

# HANDBOOK

## for Cross-border Planning



KURZEMES  
PLĀNOŠANAS  
REĢIONS



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## What is SMART PLANNING?

The project LLI-431 “Inter-regional Cooperation for Sustainable, Integrated and Smart Planning” (SMART PLANNING) has been implemented with the support of Interreg V-A Latvia – Lithuania cross-border cooperation programme 2014 -2020 (LAT-LIT programme). The project will strengthen the capacity of local and regional stakeholders in spatial and strategic planning. It aims to do this through enhancing a stronger cross-border perspective, which in turn will foster a coherent development and effective collaboration across the borders of Kurzeme region (Latvia) and Klaipėda region (Lithuania).

The SMART PLANNING project is led by the administration of Kurzeme Planning Region, in partnership with the Association “Klaipėda Region”. It will target local stakeholders such

as local and regional politicians and spatial and development planners in municipalities to build capacity and leadership. Both partners have analysed and studied their respective regions, and will use data collected to supplement the data and information in the project’s development planning documents.

This jointly developed “Handbook for Cross-border Planning” summarizes the development preconditions, the engines for regional economies and the cross-border potential for both regions. In addition, it provides guidelines for promoting smart specialization and includes practical experience to help implement cross-border development priorities.

## Why should you read the Handbook?

Municipalities are not just administrative units and a definition of regions should not be just a geographical location. Both are functioning hubs for investments, decision making, and project development of projects. Therefore it is increasingly important for different municipalities to cooperate in order to identify common development opportunities and to integrate them into planning documents.

Klaipėda and Kurzeme regions - from Nida to Kolka and Jūrmala along the Eastern Baltic Sea coast - are home for over half a million inhabitants. Common values and relationships create an excellent basis for cooperation for common cross-border projects between municipalities of both regions. Working on common development opportunities, will produce useful information that can be integrated into planning documents. This in turn will

provide good-practice examples of people-to-people cooperation, highlighting the economic potential for local businesses and for resilient development in both regions. Project-based cooperation between both the Kurzeme region and the Klaipėda region, as well as several local municipalities, means that decision making, and identifying and addressing common challenges is both easier and significantly more beneficial.

A key result of the SMART PLANNING project is its survey of the potential of existing cross-border functional zones. The survey detected the scope of development opportunities for having a common vision on connectivity, on the smart use of its potential, and on the resources to allow integration of common cross-border interests.

The SMART PLANNING “Handbook for Cross-border Planning” consists of four main chapters:

1. Information about Kurzeme Region and Klaipėda Regions
2. Summary of information on cross-border potential
3. Guidelines for promoting smart specialization
4. Practical experience to meet the challenges and priorities of cross-border development.

A series of innovation camps and practical workshops held in Palanga (2020) and Kuldīga (2021) showed just how creative and diverse the planning process can be. During these events, representatives from the Kurzeme and Klaipėda municipalities worked on a set of real project ideas to be implemented by 2027; project ideas related to such themes as: fair and inclusive society, green and sustainable development, economic potential of tourism and heritage, capacity building and people-to-people cooperation, were analysed and discussed. Further work was planned around the identification of target groups, cross-border effects, risk identification and assessment, implementation time frame and resources needed. A more detailed explanation of results is given in the last chapter. An explanatory dictionary, summary of common ideas and overview of the steps carried out to analyse project ideas are given in the annexes.



The similarities between Kurzeme and Klaipėda regions provide a good basis for learning from each other, and the regional variations provide an equal opportunity to engage in finding solutions.

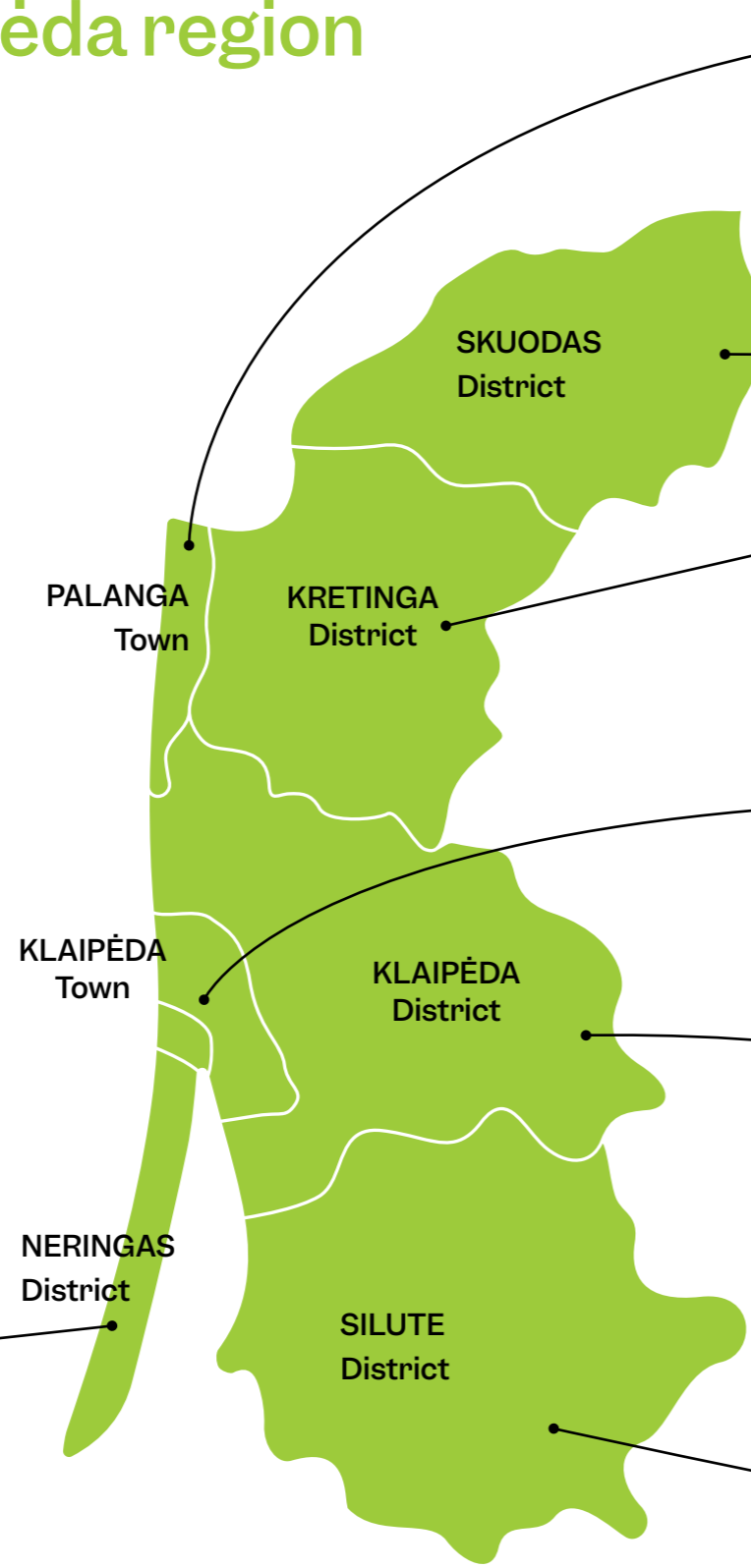
# PRECONDITIONS

(short introduction about the regions)







# Klaipėda region





With a population of 324,263 inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, representing approximately 11.56 % of the total Lithuanian population, and a total area of 5,222sq.km, Klaipėda region is the third largest region in Lithuania. Divided into seven municipalities. Klaipėda city is the centre of Klaipėda Region, a large industrial centre situated on the Baltic Sea coast with a sea port. The total Baltic Sea coastline is 90.66km long, and apart from Klaipėda city, just three other municipalities have direct access to the sea: Neringa, Klaipėda district, and Palanga City. Palanga City, Kretinga District and Skuodas District municipalities have a common border with Dienvidkurzeme municipality, and Rucava, Dunika, Kalėti, Gramzda, Vaiņode parishes.







## Neringa Municipality

-  area is 90 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 3,903 inhabitants
-  forest cover is 53.7%.
-  The municipality is situated by the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea. Within the Curonian Lagoon national Park is the UNESCO Heritage Site "Curonian Spit", a complex ecosystem and site of natural beauty.





## Palanga Town Municipality

-  area is 79 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 16,976 inhabitants.
-  There are no lakes but five rivers;
-  forest cover is 39.3%. The municipality is situated by the Baltic Sea, and it has part of the Regional Seaside Park situated here.





## Kretinga District Municipality

-  area is 989 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 37,404 inhabitants.
-  There is one lake and 36 rivers;
-  forest cover is 35%. Part of the Salantai Regional Park represents the richest nature area.





## Klaipėda District Municipality

-  area is 1 336 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 59,419 inhabitants.
-  There are three lakes, 32 rivers and one channel (King Vilhelm Channel);
-  forest cover is 26.5%. The municipality is also situated by the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea, and part of the Regional Seaside Park is situated within this territory.




## Skuodas District Municipality

-  area is 911 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 15,831 inhabitants.
-  There are three lakes and 34 rivers;
-  forest cover is 10.9%. Part of Žemaitija National Park and Salantai Regional Park represents the richest nature areas.

## Klaipėda City Municipality

-  area is 98 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 152,237 inhabitants.
-  There are two rivers and one channel (King Vilhelm Channel);
-  forest cover is 19.9%. The municipality is situated by the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea. The most remarkable natural areas of the region include the Curonian Spit National Park and the Regional Seaside Park.

## Silute District Municipality

-  area is 1 706 km<sup>2</sup>;
-  with 38,493 inhabitants.
-  There are 15 lakes and 54 rivers;
-  forest cover is 42.1%. The municipality is situated by the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea, and the Curonian Spit National Park and Nemunas Delta Regional Park represent the richest nature areas.

<sup>1</sup> Lithuanian National department of Statistics data in the January, 2022.



## The engines of Klaipėda region regional economy

**Klaipėda Seaport, a non-freezing port on the eastern Baltic Sea coast**, provides the main engine of Klaipėda regional economy. In addition, the main economic advantage of the Klaipėda Region is its strategically convenient geographical location, and its importance as a major transport hub in Lithuania. The region has overseen an ambitious transport infrastructure improvement programme for the marine and inland waterways, railway, road and air transport. In line with this, there has been a strong focus on strengthening maritime tourism, bioeconomy and other areas to implement the priority directions of the Klaipėda Region Specialization Strategy 2030. In terms of the development of international and domestic tourism, Klaipėda Region is definitely the most attractive compared to other regions of Lithuania.

The first leading direction is the goal of strengthening the maritime economy. Here it is planned to give priority to the promotion of blue energy, aquaculture and marine biotechnology, green maritime transport innovations, and other maritime economy activities.

The bioeconomy is Klaipėda Region's second leading direction, and within the next ten years, it is planned to become a leader in the bioeconomy sector at both the national level and within the Baltic Sea region. To support this, the establishment of the Klaipėda Region Bioeconomy Council is planned, which will guarantee the cross-sector cooperation of all interested stakeholders.

Development of regional food chains will be one of the topics of the Klaipėda Region Specialisation strategy. It is planned to assess the regional availability and nature of local production from farmers, fisheries and aquaculture companies, and whether these resources are sufficient to create fully-fledged regional food chains. Once an assessment is completed, several measures will be taken, to include: implementation of a programme for the promotion of organic production; diversified and renewable energy supply (RES) generating farms & fisheries; and aquaculture enterprises created for supplying local educational institutions with the products of regional farmers. These measures will promote partnerships and cooperation between farmers and the local catering sector, helping to create added value in the future (eg: attractive regional gastronomic tourism products, etc).

The third leading direction is sustainable, maritime and coastal tourism. One of the main tasks here is the creation of a unified regional tourism policy management model and a regional tourism organization (RTO). Special emphasis will be placed on bicycle-tourism and related activities to create the infrastructure for this, along with a campaign of general promotion in the coming years. It is planned to reconstruct and build new bicycle paths and tracks, and to prepare tourist routes and facilities friendly to cyclists.

## Connectivity

The transport network of Klaipėda region consists of roads, railway network and inland waterways. The road network connects all the regional member territories. The main cross-border route for road cargo is between Liepāja and Klaipėda, and direct road connections exist between Liepāja and Klaipėda, Priekule and Skuodas.

The railway network (1,520mm gauge) connects Klaipėda City with the biggest cities of Lithuania. The connection with the Latvian railway network exists only via Mažeikiai to Jelgava.

Klaipėda Sea Port is the largest in Lithuania and one of the few ice-free ports in northern Europe, serving as a port of call for cruise ships as well as freight transport. Regular

passenger ferry lines connect to Kiel, Karlshamn, and Copenhagen (and through these to other European cities). Also, there is the network of smaller ports for yachts and small ships.

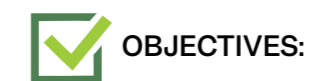
The Nemunas River and the Curonian Lagoon are the main inland waterways. The majority of Lithuanian operated inland waterways are located within the Klaipėda region. More innovations are expected for the adaptation of the Danė River to navigation, the introduction of a water bus route, as well as the reconstruction of the sea port of Šventoji, along with the creation of additional new water routes and facilities.

