduce shocks and injuries. Landing mats encourage beginners, while a sports trampoline helps develop coordination and air awareness.

The LEADER measure project fulfilled the sports club’s dream of updating their equipment. The effect was immediate – training sessions became more attractive, jumps and flips higher and easier. About 25 children and youth now attend the gymnastics club, prompting the opening of an additional group. Sport is an excellent educator, and being active as a youth often leads to a healthier, more active adult life.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality	2017–2018	7,181.69	8,977.82
Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality II	2018	7,513.60	9,392
Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality III	2019	3,999.20	4,999

Youth centre designed by its users

MTÜ Önnemaa

Location: Kambja Small Town
Kambja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Kersti Leis
+372 5331 5342
kersti@onnemaa.ee
onnemaa.ee



Kambja Family and Youth Centre is one of the longest-running and most active in Tartu County. Local youth have found their way to the centre and actively help organise events. But that is not all – they also decided to design a new layout and interior for the centre. Perhaps someone discovered their future interior designer talent? Or it might help when designing their first home.

With LEADER support, the ideas of the young people became a reality. In addition to the new interior, new activity equipment was added: a climbing wall, beanbag chairs, games, a projector, and a screen. At a time when concerns rise about youth glued to screens at home, a cosy space to interact face-to-face with local peers is invaluable.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
New furnishings and equipment for the Youth Centre	2020–2023	11,318.80	14,368.05
International, entrepreneurial, and active youth	2023–2025	9,361	18,749





MTÜ Mäksa Kolhoos
Location: Melliste Village
 Kastre Rural Municipality
 Tartu County
Contact: Mati Möller
 +372 5665 1124
 mati@pritsumees.ee
 FB: maksakolhoos

Off-road vehicles spark a passion for technology

A dozen years ago, a family attended an off-road competition, Klaperjaht, in Jõgeveste. The father became interested, brought along two friends, and they started building an *off-road* vehicle under the open sky. Through social media, they connected with other enthusiasts, children joined their fathers, and even mothers got involved. In 2016, MTÜ Mäksa Kolhoos was formed, and in 2019, a youth technology club began, teaching through hands-on experimentation and experience. The association also has a training track, hosting the now-traditional Kevadküünd competitions: young participants help prepare the track, act as flag judges, assist in cleanup, and, of course, repair the vehicles.

With LEADER support, the club acquired tool carts and shelves, workbenches, and a workshop air heater. Each week, around 20 youngsters come and experiment. Some who started in 2019 are now building their own competition vehicles. Perhaps in ten years we will hear about them in sports or technology news.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Melliste nature and exercise trail	2018–2019	40 450	50 585.64
Equipment and tools for the youth technical hobby club	2019	14 401.41	18 001.78

From drifter to serious racer

Valter Teppan, the leader of MTÜ Raadi Rallirada, has been involved in motorsports for nearly half a century. His mentors included the legendary riders Richard Laur and Ants Kalam. According to him, Raadi airfield is perfect for both training and racing in motor and auto sports. Efforts began to modernise and make the tracks safer. Families with children joined the initiative, and many expressed an interest in motorsports. Initially, there was a lack of suitable equipment. With LEADER support, essential items were acquired: a car trailer, grader, pressure washer, tent, and signal flags.

Today, several successful Estonian-level racers and engineer-car builders have emerged from Raadi. Perhaps even more important, young drivers who previously could only practice in public car parks can now safely test their skills on winter ice and snow tracks.



Raadi Rallirada MTÜ

Location: Raadi Small Town
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Marten Teppan
+372 504 7431
racetech@kodu.ee
FB: Raadi rallirada

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Youth in motorsport	2019–2020	7,601.92	9,502.40



MTÜ Sibulatee
Operational area:
 Peipsiääre Rural
 Municipality

Contact: Liis Lainemäe
 +372 5648 0065
 info@sibulatee.ee
 sibulatee.ee
 FB: sibulatee
 IG: sibulatee

Colourful cultural heritage attracts tourists from near and far

MTÜ Sibulatee, founded in 2009, is a network promoting tourism in the Peipsi region and is one of Estonia's major rural tourism success stories. Today, the network includes 41 businesses, and their Buffet Days brings 5,000 visitors and a quarter of a million euros to the eastern coast of Estonia every autumn.

From 2017–2024, Sibulatee (Onion Route) received additional support through LEADER projects – developing a website, expanding a photo bank, attending tourism fairs, and publishing content marketing stories and printed materials. Travellers along the Onion Route always returned from study trips with new ideas and fresh energy. The trips also helped people to get to know each other better. Trust is a key binding and driving force in networks.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Development of the Onion Route Network 2017–2019	2017–2020	28,965.96	37,444.40
Onion Route 2020–2022	2020–2022	29,863.26	37,665.80
Onion Route 2023	2023–2024	15,080.29	18,942.00
Onion Route 2024: strong network and attractive region	2023–2025	31,998.65	39,998.32
Food culture along the Onion Route	2023-2025	15,399.60	19,249.50

Elva holiday region develops through cooperation

Since 2004, entrepreneurs and tourism organisations in the Elva region have jointly promoted and marketed the area as a holiday destination. From 2017–2018, guide training for Elva holiday region tours was conducted, including study trips to Finland and Pskov. The group also visited the Romantic Coastal Route holiday region to learn how local businesses create synergy around a shared idea. A photo contest was held and participants jointly attended the Tourest fair. From 2019–2021, a joint development project aimed to attract more visitors from Latvia. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions, outdoor activities such as hiking games and a photo contest were still organised.



Vellavere-Vitipalu-Vapramäe SA

Location: Elva recreation area in Tartu County

Contact: Gea Järvela
+372 525 4172
sihtasutus@vvs.ee
vvs.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Training and development activities for tour guides in the Elva recreation area	2017–2019	28,321.91	35,402.40
Elva recreation area with a new idea bank for the Latvian market	2019–2022	38,701.96	48,476.02
Practical skills for youth through hands-on programmes	2019–2022	12,808	16,010
Becoming more environmentally conscious through practical experience	2022	11,633.28	14,541.60
Launch of contact-free outdoor equipment rental and enhancement of outdoor event capabilities	2022–2025	29,186.52	45,551.07





MTÜ Tartumaa Noorsootajate Ühendus

Operational area: Tartu County

Contact: Board of Tartu County Youth Workers' Association

+372 5693 3707

tartumaa.noorsootajad@gmail.com

tnuhendus.ee

Youth centres support healthy living

Since 2015, the Tartu County Youth Workers' Association has brought together active promoters of youth work in Tartu County. From 2018–2022, LEADER project support gave additional momentum to the association's activities. This enabled study trips, training sessions, collaboration events, and recognition of outstanding professionals in the field.

