

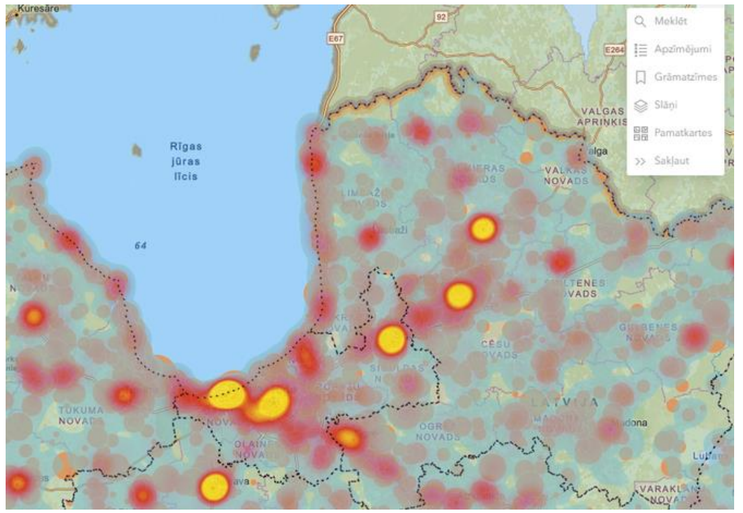
GAUJA NATIONAL PARK LATVIA

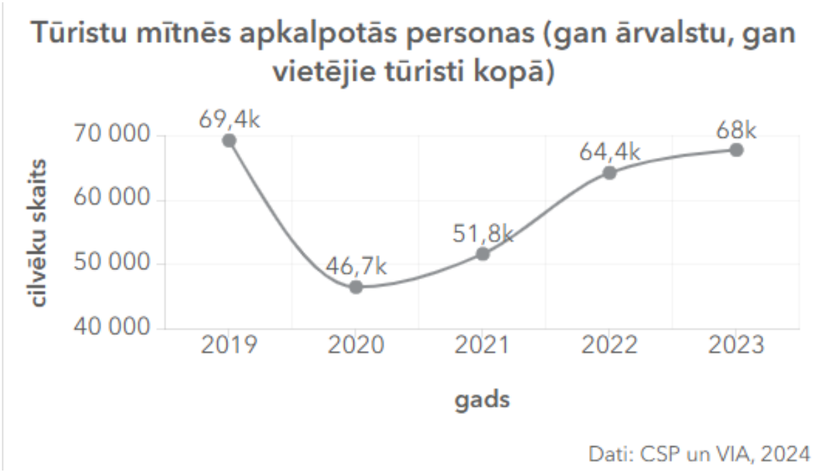
Sustainable tourism and tourism entrepreneurship in Gauja National Park and the tourism offer of Vecpiebalga

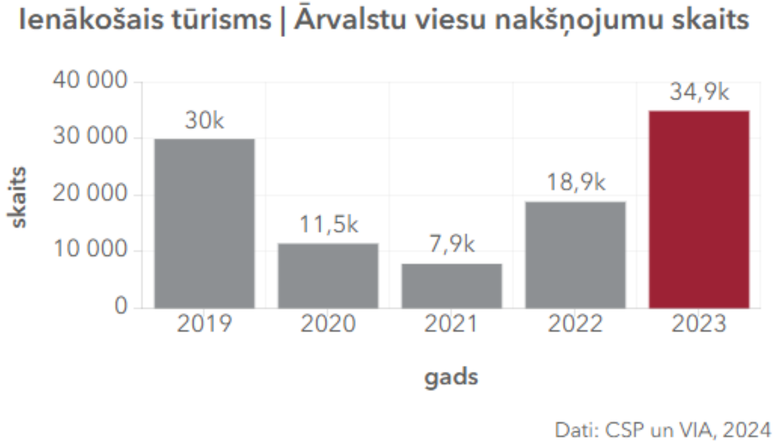
Kristīne Luca, Marketing and communication specialist, Gauja National Park Tourism Association

Insight about Gauja National park

- Size of teritorry: 917,9 km²
- Established in 1973
- > 500 cultural and historical monuments
- Inhabitats: 13 170 in Gauja National park
- ~41% are foreign travelers