## The Directions of Klaipėda Region Specialisation Strategy 2030

### DIRECTION 1 MARITIME ECONOMY



*Klaipėda Region to become a modern and attractive investment leader in the maritime economy in the South-East Baltic region by 2030.*



- To develop the maritime economy sector in Klaipėda Region and to establish a strong maritime economy centre
- To start intensive development of advanced technologies to meet the needs of the maritime economy in Klaipėda State Seaport Authority
- To develop the Lithuanian shipbuilding and repair sector as an advanced, competitive industry that meets the objectives of sustainability goals
- To develop fisheries in Klaipėda Region as a sustainable and high-quality science-based sector

## DIRECTION 2 BIOECONOMY



PRIORITY  
GOAL:

*By 2030 to become a leading bioeconomy region at national and Baltic Sea macro-regional level*



OBJECTIVES:

- Promote cross-sectoral cooperation and clustering
- To actively participate in the activities of organizations engaged in bioeconomy development and to position Klaipėda Region as a bioeconomy region
- Promote research, innovation and business development in the field of bioeconomy
- To promote the development of a circular bioeconomy
- To promote the sustainable use of the Region's biomass resources and the sale of their products on the local market

## DIRECTION 3 SUSTAINABLE MARITIME AND COASTAL TOURISM



PRIORITY  
GOAL:

*To strengthen the competitiveness of maritime and coastal tourism in Klaipėda Region in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.*



OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure efficient management of Klaipėda Region as a tourist destination
- To implement measures to promote cooperation between tourism stakeholders in the Klaipėda Region
- To create an exceptional image of sustainable maritime and coastal tourism in Klaipėda Region and to carry out tourism marketing activities in a targeted manner
- To develop common maritime and coastal tourism products for the Region
- To create an attractive tourism environment in accordance with the priorities of Klaipėda Region tourism infrastructure development and the principles of sustainable development



## DIRECTION 4 ADVANCED INDUSTRY ECONOMY



PRIORITY  
GOAL:

*To develop an internationally competitive industry in the Klaipėda Region based on advanced solutions.*



OBJECTIVES:

- Promote digital industrial transformation
- To encourage the development of advanced industries related to marine economy and bioeconomy

## DIRECTION 5 SERVICE ECONOMY



PRIORITY  
GOAL:

*To increase the share of service economy in Klaipėda Region by ensuring the necessary preconditions for sustainable competitiveness and development of the Region.*



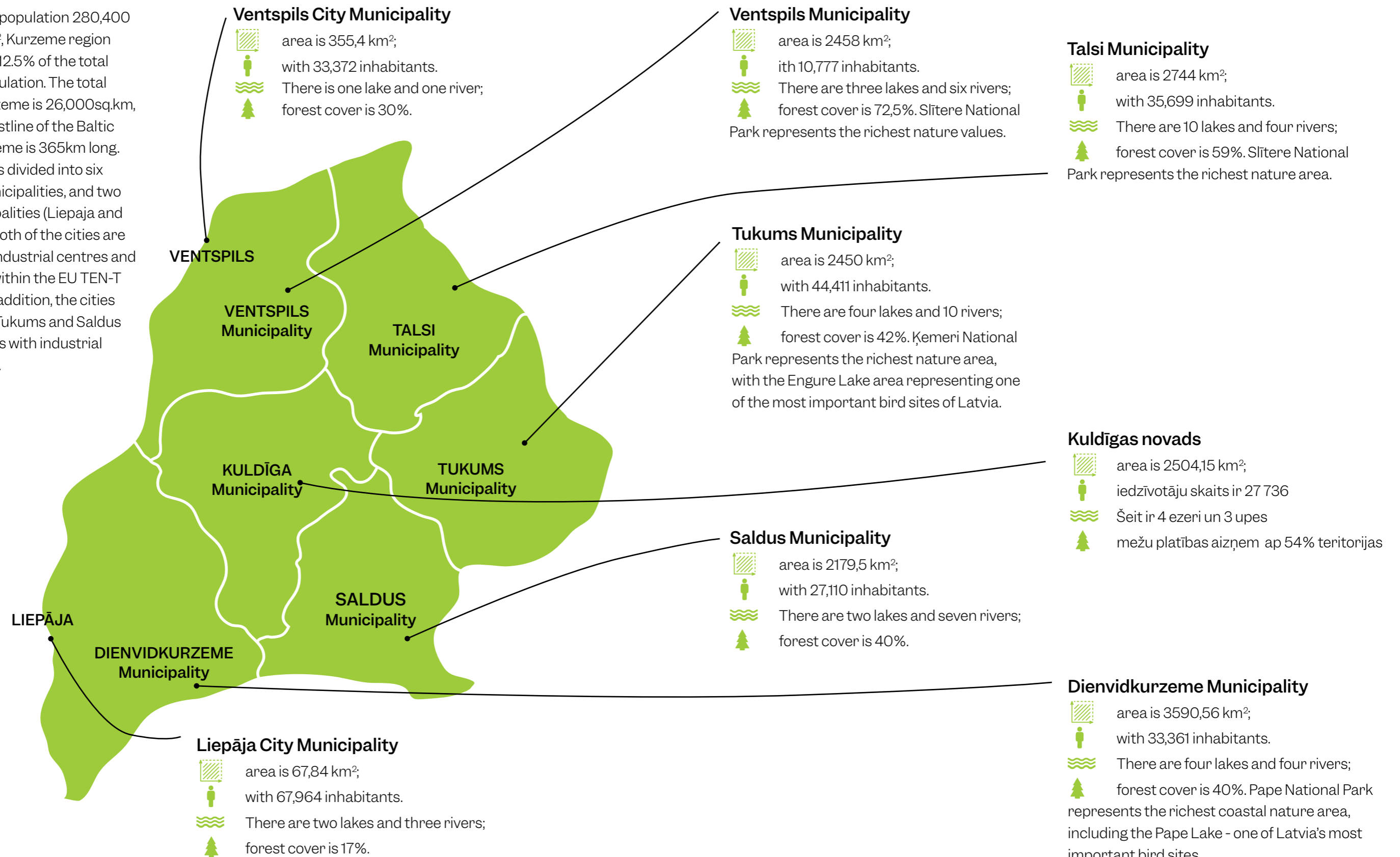
OBJECTIVES:

- To attract a highly qualified workforce and talents according to the Region's specialisation directions
- To carry out synchronized urban development of real estate and related infrastructure at regional level
- To ensure convenient accessibility and mobility within the Region
- To promote investments in development of service economy and other business according to Klaipėda Region specialisation directions
- To increase the quality of public administration and public services



# Kurzeme region

With a total population 280,400 inhabitants<sup>2</sup>, Kurzeme region represents 12.5% of the total Latvian population. The total area of Kurzeme is 26,000sq.km, and the coastline of the Baltic Sea in Kurzeme is 365km long. The region is divided into six district municipalities, and two city municipalities (Liepāja and Ventspils). Both of the cities are important industrial centres and port cities within the EU TEN-T network. In addition, the cities of Brocēni, Tukums and Saldus are the cities with industrial importance.



<sup>2</sup> Latvian Central Statistical Bureau Data on 01.01.2021.



## The engines of Kurzeme regional economy

Kurzeme regional development is based on dynamic interactions between universities, industries and government in the form of 'taking the role of the other' for fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth. The overall priorities for Kurzeme regional development include dynamic knowledge, adaptive economics, sustainable mobility, attractive living environment, social inclusivity, and cultural potential.

Strong and stable local enterprises are the main engine for development diversification both in the cities and in rural areas. The main production industries are agriculture, forestry and fisheries (including the processing industry). This is followed by the wholesale and retail sector, construction, and with tourism and hospitality growing in importance.

Collectively, the region's GDP per capita is the second highest after the Riga region. The development of industries with high added value and potential for innovative development, is highly important for Kurzeme. However, investments in business modernisation are necessary in order to significantly upgrade plants and production lines, and to promote energy efficiency within a number of industrial sectors. Revitalizing green industrial sites and green infrastructure will help towards climate neutrality by reducing emissions and producing RES and recycled products. One of these sectors, is the region's high

profile woodwork manufacturing industry which has historically used energy-intensive equipment. Other sectors include transport and storage (with the development of a public infrastructure appropriate to municipalities that will encourage sustainable mobility and decarbonisation of the transport sector); the ICT sector; and IT technologies and digital connectivity.

The Kurzeme region needs to highlight the good experience of existing business in order to help market the region to new investors. Funding opportunities for technological developments, are available from European Union funds. In addition, the Latvian investments and development agency (LIAA) Innovation vouchers support services" programme provides funding to attract skilled labour in the industrial sector.

The geopolitical situation will place the ports of Ventspils and Liepāja in a strong position to meet future challenges and attract new cargo business. Climate neutrality will be a driving force for forestry and agriculture. New production technologies, and modernization of equipment, will strengthen work place productivity, thereby creating a better end product. Business development should take into account the needs of entrepreneurs, particularly within: development of new technologies, retaining good specialists, improving and securing infrastructure, and promoting exports. Local governments have already

had good experience working with economic operators, for example by providing business facilities, organizing thematic seminars and training, and supporting the development of small businesses. Ways of cooperating with local government, economic operators and citizens should continue to be found, together with successful and business-friendly solutions.

Within the further development of the tourism and hospitality industry, key topics include the coastline, natural values, heritage and connectivity. The creation of new tourism facilities will reduce seasonality, increase the length of stay and tourist income thus increasing competitiveness. The coastline space along the Baltic Sea with its intact nature together with the beaches at coastal cities of Liepāja, Ventspils, Pāvilosta and the traditional old villages, is only one aspect of the Kurzeme region's tourism offering. Other natural resources like forest and marsh trails, rivers, lakes, and landscapes are important too. Growing

## Connectivity

The transport network of Kurzeme consists of roads and railway network. The road network connects all the regional member territories. The main routes for road cargo flows are between Rīga and Ventspils, Rīga and Liepāja, and Liepāja and Klaipēda.

The railway network (1520 mm gauge) connects Ventspils and Liepāja with the Riga

demand for active tourism products indicates the need to install new routes, and to improve and expand existing networks. As far as possible, a linked network of roads and routes connecting tourism facilities should be developed. Increased and improved networks should be linked to improved cooperation at local level between local businesses and farmers. Representatives of creative industries should be encouraged to provide innovative tourism products and help in the diversification of rural businesses. In time the tourism offer should be widened to include the rich industrial and military heritage.

metropolitan area and thus with the eastern and northern part of the country. The connection with Lithuanian railway exists only via Jelgava to Mažeikiai.

Ventspils and Liepāja Sea Ports are two of the few ice-free ports in northernmost Europe, and Ventspils is one of the leading EU deep-water ports on the East coast of the

Baltic Sea. Destinations for import/export are mainly the EU, CIS and Asian regions, helped by the region's multi-modal transport solution infrastructure for fast and high-quality service. A regular passenger ferry line connects Ventspils with Nynäshamn (Sweden). Liepāja port serves mainly freight transport, although there is a regular passenger ferry line connecting Liepāja with Travemünde in Germany. In addition, the area has a network of smaller ports for yachts and small ships.

There are a number of areas in need of development within public transport, with the first being to improve its comfort and accessibility, and to provide clear route information. In addition, the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and ICT tools to provide real-time bus timetable information at bus stops, consideration of e-tickets or phone apps for ticket payment, and the establishment of a regional public transport database to help coordinate regional routes and timetables. An important step in promoting the use of public transport is the application of discounts and various options to its users, such as lowering fares or developing free ticket conditions. All changes and improvements must be regularly assessed through passenger service e-questionnaires.

Changing world habits in relation to nature-friendly movements, make sustainable micro-mobility an important issue for the next programming period. Ventspils and Liepāja have a developed transport infrastructure, mainly related to bicycle infrastructure. Further development of the overall network in populated areas

and in functional areas within the region - especially in urban, small and village areas – is important. In the development of sustainable mobility solutions, it is important to inform and educate citizens about the impact of the transport system on climate change. This can be done through the form of campaigns, marketing materials, or at seminars and conferences.

There is great potential for now defunct and unused railway lines, as they could be transformed into green bicycle and pedestrian routes (e.g. Liepāja – Ventspils). In addition to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, local governments should implement projects and pilot projects related to other micro-mobility modes, such as e-scooters, and uni-wheel devices. Developing better integrated mobility points in and around major (and minor) transport hubs such as bus and rail terminals and stations (and parking sites /park & ride), would help to make daily travel comfortable and diverse. These should ensure both the possibility of interconnections from one type of public transport to another, and the possibility of renting environmentally friendly shared transport.

At regional level, information on the infrastructure of cycling is not gathered and its development is not coordinated. Therefore, in the future, using geo-information systems tools to show the existing network of cycling routes, as well as waterways and walkways, both internationally and regionally, and in municipalities and functional areas, will help to manage all improvements.

## The Priorities of Kurzeme Development strategy

*Kurzeme Development strategy priorities are within the following framework:*

### PRIORITY P1: THE DYNAMIC KNOWLEDGE



#### PRIORITY FRAME:

- **Increasing the role of knowledge in the region, increasing productivity of the labour force by developing the competences needed for the changing labour market.**
- **Ensuring quality education: enabling continuous learning and replenishment of knowledge, retraining, active in the digital environment, responding creatively and responsibly to multiple challenges.**
- **Moving towards the use of skills for individual, municipal and regional growth, attracting competent human resources and implementing business integration solutions.**
- **Involvement of economically inactive population groups in education and the labour market.**

### PRIORITY P2: THE GROWING ECONOMY



#### PRIORITY FRAME:

- **Regional ecosystem recovery activities: protecting, maintaining it in the long term, stimulating natural self-recovery by improving the quality of the environment in Kurzeme.**
- **The development of an environmentally friendly business, and of a resource-efficient and competitive economy. Integration of innovation into business development, development of innovative products, increasing its competitiveness.**
- **Digital transformation of businesses, increasing efficiency and productivity, increasing the use of IT solutions, and improving business performance. Development of infrastructure for business support, industrial zones and the creation of jobs and businesses.**
- **Improving road/street, engineering infrastructure, providing office spaces, development of industrial zones, development of an IT platform to promote cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, promotion of exports, cluster development, etc.**

## PRIORITY P3: GREEN AND SECURE DEVELOPMENT



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- The introduction of a climate neutrality policy: a balanced use of resources in water management, the use and production of RES in the region, the improvement of energy efficiency in district, local and individual heating and cooling.
- Efficient waste management (shared collection) and sorting, deployment of open-source technologies.
- Preservation of biodiversity: environmental education activities, green thinking, ecosystem services, preservation and maintenance of natural landscapes, development and management of natural tourism infrastructure.
- Arranging degraded areas for a safe living environment and exploiting them for public or business purposes. Adaptation to climate change, models of action in the event of natural and technogenic disasters, development of early warning systems, regular climate change education for citizens.

## PRIORITY P4: SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- Activities to promote the reach of national, regional and regional centres of importance. Provision of supporting infrastructure, reconstruction and modernisation of regional roads for the reach and growth of development centres.
- Development of smart and innovative solutions in the field of transport services, development of projects for the efficient use of micro-mobility, including the development of cycling infrastructure, the provision of infrastructure and management for a sustainable transport system.
- Efficient use and development of different modes of transport (air, land and sea).

## PRIORITY P5: ATTRACTIVE LIVING ENVIRONMENT



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- Providing modern services for citizens and business alike, building networks and promoting healthy competition. Ensuring cross-border accessibility, developing common collaborative platforms, creating and maintaining new communications networks
- Building up modern governance models, improving the quality of decision-making, developing inter-institutional cooperation, and improving job efficiency in administrations.
- Development of sparsely populated areas, increasing the attractiveness of the environment and building a sense of belonging. Creating an image of Kurzeme and a common brand. Attracting people to Kurzeme, including promoting remigration.
- Kurzeme planning region (KPR) as the main initiator and contributor to regional development in different sectors and spheres. Strengthening the capacity and competences of KPR through the introduction of an integrated management model, and by implementing innovative working methods and in doing so, contribute to the achievement of the objectives set out in the strategy. Improving inter-institutional cooperation, increasing the level of citizen involvement, and developing guidelines for different processes. When implementing projects, develop multi-sector stakeholder cooperation across all governance levels.