Considering the current concerns of young people, a completely new initiative was launched: the Tartu County Network of Health-Promoting Youth Centres (TENK). To join, a youth centre must have a health team and an action plan addressing the region's most significant health risks.

To date, 17 youth centres in Tartu County have joined TENK. Within the network, innovative ideas are shared and members provide mutual support. A health-promoting lifestyle and mindset is encouraged among both young people and youth workers. During summer schools, participants discuss current health topics – from mental well-being to sexual health. The programme also includes planning for disease and injury prevention, while enhancing youth workers' knowledge in health promotion and crisis management.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Development and empowerment of the Tartu County Youth Work Cooperation Network	2018–2022	38,124.10	50,191.96
Development and empowerment of the health-promoting youth centres' cooperation network in Tartu County	2022–2024	17,909.49	47,259.04





**Elva Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Elva Town
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Priit Värvi
+372 5149 508
elva@elva.ee
elva.ee/mentorklubi

Elva Entrepreneurs' Mentor Club

Municipalities have limited tools to support entrepreneurship, making smart initiatives even more valuable. The Elva Rural Municipality Development Plan and governance agreement emphasise 'developing entrepreneurship and supporting cooperation networks through joint activities'. In 2018, a mentor club was piloted to connect entrepreneurs, foster new business contacts and ideas, and provide educational and inspiring meetings with interesting guests.

LEADER support allowed the mentor club to meet monthly, and participants responded enthusiastically. Mentors and seminar leaders were experienced entrepreneurs and specialists in their fields. Club meetings offered a great opportunity for new business starters to set goals, generate fresh ideas, and create practical action plans. Topics included general and timely issues such as branding, service design, social media marketing, stress management, organisational culture, entrepreneurial growth, and applying for business support.

The mentor club also gave rise to a separate series, Creative Mornings, focused on supporting and mentoring creative entrepreneurs.



Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Entrepreneurs' Mentor Club	2019–2023	3,400.06	7,450
Creative mornings and mentorship for creative entrepreneurs in Elva Rural Municipality	2022–2025	8,672	10,840



H₂O Visitor Game

This initiative by Tartu Rural Municipality launched a joint visitor game for nature and science centres across Tartu County. The principle was simple – visit sites, complete tasks, collect stamps, and win prizes. The goal was to guide visitors to lesser-known locations and encourage longer stays in Tartu County.

Fourteen centres participated, representing both Tartu City and rural areas. Many families with children embraced the entertaining and educational challenge. Participants explored the nature and culture of Tartu and Jõgeva County more thoroughly and for longer than usual. The game was so successful that, after the project, it expanded nationwide – covering topics from Estonia’s natural wonders to climate change.

Tartu Rural Municipality Government

Location: Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: H₂O Visitor Game
+372 515 2884
info@kulastusmang.ee
kulastusmang.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Development of the Nature and Science Centres Cooperation Network – natural science as a local asset	2017–2019	20,136.12	25,488.85
Development of health and ski trails in Lääte	2017–2018	32,743.43	42,672



Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök MTÜ

Location: Peipsimaa

Contact: Triinu Akkermann

+372 5346 0078

maitseelamuse.koda@gmail.com

FB: Peipsi Toidu Tänav 175 km

Peipsi Food Street

On the eastern coast of Estonia, popular fish and onion fairs are held annually. MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök decided to combine these events into a 175-kilometre-long food festival, Peipsi Food Street, which winds from Setomaa to Narva, opening home gardens, village houses, harbours, and pop-up cafés to visitors.

‘We found many enthusiastic people eager to energise their communities through food culture and showcase the region’s traditions,’ the organisers of the community kitchen say. Today, several new participants have joined the network, bringing their recognised flavours and fresh ideas.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Peipsi Food Street 175 km	2017–2019	18,025.28	22,531.60
Application of renewable energy for the development of community services	2019–2022	15,095.52	30,191.04
Development of the hobby beekeepers network	2022–2024	21,877.86	27,347.33
Creation of new opportunities for tourism farms in Tartu County	2022–2025	45,300	75 500
Development of health liqueurs in Peipsiääre	2024–2025	5,190	10,380





Luunja Jõesadam SA

Location: Luunja Small Town
Luunja Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Lenno Tobreluts
+372 516 6213
sadam@luunja.ee
luunja.ee/luunja-joesadam
FB: luunjasadam



Luunja Harbour development attracts visitors to the Emajõgi River

Luunja Rural Municipality has participated for years in planning developments along the Emajõgi River, including the construction of a river harbour and the appointment of a harbour master. The next phase of work focused on expanding the recreation services at the harbour.

With LEADER support, the harbour area was developed to include a beach, outdoor swimming pool, diving tower, outdoor gym, climbing park, caravan area, parking, and connecting paths. In total, nearly six hectares were landscaped and arranged. Together with the Luunja rose garden, manor park performance area, and newly renovated cultural centre, the recreation area now provides a pleasant environment for both locals and visitors.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Construction of a recreation and outdoor sports area at Luunja River Harbour (major project)	2020–2022	199,967.45	463,854
Making the Luunja harbour recreation area user-friendly	2024–2025	15,358	20,270

Kentsi reservoir recreation area

The Kavilda primeval valley is one of the most picturesque places in Tartu County, but until now, recreational opportunities there have been rather limited. The Kentsi reservoir restoration project had been waiting for better times for many years – and finally, they arrived.

Today, the lake has been cleaned, the dam regulator repaired, a car park and service area built, and benches, trash bins, and changing cabins installed. A boat dock and fishing rafts have been added, and a hiking trail now circles the lake. Local entrepreneurs are already offering paddleboard rentals, and the nearby disc golf park has gained new momentum.

The steep slopes of the Kavilda valley could even accommodate a cable car or a ski slope in the future. The lake itself could accommodate a summer water sports park and a winter ice park. For Elva Rural Municipality, this is a new and promising recreation hub, awaiting enterprising and inventive operators.



SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport

Location: Lake Kentsi
Elva Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Sirlu Pippa
+372 5837 7930
sirlu.pippa@elva.ee
elvakultuursport.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support*	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Kentsi reservoir restoration and recreation area development	2020–2023	132,192.92	300,129.54
Organisation of the Estonian Movement and Sports Festival 2022	2022	20,544.64	25,680.80
Mini sports field in Puhja	2022–2023	69,992.12	104,356.83
Promotion of effective joint marketing for tourism entrepreneurs in Elva Rural Municipality	2022–2024	6,368	7,960
Kentsi reservoir hiking trail	2023–2025	56,509.12	99,414.70
Estonian Movement and Wellness Festival 2024	2024–2025	32,566.76	40,708.45
Supplementation of tourism sites in the Konguta and Puhja areas with information boards	2024–2025	3,616	4,520

*All projects carried out by SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport are also listed.





