

## THE CONCEPT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM ROUTE “BALTS’ ROAD”

The concept of the Baltic Cultural Route is developed in accordance with **the concept of the Cultural Route** defined by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2010), “The Concept of the Development of Cultural Routes in Lithuania” (2019) and other documents and legal acts:

- **The Cultural Route** is a project of culture, education, cultural heritage and tourism cooperation, aimed at creation and promotion of one or more tourist routes related to the historical road, cultural concept, personality or phenomenon of exceptional importance, which are significant in fostering understanding of and respect for European values.

### “BALTS’ ROAD”:

- is an international cultural route encompassing historical Baltic residential areas (Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Belarus, Poland);
- is grounded on scientific (interdisciplinary, applied, humanities, social, economic, management, etc.) research;
- creates conditions for interregional and/or international mobility of legal entities operating in the field of culture, develops cultural tourism;
- preserves and contemporises Baltic identity, national and regional cultural heritage, various types of cultural actions/processes/activities (events), enhances local identity.
- promotes cultural tourism: knowledge of the Baltic cultural environment, landscape, past and present visual and performing arts, historical Baltic and present Baltic (ethnic) way of life, values, traditions, events, processes of creative and cultural change;
- creates and incorporates Baltic historical and cultural heritage, various cultural resources (festivals, celebrations, exhibitions, plein airs, creative camps, fairs, etc.) contemporising the Baltic identity;
- involves target markets and target visitor groups (families, individual travellers, visitor groups, students, etc.) of participating and other countries with the identified needs of those groups;
- brings together business and service segments of municipalities, budgetary institutions (cultural, scientific, educational, sports, etc.), non-governmental organizations (communities, local action groups, marketing, communication organisations, etc.), companies and institutions of tourism, culture, education, protected areas, accommodation and catering (rural tourism, hotels and restaurants, etc.), and other sectors (food, recreation, etc.) as well as a network of partners in other fields in Lithuania and abroad;
- constitutes existing cultural and cultural tourism routes (sightseeing, thematic, nature, etc.), offering various forms and ways of cultural and leisure activities;
- includes functioning active communication, publicity (functioning website, social networks, etc.);
- encompasses items, products, services, etc. representing “The Balts’ Road”.

The concept of the Baltic Cultural Route is based on the approach that **the functionality of the Baltic Cultural Route** is ensured by joint activities of developers/implementers/partners and participants:

- **The operator of the Cultural Route** is Šiauliai Tourism Information Centre, which forms and coordinates the cultural route “Balts’ Road” based on the principles of cooperation and partnership.
- **Active members, partners** – municipalities; culture, tourism, education, protected areas, other public institutions, enterprises and organizations, associated structures operating in their territory; holders of cultural and tourism resources of “Balts’ Road” and service providers; legal or natural representatives who are materially and non-materially committed to cooperate in the development of the cultural route.

### Areas of strategic planning of the activities of “Balts’ Road”:

- resources of Baltic origin, their development and diversity, physical and social environment, infrastructure, facilities and services, image and other related phenomena and data;



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- other significant (valuable, attractive) resources located in the environment of resources of Baltic origin; tangible objects and intangible resources, cultural phenomena (traditions, events, etc.); their nature, condition, functioning, infrastructure;
- regulation of the protection of resources of Baltic origin (their content, related phenomena), restrictions on use, standards of resource display and service quality, entities (systems) of administration, management, sponsorship, special signs, existing products (commercial, educational), financing, etc.

### **The activities of “Balts’ Road” are planned in accordance with the following principles:**

- *Accessibility and understanding.* The purpose of interpreting cultural heritage is to help understand the value of cultural heritage sites, to promote public awareness of the need to protect them and to get involved into such activity.
- *Sources of information.* The significance of cultural heritage interpreted and presented to different strata of the society, which is identified based on scientific, applied research or a living cultural tradition, must be clearly defined and carefully documented.
- *Attention to the environment and context.* Interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage should promote the protection of values of tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites in their natural environment, cultural and social contexts.
- *Preservation of authenticity.* Respect for authenticity of cultural sites is expressed by revealing their historical significance and cultural values, protecting them from the negative effect of destructive interpretive infrastructure, pressure from visitors, inaccurate or unacceptable interpretation.
- *The principle of sustainability.* Interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage must contribute to the sustainable protection of cultural heritage sites, promoting public understanding and participation in preservation works, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and continually reflecting on and assessing the content of interpretations.

