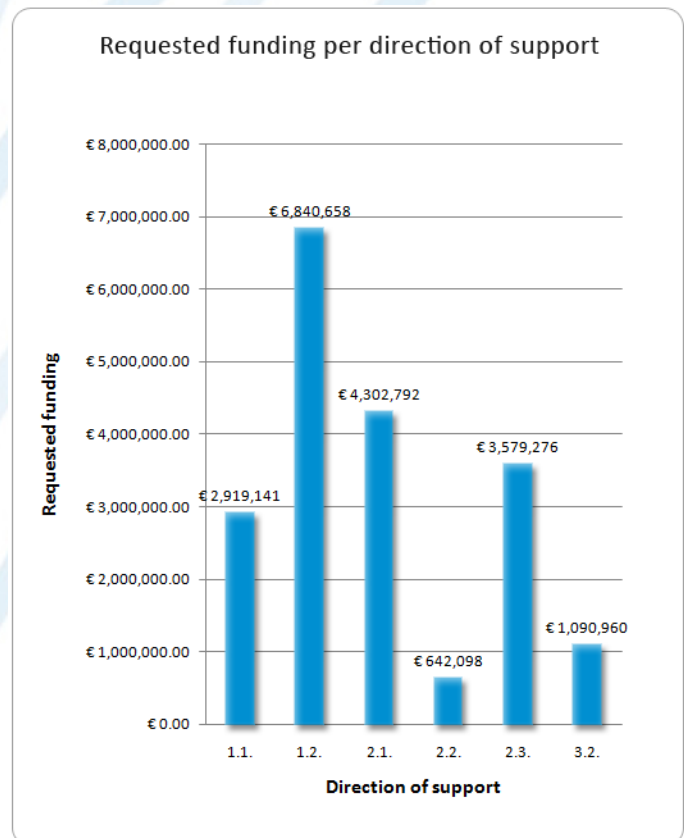
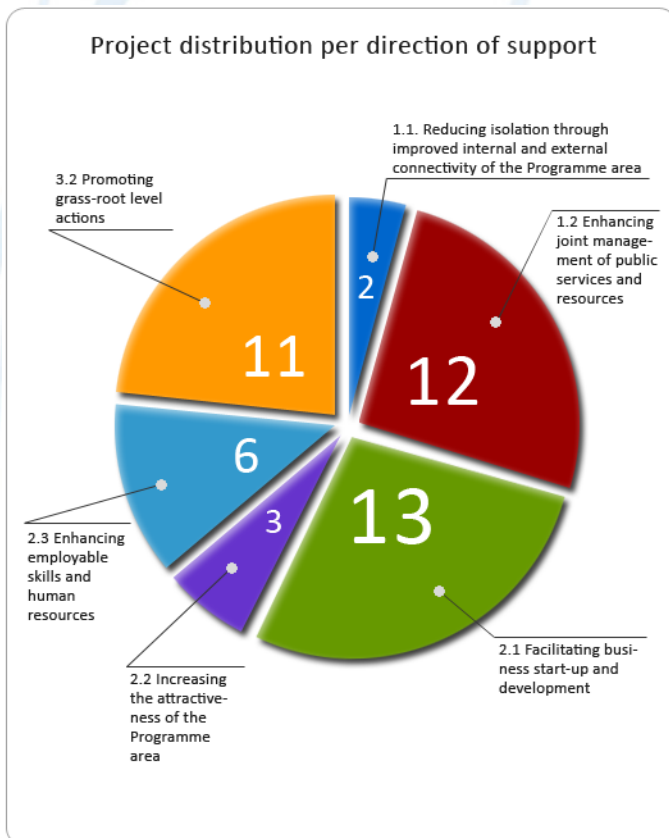


47 project applications received in the call for proposals that closed on 14 December

Thanks to all the project writers!

The charts below show the distribution of the submitted projects and of the requested funding among the Programme's directions of support:



The total requested ERDF funding amounts to almost 20 million Euros. Altogether 141 organizations from both countries are represented in the submitted projects. 32 of the projects are submitted by lead partners from Latvia and 15 by lead partners from Estonia.

The Joint Technical Secretariat has started the project assessment, and the final decisions are expected in May, after the next Monitoring Committee meeting.

The Programme is currently planning at least one more call for proposals, which could most likely start next summer, with project submission deadline following in autumn. However, precise information will only be available after the Monitoring Committee meeting in late spring. Please follow the information on our website www.estlat.eu.

Read in the next pages:

What is the future for Estonian-Latvian cooperation?

