

PROJECT "INCREASING TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING CAPACITIES OF PLANNING REGIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF LATVIA AND ELABORATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS"

EXPERIENCE STORIES



2016

Impact of the project on regional development in Latvia



Organised 15 experience exchange events



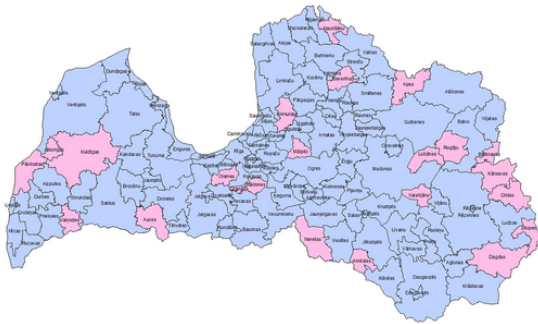
Prepared reports, guidelines, assessments



Elaborated and improved development planning documents



Organised 82 seminars



Participants from almost all municipalities of Latvia

- Elaborated draft of the long-term thematic plan for the coastal area of the Baltic Sea and Action Plan for development of Latgale Planning Region 2015–2017 – significant tools and prerequisite for purposeful and coordinated investment attraction
- Through improvement of local level development planning documents using experience gained in the project encouraged implementation of territorial approach to investment planning
- Identified substantial regional development challenges by viewing the issues from different standpoints and assessing several possible actions
- Through many activities in the project, e.g. local community training programme and „Future City game”, raised public awareness and involvement in issues of territorial development planning
- With the help of various activities raised level of cooperation and experience exchange among Latvian municipalities and planning regions
- Strengthened human resources capacity at local, regional and state level in Latvia



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Project total funding 1 195 824 EUR

Implementation time 18 December 2013 – 30 November 2016.



Project Promoter – Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
Project Partners – Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale, Latgale, Riga planning regions, association Urban Institute, Oppland, Østfold and Eust-Agder Counties, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation of Norway



ILZE BARONE

Brocēni municipality, Latvia

- As a result of communities training the Brocēni municipality has benefitted a lot. The municipality has become much more open; we are able to view the residents from a different standpoint, not be afraid from their opinions; we solve problems in a creative and friendly way. Since only two employees of the municipality took part in the training, we must work a lot with our colleagues and "infect" them with the idea that they should not be afraid to speak to the residents. Due to dialogue the work is more useful and sustainable.
- As an employee I have become more self-confident and have gained a special feeling that I am one of the residents, and that residents should be the ones creating their place of living. We still call each other and consult with the rest of the participants of the communities training programme by now having formed close ties with them because often they are the most objective people, having the understanding of the fundamental idea of the community involvement activity or activation "tool". The ideas for involving the community I most often borrow from the notes taken during training lectures.
- All employees and especially representatives of planning regions most often connected to organising life in the rural areas and small towns should go through such training. The strengths of this training were that it took place over a long period of time on a regular basis because only in this way you can change mindset. Often courses lasting for a day or two provide a good inspiration that dies out upon return to the work place and the everyday work. When thinking of the small municipalities, I definitely think that effort should be invested in education and motivation of the employees in order to ensure the preservation of the local traditions and other things that the residents consider to be important and that may often be the motivating factor in choosing the place of residence.
- This training process should definitely be a long-term training. Community development experts should be trained who might invest their passion in the small towns and rural areas of Latvia by developing their vitality. My suggestion would be to remember that the municipality is working for their residents, and they deserve responsiveness and communication on the same level. It is necessary to speak with the people, to learn their thoughts, ideas, desires and objections because conversation is a way to avoid many conflict situations. Residents, entrepreneurs, associations, etc., should feel that they are valued and very important to the municipality.