**Kastre Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Uniküla Village
Kastre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: kastre.ee

Vooremäe Health and Sports Centre

The Vooremäe Health and Sports Centre is a gradually developing and expanding recreation area. Residents of Tartu have already discovered the illuminated cross-country ski trails with artificial snow, and now, thanks to LEADER support, the centre also has a service building where visitors can shower and change clothes.

The service building has enabled the organisation of health and sports events and created two jobs for staff who guide visitors during the winter season and maintain the facility. The completion of the building has given the centre a significant development boost, with active discussions underway with entrepreneurs about building a downhill slope with a ski lift. In the summer, the area hosts disc golf, running, and cycling events.

Kastre Rural Municipality plans to replace the costly trail lighting and construct a parking area near the building. These improvements benefit both the health of local residents and the regional economy.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Design and construction of the service building at Vooremäe Health Sports Centre	2020–2023	199,990.94	623,807.96





**Tartu Rural Municipality
Government**

Location: Lähte Small Town
Tartu Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Tartu Rural
Municipality Government
+372 510 6363
tartuvald@tartuvald.ee
tartuvald.ee/lahte-jaavaljak

Lähte ice skating and hockey rink

In August 2022, Tartu Rural Municipality opened an outdoor ice hockey and skating rink in Lähte, which was warmly welcomed by enthusiasts. Friendly matches and outdoor training sessions took place, and plans were made for camps and tournaments. Soon, the local sports school will offer opportunities for both ice hockey and figure skating. The long-term goal is to create the best winter sports facilities in Tartu County, enabling year-round use of the ice rink.

Currently, a full-sized outdoor rink has been constructed with goals and lighting, and an ice resurfacer has been purchased. This allows the rink to be used in winter, while spring and autumn competitions, such as indoor hockey, can also be organised. In the second phase, technical support rooms will be built, and in the third phase, a full-service ice hall will be constructed around the rink. Interest in winter sports is growing, and there is already a shortage of available ice time in Tartu County, so it is expected that the rink will be in constant use.

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Outdoor ice hockey and skating rink at Lähte Health Sports Centre	2020–2023	190,205.36	612,111.49



Development of Jõeääre boat harbour in Kastre Rural Municipality

The poet Contra once wrote about Tartu County:

*'The Emajõgi flows
through it – seldom does
it foam, it unites,
divides, and unites Tartumaa along the way.'*

Indeed, the Emajõgi River connects different parts of Tartu County, and developments along its lower reaches can benefit upstream areas as well. When additional harbours, docking spots, boat ramps, and recreation areas are created, they attract more visitors, who in turn consume local products and services.

With support from LEADER, MTÜ Jõeääre Paadisadam established a harbour with 20 docking spots in Haaslava Village, Kastre Rural Municipality. The works included deepening the riverbed from the Emajõgi to the harbour, constructing an embankment with a walkway, a 30-metre boat ramp, and a proper parking area. Future plans include adding more docking spots, opening a service building with a café and conference hall, a fuel station, and a boat maintenance area.

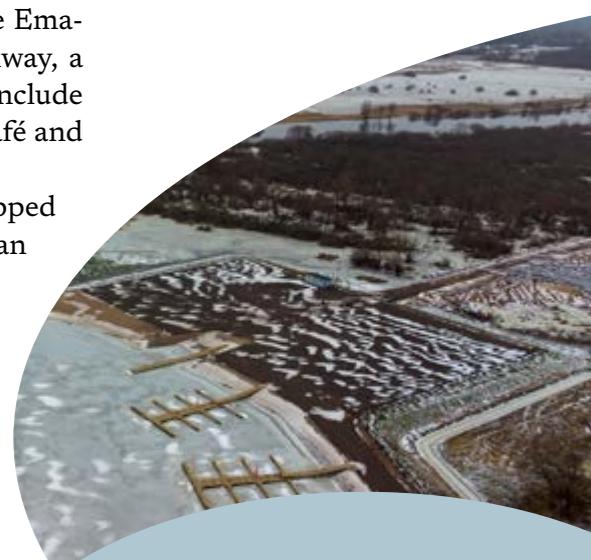
The project's initiators believe that there are many untapped opportunities along the Emajõgi River, and are actively setting an inspiring example.



MTÜ Jõeääre Paadisadam
Location: Haaslava Village
Kastre Rural Municipality
Tartu County

Contact: Lauri Roosior
+372 511 8174
sahkar@sahkar.ee

Projects funded with LEADER support	Implementation year	Funding amount (EUR)	Total cost (EUR)
Jõeääre Boat Harbour	2023–2025	199,966.17	405,775.52



Funded projects 2016–2024*

Measure 1.1. Development of small-scale production and services

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Production of healthy berry purées	OÜ Maheland	8,730.00	4,040.00
2016	Acquisition of the cheese farm pre-press vat	OÜ Andre Juustufarm	22,990.00	11,499.00
2016	Acquisition of equipment and interior setup for processing rhubarb products	OÜ Rabafarm	15,988.32	7,994.14
2016	Provision of juice production services for gardeners using their own produce	OÜ Marjapuu	34,004.99	16,424.51
2016	Shrub harvesting equipment	Habemiku Farm	131,000.00	37,763.53
2016	Valorisation of colostrum and acquisition and implementation of colostrum powder production equipment	OÜ Teadus ja Tegu	8,088.24	3,858.85
2017	Acquisition of a furniture door production line	OÜ Avi Puutöökoda	60,274.10	27,163.68
2017	Purchase of convective wood dryers	OÜ Benfort	122,200.00	46,642.28
2017	Solar-powered devices	OÜ Päikeseratas	9,583.00	4,791.50
2017	More aesthetic living environment – higher environmental value	OÜ Aiasöber	48,535.75	24,267.87
2017	Purchase of kitchen equipment for OÜ Kaitsmarger to provide catering services	OÜ Kaitsmarger	26,676.00	13,338.00
2017	Advancing Luunja horse breeding to an international level through embryo transfer	OÜ Luunja Stud	22,500.00	4,500.00
2017	Acquisition of a painting robot	OÜ Avi Puutöökoda	139,100.00	69,550.00
2017	Purchase of Vepak VI firewood packaging machine	OÜ L-Wood	58,500.00	29,250.00
2018	Launch of wine and cider production and service development at Järiste Winery	OÜ Järiste Veinitalu	9,765.65	4,882.82
2018	Purchase of honey production equipment	OÜ Marjala	7,946.00	3,973.00
2018	Construction of a production building	OÜ Jalak	105,155.00	52,122.79
2018	Development of Kure tree nursery	OÜ Kure Puukool	51,905.00	25,952.50
2019	Honey processing building with beekeeping equipment	OÜ Kaspri Talu	61,836.78	30,842.60
2019	Launching the production of bakery and confectionery products at Chez André	OÜ Lyonberg	79,983.48	39,991.74

