



Friendly island routes

Throughout history, the population round the Central Baltic Sea coast has used the sea and land for various activities as well as for fishing and shipping to attract people to the various countries surrounding the coast. Considering the increasing number of tourists visiting the region, it is of importance to develop the growing market through sustainable tourism approaches.

Tourism has during the last decade become more and more important for the islands round the Gulf of Finland, and the number of visitors has increased, especially in the larger cities. Although this is a positive aspect, it can be seen that small harbours in the archipelago round Finland and Estonia lack high-quality services and connections to local tourist activities. In order to attract tourists and develop sustainable tourism activities, there is a need to link the available services.

The project Friendly Island Routes (FIR) was developed by keeping the aforementioned in mind through an Estonian and Finnish network. The aim of the project is to raise interest towards small harbours and develop new and more individual as well as special tourism products in the archipelago. In order to do this, FIR has collected stories and legends about the islands, using them for marketing purposes as well as making special products that attract people. Sustainability is a key issue in the project. The main objective is to improve regional competitiveness in both countries. The project will improve the accessibility of Estonian and Finnish harbours and share information about the harbours in a versatile context.

During the project period, the current situation of the existing connections of the islands are analyzed, and proposals will be made for improving them. Project Manager Merle Laager from Estonia relates that a lot of things have happened since the project started. For example, a marketing and development strategy for islands for period 2010-2014 has been developed and marketing research has been organized. In addition, a TV show comprised of 14 broadcasts aimed at marketing Estonian and Finnish small islands has aired on Estonian Television. All of these materials contain a look at today's situation as well as recommendations on how to develop sustainable tourism activities and products on the islands. For example, it is stated that quality improvement and lowering costs is important in order to offer a competitive price level to all tourists.



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(Sub-)programme: Archipelago and Islands Sub-programme
Priority: Economically competitive and innovative region
Direction of support: Supporting accessibility to and information about the archipelago and the islands

Project duration: September 2008 - August 2011 (3 years)

Approved budget: 978 731 euros

Approved ERDF: 786 838 euros

Lead partner: Viimsi Municipality, Estonia (Viimsi)
Partners: Cursor Oy, Finland (Kotka)
 Tallinn Municipality, Estonia (Tallinn)
 NGO Kõrgessaare Harbour, Estonia (Käina)
 Estonian Public Broadcasting, Estonia (Tallinn)
 Municipality of Paldiski, Estonia (Paldiski)
 Foundation Kalana Jahisadam, Estonia (Tallinn)
 Jõelähtme Municipality, Estonia (Jõelähtme)
 NGO Muusa Kapriis, Estonia (Kuusalu)

More information: <http://fir.viimsi.ee>