## PRIORITY P6: SOCIAL INCLUSION



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- Measures to promote the health of the population of the region (counselling, educating, changing lifestyles and habits, developing skills).
- The setting up of social groups (especially for seniors, young people, people with disabilities, families with young children) to support instruments ensuring their full participation in the economic, social and cultural life of society, and improving the standard of living and well-being.
- Development and development of environmental accessibility and services, including sport infrastructure. Promoting social entrepreneurship, creating high social added value, and creating and maintaining new jobs.

## PRIORITY P7: CULTURAL POTENTIAL



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- A comprehensive, development-oriented regional cultural environment to include: cultural infrastructure, preservation of cultural heritage, preservation and promotion of a European cultural heritage, innovation in the provision of cultural services.
- The development of creative industries, promoting the labour market and increasing competitiveness. Adapting and providing marketing and communication activities, adequate environment and infrastructure. Development of networks for cooperation between cultural communities. Cultural communication: export and promotion of cultural activities outside local and regional borders.

## PRIORITY P8: ACTIVE SOCIETY



### PRIORITY FRAME:

- Strengthening national identity and ownership, increasing the level of inclusive participation and civic knowledge by strengthening a high-quality and secure area of democratic participation and information. Encouraging the involvement of different target groups (youth, pensioners, families, etc.) in different public activities.
- Increase active participation in the life of the community – for both Latvians and non-Latvians - so that people feel valued and useful. Involving different citizens in community conservation and awareness-raising activities. Activities at community and neighbourhood level are an opportunity to create an inclusive and open society in which the interests of all members of society, are respected and supported. Develop close cooperation with the non-governmental sector.

# CROSS-BORDER POTENTIAL





One of the project objectives of the SMART PLANNING project, is the formulated research and analyse of possibilities to plan common projects across the borders of Kurzeme region and Klaipėda region. Although certain development planning differences exist across both regions, there are certainly common interests

## Kurzeme

The Spatial Development Perspective of Kurzeme Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030 highlights the area along the Latvian-Lithuanian border as the Border Area, directly affecting the municipalities of Saldus, Vaiņode, Priekule and Rucava.

### THE GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE KURZEME BORDER AREA PRESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING:

- to plan the development of the roads network with a focus along the border which ensures accessibility for local residents, thus linking settlements of Latvia and Lithuania across the border or to serve as international transport routes;
- to respect the preservation of nature territories and conservation of cultural and historical heritage; since it is one of the most important resources for tourism development of remote and secluded areas;
- to plan the landscape protection and formation in the valleys of the border rivers Vadakste, Loša, Šventoji;
- to plan the conservation of biodiversity and development of tourism in cooperation with the municipalities of Lithuania;
- to work out thematic plans facilitating the development of territories in the border area between Latvia - Lithuania.

## Klaipėda

In 2021 the Analysis of Klaipėda Region Possibilities to Develop Functional Zones with the Lithuanian Regions of Telšiai and Tauragė, and the Latvian Region of Kurzeme (hereafter – Analysis) was developed.

The analysis aimed to find out and assess the possibilities of Klaipėda and the neighbouring Tauragė, Telšiai and Kurzeme regions to form and develop common functional zones. In order to determine the directions of cooperation, it was necessary to discover and agree on the principles connecting the regions, which would enable the creation of common activities.

In this analysis, a 'functional zone' is understood as being a territory characterized by economic or social relations with a shared infrastructure or service network. One of the goals of the analysis is to lay a solid foundation for functional zones cooperation between Klaipėda and its neighbouring regions to identify important problematic issues, priority areas of joint action, and preliminary opportunities for attracting investments.

### THESE POTENTIAL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AREAS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE ANALYSIS AS FOLLOWS:

## Sustainable use of resources and environment / a direction that creates a balance between different areas.

- Sustainable use of resources includes processes from strategic planning to environmentally friendly and sustainable production, energy production and consumption. These factors are important in the long term, increasing the regions' competitive advantage in attracting and retaining human resources, creating high added value and a quality living environment.
- Coordinated transition to renewable energy;
- Development of wind power parks;
- Sustainable mobility infrastructure development;
- Protection and conservation of nature.

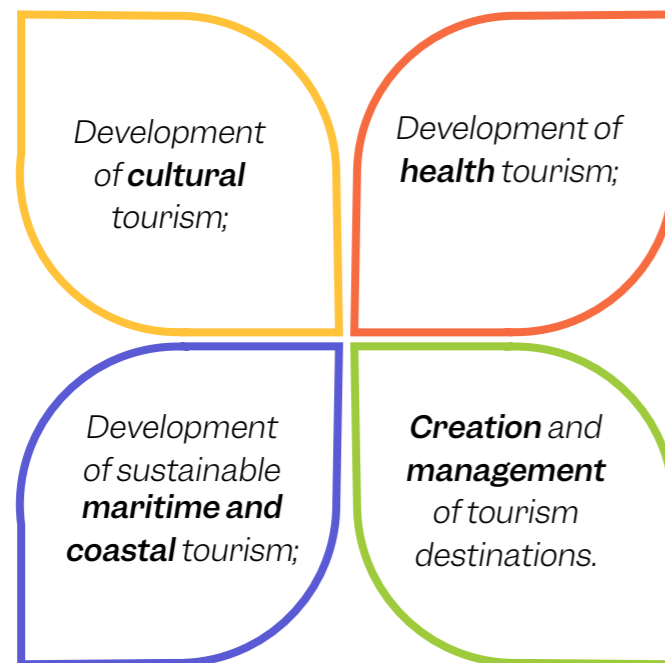




## Experiential tourism

*/ a direction that creates various experiences for locals and visitors.*

A destination is a relationship that connects infrastructure, heritage, experiences, people, history, culture and everything that happens in between: from architecture and landscape to intangible cultural heritage, local food, cultural events, visual and performing arts, and other cultural and artistic processes. The theme is everything and the narrative that connects the dots needs to be co-created



## People-centred public services

*/ a direction of a high-quality living environment and services*

Regions face a shortage of human resources. Often, economic growth and business development take place in regional centres or larger cities. While other cities do not play such an active role in developing the regional specializations and implementing their visions, it is important for all regions to create a healthy and attractive living environment for their inhabitants.



*Making cultural services more efficient;*



*Making educational services more effective;*



*Making health services more efficient;*



*Making social services more efficient;*



*Providing services on both sides of the border.*

## High value-added creation

*/ high value-added creation chains*

Using research, experimental development and innovation activities in the fields of bioeconomy, blue biotechnology, clean technologies and related fields, regions are transforming traditional industry, developing creative industries, professional services, innovation systems, new products and services. There is a need to transform existing “soft” and “hard” infrastructure for science and business partnerships, attracting the professionals needed to develop this.

- Coordinated purchase of raw materials through business clusters;
- Public and private sector partnerships;
- Capacity building and development programme;
- Creation of an interregional bioeconomy centre.

## Overall topics

### Public services and governance capacity building and people- to people cooperation

Human resources are not only one of the most important, but also the main resource of each area. Any capacity building activity provides a good start, whether it is training, public involvement strategies, development

of services or digital skills, or investments in relevant public health promotion projects. The digitalization of public services should reduce administrative burden, save time and resources. Smart governance is relevant to

lifelong learning, sustainable and efficient integrated systems, and transparency of decision making. In cooperation with both regions, ways should be found to highlight the best services provided by each municipality. Connecting people requires a good, well connected, transport network to help achieve cross-border cooperation between the neighbouring municipalities. At present, this is limited by the poor state of the road.

Such a sensitive zone as the border area has special needs in the social and healthcare sectors. Here the challenges of social services are similar to each of the regions as a whole, and they include the need for a widening and diversification of social services. The common interests in the mobility of human resources should be found; a challenge positively influenced by the recent pandemic crisis, which demonstrated that working practices can be moved online and remotely. It is important to encourage cooperation between the Latvian and Lithuanian Emergency Medical Services, as well as the two National Fire and Rescue Services. As ICT network coverage in the border area is insufficient, it increases the risk that the population will not receive assistance. Also, a shortage of dentists means that people from Dienvidkurzeme and Saldus municipalities in Latvia choose to receive dental services in Lithuania.

Sport activities are another possible way for cooperation. In terms of distance, border areas have low competitiveness and are not binding on competition organizers, so they choose to be organized closer to Liepāja. Lithuanians are actively taking advantage of the supply of sports halls in the border area due to Lithuania having a poorer infrastructure compared to Latvia (although this situation is improving).

An analysis of settlements structure, employment centres, road infrastructure and services, and their reach in the context of the border area shows that more accurate data analysis is required on the availability of services such as:

- shopping habits;
- household services;
- health care;
- education;
- culture;
- sport;
- and social services.

Identification of the challenges should be done analysing the attainability of high-quality services depending on time, distance, price (including, food basket, Big Mac index, etc.). Processing data from mobile operators to identify the habits of people, their most frequently visited places, and the duration of their stays. Further analysis would be helpful on existing situations in the border area related to training courses, real estate prices, and transaction volumes.

## Fair and inclusive society

Social processes reflect society, connected values, and the life of people and their mutual relationships. Social resilience is mainly an open dialog between all social groups, so cooperation with local communities and NGO's, community-based social services, social innovations, social entrepreneurship, and mobile social services could expand possibilities to strengthen this social inclusivity. The social groups we have in mind should include those such as pre-retired and post-retired persons, disabled people, homeless and migrants, disabled people, single-parent families, and different youth groups. All of whom should feel a close identity to the local community.

Social exclusion can be reduced by providing regular improvements in public health, mixed generations kindergartens, work with street-youth, foreign language training for the elderly and establishment of equal opportunities. Capacity building measures for social services like digitalization of social services, development of infrastructure for social services and creation should also strengthen the providers of social services.

All municipalities in the Kurzeme region have social services, but their range is very diverse and there are only basic social services available in four municipalities. There are at least 10 social employment professionals in the social services of the municipalities of the KPR, but there is a distinct lack of specialists in municipalities with a small population, as well as in Liepāja and Ventspils. Although KPR tends to decrease in population numbers, this does

not mean a decrease in the number of social service beneficiaries as society ages and support measures are needed for people above working age. There has been a gradual increase in demand for services for people with mental disabilities and children with disabilities, and it is therefore important to improve the support system for parents of children with disabilities. Developing the palliative care system and increasing access to support for nationals, for example by providing mobile brigades, remains very important.

Following the analysis of social services carried out in the KPR, as well as the assessment of the discussions of the working groups, it can be concluded that red tape severely limits the time spent by social services workers devoted to people's real needs; and matching needs to services is affected by a very complicated and formal procedure for granting a service. One of the reasons why it is difficult to attract new social services workers is the low pay and the low valuation and prestige in society. Social workers have a high risk of burn-out, so a supportive and motivating working environment, competitive pay and psychological support measures are important. It is necessary to improve working conditions for social workers, to promote the accessibility of the environment for municipal social houses and social services so that they are also accessible to people with disabilities.

All developments at local level need to be replicated at regional level, something that

might happen following the administrative territorial reform of 2021. Targeted public education and awareness-raising are needed to promote the social inclusion and inclusion of vulnerable groups such as young and low-skilled people. Social services and support need to be modernized and reviewed, bringing together different areas and societal needs, in greater cooperation with NGOs. Municipalities, in cooperation

with NGOs, need to develop training to educate and raise the level of competence of citizens on cooperation with different target groups. Access to support services for people of retirement age or pre-retirement age is becoming increasingly urgent.

## Sustainable use of the resources and the environment

In the long-term, the production of environmentally friendly goods, alternative energy sources will increase the competitiveness of regions, increasing added value to the environmental quality. The geographical location of both Kurzeme and Klaipėda regions is comparable: location on the coast of the Baltic Sea, evenly flat terrain, natural values, etc. The geographical location opens up the potential to use renewable energy sources such as hydro, solar and wind energy of geothermal energy.

Both regions are already making good use of wind energy, but there is scope for other kinds of renewable energy as well. The second aspect which the two regions have successfully developed is the transition from traditional production and smart production to more and more environmentally friendly resources.



## Diversification of tourism products

Both regions have a wealth of heritage, recreational potential, diversity of experience of cultural and ethnic groups, and great natural values. Diversification and widening of tourism will be strengthened by a mutual interest to create links between people and their experience, heritage, history, culture, local products, cultural events and artistic processes to sustainable and attractive product of tourism and hospitality. Compared to other municipalities and cities, the level of cultural tourism is currently lower across the border area, as shown by the number of visitors. Not only are the availability of services

important to promote development in the border area, but also overall improvements of recreational areas and, fundamentally, the condition of roads. Any new tourism products could be created using a narrow range of interests like industrial heritage, bird-watching activities, military heritage. In developing cross-border tourism, although health-tourism is well developed and represented, each municipality can have its own strong type of tourism, and this diverse supply can be developed through a single network.

## Inclusive and resilient public services

The public service providers are both local municipalities and governmental organizations. There is a need and potential to find ways of balancing future expectations and prognosis with the current situational demand.

A similar challenge is the education of the existing workforce and the possibilities for retraining. Overall, the distribution of the population by level of education in both the Kurzeme region and the Klaipėda region is similar, with the highest share of the

population (15-64 age group) in 2019, having an average general education, or vocational education. To promote high quality education in the border area, it is necessary to provide qualified and motivated educators, as well as to attract new specialists. The importance of Latvian language training is increasing as the number of re-emigrants increases.

# To create high level added value

Using research is the way to help traditional industries to readjust, to encourage creative industries and professional services, to adapt innovation systems and to create new products and services. The areas related to bioeconomy, marine biotechnology, and clean technology are ideal for this purpose. The existing “soft” and “hard” infrastructure for science and business partnerships needs to be transformed by attracting the necessary specialists.