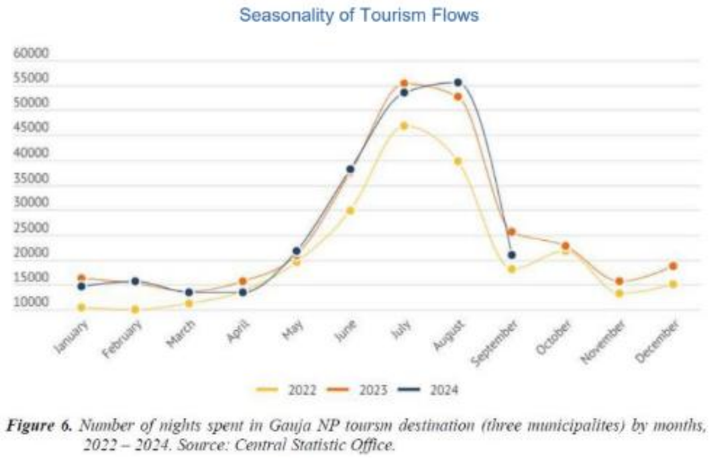
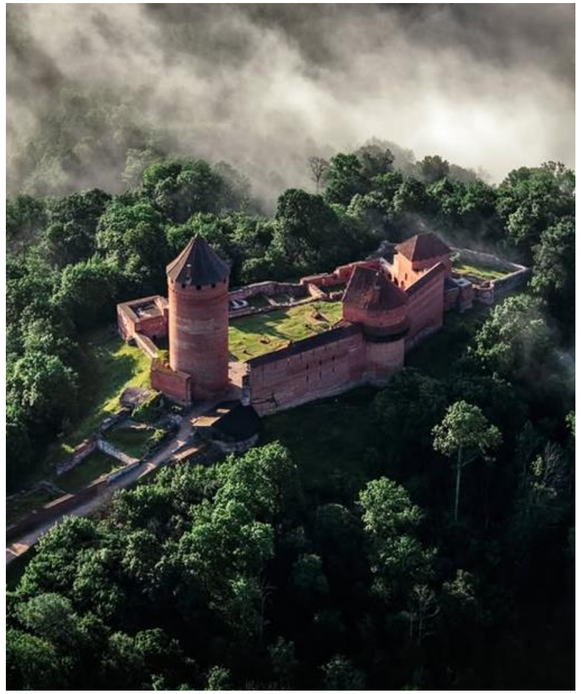


Figure 6. Number of nights spent in Gauja NP toursm destination (three municipalites) by months, 2022 – 2024. Source: Central Statistic Office.

Tourism in data
2025



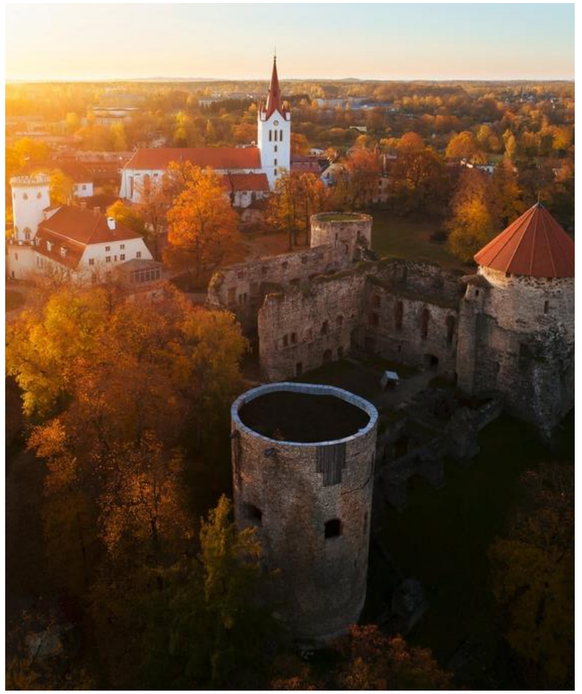
Turaida Museum resrve

177 483 visitors



Zilaiskalns watching tower

33 755 visits



Cēsis Castle Complex

78 046 visits

Challanges = factors that run sustainable tourism

Nature conservation & Local and incoming tourism & Local entrepreneurship

synergistically in a balanced manner in Gauja National park

Our homework: involve more local communities

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

REGION CERTIFIED FOR 2025-2029

EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas

Starting on 2026:

PARTNER
EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas



Sustainability through collaboration

The strong partnership between the Nature Conservation Agency, the DMO Enter Gauja, and the University of Vidzeme was highlighted as a key driver of sustainable tourism in the territory.