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2019	Construction of an irrigation system and fence for Variku Orchard OÜ	OÜ Variku	24,692.40	11,947.06
2019	Launch of the OÜ CLTEST production facility	OÜ CLTEST	149,460.07	69,991.45
2020	Modernisation of rhubarb and gooseberry product production	OÜ Rabafarm	7,992.82	3,859.37
2020	Advancing Luunja horse breeding to an international level through embryo transfer	OÜ Luunja Stud	45,000.00	22,500.00
2020	Purchase of a juice production line	OÜ Tagametsa Mahe	79,912.00	39,956.00
2020	Acquisition of cheese processing equipment and refrigeration equipment for a delivery van	OÜ Viinamärdi Talu	64,049.53	25,811.00
2020	Upgrade of production equipment at Alatskivi Mõisamaitset	OÜ Alatskivi Mõisamaitset	11,438.94	5,621.18
2022	Acquisition of production infrastructure for thermal putty	OÜ Thermix	20,100.00	9,317.79
2022	Development of rhubarb and rhubarb juice production	OÜ Rabafarm	89,230.21	44,615.10
2022	Development of Siret Ott Design's business activities	OÜ Siret Ott Design	19,411.81	9,705.90
2023	Development of hay production technology	OÜ Kvaliteethein	21,000.00	10,500.00
2023	Innovation of sales systems at Magasiait	OÜ Magasiait	5,695.50	618.75
2023	Acquisition of digital tools for OÜ Pinnavormijad	OÜ Pinnavormijad	5,156.47	2,554.77
2023	Purchase of a jam cooker, drying cabinet, and packaging filling equipment	OÜ Tagametsa Mahe	17,322.65	8,642.59
2023	Development of an innovative free-range horse stable	OÜ Pedajas	13,650.00	6,825.00
2023	Renovation of the embryo centre's facade, parking area, and manure storage, and acquisition of a power bank and an illuminated advertisement	OÜ Luunja Stud	61,930.00	30,965.00
2024	Purchase of a new juice production line	OÜ Marjapuu	59,675.00	29,837.50
2024	Acquisition of a wood splitter	OÜ Karupoeg	16,100.00	8,050.00
2024	Acquisition of a wood splitter for the valorisation of low-quality timber in the region	OÜ Arborist Expres	10,500.00	5,250.00
2024	Increase in production capacity and quality improvement of products at Järiste Winery	OÜ Järiste Veinitalu	12,216.20	6,021.63
2024	Improvement of seminar services at the Ice Age Centre and creation of raft seminars as a product	SA Saadjärve	7,952.29	3,976.14

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2024	Development of health liqueurs in Peipsiääre	MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök	10,380.00	5,190.00
2024	Acquisition of a micro-manipulation system for horse cloning and in vitro embryo production	OÜ Luunja Stud	36,824.86	18,412.43
2024	Purchase of equipment to produce beekeeping products	OÜ Marjala	5,308.67	2,654.33
		Total	1,819,762	841,672

Measure 1.2. Tourism entrepreneurship development

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Creation of the colouring wall concept and construction at the Ice Age Centre	SA Saadjärve	14,333.33	7,166.66
2016	Further development of the innovation of straw houses in Nina	OÜ Kormoran Kayak	29,329.60	14,664.80
2016	Development of the space theme park 'Invisible Seeing, Unknown Knowing'	MTÜ Stellaarium	87,196.00	70,000.00
2016	Cross-marketing and signage for Tartu County tourism	SA Tartumaa Turism	21,021.00	16,816.80
2016	Kalevipoeg Stone-Throwing Game	SA Saadjärve	12,816.00	6,408.00
2017	Purchase of kitchen equipment for catering services at OÜ Kaitsmarger	OÜ Kaitsmarger	57,074.90	28,537.45
2017	Reconstruction of the performance and exhibition hall at Luke Manor's steward house	SA Luke Möis	90,785.06	70,000.00
2017	Ice Age Centre 'Flight with the Northern Lights' in Äksi	SA Saadjärve	29,883.00	14,941.50
2017	Renovation of Puhja Church facade and window openings	EELK Puhja Congregation	96,762.75	43,089.02
2018	Development of the recreation area at Luunja River Harbour	Luunja Rural Municipality Government	19,362.50	15,490.00
2018	Improvement of visitor and exhibition conditions and working conditions	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	52,335.88	24,625.20
2018	Improvement of infrastructure and tourism development at the Ilbu Hunting and Guest House	Jaan Šults	36,420.83	18,210.41
2018	Construction of walking and footpaths at Mehikoorma beach area	Räpina Rural Municipality Government	94,188.72	69,991.63

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2018	Improvement of the Kolkja recreation area	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	5,678.15	4,542.52
2018	Reconstruction of the craft workshop and the II floor at Luke Manor	SA Luke Mõis	25,912.20	20,729.76
2018	World Technical Culture Heritage – Panavia Tornado with variable-sweep wing	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	136,348.14	66,933.39
2018	Brauermoto Extreme Motor Centre	OÜ Brauermoto	5,099.16	2,549.58
2019	Development of public tourism sites; procurement of equipment for artificial snow production for the ski marathon	Club Tartu Marathon	90,000.00	69,993.00
2019	Outdoor space development for Sofi Farm's rural environment	OÜ Sofi Talu	22,473.00	9,103.80
2020	Reconstruction of the I floor at Luke Manor's steward house	SA Luke Mõis	105,383.40	69,995.11
2020	Creation of a children's activity room at the Ice Age Centre	SA Saadjärve	25,080.00	12,540.00
2020	Enhancement of the functionality and attractiveness of the Ulila landing area	Elva Rural Municipality Government	68,576.88	48,180.67
2020	Reconstruction of the Luunja pump house into a museum bell tower on the central square	Luunja Rural Municipality Government	67,854.60	54,283.68
2022	Why is Lake Saadjärv unique in Estonia and Europe? Exhibition at the Ice Age Centre	SA Saadjärve	40,413.34	20,060.00
2022	Additional furniture for the carriage horse stable at Alatskivi Castle	SA Alatskivi Loss	9,657.80	5,794.68
2022	Improvement of the Puhja Churchyard	EELK Puhja Congregation	10,080.56	8,064.44
2022	Tedreküla Dryer and Guesthouse	OÜ Juulamõis	174,050.00	69,968.10
2023	Construction of the riding arena foundation and riding field	Priit Ojamaa's Treiali Farm	13,575.00	6,787.50
2023	Reconstruction of the terrace at the Emajõe-Suursoo Centre	Luunja Rural Municipality Government	49,000.00	39,200.00
2023	Freiberg Haus and inclusion of Mehikoorma on the tourism map	OÜ Meistrite Kool	44,048.51	21,799.25
2024	'Setting the Table for the Outdoor Area' project	OÜ Maitsemõis	41,495.00	20,747.50