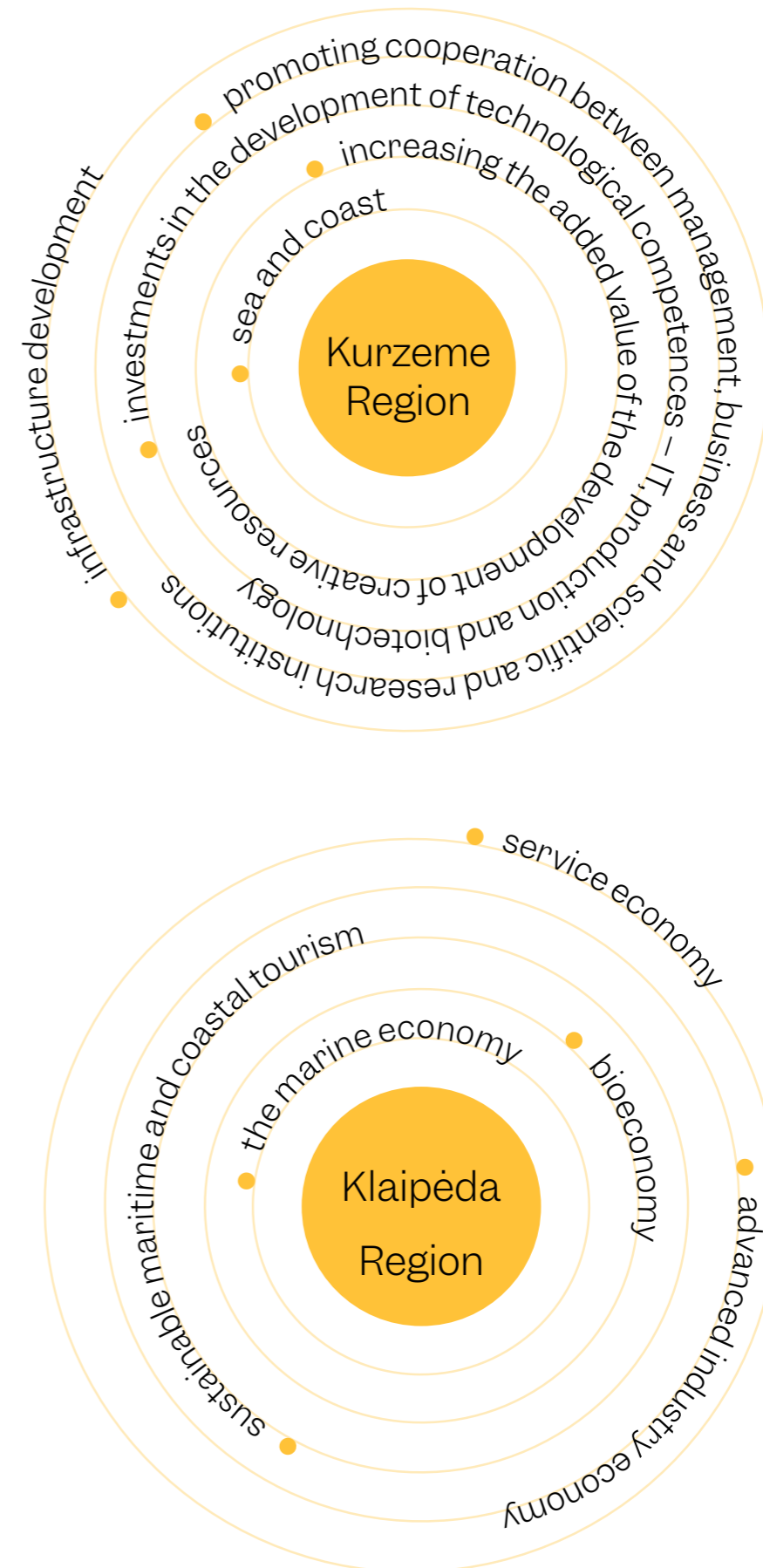
Both the regions of Kurzeme and Klaipėda face equal challenges in demographic issues – shrinking population and population ageing, and cooperation needs to find ways to balance future expectations with the current situation. Focusing on possible investments is connected with the problems of educated employees, creation of local jobs and business development in line with customers’ needs.

Currently, the increase of population is driven by production plants with a large number of jobs. The development of home production and for crafts is evident, and we need entrepreneurs to be more in line with customer needs. The current situation in the border area of Kurzeme region is that there is not an active local operator able to

compete with Lithuanian tourism services. Lithuanians actively purchase properties in Rucava parish on the border coast (Nida, Pape) and develop their guest houses and campsites, use local infrastructure, but do not use local labour. The Kurzeme region needs to find its own markets, which would be relevant for both local residents and tourists.

At the same time, it should be understood how to link the lines of specialization within the same network in order to create pre-conditions for high added value and economic growth. In the context of the previous chapter, it is necessary to find solutions for training specialists in different areas and to ensure that they are employed in growth areas. The main challenges are connected with the current market for small spectrum services, a low value-added export structure, and low levels of business. The challenges are similar for both Latvia and Lithuania, but the aim is to increase added value through existing resources. In cooperation between Kurzeme and Klaipėda regions, this can be achieved by targeting the development of blue growth through ports, coasts, and by developing infrastructure in parallel.

The challenges and opportunities of the Kurzeme region and Klaipėda region are similar, and specialisation in regional planning documents is also defined in similar directions. A deep challenge for society will be changes in lifestyle such as changes in the use of energy resources, and a different organization of job and of the working environment.





GDP in both Kurzeme and Klaipėda is forecast to grow, but it is significantly higher in Klaipėda than in Kurzeme. In the Klaipėda region, GDP per capita is higher than the average in Lithuania, indicating that the Klaipėda region has high competitiveness in Lithuania and the Baltic as a whole.

Both regions are largely characterized by port activities, with two large ports in the Kurzeme region – Liepāja and Ventspils, and one port in Klaipėda. Large ports, as points of the Baltic Sea region-wide transport hubs, provide land and sea links and connections to the external market, with all ports strongly focused on exports. However, the trends in cargo turnover are different, with a drop in cargo turnover in Ventspils port from 2005 to 2019, while there is an increase in cargo turnover in the ports of Liepāja and Klaipėda. One of the reasons for the increase in Klaipėda port cargo turnover is the improvement of the transport network in Lithuania.

Such continuous and rapid changes in accessibility of services may lead to a lack of confidence in public governance (not only in political administration, but also in the provision of services, healthcare, the financial sector), and therefore, in the post-pandemic life, there is a need to invest significantly in the development of new types of services.

During the last two years the remote work and training process developed rapidly. These conditions created the need to work remotely, and such changes made it easier to choose the living environment and increase the flexibility of migration. Working from anywhere creates a new type of employee, one who chooses from where to work, where to live. In any future development, it is important to ensure good infrastructure and accessibility for the convenient mobility of people and of tourists.

## Encourage potential cross-border functionality

Following data-analysis carried out, it was found that services that may become more efficient when supplied in cross-border areas should be identified. The reference points for the development of the two regions' functional areas are: sustainable use of resources and the environment; diverse tourism; human-centred public services; and high added value for goods and services.

When defining cross-border functional areas, two zones with distinct reach should be considered:

### 1. On the scale of the Kurzeme-Klaipėda region, the 45-minute reach to:

- the workplace;
- shopping (larger, non-daily purchases);
- centres of services (larger, services of a certain spectrum);
- real estate.

### 2. On the scale of border area (Priekule, Rucava, Vainode, Skuodas, Mažeikiai) 20-minute reach to:

- daily shopping;
- daily services (healthcare, education, social services, etc.);
- markets for local farmers, craftsmen, artisans;
- public transport infrastructure.



# GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING SMART SPECIALISATION



## 1. The concept of smart specialisation

Smart specialisation and relevant methodology, known as *Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation* (RIS3), includes the two key values to European Union *Regional Innovation Strategies* (RIS): the value of prioritizing (making smart choices) as a starting point and how such prioritization should be done through a collaborative process. A collaborative process includes collaboration

between such stakeholders playing leading roles as research centres, leading companies and entrepreneurs, and use of the planning method called 'triple (also - quadruple) helix'. RIS3 and other policies, inspired by the smart specialisation concept, is a matter of combining three key elements: choice, collaborative leadership and related variety. The basic principles of smart planning are following.

S	<b>SPECIFIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the goal as much as possible with clear language.</li> <li>WHO is involved, WHAT does the person want to accomplish, WHERE will it be done, WHY is the person doing this - purpose, WHICH constrains and requirements does the person have.</li> </ul>
M	<b>MEASURABLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it possible to track the progress and measure the outcome?</li> <li>How much, how many, how will the person know when the goal is accomplished?</li> </ul>
A	<b>ATTAINABLE/ ACHIEVABLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the goal reasonable enough to be accomplished? How so?</li> <li>Make sure the goal is not out of reach or below stated performance.</li> </ul>
R	<b>RELEVANT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the goal helpful and will it meet the person's needs?</li> <li>Is each goal consistent with the other goals that the person has established and does it fit with person's immediate and long term plans?</li> </ul>
T	<b>TIMELY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person's objective should include a time limit like: this step will be completed by day/month/year.</li> <li>Established sense of urgency and prompts help the person to better manage the time.</li> </ul>

**THE CHOICE INCLUDES:**

the value of prioritizing several knowledge domains and lead markets (vertical priorities assembled as a pattern of specialisation) and the subsequent alignment of initiatives (horizontal policies) around them. Collaborative leadership now should be understood as the capacity of taking the initiative to manage, convene, promote, encourage and generate consensus. In other words - prioritizing according to two criteria: an “entrepreneurial” and co-decision-making model. Related variety concerns to the priorities are just the backbone for the “specialized diversification”. It is not a directive, but a guide for growth. In exploiting related diversity and relationships between the different priority domains, new opportunities and activities could emerge.

**The RIS3 strategies are coherent regional programmes for economic change. They have five main characteristics:**

- 1 focusing on policy support and investments on key national/regional priorities, challenges and needs for knowledge-based development;
- 2 based on each country/region’s strengths, competitive advantages and potential for excellence;
- 3 support for technological as well as practice-based innovation; and their aim is to stimulate investments in private sector;
- 4 getting the stakeholders fully involved and to encourage innovations and experimentation;
- 5 evidence-based and including sound monitoring and evaluation systems.

In terms of smart specialisation, municipalities should take the first step and not expect any encouragement from RIS3 leading authorities in the short term. If municipalities are proactive, they might take advantage of the smart specialisation concept to strengthen their own policy-mix on business-led local economic development with or without a strong

counterpart on the national or regional level. In particular, municipalities should work in four key areas, namely: cluster development, entrepreneurship, workspace provision, and investment/talent attraction. More detailed information on strategies for research and innovation-driven growth is available at [s3platform](https://s3platform.eu). 

**The steps to formulate a smart specialisation strategy are described in the table below.**

**Analysis of the regional context and potential for innovation**

- What are the main challenges - barriers to, and drivers of, sustainable growth in your region?
- What are the existing regional assets and emerging potential for activities that will encourage sustainable growth?
- What is the existing expertise and knowledge in the region, including research and innovation capacities such as those within universities, which relate to eco-innovation, sustainable energy, etc?
- What are the competitive advantages and capacities of local industries and SMEs in the fields of eco-innovation, sustainable energy, etc?
- How dynamic is the local entrepreneurial environment in the areas with the highest potential for sustainable growth?

**Governance: Ensuring participation and ownership**

- What agencies, organisations, companies and other stakeholders could be involved in designing and promoting specific actions that will contribute to connecting smart and sustainable growth in the region?
- How can stakeholders best be mobilised to create regional alliances to promote innovations for sustainable growth?
- How can collaborative action and effective implementation best be organised?

### Elaboration of an overall vision for the future of the region

- How can the objective of sustainable growth be integrated into the long-term vision considering regional assets, challenges and emerging opportunities?
- How are smart and sustainable growth connected within this overall vision for the future?
- How can the vision reflect the global trends?

### Identification of priorities

- What is the overall priority for sustainable growth in the strategy?
- What are the key focus areas to promote innovations for sustainable growth in the region/member state?
- What are the key technological, sectorial, and horizontal priorities for investment?

### Definition of coherent policy mix, roadmaps and action plan

- What strategies, roadmaps, policies and actions need to be undertaken to promote specific niche areas and the priorities for linking smart and sustainable growth?
- How can the horizontal, vertical and temporal coherence of the policy mix be ensured?
- How can demand and supply side measures be balanced?

### Integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- How to assess the impact and evaluate and monitor actions and projects that address sustainable and smart growth?
- How can progress toward sustainable and smart growth be measured?

A figure below shows the process of developing smart specialisation in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region (Finland).



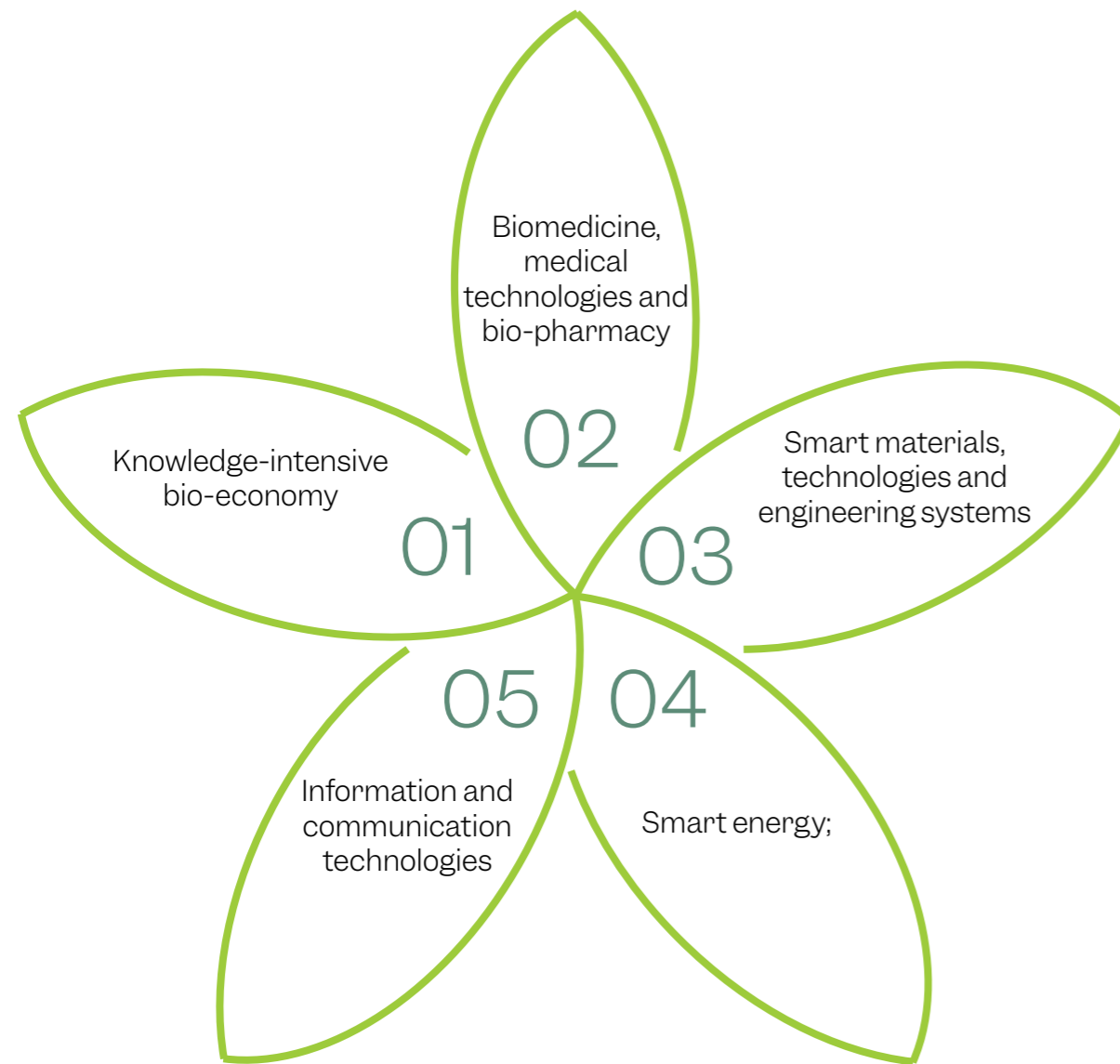
The starting point and guidelines for the local smart specialisation strategy could be found in smart specialisation documents at national and regional level.