Best regards,



Michael Hošek
President
EUROPARC Federation

BUSINESSES

Family run businesses - local community involved

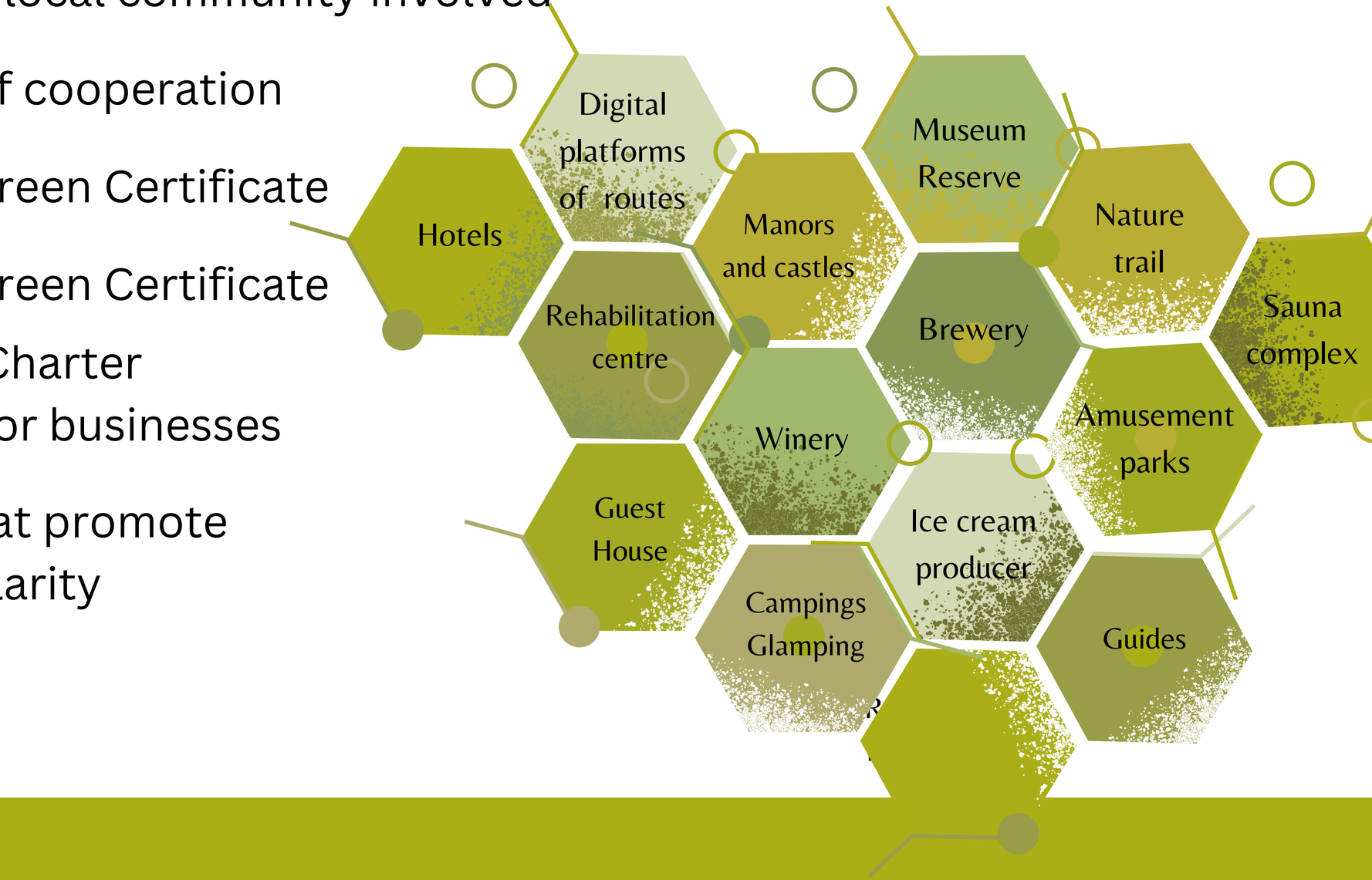
Understand the value of cooperation

4 businesses with the Green Certificate

4 businesses with the Green Certificate

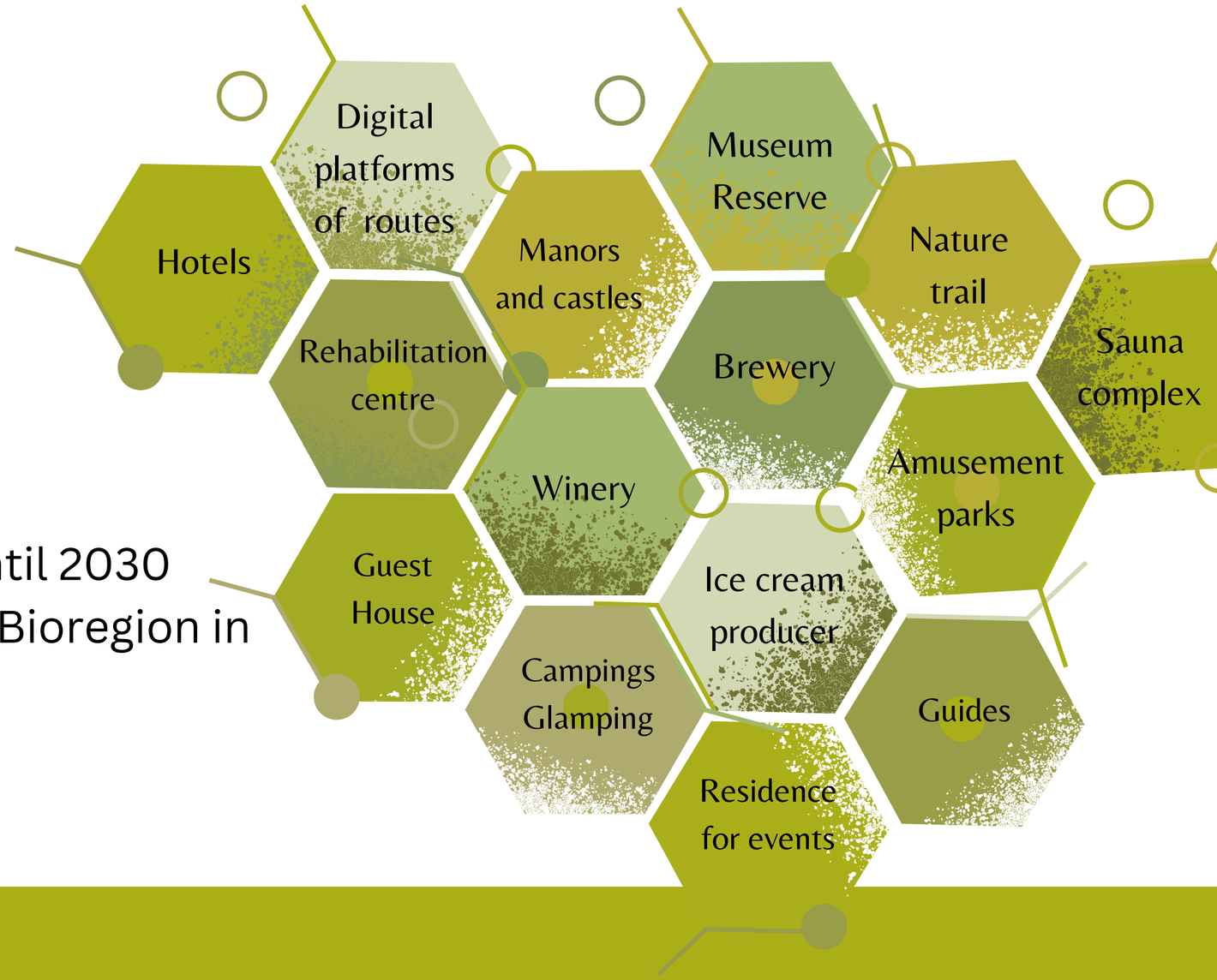
Launching EUROPARC Charter
Partner 2 certification for businesses

Implement activities that promote sustainability and circularity



The association unites 46 members - tourism companies,
5 municipalities, Vidzeme University of Applied Science, Nature Conservation Agency, Vidzeme planning region.