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2024	SUP Academy training in Luunja Rural Municipality	OÜ SUP Akadeemia	8,234.18	4,117.09
2024	Expansion of Saaga Harbour with the creation of new berths	OÜ Silvernet Group	65,473.68	32,736.84
2024	Development of Aida Event Hall	OÜ Lumira	30,701.59	15,350.79
2024	Improvement of tourism service capacity in Luke Manor Park	SA Luke Möis	23,253.20	18,602.56
2024	Supplementing tourism sites in the Konguta and Puhja areas with information boards	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	4,520.00	3,616.00
2024	Making the Luunja harbour recreation area user-friendly	SA Luunja Jõesadam	20,270.00	15,358.00
2024	Furnishing the café at the Piirissaar Community House	OÜ Piirivee	9,146.38	4,573.19
2024	Transformation of the Ice Age Centre café into a family-friendly café-restaurant	SA Saadjärve	14,969.24	7,484.60
2024	You are welcome to visit the drying barn-guesthouse!	OÜ Juulamöis	18,263.57	9,131.78
2024	Bridge over the pond at Alatskivi Manor	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	5,850.00	3,510.00
Total			1,776,917	1,065,695

Measure 1.3. COVID-19 support measure

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2022	Creation of an interactive visitor companion at the Ice Age Centre	SA Saadjärve	24,910.00	6,195.00
2022	Creation of higher-quality and safer capacity for outdoor events at Luke Manor	SA Luke Möis	77,174.13	50,405.25
2022	Acquisition of honey vending machines	OÜ Önnela	11,370.03	6,822.00
2022	Launch of contact-free outdoor equipment rental and enhancement of outdoor event capabilities	SA Vapramäe-Vellavere-Vitipalu	45,551.07	29,186.52
2022	Acquisition of equipment to get started in storing and selling firewood	OÜ Guitop	5,241.67	3,145.00
2022	Development activities at Luke Manor's steward house	SA Luke Möis	91,188.72	69,987.33
2022	Biotechnology tourism in Estonia – establishing a horse embryology lab in Luunja	OÜ Luunja Stud	116,666.69	67,540.00

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2022	Creation of new opportunities for tourism farms in Tartu County	MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök	75,500.00	45,300.00
2024	LEADER joint project 'Supporting the Development of Bioeconomy Enterprises' under the COVID-19 support measure	Tartu County Development Association (TAS)	12,650.00	10,089.64
2024	Launch of sailing trips on Lake Peipus with a new two-masted barge	MTÜ Emajõe Lodjaselts	25,400.00	14,732.00
Total			485,652	303,403

Measure 2.1. Preservation and promotion of local traditions

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Reconstruction of the craft workshop at Luke Manor	SA Luke Mõis	90,893.16	70,000.00
2016	Introduction of chess and table tennis at the Kaagvere Outdoor Centre	Village Association Kawershof	5,603.60	4,458.88
2016	Construction of an outdoor gym and playground	Elva Rural Municipality Government	14,088.60	10,160.86
2017	Quick and expert help on the Emajõgi River	MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	17,885.13	14,308.03
2017	Establishment of an outdoor classroom to promote rural life	MTÜ Metsaelu	35,696.64	28,550.00
2017	Development of health and ski trails in Lähte	Tartu Rural Municipality Government	42,672.00	32,743.43
2017	Ground-source heating installation	Meeri Village Development Association	29,163.63	23,026.94
2017	Partial renovation of the garage for MTÜ Laeva Vabatahtlik Tuletõrje Selts	MTÜ Laeva Vabatahtlik Tuletõrje Selts	36,995.52	18 480,99
2017	Installation of heating and sewerage system in Jaago Farm craft barn	MTÜ Jaago Sõbrad	18,671.66	14,865.59
2017	Quick and expert help on the Emajõgi River, phase 2	MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	18,083.03	14,466.42
2017	Melliste nature and exercise trail	MTÜ Mäksa Kolhoos	50,585.64	40,450.00
2017	Nõo Rural Municipality Christmas Village	Nõo Rural Municipality Government	11,983.20	9,500.00

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2017	Signposting Vara region's cultural heritage and publishing a book	MTÜ Vara Maarahva Selts	5,126.40	3,429.12
2017	Renovation of the Puhja Clergy House	EELK Puhja Congregation	87,194.33	69,119.72
2018	Support investment for Tartumaa Equestrian Club: purchase of competition obstacles	Tartumaa Equestrian Club	20,400.00	16,315.20
2018	Preservation, development, maintenance, and promotion of local folk culture	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	9,732.00	7,784.62
2018	Koosa gym	SA Vara Sport	15,996.57	12,797.25
2018	Exhibition of cultural heritage related to Nõo Church	EELK Nõo St Lawrence Congregation	52,756.20	29,098.08
2018	Kastre Rural Municipality Social Services Centre	SA Hooldekodu Härmalõng	26,702.04	21,361.63
2018	Improvement of sports facilities for residents of Räämsi Village	Uula Village Association	6,270.00	5,016.00
2018	Restoration of the choir roof and tower of Puhja Church	EELK Puhja Congregation	42,912.00	14,408.75
2018	Rahinge Külakatel – renewed content in a new format	Rahinge Village Association	26,972.58	21,578.06
2018	Traditional clothing for the men of the Reola mixed choir	Reola mixed group	3,904.00	3,123.20
2018	Procurement of wrestling mats for local youth sports development	Kambja Wrestling Club Englas	5,970.00	4,776.00
2018	Construction of an outdoor gym in Alatskivi	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	17,261.29	10,974.72
2018	Construction of a viewing tower in Kolkja	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	26,176.80	20,941.44
2018	Performance costumes for the Lääte Women's Choir	MTÜ Sootaga Maanaiste Selts	5,000.00	4,000.00
2018	Exhibition 'History and Developments in Veterinary Science in the Museum Collection' in cooperation with the Estonian University of Life Sciences, 8 Sept 2019	SA Eesti Maaelumuuseumid	36,544.50	29,235.59
2018	Traditional costumes and footwear for MTÜ Naisrühm Hermine	MTÜ Naisrühm Hermine	23,608.00	18,350.88
2018	Reconstruction of the auxiliary building of Nõo Saint Lawrence Church	EELK Nõo St Lawrence Congregation	55,440.00	43,252.80