Insight into the conference just held in Rīga (2)

Activities of the running projects (3)

Other news (4)



What is the future for Estonian-Latvian cooperation?

On 10 December, a **conference on Latvian-Estonian future cooperation** was held in Riga, attended by both Latvian and Estonian prime ministers, as well as various representatives from Latvian and Estonian state institutions, local governments, and the sectors of culture, education, tourism and business. The conference was organized in relation to Latvian-Estonian Future Co-operation Report produced earlier this year by the Political Director of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Andris Razāns and Director of the BNS News Agency Anvar Samost.

The **Estonia - Latvia Programme** was also presented at the conference, providing an overview of the ERDF funding spent for the Estonian-Latvian cooperation, supported projects, and also some interesting findings from the last year's public survey (<http://www.estlat.eu/programme/evaluations-and-surveys>).



During the conference, various directions of cooperation were discussed, and a number of concrete ideas came up.

One of the major topics was **business cooperation** and its pre-conditions, such as joint IT and transport infrastructure, harmonized legislation and tax policy. A concrete idea was proposed to use the existing railroads and develop a fast-speed train connecting Riga and Tallinn. However, it was also acknowledged that such a project would require huge investments in infrastructure, therefore the possible outcomes are yet to be carefully estimated. Cooperation potential was identified in the energy field, as our overall situation tends to be very similar there (despite some apparent differences

in wind channels in Estonia and Latvia). Along with harmonizing of the legislation, avoiding of protectionism was also regarded as an important step towards closer business cooperation.

Business cooperation linked to another discussion topic - **tourism**. Regarding promotion of the region in the external market, it was agreed that a joint Baltic brand should be developed together with Lithuania. The possibilities to further develop the transport connections between the countries were also discussed in the tourism context.

So called "**people to people cooperation**" also took an important part of the overall conference discussions and resulted with a number of concrete ideas. Participants agreed that there is enough of yet unused potential for mobility and exchange in the education and culture. While institutions are relatively active in cooperation, true people to people contacts and closer Estonian-Latvian links in the next generations require more active involvement of teachers. Cooperation of media and cross-border broadcasting was also discussed, including technical matters and property rights. Joint Baltic song and dance festival was proposed, as well as enlarging the number of creative work translations from one language into the other. Necessity for a comprehensive and modern Estonian-Latvian / Latvian-Estonian dictionary was stressed several times during the conference. In addition, a joint Latvian-Estonian soap opera was proposed as an innovative tool for dealing with the similarly tense ethnic issues in both countries.

In the overall atmosphere of cooperation and coming Christmas, the head of the Latvian Institute, Ojārs Kalniņš, came up with a proposal to end one of the recent Estonian-Latvian fights and agree that the first Christmas tree was decorated in Livonia (that at the time comprised the territories of both Latvia and Estonia).

It was agreed that at the end of the next year both prime ministers will review the implementation of the cooperation report.



Activities of the running projects

December

Back to Nature

Game "The explorer of bog footbridge" published on www.daba.gov.lv

Outdoor class manual – practical guide for nature education published on www.daba.gov.lv

Bat DVD published for distribution (end of December)

MLEDU

Meeting of the media teachers from Madona and Lāhte schools in Madona, Latvia*

Practical study trips - capturing video materials with winter scenery and winter sport events in Tartu county, Estonia*

** Details to be specified*

January

One Vacation – Two Countries

Participation in the tourism fair "Matka 2011" in Finland (20-23.01)

Est-O-Lat League

Map drawers` seminars in Latvia (08-09.01)

Ski orienteering competition in Alūksne, Latvia (22-23.01)

Active Through Passive

Training courses for Estonian and Latvian architects and engineers on low energy and passive house building in Valga Cultural Centre (19-21.01)

Still Active

Computer training courses in Tõrva, Estonia (17-21.01)

Pottery and porcelain workshops in Taagepera, Estonia (27-29.01)

Back to Nature

Final event and presentation of project results in Tartu, Estonia (end of January)*

SIB-Net

Seminar in Tartu, Estonia on promotion of pre-incubators services, Business Angels, creativity methods (3rd week of January)*

Consensus building activities in Tartu for various business related stakeholders (3rd week of January)*

MLEDU

Meeting of the media teachers from Madona and Lāhte schools in Tartu, Estonia*

Practical study trips - capturing video materials with winter scenery and winter sport events in Tartu county, Estonia*