**In Latvia**, there are five smart specialisation areas as identified in the Industrial Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027 and in Smart Specialization Strategy for Research and Innovation

(RIS3) including five key areas to articulate and promote economic transformation towards higher added value and international competitiveness. Additional information on each area of specialisation, their opportunities and challenges is available in the Industrial Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027 and in the Science, Technological Development and Innovation Guidelines for 2021-2027.<sup>3</sup>

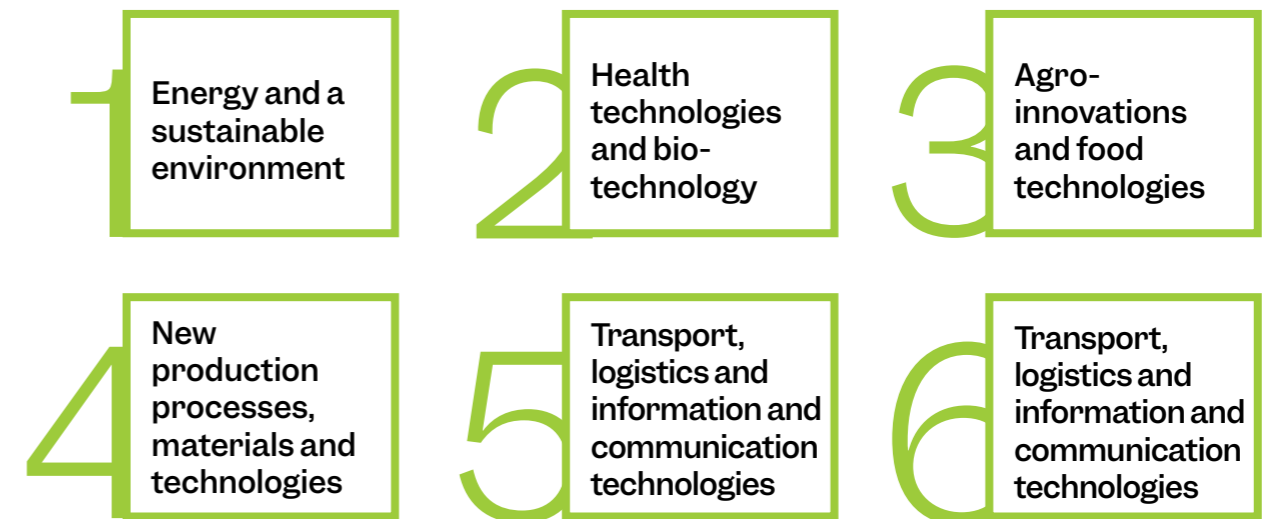
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/smart-specialisation-strategy-ris3>

The five smart specialization areas with the greatest research and innovation potential were defined as follows:



In addition, in the context of RIS3 Social Sciences and Humanities are developed as an area with horizontal impact on RIS3.

In Lithuania, there are six smart specialisation industries as follows<sup>4</sup>:



More explanation and detailed information is available on the home page <https://strata.gov.lt> of the Lithuanian Centre for Strategic Analysis<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Definition of the areas of smart specialisation at local/ regional level

### Smart Specialisation (RIS3) Ecosystem and involvement of stakeholders

The Smart Specialisation Strategy is a joint testing process using existing resources, analysing the strengths and the possibilities. The figure below shows how the stakeholders should be involved in the Smart Specialisation Strategy at regional level.

<sup>4</sup> <https://smartup-bsr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/O2.6-Lietuva-RIS3.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://strata.gov.lt/lt/sumani-specializacija/apie>





**At any planning level the following stakeholders could be involved:**

- Local government employees (politicians, development department, infrastructure departments, property unit, financial unit, tourism information centre);
- Regional representatives (development planning, business and tourism);
- Business representatives (business clubs, major/most active companies);
- Universities and research institutions;
- Representatives of general and vocational education institutions;
- Non-governmental organisations of the local communities;
- Representatives of creative industries/non-governmental organisations;
- Other interested parties, with focus on local specific and/or interests.

There is a good example from the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region on the involvement of stakeholders in the development of the RIS3 strategy. The goals of implementing the RIS3 strategy of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region are:

- To create the preconditions for and actively promote regional co-operation targeted to create the achievements on an international level.
- To combine and use the know-how and expertise existing and cumulated in the region as a common basis for innovation.
- To use the co-operation platforms for bringing together various actors and stakeholders and to combine expertise, solutions offered by technology and key resources to solve common propositions.
- To increase the productiveness, predictability and use of long-term approaches for research and innovation activities.
- To improve networking so that it becomes clearer and more effective.
- To focus on collaboration within thematic priorities that are looking to find solutions for everyday actual business challenges for stakeholders in the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region.
- The metropolitan position: In the Helsinki metropolitan area (a part of Uusimaa Region) 12 municipalities have created a shared competitiveness strategy. The strategy highlights internal cooperation, a strong intent in pursuing a common goal, and internationalism.
- The research and innovation position:
  - ☒ The preparation for the national Innovative Cities project (INKA) has played an important part in identifying the strengths and priorities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region. In the process, experts from research facilities, universities, universities of applied sciences and businesses and municipal actors were invited for the discussions. Over 280 people from Helsinki-Uusimaa, 60 of them business representatives, participated in the seminars and workshops that the themes were tested and modified in.
  - ☒ The development of Helsinki-Uusimaa as an innovation ecosystem has been analysed and developed in a process led by the Finland Futures Research Centre (FFRC) of the University of Turku.
  - ☒ Aalto University has described innovation and collaborative practice and operating methods simulated from the point of view of researchers and innovators.
- Connection with other strategic programmes: In addition, separate surveys have been commissioned, and the strategic programmes and plans of other regional and national actors have been examined from the Smart Specialisation point of view.

The Smart Specialisation strategy for the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is a process that will complement the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme as well help develop the activities taking place in the region. It will be carried out step by step to be part of the goal-setting for the region's development goals and for the planning and implementation of projects.

In this process, the region's tasks, development goals and necessary actions have been described comprehensively by combining the viewpoints of various stakeholders and the work done in different areas:

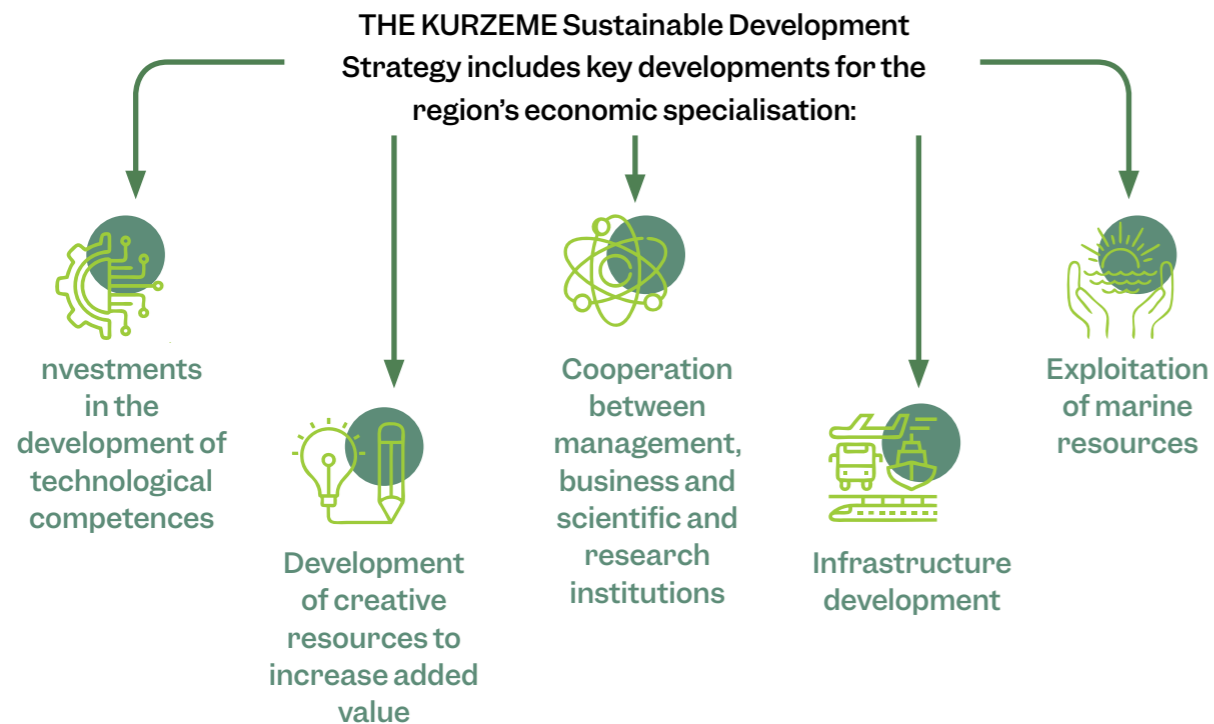
- The municipal position: All 26 municipalities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region have defined their priorities and created a municipal strategy.

In view of the innovation of the concept of smart specialisation, local authorities and at regional level should primarily contribute to the definition of all stakeholders' familiarity and areas of common interest.



## Scope for smart regional specialisation

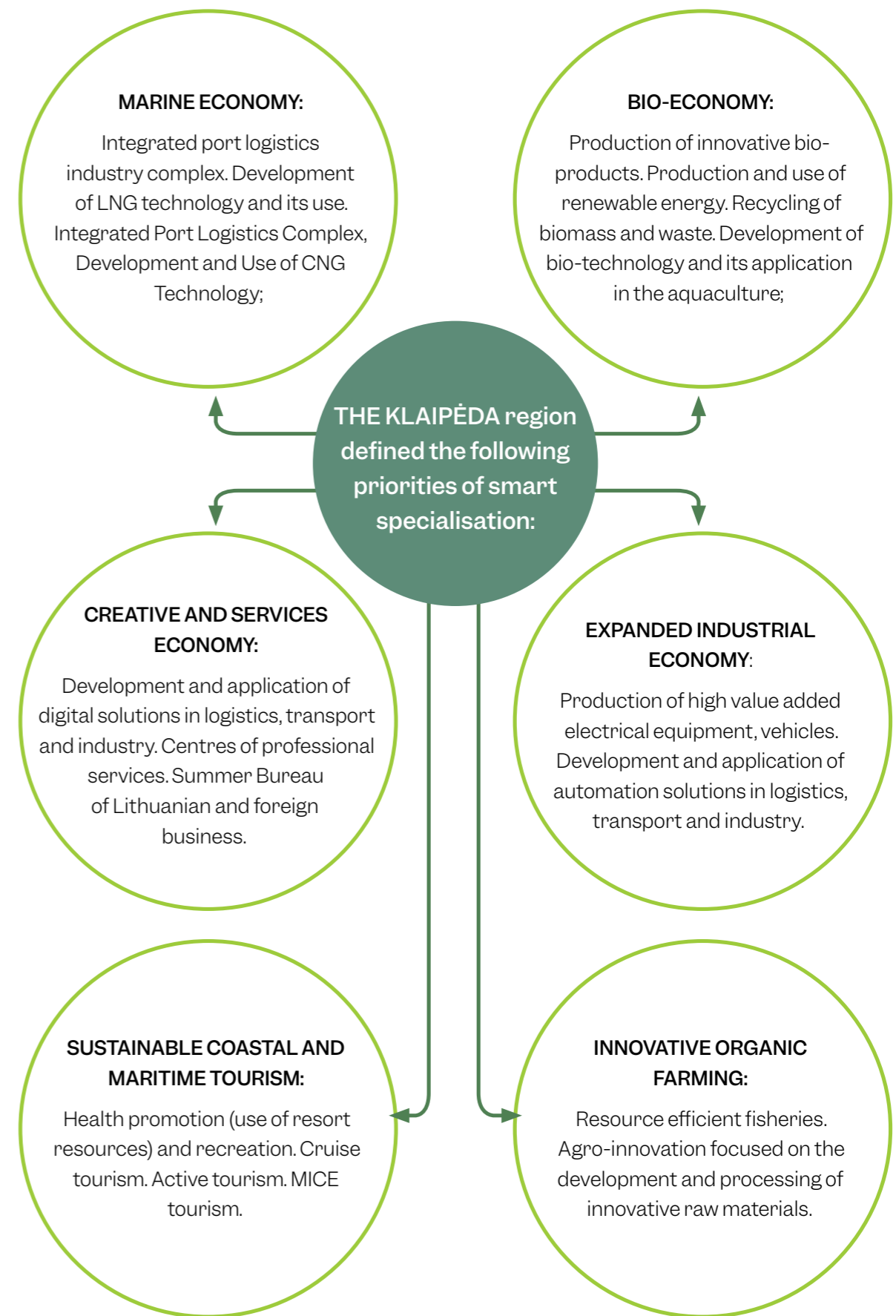
The next step in defining the areas of smart specialisation is to analyse areas of regional specialisation. They are usually included in the regional development planning documents.