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2018	Application of renewable energy for the development of community services	MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök	30,191.04	15,095.52
2019	Preservation, development, maintenance, and promotion of local folk culture	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	15,660.00	12,528.00
2019	Kallaste playground 'Friendship'	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	28,323.36	22,658.68
2019	Annikoru skatepark	Elva Rural Municipality Government	25,800.00	20,352.00
2019	Partial renovation of the Lohkva Community Centre	MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts	42,781.80	33,001.88
2020	Creation of a recreation area in Koosa	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	15,652.92	12,522.33
2020	Construction of a movement playground in Kambja Small Town	Kambja Rural Municipality Government	17,430.00	13,848.00
2020	Renovation of the Ulila Centre's roof	MTÜ Sooveere	71,604.00	53,273.38
2020	Tartu County community creative workdays	Association of Municipalities of Tartu County	33,000.00	24,948.00
2020	Partial renovation of Lohkva Community Centre, phase II	MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts	71,976.32	41,206.44
2022	Expansion of the Kambja Small Town movement playground for different community groups	Kambja Rural Municipality Government	26,436.00	21,148.80
2022	Tartu County community accelerator 'Creative Rural Municipality'	Association of Municipalities of Tartu County	26,800.00	17,600.00
2022	Renovation of the interior of Nõo St Lawrence Church	EELK Nõo St Lawrence Congregation	97,669.85	32,748.70
2022	Mini sports field in Puhja	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	104,356.83	69,992.12
2022	Development of Kriimani village square and ensuring drinking water in emergencies	MTÜ Tareke	4,935.00	3,948.00
2022	Assurance of the sustainability of the Aviation Museum	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	93,486.51	69,413.45
2022	Installation of fuel tank, tanker base, and car park at Mehikoorma Harbour	SA Mehikoorma Sadam	79,591.00	49,046.60
2022	Furniture and paintings of the Nolcken family	SA Alatskivi Loss	8,921.10	5,978.00

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2022	Onion Route 2023	MTÜ Sibulatee	18,942.00	15,080.29
2022	Procurement of boundary fencing equipment	Club Tartu Marathon	57,150.00	45,720.00
2022	Renovation of the waste-cleaning and pollution-control boat for MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	45,454.00	36,363.20
2022	Expansion of artificial snow-covered ski trails at Vooremäe Health Sports Centre	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	142,200.00	69,990.83
2022	Cultural-historical trail of Kodavere Parish	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	9,040.00	7,232.00
2022	Kentsi reservoir hiking trail	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	99,414.70	56,509.12
2022	Expansion of activity opportunities for the Meeri Village Association	Meeri Küla Arendamise Selts	29,091.38	23,434.70
2023	Outdoor gym in the Kaagvere Open-Air Centre	Village Association Kawershof	25,635.10	20,508.08
2023	Acquisition of a new ceramic kiln and provision of workshops	MTÜ Celadon	3,201.62	2,561.29
2023	Aviation Museum activities and projects for Tartu 2024 events	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	62,495.00	49,276.00
2023	Kambja Choir Academy	Kambja Rural Municipality Government	12,695.00	10,064.55
2023	Swimming pier at the Koosa reservoir	Koosa Youth Club	3,973.06	3,178.44
2023	Phase 1 renovation of Luunja Manor Park	Luunja Rural Municipality Government	34,920.00	27,936.00
2023	Inspirational landscapes of Juhan Liiv	Peipsiääre Rural Municipality Government	77,880.00	62,304.00
2023	Aviation Museum activities and projects for Tartu 2024 events, phase 2	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	73,107.35	58,351.43
2023	Community day for the Smart Garden and launch of the Smart Garden web platform	MTÜ Jaago Sõbrad	13,551.42	10,951.53
2023	Tartu County cultural heritage design trail and empowerment of the designers' community	SA Tartu Loomemajanduskeskus	36,415.62	29,132.49
2023	Restoration of the Ulila waterbody	Elva Rural Municipality Government	10,472.40	8,377.92

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2023	Development of the Puhja playground	Elva Rural Municipality Government	35,479.21	28,383.36
2023	Cultural event 'People and Clothing' and acquisition of traditional costumes	MTÜ Naisrühm Hermine	17,178.00	13,742.40
2023	Estonian Movement and Wellness Festival 2024	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	40,708.45	32,566.76
2023	Restoration of the window openings at Nõo Church	EELK Nõo St Lawrence Congregation	84,930.00	67,944.00
2023	Enhancement of Puhja Church	EELK Puhja Congregation	79,913.70	23,462.10
2023	Enhancement of the technical park for cultural activities in Kastre Rural Municipality	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	24,004.38	19,203.50
2024	Purchase of baritone saxophone YBS 480 for the Väägvere Brass Band	MTÜ Väägvere Pasunakoor	6,390.00	5,112.00
2024	Development of Kallaste football park	Football Club FC Peipsi United Junior	10,944.35	8,755.48
2024	Estonian Aviation Museum 25: compilation and restoration of the air defence department exhibition	SA Eesti Lennundusmuuseum	16,069.00	12,855.20
2024	Acquisition of traditional Kambja Parish costumes for the performance attire of the mixed choir Läte	Kambja Rural Municipality	9,272.00	7,417.60
2024	Development leap of the Smart Garden: the under shelter construction	MTÜ Jaago Sõbrad	13,980.00	10,019.95
Total			2,729,412	1,902,318

Measure 2.2. Youth activation

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Promotion of youth physical activity through orienteering	MTÜ Seiklushunt	14,796.28	9,441.69
2016	Expansion of sailing opportunities in TAS' region	Tartu County Sailing Association	13,920.00	11,136.00
2016	Provision of motorsport opportunities for youth by MTÜ LGT	MTÜ LGT	17,791.20	14,036.16
2016	Helpful Youth	MTÜ Ujumise Spordiklubi	12,584.00	5,994.35