February

Back to Nature

Final event and presentation of project results in Latvia (2.02)*

FireSafe

Open doors event at the voluntary firemen union in Valmiera, Latvia (11.02)*

Est-O-Lat League

Ski orienteering competition in Holstre-Polli, Viljandi county, Estonia (12-13.02)

One Vacation – Two Countries

Participation in tourism fair "Balttour 2011" in Riga, Latvia (11-13.02)

Participation in tourism fair "TourEst 2011" in Tallinn, Estonia (18.-20.02)

Participation in tourism fair "VivaTour 2011" in Vilnius, Lithuania (25-27.02)

Info days in the schools of Ventspils, Latvia, and Kuressaare, Estonia, about environment and beach safety*

Active Through Passive

Training courses for Estonian and Latvian architects and engineers on low energy and passive house building in Valga Cultural Centre (16-18.02)

Moto

Training camps and competitions in Jaanikese, Estonia*

Stende – Võhma

Master classes for Stende dance group and Võhma choir on Estonian and Latvian folk arts and contemporary approaches (end of February)*

SIB-Net

Creativity Seminar in Riga: training of the prospective trainers (first week of February)*

Seminar in Riga on promotion of pre-incubators services, Business Angels, creativity methods (first week of February)*

1st stage of the cross-border business idea competition in Riga for people with promising business ideas

Creativity seminar in Ventspils for selected 1st stage cross-border business idea competition participants*

MLEDU

Practical study trips - capturing video materials with winter scenery and winter sport events in Tartu county, Estonia*

March

Demo Farm

International seminar in Estonia (2.-4.03) *

One Vacation – Two Countries

2011International Environmental Olympic for Ventspils and Kuressaare schools in Kuressaare, Estonia (10-12.03)

GORWIND

Policy forums in Pärnu, Estonia, and Saulkarsti, Latvia*

Tolerance

Winter camp in Latvia for families raising children with special needs (19-23.03)*

Moto

Training camps and competitions in Jaanikese, Estonia*

Active Through Passive

Training courses for Estonian and Latvian architects and engineers on low energy and passive house building in Valga Cultural Centre (23-25.03)

SIB-Net

Seminar in Viljandi on promotion of pre-incubators services, Business Angels, creativity methods*

Creativity seminar in Tartu for selected 1st stage cross-border business idea competition participants*

Consensus building activities in Liepāja for various business related stakeholders*

Other news and developments:

- Meeting of the **Programme's Monitoring Committee** took place on 6 December in Viljandi, Estonia. Various strategic Programme issues were discussed. The next meeting is planned in late spring, when decisions will be taken also on the newly submitted projects.
- It has been decided that **Estonian project partners** will have to ask for competitive **price offers** only when making **purchases over 1000 EUR** (without VAT). The partners of the running projects will soon receive more information from the JTS. This change will also be reflected in the Programme Manual.
- Practical seminars on **procurement issues** will be organized **for the running projects** at the beginning of the next year – JTS will contact the partners with more information.

Did you know...

One of the most important and widespread Estonian peasant traditions was the habit of **bringing home Christmas straw**. Although connected with the biblical legend of Jesus Christ's birth-story, the tradition of Christmas straw might even be of pre-Christian pagan origin. In Estonia, straw (in South Estonia sometimes also hay) was taken to the house for the whole festive season. It became a playground for the children.

From Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.vm.ee



Painting of F.v. Uexküll (early 19th century), from the archives of the Estonian National Museum

In other cooperation programmes...

Estonia – Latvia – Russia Programme and **Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme** have closed their recent calls for proposals and are starting the project assessment.

Latvia – Lithuania – Belarus Programme has open call for proposals until 22.02.2011 – more information under <http://www.enpi-cbc.eu/>

Baltic Sea Region Programme has open call for proposals until 31.03.2011 and seminars for lead applicants will take place in Riga on 19-20.01.2011 – more information under <http://eu.baltic.net/>

Latvia – Lithuania Programme has a tentative plan to open its next call for proposals in February – follow the news under <http://www.latlit.eu/>

Links to other cooperation programmes operating in the region are available under <http://www.estlat.eu/links>

A Latvian peasant Christmas tradition is **dragging the Christmas log** around the farmstead, or several farmsteads. This is explained as the symbolic collecting and burning of last year's problems and misfortunes. The log was either dragged by the people of one farmstead or several neighbours together. This was accompanied by songs, singing games, and various sounding instruments. Afterwards the log was burned in a fire.

From the Latvian Institute, www.li.lv



Dragging of the Christmas log at Austris Grasis house „Ģenderti” near Mazsalaca, 2008. Photo: V.Korālis

Häid jõule!

Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus!

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