### **“BALTS’ ROAD”. Strategic aims**

**1. To carry out research and other analytical works of culture and tourism resources and their complexes in the zone of the Baltic Cultural Route, using the obtained data for substantiation of preparation, implementation and development of related topics and content, services, infrastructure.**

The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- Development of the concept of cultural tourism (services and attractions) in the zone of the Baltic Cultural Route.
- Research on accessibility, availability, social environment of the territory and objects.
- Research on the preconditions for administration of the territory and objects (research on the administrative environment).
- Assessment of the totality of objects, condition of selected objects and infrastructure.
- Research on the preconditions for the use of the territory and objects (display, presentation) for the needs of cultural tourism.
- Formation of an assortment of cultural tourism services and attractions: expositions, events, museums, demonstration, celebrations, excursions, accommodation, catering, transportation, etc.
- Development of administration models for the cultural route products.
- Preparation and implementation of a marketing and communication plan.
- Analysis of cultural, social, and economic benefits.

**2. To plan the Baltic Cultural Route that would extend through Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Russia, and Poland, combining Baltic cultural and natural objects expressing tangible and intangible heritage, by involving specialists of various fields, communities, and institutions in the name of preserving and promoting Baltic heritage.**



The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- Selection of cultural objects in the regions of the Baltic tribes, which are significant for local and international tourism.
- Compilation of passports of objects, formation of the scientific-methodical library (sources).
- Development of thematic and sightseeing routes, based on research data, scientific recommendations regarding:
  - *the nature of objects*: trade, defence; Balts' daily life, mode of life, housework routines; family traditions, culinary heritage; folk art, crafts, ornamentation; architecture; holidays, craft days, traditional calendar holidays; folklore, language; etc.
  - *topics (content)*: modern cultural trends, city celebrations, festivals, plein airs, phenomena of literature and other cultural fields (premiums, etc.) characteristic to the territory of the Baltic Cultural Route; settlements, buildings, fortifications; non-ferrous metallurgy and jewellery; worldview; Baltic art; etc.
  - *geographical, ethnic and administrative territories*: Lithuania-Latvia, Lithuania-Belarus, Lithuania-Poland, Lithuania-Russia; Upland Lithuanians, Yotvingians, Curonians, Latgalians, Lithuanians, Prussians, Selonians, Skalvians, Samogitians, Semigallians; etc.
  - *infrastructure, accessibility, marking, etc.*
- Presentation of cultural tourism products (excursions, services, attractions, media, etc.) created in the zone of the Baltic Cultural Route to the public.

**3. To create conditions for interregional cooperation of legal entities operating in the field of culture while developing cultural tourism, preserving, and contemporising cultural heritage and cultural events of Baltic historical and ethnographic regions, and enhancing local cultural identity.**

The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- Socially responsible approach to tourism grounded on cultural heritage.
- Responsible cooperation between the cultural and tourism sectors to ensure effective management and care of cultural heritage, using these values for tourism.
- Image formation on an international scale.
- Economic and social impact on the region.
- Political support for management and protection of the Baltic heritage.

**4. To ensure functioning of the Baltic Cultural Route by coordinating the activities of related organizations, creating, and maintaining the information dissemination system implementing the objectives of marketing, communication and support – to inform, persuade, and remind.**

The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- Creation of an information infrastructure (a logo, website, marking with cultural route attributes (a logo); expositions and exhibitions, brochures, social networks, mobile communication, and the like).
- Development of support measures ensuring customer information about the advantage of the Baltic Cultural Route, educational, cultural, tourist opportunities and supporting constant interest.
- Search for new ideas supporting products and services in the activities (content) of other cultural-tourism projects operating in the zone.
- Funding (cultural and tourism support funds, investment projects, sponsors, budget appropriations, etc.) of support actions (sales promotion, advertising, promotion, etc.).
- Preparation of forms, tools, places for information (data) structure, management, accessibility, presentation (sales), creation of an interactive environment and tools (websites, information portals, etc.).

**5. To ensure the implementation of the sustainable development philosophy by forming an environment of higher quality of life in the present society and in the perspective of future generations.**



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The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- The implementation of project activities, decisions taken, and planned results are based on the synergistic effect of economic, ecological and social factors.
- Promotion and involvement of local services, communities, and residents in activities. The development of sustainable tourism allows local people to benefit from the provision of tourism services, at the same time preserving local cultural and environmental integrity, increasing the protection of ecologically sensitive territories and natural heritage.
- Active formation of the market of ecotourism services by providing innovative services and attracting persons who want to travel on foot, by bicycle and who are interested in natural and cultural heritage. Distinctive features of ecotourism are: reduced environmental impact, respect for local culture, and activation of local people's activities.

**6. To generate tourist flows in the project implementation territory by increasing awareness of the Baltic culture and tourist adaptability, creating a cross-border route "Balts' Road" based on the principles of sustainable tourism development and integrating "Balts' Road" into the map of European cultural tourism routes.**

The aim is pursued by following such directions of activities and planning appropriate measures:

- Creation of new tourist attraction objects for the promotion of local and international tourism, based on advanced, innovative technological solutions, in the project implementation territory.
- On-going accounting of visitor flows and analysis of obtained benefits to evaluate the popularity and cost-efficiency of the Baltic Cultural Route.