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2017	Entrepreneurship education at Sillaotsa School	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	7,840.00	5,769.60
2017	Outdoor gym at Melliste sports field	MTÜ Lost Loomemajandus	13,577.28	10,762.28
2017	Disc golf course for youth in Võnnu	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	3,960.00	3,008.77
2017	Integration of a robotic lawnmower into teaching	Elva Rural Municipality Government	4,260.00	3,400.00
2017	Versatile Young Person	Tartu County School Sports Union	12,584.00	10,067.20
2017	A united team is a strong team	Tartu County Sailing Association	4,167.50	3,334.00
2017	Construction of an outdoor gym at Vara Stadium	MTÜ Vara Lastekaitse Ühing	23,728.31	14,720.00
2017	Development of international cooperation for young string instrument players	Karijärve Keelpilliorkester MTÜ	14,029.00	11,223.20
2017	Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality	Sports Club A.L.O. Crew	8,977.82	7,181.69
2017	Water-themed learning activities for youth	MTÜ Jõe- ja Järvehuntide Akadeemia	18,590.80	10,765.41
2018	Diversification of youth leisure activities and development of practical skills	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	8,410.47	6,727.41
2018	Nothing is lost if you know how to search	MTÜ Luunja Vabatahtlik Jõepääste	7,890.00	6,312.00
2018	Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality II	Sports Club A.L.O. Crew	9,392.00	7,513.60
2018	Youth knows what they want	MTÜ Lohkva Külaselts	14,340.00	11,472.00
2018	Equipment and tools for youth technical clubs	MTÜ Mäksa Kolhoos	18,001.78	14,401.41
2018	Purchase of mobile basketball equipment to increase youth activity	MTÜ BC Elva	8,368.12	6,566.97
2019	Acquisition of Race BMX starting gate for Reola BMX hall	MTÜ Tartu BMX Racing Indoor	14,175.15	11,340.12
2019	Promotion of joint activities and practical skill development for youth in Kastre and Nõo Rural Municipality	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	11,246.00	5,700.48
2019	Year-round sailing	Saadjärv Catamaran Club	18,203.50	14,527.84

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2019	Youth in motorsport	MTÜ Raadi Rallirada	9,502.40	7,601.92
2019	Practical skills for youth through hands-on programmes	SA Vapramäe-Vellavere-Vitipalu	16,010.00	12,808.00
2019	Youth Gymnastics in Nõo Rural Municipality III	Sports Club A.L.O. Crew	4,999.00	3,999.20
2020	Practical skills for youth through the programme 'From Old to New'	SA Luke Mõis	9,315.00	7,161.56
2020	Furnishing and mentorship programme at Melliste Youth Centre	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	17,779.07	14,370.61
2020	Creating football opportunities for youth in Peipsiääre Rural Municipality	Football Club FC Peipsi United Junior	4,900.86	3,920.68
2020	Youth councils in every rural municipality of Tartu County	MTÜ Tartumaa Noortekogu	18,395.98	14,716.78
2020	New furnishings and equipment for the Youth Centre	MTÜ Önnemaa	14,368.05	11,318.80
2022	More aware youth, more aware community members	MTÜ Sooveere	4,846.80	3,877.44
2022	Enterprising and sporty youth	Tartu County School Sports Union	14,716.00	11,772.80
2022	Diversification of opportunities at Puhja Youth Centre to promote youth entrepreneurship	Elva Rural Municipality Government	3,530.62	2,824.49
2022	Enhancement of self-management skills of youth in Peipsiääre Rural Municipality to foster regional entrepreneurship	Alatskivi Youth Centre	3,460.00	2,432.00
2022	Tartu County young tech talents	Estonian Motorsports Academy	8,819.59	6,897.60
2022	Practical skills for life	MTÜ Palu Puhkajate Looduskeskus	15,600.00	12,480.00
2022	Skills with Horses	Sports and leisure club Viplala	19,173.60	11,504.16
2022	Support for increasing youth physical activity	MTÜ Sooveere	3,244.92	2,595.93
2022	Becoming more environmentally conscious through practical experience	SA Vapramäe-Vellavere-Vitipalu	14 541,60	11 633,28
2023	Community entrepreneurship – the first step in a young entrepreneur's life	MTÜ Palu Puhkajate Looduskeskus	15,576.28	9,621.46
2023	Improvement of biathlon opportunities for youth, including acquisition of biathlon rifles	Elva Ski Club	10,233.00	8,186.40

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2023	Sports facilities for youth in Koosa	Koosa Youth Club	4,920.00	3,936.00
2023	Development of youth entrepreneurship in Nõo Rural Municipality through planning of a youth town	Nõo Rural Municipality Government	11,820.00	9,456.00
2023	Low adventure course at Konguta School	Elva Rural Municipality Government	16,817.70	13,454.16
2023	Creation of football opportunities for youth in Peipsiääre	Football Club FC Peipsi United Junior	4,080.00	3,264.00
2023	Lohvik – a children’s mobile café on wheels	MTÜ Teeklubi	18,708.60	14,966.88
2023	International, entrepreneurial, and active youth	MTÜ Önnemaa	18,749.00	9,360.63
Total			564,941	419,563

Measure 3.1. Development of major investment projects

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2019	Ice hockey and skating rink at Lähete Health and Sports Centre	Tartu Rural Municipality Government	612,111.49	190,205.36
2019	Design and construction of the service building at Vooremäe Health Sports Centre	Kastre Rural Municipality Government	623,807.96	199,990.94
2019	Construction of a recreation and outdoor sports area at Luunja River Harbour	SA Luunja Jõesadam	463,854.00	199,967.45
2019	Kentsi reservoir restoration and recreation area development	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	300,129.54	132,192.92
2022	Jõeääre Boat Harbour	MTÜ Jõeääre Paadisadam	405,775.52	199,966.17
Total			2,405,679	922,323

Measure 3.2. Creation and development of networks within TAS' region

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Training and development activities for tour guides in the Elva recreation area	SA Vapramäe-Vellavere-Vitipalu	35,402.40	28,321.91
2017	Development of the Onion Route Network 2017–2019	MTÜ Sibulatee	37,444.40	28,965.96
2018	Development and empowerment of the Tartu County Youth Work Cooperation Network	Tartu County Youth Workers' Association	50,191.96	38,124.10
2018	Active and Enterprising Youth of Tartu County	TAS	42,000.00	31,112.10
2018	Elva recreation area with a new idea bank for the Latvian market	SA Vapramäe-Vellavere-Vitipalu	48,476.02	38,701.96
2018	Entrepreneurs' Mentor Club	Elva Rural Municipality Government	7,450.00	3,400.06
2019	Onion Route 2020–2022	MTÜ Sibulatee	37,665.80	29,863.26
2019	Lake Peipus Festival 2019–2020	TAS	20,000.00	15,511.43
2019	Community funding for the development of regional self-sufficiency and co-financing capacity: Crowd4Region	TAS	33,880.00	26,673.19
2021	Emajõgi River and Lake Võrtsjärv cooperation network	TAS	30,000.01	23,876.77
2022	Development of the hobby beekeepers network	MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök	27,347.33	21,877.86
2022	Development and empowerment of the Tartu County Youth Work Cooperation Network	Tartu County Youth Workers' Association	47,259.04	17 909,49
2022	Promotion of effective joint marketing for tourism entrepreneurs in Elva Rural Municipality	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	7,960.00	6,368.00
2022	Creative mornings and mentorship for creative entrepreneurs in Elva Rural Municipality	Elva Rural Municipality Government	10,840.00	8,672.00
2023	Creation of a tourism network around Lake Saadjärv	MTÜ Viie Järve Võrk	16,122.20	12,897.76
2023	Onion Route 2024: strong network and attractive region	MTÜ Sibulatee	39,998.32	31,998.65
2023	Food culture along the Onion Route	MTÜ Sibulatee	19,249.50	15,399.60
2024	Development of the Tartu County food region	TAS	37,500.00	30,000.00
Total			548,787	409,674