EDGARS PUDZIS

Carnikava Municipality, Latvia

- The most significant benefit is connected with the Future City game within the framework of which the representation of the society was involved from Garciems of the Carnikava municipality; as a result, the formation and activation of the local village community was promoted. As a result of the event the society of the village residents "Garciemieši" was formed that actively participates in the development processes of the village.
- The most essential personal benefit was participation in the municipality training programme that not only provided enhanced knowledge about the trends of local development across the world and in Europe, but also provided new contacts with specialists of other municipalities in Latvia.
- Trends of local development planning and implementation in Latvia are "on the right road", yet a lot is yet to be learned and much work is to be done in order to activate the local communities and to provide support to the development of a civil society on a local level. In the next years a greater emphasis should be placed on village planning and development of village communities because within the last years the society understands more and more the meaning of the civil activities and their ability to form their environment so that it is acceptable to the local community.
- My wish to the other municipalities is not to be afraid of the new things and believe that municipality does not only work, but is also a point of support to the activity and development of the local communities.





IEVA KALNIŅA

Vidzeme Planning Region, Latvia

- Benefit from the participation in the project is very practical: development planning documents of Vidzeme planning region were elaborated: sustainable development strategy and development programme. It is important that the elaboration of the documents was done by ourselves. Elaboration of the documents locally within the region has also promoted a more active involvement of the colleagues, thus facilitating the participation in setting the common goals and currently also their implementation. The results of the project are applied in everyday work, paying a special attention especially to communication with the public, implementation of the planning documents and implementation monitoring that are an integral part of the development planning process. The knowledge gained during the project assists in communication both with the colleagues and the people doing the planning for the municipality, as well as politicians when providing arguments and support to the specific actions.

- Implementation of the project was a test for myself. It was very interesting to take on and implement things that initially appeared almost impossible. When working with a large amount of information and documents, successful cooperation between all involved institutions is necessary. Experience has been gained, as well as team building and leadership skills have been improved, including creating dialogue both with the state and municipal institutions.

- A positive aspect is that understanding of involved parties regarding the necessity of planning increases, yet there is still a lot to do because I still see that planning is often seen as utopian and useless thing without which life would be easier. I would like for this thinking to change in order for everyone to understand that a successful planning process makes it easier to further implement various significant project ideas. Project implementation requires a lot of work and meticulousness in work with documents. It is good if there is an opportunity to receive financing for implementation of the ideas, yet the process is still comparably bureaucratic. Success of the project implementation depends on the project implementation team. Thank you to my project team, without which project implementation would not have been successful!

- I believe that overall the role of the regions should be strengthened in the development planning. Planning is a continuous process; planners are the people who need regular communication, discussions, familiarisation with the experience of other colleagues in Latvia and outside Latvia, as well as strengthening of the cooperation. My wish for others is not to be afraid of forming ambitious plans. Everything can be



Ieva Kalniņa participated in elaboration of Vidzeme planning region sustainable development strategy and development program, as well as in the experience exchange visit to Norway on establishing link between budget planning and development planning and seminar within the municipal training programme



RŪDOLFS CIMDIŅŠ

Rīga Planning Region, Latvia

- Through the project a possibility to implement a communicative planning process was ensured during elaboration of the Riga planning region's sustainable development strategy and development programme. The region has new territorial development planning documents implementing the principle of territorial approach and finding a link with real needs and possible actions according to the competence of the region. Through the exchange of experience and attended seminars, the specialists of the region have enhanced their knowledge in the area of development planning.
- The most essential personal benefits after involvement in the project activities are improved knowledge of spatial and developmental planning solutions beyond the borders of Latvia, as well as familiarisation with the good practice within Latvia and Riga planning region. Another benefit was the possibility to network and gain new contacts both in Norway and Latvia.
- A valuable insight received after the involvement in the project: a greater need to focus on the development planning process and involved development participants when implementing the main role of the region, being a "matchmaker". The way that development planning documents are being presented plays a major role as well – easily readable and visually attractive materials speak to a significantly greater part of the society.
- Development supervision in Latvia is still a current issue and should be improved both at the regional level and the municipal level by improving the accessibility of the necessary information and supplementing the knowledge of the planning specialists both in assessment of the planning documents and various development processes. More attention should be paid to social topics and improving the knowledge in the area of social planning.