The competitive sectors of the region include the transport sector (ports), food production, agriculture and forestry, woodworking, metalworking, specialised construction. In addition, blue growth sectors, including coastal tourism, fisheries and marine aquaculture, wind energy, shipbuilding and repairs, should be developed in the perspective.

Additional information is available in the documents of the Kurzeme Planning Region Development Programme and in the SMART PLANNING materials of the project<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kurzemesregions.lv/>

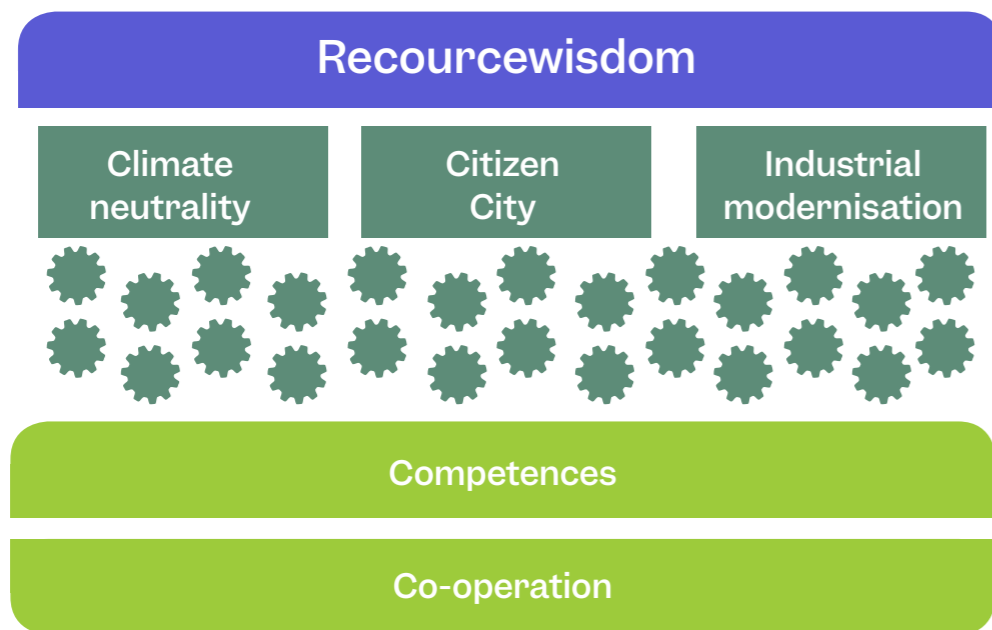


Additional information is available in the Smart-up BSR materials project<sup>7</sup> and on the Klaipėda region home page<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://smartup-bsr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/O2.6-Lietuva-RIS3.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://klaipedaregion.lt/>

The strategic framework for smart general specialisation in the Helsinki-Uusimaa region and is shown in the figure below.



- business information by sector: turnover, employment, added value, added value per employee;
- existing and potential business areas;
- information on vocational and higher educational programmes and linkage to the needs of employers;
- analysis on smart solutions at the regional level and the regional innovation and knowledge platform.

## Data for the identification of areas and resources of smart specialisation at local/regional level

To identify the areas and resources of smart specialisation, a comprehensive analysis of the current situation should be carried out. The information and sections to be included in the detailed description of the current situation are described in the relevant guidelines for national development planning documents, and this places emphasis on the information needed in the context of smart specialisation.

### Key information in the context of smart specialisation shall include:

- the structure of settlement, the dynamics and location of different age groups of inhabitants, the daily mobility flows for the purposes of work and service receiving;
- availability, reach of existing services;
- mobility, including public transport;
- business data, including cooperation between tourism, business centres and other institutions, development potential for innovations, an assessment of the business support services currently available in each region;

Latvian experience shows, that data for analysis can be found on the website of the National Statistical Bureau (data tables, press releases, publications, NACE classification etc.) as well as on the public open data portal. If necessary, it is possible to require more detailed analysis of the data in the specific municipality section, for an additional fee. It is recommended to use experimental statistics as a new and handy tool for analysing data. NACE classification is another source for classification and could be used to identify the sectors with higher added value, and to analyse employment data from the smart specialization point of view.

All the data could be used for spatial analysis to assess development opportunities. In analysing the data on the current situation, not only problems and facts should be assessed and defined, but also potential developments and opportunities based on the resources available. The data analysis should cover the widest possible range of areas and directions, highlighting the strong and weak sides. Data-based decisions are more efficient, more justified and can increase the competitiveness of the area

more. In addition, they can add to more and more companies moving towards being innovative. Data on innovation in companies is used to assess the number of innovative companies, their share within active companies, the number of innovative companies by activity, their turnover, the number of workers, the number and share by type of innovation, and the overall innovation spending. Improving these indicators would help the region to achieve the objectives of smart specialisation goals. Although statistics are currently not updated according to recent years, this is a criterion for future improvement.

Data analysis tools developed on the basis of information available on municipal information systems and their links to other authorities' databases may also be used. Spatial data could be used to understand the location of specific population groups (e.g. pre-schoolers, retired persons) to plan the relevant services, capacity of infrastructure, replacement / intensity / specialization of businesses, analyse the sources of taxes, real estate, and infrastructure maintenance costs.

### 3. Actions for the development of smart specialisation at municipal level

The inspiration for activities for strategic planning of smart specialisation activities at municipal level is taken from the regional development programmes.

The priority “Dynamic Knowledge” of the Kurzeme Planning Region Development Programme 2021-2027 includes a number of actions. Continued education will boost innovation capacity, and this includes the continued identification of innovation and the recruitment of professionals to develop the education system in line with societal and scientific changes, both by selecting training methods and ICT solutions and by adapting to the demands of smart specialisation industries. As result, the following actions could be identified:

- **TO ENCOURAGE innovations;**
- **BUILD UP a modern, accessible and healthy environment in educational institutions; improve the infrastructure, facilities, inter alia distance learning tools, online education;**
- **TO IMPROVE educational management systems and the modernisation of technologies;**
- **TO PROMOTE cooperation between municipalities and entrepreneurs strengthening innovation capacity of educational institutions.**

It is equally important to promote the digital competences and to create regional digital innovation centres in regional development centres as follows: Kuldīga, Talsi, Saldus and Tukums as well in Liepāja and Ventspils. As result, the following actions could be identified:

- **TO CREATE regional centres for digital innovation centres;**
- **TO CONSUMMATE digital skills within the framework of the Qualified Human Resources Programme;**
- **TO ELABORATE and implement Kurzeme digital transformation strategy: using existing and creating new digital technology capabilities, improving the quality of life for every individual and society as a whole;**
- **TO DEVELOP, train and retrain skills for work and life in society.**

In order to improve citizens' skills, the availability of high-quality and human-oriented lifelong learning is important, including the recruitment of skilled trainers and professionals, the development of an infrastructure and technical base, promoting the active participation of each individual in a knowledge-based society and economy. In order to implement it, it is necessary to implement a diverse, binding and creative vocational orientation and interest education.

As one of the main challenges identified is the lack of human resources, the development of human capital and the rational use of human resources are important. As result, the following actions could be identified:

- **TO IMPROVING the efficiency of education and training systems and promoting compliance with changing labour market demand;**
- **DEVELOPING a human resources recruitment strategy;**
- **THE DEVELOPMENT of smart specialisation industries by encouraging the preparation of the human resources needed for them;**
- **ORGANISING ACTIVITIES to improve the professional skills of citizens, raising skills to boost the competitiveness of workers and increasing productivity.**

The priority “Growth Economy” relates to the implementation of the smart specialisation. Competitive blue economy will be targeted to the sustainable development of coastal and maritime tourism by promoting investment of the blue economy in the Kurzeme region, by introducing solutions for promoting water ecosystem infrastructure and potential for economic growth. In order to do this, the following actions are needed:

- **PROMOTING a competitive economy through coastal/ marine resources (“blue growth”/blue growth), including data collection, pilot projects, communication activities;**
- **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT of coastal and maritime tourism;**
- **PROMOTING the sustainable growth of the blue bioeconomy by identifying the potential of this sector;**
- **ADAPTATION of fisheries and aquaculture to climate change (in the Kurzeme region).**

As a result of increased competition, companies need to be redeployed and adapted to innovative solutions, investing in capacity building, thereby enabling the exchange of experience in a single platform, in cooperation with joint pilot projects for higher education institutions, scientific institutions, businesses and municipalities. The creation of knowledge and capacity building for business innovation are also important, including the following actions:

- **SETTING UP a platform for innovation knowledge and technology transfer;**
- **STRENGTHENING higher education, including cultural education, institutions as knowledge-building, technology transfer and innovation centres for smart growth;**
- **IMPLEMENTATION of pilot projects in the field of innovation and capacity building in the public sector.**

The development of the Green Course – an environmentally friendly business – is important to implement the smart specialisation of the region. It aims to update and promote green business in the region by promoting the implementation of environmentally friendly actions on the part of businesses. The development of green clusters, the introduction of environmentally friendly lifestyle principles and innovative solutions for the development of a green urban environment (including innovation in waste management). In order to achieve this, the following actions are identified:

- **PROMOTING and developing environmentally friendly business in the region;**
- **THE INTRODUCTION of circular economic principles in manufacturing and services and the development of innovative business models based on circular principles;**
- **DEVELOPMENT of “green” industrial areas, development of “green” clusters;**
- **DEVELOPMENT of green infrastructure solutions (including energy efficiency solutions) in businesses.**

It is important to promote the development of support services for Kurzeme entrepreneurs, which includes support for existing and young entrepreneurs, the realisation of business ideas for new products or services, through networking activities for regional entrepreneurs, promoting exchange activities and respecting Penta Helix’s basic principles. The following actions are needed to implement this:

- **THE ESTABLISHMENT of a business communication network (business development centres), in which entrepreneurs meet not only among themselves but also with potential investors, clients, municipalities and public authorities, thereby being able to react more quickly to all stakeholders;**

- **ORGANISATION of training activities for capacity building and strategic development of human resources for enterprises;**
- **THE LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT of the business support environment, in line with the basic principles of Penta Helix.**

Given the region’s competitive industries and global trends, the digital transformation of companies is important. It aims to support different sectors (tourism, manufacturing, increasing their efficiency and productivity through modern ICT solutions for the sale of goods and services and customer service. Promoting companies to take advantage of technology effectively and raising the information and knowledge base on available IT solutions. In order to do so, the following actions should be taken:

- **THE INTRODUCTION of smart solutions for travellers in businesses, attractions and travel destinations;**
- **PROVIDING ICT infrastructure to promote the digital transformation of businesses;**
- **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT through smart technologies.**

It is important to promote the development of the infrastructure needed for entrepreneurship, which includes the development of an environment conducive to SME activities (including e-environment), the deployment of sites’ revitalisation, and rectification activities, by improving public infrastructure to promote business development. In order to do this, it is important to take the following steps:

- **EXTENSION of the tourism package to reduce seasonality.**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT for the provision of water tourism services**
- **IDENTIFICATION and ESTABLISHMENT of the support infrastructure needed for business. Revitalisation of the territory, recuperation by improving good-fitting, road (automobile, bicycle, pedestrian) infrastructure, i.e. communications, connections to the needs of economic operators.**
- **SETTING UP INDUSTRIAL PARKS, creating production buildings and infrastructure to boost business competitiveness, including ensuring a transition to climate neutrality.**



Promoting the entrepreneurial capacity of society is one of the important steps to realize the smart specialisation of the region. It includes promoting the entrepreneurial capacity of young people and other population groups on the development of sustainable, green and innovative business in the region. The development of entrepreneurial skills in society by promoting the development of social entrepreneurship, self-employed and other forms of entrepreneurship.

The green and safe development priority includes the development of sustainable and efficient forms of energy production and use. It aims to promote sustainable energy and RES use in municipal and institutional buildings, households, business, manufacturing-industry. Reduction of heat loss through energy management, energy efficiency and optimisation measures. It shall include the following actions:

- **Use of SUSTAINABLE ENERGY and RES in municipal and local buildings (including cultural and historical sites), facilitating the connection of structures to district or local heating.**
- **CAPACITY BUILDING for local government specialists in the field of AER and air pollution**
- **DEVELOPMENT of energy-efficient business infrastructure and technology (including AER), ensuring a business transition to climate neutrality**

In order to promote the efficient use of resources in the region, the introduction of a circular economy is important. It aims at turning waste into resources, adapting landfills by expanding the shared collection system, and creating a modern waste management system in the region. Adaptation of industrial processes in business by creating closed material cycles. Building an educated society by changing public attitudes towards commodity management throughout its life cycle by promoting sustainable consumption. The following actions are needed to realise this:

- **ADAPTATION, re-profiling or conversion of existing landfill sites for other waste management activities, as well as measures to reduce local waste generation, increase the waste-shared collection system, develop commodity repair services and promote the circular economy.**
- **THE INTRODUCTION of circular economy principles in manufacturing and services, by developing secondary and closed material cycle technology, facilitating the transition to the use of recyclable and environmentally friendly raw materials in manufacturing technological solutions.**

Equally important is the introduction of a green and climate neutral policy to promote climate neutrality by investing in sustainable and energy-efficient infrastructure, waste prevention and developing a high-quality green growth strategy for the introduction of climate neutrality policies in the Kurzeme region. This requires increased energy efficiency of local government-owned buildings, energy certification of buildings and works to increase energy efficiency, including smart management solutions.

Adaptation to climate change and effective crisis response (including infrastructure) are crucial. This includes the establishment of a uniform, safe and modern system of public safety oversight, improving the level of response in crisis situations and increasing the possibility of rapidly developing risk identification and prevention measures. Ensuring the training of citizens in the field of climate change is therefore important in implementing integrated and multi-functional blue and green infrastructure solutions.

The “Sustainable mobility” priority includes ensuring the reach of development centres and regional centres. It aims to achieve this through a high-quality, environmentally friendly, secure and accessible transport infrastructure, extending the transport service. The following actions are needed to realise this:

- **DEVELOPMENT OF PORT / public infrastructure for freight and passenger transport purposes, extension and modernisation of the range of services;**
- **DEVELOPMENT OF AERODROMES infrastructure to boost aviation security, increase airport capacity and make civilian-military cooperation more efficient.**

The deployment of smart mobility solutions in the region is also important. It aims at improving the transport system through ICT solutions and promoting more efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly use of mobility-related resources, including pilot projects to implement smart mobility solutions in the region. In order to achieve this, the following actions are needed:

- **ESTABLISHMENT of smart transport corridors in the Kurzeme region;**
- **THE DEPLOYMENT of smart technologies to regulate traffic flows and to address environmental issues;**
- **PROVIDING environmentally friendly, modern-day and energy-efficient mobility services (including improving the technical base).**

The “An attractive living environment” priority includes an important course of action to promote the smart specialisation of the region. The action “Providing innovative, accessible and efficient services” includes the development and extension of the scope of services provided by municipalities and KPR, by introducing innovative solutions to improve service efficiency and digital reach while increasing staff capacity.