Measure 3.3. Promotion of regional and international cooperation

Year	Project name	Applicant	Total amount	Funding amount
2016	Development of the Nature and Science Centres Cooperation Network – natural science as a local asset	Tartu Rural Municipality Government	25,488.85	20,136.12
2016	Targeted Marketing of the Peipsi Region 2016–2019	TAS	17,018.00	8,944.16
2017	Peipsi Food Street 175 km	MTÜ Peipsimaa Kogukonnaköök	22,531.60	18,025.28
2017	Enhancing the collaboration and capacity of networks in Tartu County and the South Estonia region	SA Valgamaa Arenguagentuur	20,369.47	15,661.44
2017	'Living on the edge II'	TAS	55,523.00	44,154.89
2017	II and III Lake Peipus Festival	TAS	14,500.00	11,541.30
2017	Targeted Marketing of the Peipsi Region 2016–2019	TAS	40,032.00	29,058.68
2018	International cooperation project: 'In Search of Innovation'	TAS	48,000.00	25,670.31
2019	'Strengthening communities and promoting tourism with National Geographic's Yellow Windows'	TAS	47,400.00	37,920.00
2019	Establishing a European Airport Cooperation Network and Promoting Collaboration with Chinese Partners	TAS	50,520.00	36,155.75
2021	Smart Villages Development Programme	TAS	10,993.96	8,789.75
2022	Organisation of the Estonian Movement and Sports Festival 2022	SA Elva Kultuur ja Sport	25,680.80	20,544.64
2022	Development of the Puhja Pilgrimage Centre	EELK Puhja Congregation	73,553.89	49,810.69
2022	Lake Peipus Festival 2022–2023	TAS	26,000.00	20,572.42
2022	Tartu 2024 Southern Estonia Community Programme	TAS	48,500.00	38,795.16
2022	LEADER cooperation project 'Development of Business Relations, Tourism, and Air Traffic between the Tartu and Seinäjoki regions'	TAS	42,200.00	33,757.16
2023	Series of Tartu County Food Events and Development of the Food Network	TAS	87,500.00	70,000.00
Total			655,812	489,538

Tartu 2024

South Estonia Community Programme



Southern Estonia Community Programme events

The Southern Estonia Community Programme was a regional development project within the main programme of the European Capital of Culture Tartu 2024. In 2023 and 2024, a total of 20 projects were carried out, featuring nearly 250 value-based events, attended by around 72,000 people.

The programme invited visitors from Estonia, Europe, and beyond to explore Southern Estonia and experience the values that matter most to the local people and communities.

All events helped strengthen the identity of Southern Estonia and highlight the region's assets – clean nature, diverse cultural heritage, local food and crafts, healthy lifestyles, sustainable and innovative solutions, and active, vibrant communities.

Photos: Terje Atonen



TARTU COUNTY



Maarja Ülper

**Winter trails
in the Emajõgi-Suursoo area**

VALGA COUNTY



Elisabeth Tõnisson and Lea Vutt

**Spatial Development Conference
'Create or Quit!' in Valga**

TARTU COUNTY



Triinu Akkermann
Pepsi Food Street
175 km

VALGA COUNTY



Triin Nurmsalu and Ago Arro
Hiking series through the picturesque
landscapes of Otepää

TARTU COUNTY



Linda Saare
'Discover the Emajõgi River!'

PIIRIVEERE



Evelin Leima and Maarja Saarine
Seto dance celebration
'Kad`ah kavvõkõsõ`'

TARTU COUNTY



Gea Järvela and Gaili Kangur
Travelling play Garden of Eden
in Luke Manor Park

VÕRU COUNTY



Maiki Park and Mirelle Vetemäe
Navi Village Community
Festival

TARTU COUNTY



Katri Kuusk
Tartu County food event series
'Tirin'

PIIRIVEERE



Kerli Auväärt and Kairi Kasearu
Community play
Leevaku Gold Miner

TARTU COUNTY



Eneli Kaasik and Kalvo Kaasik
Tartu County Theme Days
'Inherited Survival Skills'



TARTU COUNTY

Mihkel Kohava and Sandra Kartau
Documentary play
'The Air Between Us'



VALGA COUNTY

Maritta Pillaroo
Rose Festival
in Kaagjärve



VÕRU COUNTY

Rutt Riitsaar and Kaja Kesküla
Rõuge Community Festival
'Arts of Survival'



VÕRU COUNTY

Madis Meister and Eleriin Seim
South Estonia Inspiration Festival
'Creativity Creates Hope!'



PIIRIVEERE

Ülle Pärnoja and Inara Luigas
Seto Kostipäiv



VÕRU COUNTY

Tarmo Tagamets and Kaspar Kurve
Undiscovered treasures of Antsla -
lakes



TARTU COUNTY

Mikk Kirikal and Ergo-Hart Västrik
I Kodavere laalupido



VÕRU COUNTY

Vahur Veeroja and Eda Veeroja
Weekend of open saunas
'SANNA!'



VALGA COUNTY

Jaanika Tammaru and Merili Viks
'THROUGH THE TOWN: Valga+Valka'

TARTU COUNTY FOOD STRATEGY 2022-2030

2030



Vision

Tartu County is a well-known food region in Estonia and Europe

Public and private sector caterers mainly use local produce. Food production, processing and presentation is renowned for its science-based, innovative approach. People in Tartu County value healthy and local food; the food scene is vibrant, boasting a wide variety of actively involved companies and organisations. The food industry collaboration network operates efficiently, covering all sectors, including producers, caterers and customers.



Strategic goals

SG 1



Efficient exchange of information and knowledge



SG 2



A common and distinctive brand



SG 3



Innovative and science-based solutions



SG 4



Conscious consumption of healthy local food



Lines of action

- 1.1.** Systematic information mapping and creation of a collaboration platform
- 1.2.** Regular information exchange and events
- 1.3.** Development of distribution channels and points of sale

- 2.1.** Creation of a brand and shared marketing efforts
- 2.2.** Working towards transforming the Tartu County food region into an Estonian and European food region

- 3.1.** Cooperation with research and development institutions to improve innovation capability
- 3.2.** Implementation of innovative food industry projects

- 4.1.** Shaping of consumption habits and attitudes
- 4.2.** Involving supermarket chains

Guiding principles

Valuing local produce



Innovation



Collaboration and co-creation



Distinct character and versatility



www.tas.ee