IVETA MAĻINA - TABŪNE

Latgale Planning Region, Latvia

- The project activities offered an opportunity to view many things from an unusual standpoint. Taking into account the Norwegian experience, Latvian municipalities and planning regions can apply development planning solutions, implementing the interests of the society in the long term by means of cooperation between several municipalities, regions and by involving the local communities.
- Within the framework of the project several unique and novel but very necessary and interesting things were accomplished that may be used not only by the development planners but by anyone, for instance, analysis and mapping of the territorial placement of several public individual services in connection with the number of the residents, perspective models, and visualisation.
- In future, development and strengthening of cooperation between municipalities of Norway and Latgale will become significantly meaningful in taking over the good practice and examples. I think that public discussions regarding the opportunities of providing services and attracting the funding for implementation of joint international projects will be fruitful.
- I am satisfied that the service development scenario with mobile services offered by the Latgale region is already active – "e-van" of the State Revenue Service (SRS) has begun its tour through the Latvian municipalities in order to improve customer service and promote the use of electronic SRS services.





BAIBA ZVEJNIECE

Pārgauja Municipality, Latvia

- One of the greatest benefits is strengthened relationships with the current municipal partners in Norway, as proved by the confirmation for continued cooperation signed by the end of March, 2016, in Riga between several municipalities of Norway and Latvia. Within the framework of cooperation, representatives of Spydeberg commune visited the municipality of Pārgauja municipality in order to learn the examples of good practice in relation to development of agriculture, bio tourism, as well as support to local home compounders and craftsmen by organising the "Straupe Farmers Market", represented since 2015 also in Slow Food movement.

- Each on-site meeting in the events organised by the project has been an excellent platform for discussing new potential cooperation opportunities and nearest activities in strengthening the mutual cooperation with the Norwegian partners; it has also provided a good way to better understand the current experience of the Norwegian municipalities in solving various issues.

- Personal benefits are mostly linked to forming new contacts, that is a very important aspect in successful future cooperation, and it was also excellent to see the experience of other municipalities in solving various issues that may be expressed in everyday work as a new inspiration or a way to view certain matters.

- International cooperation is very important; it promotes a wider perspective on issues, as well as allows others to get to know our country better. One of the important insights is that we also have enough good examples to share with others and present to them. Maintaining the international cooperation at a certain level and for a long term requires hard work often affected by various external circumstances, for example, political changes in governance. Currently international cooperation has become more complex than it was ten or fifteen years ago; it also means that this cooperation has increasing requirements in the area of quality and certain results to be achieved. I think that within the next five years such emphasis will become even more obvious in the development of cooperation.





PER ERIK FONKALSRUD

Oppland Regional Country, Norway



- Benefits of the project - gaining a broader competence for me and other colleagues that have participated. The project focus on local communities represents a scale which is not so relevant for a County Authority, but more for a Municipal administration. I have had great pleasure in learning more about Latvia as a country and the planning challenges.
- Likewise I had very memorable stays in three different places, with local programmes that added flavour and depth to the experience. I believe that the practical sessions, have given insight in down-to-earth methods of how to work in a local community.
- The mix of indoor sitting-down-seminar and social games outside was crucial for bonding and keeping the mind sharp. It was very important that the workshops were held in the local communities, to see the conditions and to give the participants a challenge in presenting themselves and their work *in situ*.
- Planning capacity has much to do with enough persons and competent persons in the Municipalities and Regions. But don't forget the politicians, they too need a fundamental understanding of planning. Programs for politicians is a good idea. And finally, develop methods of how to engage the inhabitants; democracy and planning should be connected.



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Vidzeme Planning Region www.vidzeme.lv

Riga Planning Region www.rpr.gov.lv

Kurzeme Planning Region www.kurzemesregions.lv

Latgale planning region www.latgale.lv

Society „Urban Institute” www.urbaninstitute.lv

Oppland Regional County www.oppland.no

Østfold Regional County www.ostfold-f.kommune.no

Aust-Agder Regional County www.austagderfk.no

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