The priority “Social inclusion” includes the “Promoting social entrepreneurship” action line, which corresponds to the smart specialisation of the region. It aims to promote the positive climate of social entrepreneurship in the region, to provide information on the efficiency and effectiveness of social enterprises in municipalities by organising regular meetings and consultations (networking activities) involving local government and NGO specialists to promote cooperation with social entrepreneurs. In order to do this, it is important to implement these actions:

- **THE DEVELOPMENT and promotion of social entrepreneurship (including communication activities, discussions, seminars);**
- **THE IMPLEMENTATION of support measures for the development of an inclusive working environment for enterprises and the prevention of discrimination in business;**
- **DATA COLLECTION, analysis and the establishment of a common information platform for the identification of social enterprises and the promotion of social entrepreneurship.**

The priority “Cultural potential” includes the preservation of cultural heritage, the strengthening of Kurzeme’s historical and modern traditions and the development of cultural innovation and creative industries. The following actions are needed to realise this:

- **DEVELOPMENT of infrastructure for creative industries; the development of creative industries (incl. incubators), promoting strengthening and promoting the human capital capacity of cultural education, as well as the development of new cultural projects.**

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMART SPECIALISATION IN KLAIPĒDA REGION ACTIVITIES SHALL INCLUDE:

### 1. TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS:

- **design of clean vehicles;**
- **digitisation and the development of new technological solutions (increasing efficiency and safety and production), their integration and integration;**
- **establishment of a maritime transport logistics unit (faculty/institute) at Klaipėda University;**

### 2. INDUSTRY 4.0:

- **establishment and development of centres of competence in the logistics sector;**
- **design and development of autonomous port systems and logistical solutions;**
- **storage and processing of “big data”.**

### 3. ENERGY:

- **exploitation of geothermal energy potential;**
- **prospects for the development of offshore wind parks;**
- **more extensive use of LNG.**

# FROM IDEA TO REAL PROPOSAL

# 05

In a unique way, the SMART PLANNING project collects the experience of municipal, regional and national expert groups within the fields of cross-border development priorities. During two Innovation Campus and several practical workshops, the experts and planners identified the priorities highlighted within the LAT-LIT programme, which correspond to the interests at regional and local level in both Kurzeme and Klaipėda.

## Priorities

The project team indicated the main focuses from LAT-LIT programme priorities aimed at the interests of future development of both regions.





Priority  
“GREEN, RESILIENT  
AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT” –  
with focus on:

- studies of the interests and needs of local farmers, fisheries and aquaculture enterprises in relation to organic production and diversification;
- development of industrial symbiosis;
- education about bioeconomy (circular economy);
- development of short food supply chains/ food redistribution system;
- development of sustainable and efficient energy production and use;
- water management (flood prevention);
- waste management (reduction, reuse; microplastics, clean sea/rivers);
- introduction of circular economy principles, bioeconomy education campaigns;
- sustainable eco transport (infrastructure development, safety, cycling also);
- preservation of natural landscape and natural assets (biodiversity);
- sustainable real estate management;
- development of brownfields.



Priority  
“ECONOMIC  
POTENTIAL OF  
TOURISM AND  
HERITAGE” –  
with focus on:


- tourism markets and consumer research;
- development of a regional tourism cooperation models;
- thematic tourism clusters;
- regional tourism marketing and communication strategy (integrated marketing in targeted markets);
- development of maritime and coastal tourism products;
- regional cycling tourism network;
- convenient accessibility and mobility;
- preservation of cultural heritage (historical and modern traditions);
- cultural innovations and creative industries (diversity of cultural spaces);
- greenways (railways) development;
- development of public waters;
- digitalisation of tourism;
- gastrotourism (regional culinary heritage);
- development of airports; ports and communication infrastructure for tourism.





Priority  
“CAPACITY  
BUILDING AND  
PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE  
COOPERATION” –  
with focus on:

- public sector service quality monitoring system;
- reduce administrative burden;
- strategy development for attracting human resources;
- municipal employees' digital skills and innovative services in the municipalities;
- sustainable and efficient system for integrated development of the region;
- development of smart communities;
- public health promotion programmes/projects;
- transparency in decision-making (public involvement strategies);
- digitalisation of public services;
- capacity building for development of offshore wind energy.

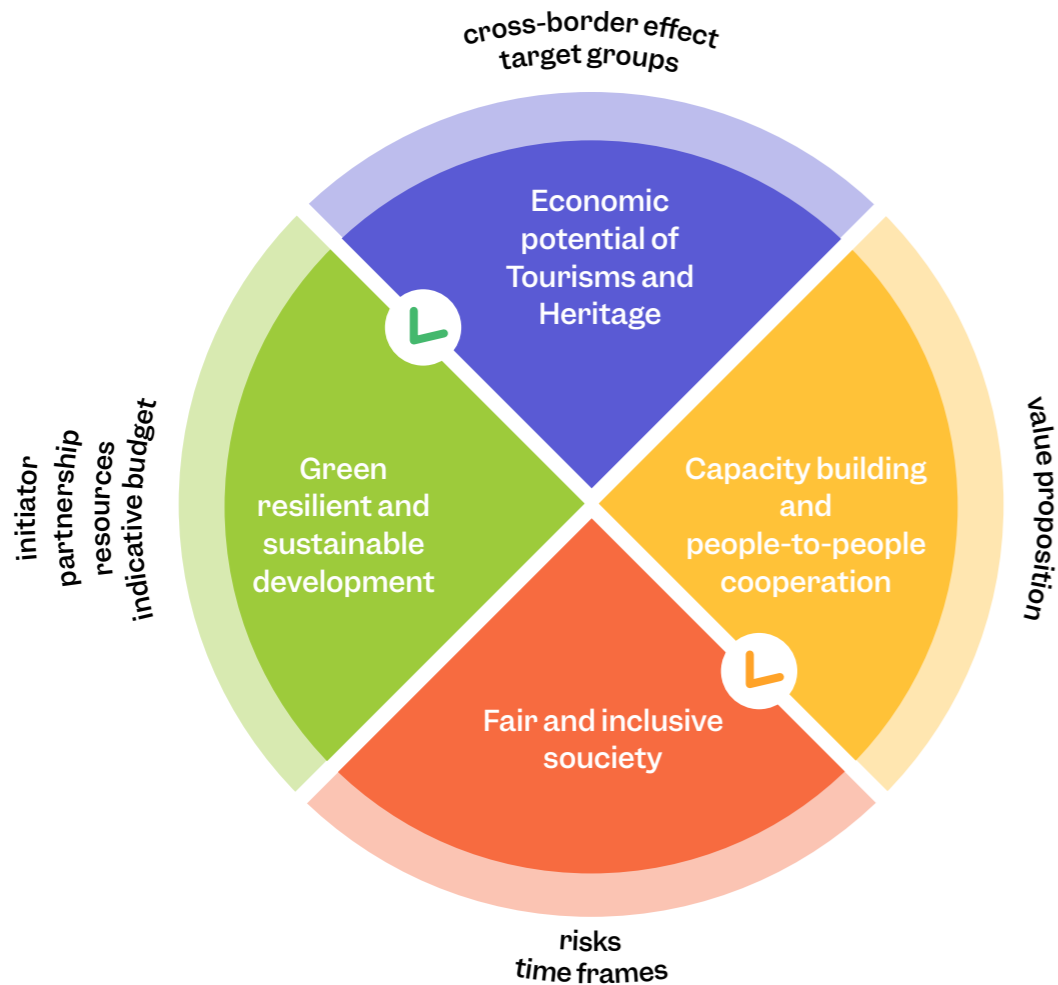


Priority  
“FAIR AND INCLUSIVE  
SOCIETY” –  
with focus on:

- improving public health;
- sustainable and community-based system of social services (social care);
- social innovations;
- development of the infrastructure for social services (universal design activities);
- integration of refugees;
- social services digitalization;
- ensuring equal opportunities;
- social entrepreneurship;
- cooperation with NGOs, local communities;
- mobile social services;
- mixed generations kindergarten concept;
- street work with youth;
- foreign language training for the elderly.

The project management team was the main leader for all SMART PLANNING activities. The activities with a focus on practical, common work to detect cross-border development values, needs and possibilities, were organized in close collaboration between the project management team and local (mainly municipal), regional and national experts and participants. Two Innovation Campus were organized, one in Palanga (Lithuania) and one in Kuldīga (Latvia) to identify the possible ideas and interest areas for future projects. There were several workshops in Skuodas (Lithuania), Nīca (Latvia) and Šventoji (Lithuania) with participation of representatives from both regions to elaborate project ideas in detail, and to find the project proposal which could be relevant for several partners from Latvia and Lithuania. Each workshop focused on one Cross-border development priority.

The project management team, consisting of representatives from Kurzeme planning region and Klaipėda region, was the main process driver, organizing the discussions and group work. Before each practical workshop a delivery strategy was developed to take into account the competences and skills of involved experts. It included the collection and analysis of possible project ideas, identification of thematic working groups, and preparation of information for workshops. This project model canvas was used to identify details about a real project proposal, and includes information about the main project idea, initiator (leading partner), partnership, value proposition, cross-border effect, risks, time frame, resources, target groups, and indicative project budget.



The most important role was played by the members of the project management group who were also the thematic working group leaders. Before each workshop, a clear understanding of the workshop organization was established, starting from the generation of ideas, the determination of topics discussed during workshops, and any other relevant details.

The experts, national, regional and municipal representatives from both Kurzeme and Klaipėda worked together in thematic working groups with a strong focus on the cross-border perspective. To identify specific training needs and topics a short survey was completed at the beginning of the Smart Planning project. The main

learning objectives were to strengthen participants capability to apply interregional perspective in their own strategies (including their regional Smart Specialisation strategy), as well as to provide planners with relevant networks, tools and methods for broader stakeholder involvement.

At the start, the experts from municipalities came together to share their ideas and needs. All of the project proposals were put together and a check was carried out on the compatibility with funding priorities, cross-border interests and local interests, as well as to evaluate significance of each. The groups used the table model below to summarize their results.

Compatibility with:			
Funding priorities			
Cross-border interests			
Local priorities			
Any other relevant topic [...]			
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH

When reviewing all strategies, programmes, projects and plans with a focus to the common cross-border interests, the expert/planner should evaluate the contribution to achieve the purposes prescribed in programme documents (guidelines, national legal framework). The evaluation of possible sustainability purposes to prioritize the objectives and/ or targets. The successful project(s) is based on a smart analysis of external possibilities like cross-border development priorities and cross-border effects, specific needs of relevant regional/

local municipality, chance to find the best partners and negotiation about risk identification and assessments, time frame, resources and budgeting. All these steps were practically implemented during the Smart Planning Innovation campus and the Smart Planning workshops where all participants found the ideas, identified projects and found the consensus for the future project ideas.

# Inventory and assessment of project ideas

The experts and planners prepared a list of all projects with a focus on common interests within the four areas of cross-border development priorities: i) capacity building and people to people cooperation; ii) green, resilient and sustainable development; iii) fair and inclusive society; and iv) economic potential of tourism and heritage. The list of projects has been discussed during four workshops, each focused on a relevant priority.



Experts could play a crucial role in identifying actual and relevant projects at the regional/local level. For example, social experts from Kurzeme local municipalities worked together within their specialization on different focus groups - retired persons, youth, disabled persons and other socially sensitive groups.

Then all experts sat together and brainstormed solutions to solve the given problems. Then common interests were detected, all experts prepared their project ideas and presented them to the working group leader. With a limited time (10-15 minutes) each working group completed a proposal for their project idea. Then each leader within each working group was changed, and with another topic, the discussion started again. Then all ideas were collected, projects were sorted, and an overall analysis was carried out. Using the 'cross-border relevance' criteria, some projects were excluded. Groups voted for the most interesting project (per each topic), and then discussed a potential title for each. The working group leaders presented the result to all groups. Below is a summary of each of the four workshops:

**Skuodas Workshop** (Green, resilient and sustainable development): the work was organized into six working groups to identify the project proposals for topics: Water Management, Climate Change, Waste Management, Nature capital & Biodiversity, Capacity Building and Other Topics. The results are summarized and available in [here](#)



**Nica Workshop** (Economic potential of tourism and heritage): the work was organized into six working groups to identify the project proposals for topics: Public waters and Recreation; Hiking and Walking; Cycling; Cultural Heritage; Maritime Heritage and Destination and Marketing. The results are summarized and available [here](#)

**Šventoji Workshop** (Fair and inclusive society): the Kurzeme Planning Region representatives presented the priorities set by the local municipalities for work with different social groups to include people with special needs, young people, and seniors. Project ideas were initiated in joint discussions, and new partnership programmes were established in the fields of socially inclusive society, looking at cooperation models linking people and institutions. Possible solutions were defined in the form of project ideas to support areas such as environmental accessibility and universal design, mobile services, social inclusion and supporting measures, adaptation and integration in labour market, training of digital skills and the use of social services. It also concluded that solutions are



needed to strengthen the capacity of social professionals and to avoid excessive stress. The results are summarized and available [here](#)



**Šventoji Workshop** (Capacity building and people to people cooperation): the work was organized in several groups. The experts explored a number of project ideas and partnerships in areas such as capacity building and strengthening of municipal staff, participatory budgeting and public education, opportunities, participation in municipal activities, promotion of active civil society, mobility issues, establishment of sports and physical activities for different age groups in municipalities



## Recommendations and Conclusions

To make the outcomes from the Smart Planning project in line with already started development initiatives, the final conference “The Smart Planning” in Ventspils (Latvia) and Field Study to Kuldīga and Ventspils were organized.

The conference was organized as a platform for the exchange of good practices and experiences between the local governments of the Kurzeme and Klaipēda regions. The event was split into three thematic working sessions: “Being smart”, “Doing together” and “Looking into the future”. At the end of the event, during the excursion through the newly built science centre “Vizium”, participants had a unique opportunity to learn about this modern and energy-efficient building.