Renwed long-term memorandum
about sustainable tourism development until 2030
Together we are partners in memorandum Bioregion in Gauja National Park

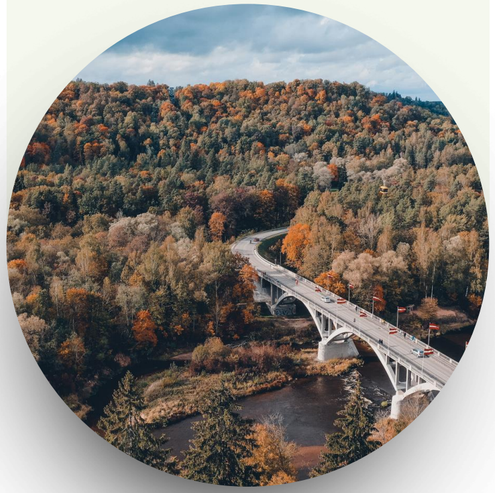


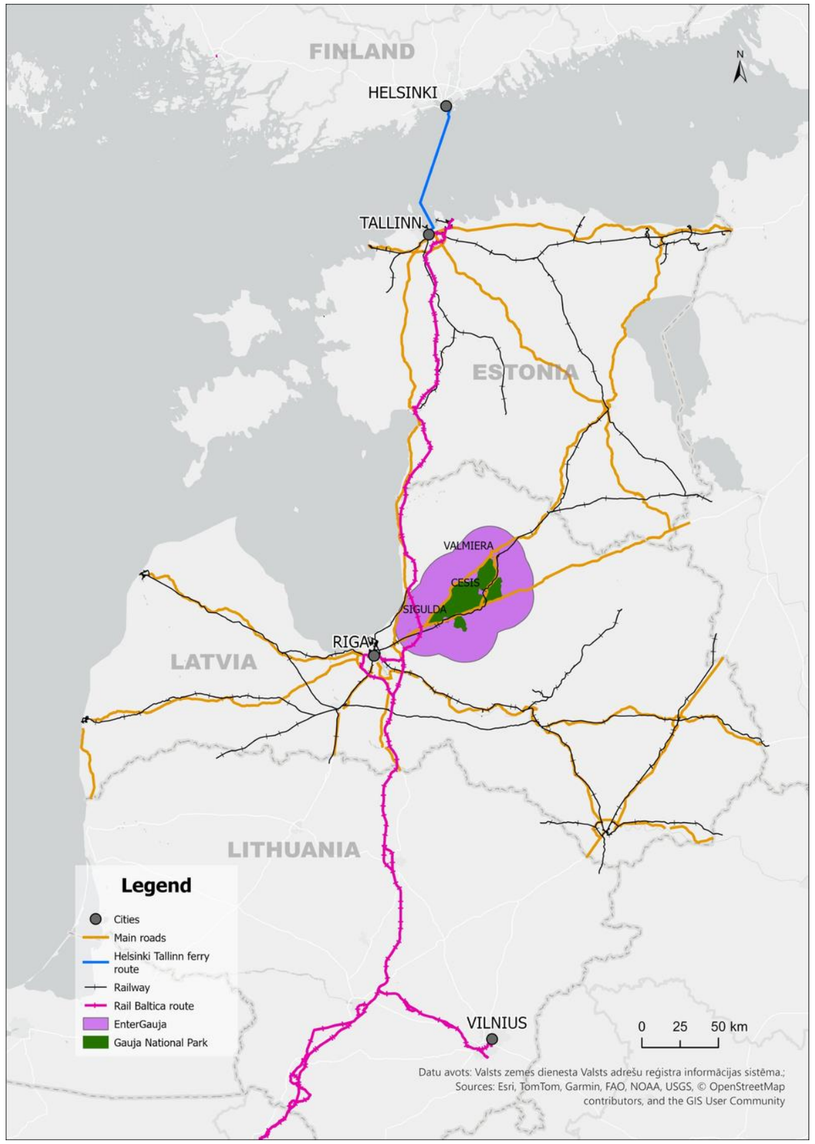
Year 2000 the tourism association of the Sigulda region establishment

Year 2012 Gauja National Park Tourism Association establishment

Area of activity is sustainable tourism in Latvia's oldest national park and its extensive surroundings:

- internationally demanded
- symbolic for the nation
- full of natural, cultural and scenic values





Created by Martins Kibers



Created by AI

Action scope

- International and national projects → attraction of external finances. Organizing trainings and networkings for target markets, creation of tourism products

- Experience exchange and cooperations with other protected areas in Europe

- International marketing of Gauja National park region and it's tourism offer, cooperations with tour operators and media













ENTER GAUJA BRAND

- NATURE EVERYWHERE
- AUTHENTIC PRIMOGENITURE
- ADVENTURES WITH ADDED VALUE
- AUTHENTIC ROOTS

Anchors in marketing

The largest national par in the Baltic States

Michelin LATVIA Guide

Europarc Federation awarded sustainable tourism destination

The Lonely Planet awarded long distance The Baltic forest hiking trail

Individual awards for businesses:

- Turaida Museum Reserve - European Heritage Label & ECTN Grand Prize – “Resilience in Sustainable Cultural Tourism” 2026
- H.E.Vanadziņš - MICHELIN Bib Gourmand 2026
- Ziedlejas Wellness Resort - Latvian Architecture Award & Most Export-Ready New Tourism Product, 2024

Expert opinion

This practice from Latvia successfully demonstrates the benefits of clustering in a specific sector and its positive effects on local SME competitiveness. More specifically, a tourism cluster was set up to promote local entrepreneurs and tourism opportunities in a specific destination. The cluster's activities have included developing a common logo and brand, marketing material as well as a strategy to benefit everyone of the cluster's members. The evidence of success of this practice include a 30% increase in overnight stays in the destination – a clear rise in its popularity. The practice definitely has replication potential in other contexts as well, especially having the general potential to inspire policy-makers to shape cluster development programs that benefit sectors that hold great potential for a specific country and context.



Rene Tonnisson

Works at Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform

GAUJA NATIONAL PARK TOURISM ASSOCIATION:
- GREAT EXAPMLE FOR OTHER CLUSTERS
- EXAMPLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN EU PROGRAMMES AND LATVIA



Study Tour Strengthens Oni Municipality: Exchanging Expertise with Latvia's Enter Gauja Cluster

19.10.2023



On 3-8 October 2023, with EU support, a delegation representing the Oni Tourism Cluster, Oni Municipality City Hall, and PMC Research visited Gauja National Park, Latvia. During the visit, experiences were exchanged with the Enter Gauja Cluster. Importantly, the study tour was part of the EU-funded "Economic Development of Oni Municipality via Business Cluster Creation and Investment Attraction" project.

EXTERNAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

BY IMPLEMENTING 10 DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, WE MANAGED TO ATTRACT ~ 1.3 MILLION EUR FOR DEVELOPMENT



Latvijas vides aizsardzības fonds

Interreg Central Baltic

Interreg Estonia-Latvia
European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN UNION

Projects = instruments for sustainable tourism development

Enhanced Employment Opportunities in Rural Areas - motivating locals to start their businesses through trainings, mentors' support, internation experience exchange

Seminars about nature friendly living and entrepreneurship

Research on circularity practices in companies - Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

+ projects providing tourism product creations and marketing, experience exchange events, brand devlopment, growth in hospitality quality

Tourism offer of Vecpiebalga
Scenic countryside, lakes and cultural heritage

Peaceful and scenicrural landscapes and traditional

Vidzeme character

Strong sense of local belonging

Ideal for slow travel, cycling, hiking and nature-based experiences

Small-scale rural accommodation and family businesses









Tourism offer of Vecpiebalga
Scenic countryside, lakes and cultural heritage

From A - Z of tourism package

Experiences + catering + accommodation

Experiences



Vēveri – traditional rural architecture and ethnographic heritage



Brežģa Hill Observation tower



9x9 Herbs Crats

Tourism offer of Vecpiebalga
Scenic countryside, lakes and cultural heritage

Journey of tase



Honey harvested in Piebalga



A celebratory feast in Piebalga

Tourism offer of Vecpiebalga
Scenic countryside, lakes and cultural heritage

Places to stay







Tourism offer of Vecpiebalga
Creative, new tourism offer



Cinema Farm



Chill Up



Fantasy Land Neonija



THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTION?
WE ARE HERE!
INFO@ENTERGAUJA.COM