### The main conclusions, referred to as being smart, were presented, including:

- 1 the main results and **overall outcome of the Smart Planning project** - planning documents for both regions were elaborated, innovations camps and workshops and experience exchange study trips for representatives from municipalities were organised; during the project cooperation and information exchange between both regions and municipalities were improved, capacity raised, common cross-border challenges discussed, many ideas for future projects generated;
- 2 practical solutions towards **energy efficiency in Ventspils City (Latvia)** where presented such as new, modern and energy efficient concert hall “Latvija” and the State Ventspils Music High School and multimodal public centre with library in “Gāliņciems”, as well as an environmentally friendly public transport infrastructure (eBuss) with 14 new electro buses and three charging stations which is an innovative approach in Latvia’s municipalities; on the second day of conference participants visited all these sites and experienced these innovations themselves;



3

inspiring partnership **the process of regional specialization for Klaipėda region (Lithuania)**; Klaipėda region is the only one in Lithuania that has developed a regional strategy specialization with a clear long-term goal and identifying steps to achieve these commitments in marine and bioeconomy, sustainable maritime and coastal tourism and service economy; to discuss and define the further development of the region all important stakeholders of the region was initiated and more than 130 discussions, workshops with more than 300 different stakeholders were organised;

4

inspiring **municipal and business cooperation of Dreverna village port development (Lithuania)**; Using financing from various EU funds, the municipality created a new port infrastructure and developed its territory, implemented different marketing activities and popularised the newly built port Dreverna; the private sector fully created the tourist service infrastructure in the port and takes care of tourism services; from a small and provincial seaside town Dreverna during the 12 years of investments and reconstruction, has become a popular resort for sailors and tourists with developed infrastructure, clean environment, requested tourism services, a good reputation and can be considered as a success story of municipal and public sector cooperation;

5

good praxis of **preservation and support for Kuldīga Old town (Latvia)** as a currently nominated UNESCO Heritage site; Kuldīga is a beautiful well-preserved old town with many historical buildings; located in the centre of Kurzeme the preservation of its unique heritage is a priority for the municipality; it is organized in various forms: by incorporation in the municipal territory development planning documents and developing special territory use and construction rules for Old town area, carrying out detailed researches and publishing books, preventing rapid building development risks in the Old town (no plastic windows are allowed!), informing, educating and teaching residents about the historical values of buildings and providing various co-financing programmes for the restoration and conservation of the town's historical centre; a special restoration centre in Kuldīga has been established, where practical wood carpentry restoration services, the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills for all interested are available;

6

a good example of **partnership and cooperation of Mosedis Eldership in Skuodas District (Lithuania)** as basis for prosperous local communities; cooperation between all important stakeholders of this small and cosy municipality with 973 inhabitants is organised through the various and regular meetings, projects, events, ideas exchange and without any written papers, contracts, declarations, or minutes. All motivated stakeholders work for the common good of the Mosedis and this unique partnership gives many opportunities and possibilities to organise common events, create and implement different projects for community residents, raise local self-confidence and the prestige of the Mosedis, as well as help faster problem solving;

how important and successful is the **involvement of society in decision making process by Saldus Municipality (Latvia)**; municipality has a total

7

of 28,567 residents and it works actively and creatively using many forms of communication: regular meetings with local residents (one per month); organizing all kinds of surveys for resident's feedback and initiatives, using the "map of ideas" tool where residents are invited to submit their ideas or point out the problems to be solved, providing grant programmes and small grants for local NGO's, co-financing for LEADER projects implementation; Saldus introduced also the participatory budgeting for small scale projects;

8

**the involvement of local inhabitants using participatory budgeting by Kretinga District Municipality (Lithuania)**; Kretinga with 37,800 residents was the first district municipality in Lithuania to introduce participatory budgeting in 2019; to educate residents with this new idea about residents self-initiated small scale projects, which are afterwards evaluated by public voting and then fully implemented by the municipality, meetings were held and a special promotion video was created with information about the procedure, rules, available financing and the project categories; activity was high and the idea of municipality was well supported by local residents as a result, many good projects were realised and are currently implemented; so far, in these projects Kretinga district inhabitants have already been allocated 500,000 EUR;

9

good basis for challenges looking into the future due to already realized **initiatives in the field of climate neutrality and smart solutions in large cities by Liepāja Municipality (Latvia)**; Liepāja by signing the climate contract in the Covenant of Mayor for Climate and Energy programme, has committed to become a climate-neutral and smart city by 2030. The contract is intended to identify municipal priorities through concrete actions by: reduction of CO2 emissions, increasing energy efficiency in building sector and ensuring the energy saving measures through the city, transferring Liepāja to the Smart city, increased use of RES and creation of the energy communities, review of the frequency of public transport and development of new city mobility plan etc. It was concluded that in the field of energy and climate change currently there are various funding opportunities widely available;

10

**the possibilities of Interreg "Latvia- Lithuania Programme 2021-2027"**; Programme Joint Secretariat representative (Latvia) introduced with four main priorities for the next programming period: capacity building and people-to-people cooperation, green, resilient, and sustainable development, fair and inclusive society and economic potential of tourism and heritage; it was stated the Programme territory has changed, and now it includes the Kurzeme, Zemgale and Latgale regions in Latvia, and the Klaipėda, Telšiai, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Utena counties in Lithuania with 1.8 million inhabitants, 72,067 km<sup>2</sup> total area and 588 km of borderline. Same as in previous period, national, regional, or local public institutions, public equivalent bodies and NGOs can be partners of the projects; total 29.2 MEUR financial resources for the whole period and programme area is allocated. The 1st call of the programme is planned at the end of November 2022.

All presentations from the final conference are available:  
[HERE](#)

To see the innovations of local governments and the experience of implementing them, on the second day, the participants visited different sites in Ventspils and Kuldīga.

During the excursions in Ventspils, the concert hall “Latvija” and Ventspils Music High School, the Seaside Open-Air Museum and the new Boat House, the future multifunctional centre “Gāliņciems” were visited and discussed. The municipalities innovation in the public transport sector - 14 new electric minibuses and three charging stations in Ventspils – was considered by all to be very innovative and modern.

In Kuldīga participants were introduced to the LIBA business incubator, a digital innovation centre, as well as an Arts and creative cluster with international master’s degree and artist residency programmes and a prototyping workshop. All these initiatives are located in the meticulously restored building of a previous needle factory and it is a great platform for creative design and art students, entrepreneurs and digital innovation initiatives. The old building was renovated using EU funding and is currently a popular and attractive place in the Kuldīga town.

At the end of the day, the participants went to the tourist attraction of the industrial heritage - the restored Needle Tower from which a wonderful view of the city could be seen.

## The exchange of experience in Turku region, Finland.

The representatives of the administration of the Kurzeme planning region, Klaipeda region and the municipalities of Latvia and Lithuania involved in the “Smart Planning” project went on a good practice learning trip to Turku, Finland on May 16-19, 2022.

During an intensive two-day visit, we visited the Regional Council of Southwestern Finland, Turku University of Applied Sciences, the Port of Turku, met with the tourism entrepreneur of the Ruissalo Islands and representatives of the Turku municipality and shared our experience in the field of planning, ports in development planning and cooperation models between entrepreneurs, state and local government institutions.



On the first day a meeting with the Regional Council of Southwestern Finland was held, where we got acquainted with the planning tasks of the region and the functions assigned to it, the newly developed development programmes and strategies, and the most important challenges. During the meeting, representatives from the Kurzeme planning region and the Klaipeda regional association also shared information

about their regions, activities carried out, and plans for future. The Klaipeda regional association, unlike Latvia’s and Finland, was established on a voluntary basis and is based on the initiative of local municipalities.

During the visit to the Turku University of Applied Sciences, the representatives introduced us to the programmes implemented in the educational institution, about the cooperation with regional entrepreneurs and institutions, existing challenges in attracting students and strengthening the university’s capacity. By attracting EU funds, the university has managed to create modern laboratories for conducting the necessary research and participating in various international projects. The university is an important centre of innovation and training of young specialists in the region - about 80% of university graduates, continue to work in Turku and the south-western region of Finland.

When visiting the island of Ruissalo on the second day, we were introduced to a project in which tourism entrepreneurs of various levels and types on the island have united in search of funding for marketing activities and attracting tourists. Funding for the implementation of the mentioned project was allocated by the Regional Council of Southwestern Finland; a significant difference from the planning regions of Latvia who currently do not have such regional funds. The regional council of Southwestern Finland receives an average of EUR 300,000 annually to support regional projects, while this funding was increased to two million EUR to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. All tourism entrepreneurs in Ruissalo island, likewise as in Latvia and Lithuania, face the same challenges of seasonality and are looking for different ways

to diversify the risks caused by the short tourism season.

The representatives of the port of Turku presented the performance indicators and achievements of the port, future development plans, cooperation with Turku municipality, as well as challenges in the new geopolitical situation, now all previous cooperation with neighbouring Russia has been completely stopped. Despite the above-mentioned complications, the construction of a new passenger terminal in port is planned, with part of the existing port area being given to the city of Turku. During the meeting, the participants also got acquainted with the operation of Klaipeda port, its development plans, and the operation of Kurzeme ports. At the end of the visit, we agreed on a separate meeting to discuss the possible cooperation between the ports of Kurzeme and Turku.

Representatives of Turku municipality shared interesting experiences with Spearhead projects in urban planning and solving social issues. These are long-term projects that are related to the long-term strategic settings of the municipality. One such project envisages the improvement and development of the Turku Port area, which will be handed over to the city after the construction of the new passenger terminal, into a new cultural and artistic centre.

The visit to the Turku region was well prepared and organized, rich in content, thoughtful and interesting. During two days, it was possible to meet and get to know professional politicians, experts in the field of spatial and regional planning, entrepreneurs, port representatives, managers of various projects at the Turku municipality. Within the two days experience exchange trips, new contacts were established and agreements on future cooperation were reached.



## STUDY VISIT AND EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES IN POMORSKIE REGION, POLAND

The representatives of the administration of the Kurzeme planning region, Klaipeda region, and the municipalities of Latvia and Lithuania involved in the “Smart planning” project went on a good practice study visit to Gdansk, Poland, on October 4-8, 2022

During an intensive three-day visit, main regional stakeholders (including the Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship, Gdansk Science and Technology Park, Metropolitan Area Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot, Pomeranian Development Agency, and others) were met and different regional development aspects of Pomorskie region were presented and discussed. The study visit made it possible for representatives from Kurzeme and Klaipeda regions to experience and get a better understanding of the Pomorskie region planning processes and applied development mechanisms. Also, to get a closer look at regional planning system, especially at the differences between the development of rural and metropolitan areas.

The study visit also provided an opportunity to learn about regional projects that focus not only on the processes in the public



sector management and planning, but also to hear about the development of the business sector - work with foreign regional investments, talent attraction programmes, export promotion projects, etc.

During the visit, the participants were able to get the insights about Pomorskie's work with the R&D promotion, fostering partnerships between business and academia. Participants were especially interested to hear about Pomorskie's plans and processes related to maritime initiatives and to learn about the Polish experience in building and developing a regional ecosystem for the arrival of the new offshore wind energy sector.

In summary, the visit broadened the knowledge and understanding of Kurzeme and Klaipeda region politicians and regional planners, provided a lot of new information about the development plans of the neighbours and allowed participants to gather new contacts and partnerships, as well as providing some inspiration and motivation to think about the localization of Polish experience in our regions.

# ANNEX

# Vocabulary

<b>CROSS-BORDER AREA</b>	a cross-border area is a territorial entity that is made of several local or regional authorities that are co-located yet belong to different nation states. Cross-border regions exist to take advantage of geographical conditions to strengthen their competitiveness
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	the process of growing and becoming more mature, advanced, or elaborate
<b>ECONOMIC INPUT</b>	economic output is the total value of goods and services produced in a country. Output plays a big part in measuring Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is a standard measure of economic output used today. Output is used to measure the growth of an economy and is used as a critical measurement in macroeconomics
<b>HIGH-ADDED VALUE</b>	a value-added product is a saleable commodity that has been enhanced with additional qualities that make it worth a higher price than the raw materials used to make it. It may be made more convenient, more attractive, more palatable, or easier to use than its raw ingredients
<b>IMPACT</b>	positive or negative change wholly or partially resulting from an institution past and present decisions and activities
<b>INDICATORS</b>	quantitative, qualitative or descriptive measure
<b>MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</b>	set of elements in organization to establish policies and objectives, and processes to achieve established objectives
<b>MONITORING</b>	determination of the status of a system, process and/ or activity
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	result to be achieved
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	person or group of people having own functions with responsibilities, legal capacity and relationships to achieve the certain objectives
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	measurable result

<b>POLICY</b>	intentions and direction of an organization
<b>PROCESS</b>	set of interrelated activities transforming inputs into outputs
<b>PROJECT</b>	any temporary endeavour with a definite beginning and end.
<b>RESILIENCE</b>	adaptive capacity of an organization in complex and changing environment
<b>RISK</b>	An uncertain event or condition, that if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on a project's objective
<b>SPECIALIZATION</b>	the process of concentrating on and becoming expert in a particular subject or skill
<b>STAKEHOLDER/ INTERESTED PARTY</b>	person that can affect, be affected by or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	in the broadest sense, sustainability refers to the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time. In business and policy contexts, sustainability seeks to prevent the depletion of natural or physical resources, so that they will remain available for the long term
<b>TRIPLE/ QUADRUPLE HELIX</b>	a concept to analyse and reinforce cooperation between business and industry, the knowledge sector and the public authorities, basic network for innovations and development; often used as an instrument to support the creation of clusters. Specific information is available at <a href="http://www.igi-global.com">www.igi-global.com</a> . Quadruple helix besides the business and industry, the knowledge sector and the public authorities includes the environment



**P**roject LLI-431 “Inter-regional Cooperation for Sustainable, Integrated and Smart Planning”/ Smart Planning is implemented with the support of Interreg V-A Latvia – Lithuania cross- border cooperation programme 2014 -2020.

**P**roject aims to strengthen capacity of local and regional stakeholders in spatial and strategic planning, enhance stronger cross-border perspective in strategic development planning to foster coherent development and effective collaboration across borders.

**A**s a result of project a capacity building and leadership program for local stakeholders - local and regional politicians, spatial and development planners in municipalities, will be implemented. Kurzeme planning region and association “Klaipeda region” will analyze and study own regions in order to supplement the data and information for the upcoming development planning documents. Jointly developed “Handbook for Cross-border Planning” will summarize the challenges that are raised by the local stakeholders and provide approaches to tackle them.

**Total project size is 363 237,51 EUR.  
Out of them co-funding of European Regional  
Development Fund is 308 751,88 EUR.**

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:



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