



European  
Regional  
Development  
Fund

**WP3 3.4. ACTIVITY:  
DRAFTING OF THE NATURE GUIDES TRAINING PROGRAMME:  
JOIN PERSPECTIVE FOR LITHUANIA, GERMANY AND POLAND  
WITH NATIONAL ADAPTATIONS**

November 29th, 2019

Lead Partner:



Project Partners:



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Activity 3.4. DRAFTING OF THE NATURE GUIDES TRAINING PROGRAMME intends to present development of Nature Guide training program as a cross-border training using the data of WP Activities 3.1., 3.2. and 3.3. The training program is the key element in the project and its planning took most of the time and efforts among our partner countries.

### 2. METHODOLOGY

The joint framework curriculum of the training program has started since the beginning of the project in 2018 and is largely based on the analysis and findings of:

- 1) Analysis of existing training schemes in the EU and worldwide (Act 3.1)
- 2) the respective national framework for a Nature Guide training in the partner countries (Act. 3.2)
- 3) the developed joint Nature Guide profile (Act. 3.3)

The existing processing pattern of the activities 3.1 - 3.3, the tabular form of analysis, was continued, supplemented and specified. The decisive change compared to the last result (Nature Guide Profile) lies in the greater detail of the criteria of the framework curriculum, e.g. the training content, the conditions of training as well as the competences and skills. Main training elements were presented on national levels, producing promotional leaflets for the training, promoting in websites and social media.

The Quality Assurance Methodology outline developed in the project period and certification standard „European Norm EN 15565:2008: Standard for the Training and Qualification of Tourist Guides in Europe“ were mainly taken into account with regard to the quality criteria of the joint training, e.g. duration of training, admission requirements, exams. In addition, network partners, e.g. from vocational training, tour guides, nature guides or environmental authorities, contributed to the development of the framework curriculum as experts in their field.

The framework curriculum was developed in cooperation with every partner and WP3 coordinator’s guidance and agreed during 3<sup>rd</sup> partner meeting in Poland in May 2019 and in Lithuania in October 2019. Further on, an email and skype communication and an ongoing discussion process helped us to identify a joint vision and key elements for a cross-border training program. Having this framework set, the programs of the trainings were elaborated by every partner country with its own specific needs and adaptations, mainly differing in length of the pilot training course, for example, the training course in Germany lasted one week, in Lithuania 15 weekends in 7 months, in Poland 5 weekends in 6 months. Such country-specific adaptations were agreed upon application procedure and were approved by the JS. The framework follows in previous activities’ developed structure.

### 3. FINDINGS

Further table presents the framework curriculum of the Nature Guide Training program as a cross-border training program. Such training represents our partner’s vision for ideal situation and without national adaptations.

#### 3.1. THE FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM OF CROSS-BORDER NATURE GUIDE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Topic	Description
<b>Main Focus</b>	<p>Aim of the program is to provide practical and theoretical knowledge and skills to be able to create an own business and act as a self-employed professional nature guide-interpreter in field of nature tourism, nature education and environmental awareness raising. The program is designed for people who want to work as nature guides using heritage interpretation tools and design experience-oriented and service-oriented trips to nature for individuals and groups. The program provides a holistic model of guest guiding in the nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods by covering following fields:</p> <p>Nature/Culture/History/Management/Business/Legislation/Interpretation/Methodology/Communication/ Ethics.</p>

<b>Main Objectives</b>	<p><i>Graduates will be able:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to offer and provide high quality Nature Guides service on self-employment base with respect for local nature, culture and people</li> <li>- to interpret a wide-range of local natural resources, landscape, culture and history in changing environment for diverse target audiences</li> <li>- to understand holistic perspective of physical, natural and social-economic environment interactions</li> <li>- to use communication and heritage interpretation techniques to impart one's own interaction and connection with natural and cultural phenomena through senses and values</li> <li>- to create sustainable tourism products with knowledge of basic rules of customer service and marketing tools</li> <li>- to employ tools creating self-sustained business in natural areas, including protected areas and Natura 2000 spots, which would promote nature protection values among public.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to employ experiential learning into guiding practice</li> <li>- to be familiar with nature protection system and state regulations at EU level and in the respective country (Lithuania, Poland, Germany)</li> <li>- to understand ecosystem interdependencies, value of ecosystem services and human-nature interaction</li> <li>- to be familiar with the tourism laws, nature ethics standards and tourism market of the respective country (Lithuania, Poland, Germany)</li> <li>- to be familiar with natural (biotic and abiotic), geographical, cultural, historical resources, and nature tourism routes in a certain region</li> <li>- to be familiar with tourism management and guiding rules</li> <li>- to be familiar with group psychology and processes, conflict management and basics of psychology in education</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills and competences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge of methodology for designing, organizing and leading enjoyable, safe, sustainable and attractive nature tours/trips, especially in protected areas and ecologically sensitive places</li> <li>- skills and methods to prevent and minimize risks before and during the tour (e.g. outdoor first aid, appropriate planning of tours, check of weather conditions, etc.)</li> <li>- use of outdoor techniques/tools (e.g. dealing with various sports and familiarity with the appropriate equipment; orientation/GPS)</li> <li>- ability to communicate self-perceived, holistic and comprehensive natural knowledge in a simple manner and thus create awareness for nature and the environment</li> <li>- appropriate use of different tools/methods for nature-based and experiential learning (e.g. heritage interpretation, experiential/outdoor education) for various target groups to have inspiring nature experiences of interpretation</li> <li>- knowledge and application of a variety of different communicative and didactic tools and methods (e.g. rhetoric skills, knowledge to promote interaction and solve conflicts between various actors, knowledge of group dynamic processes and how to deal with them) for being a nice and authentic host, mediator and leader of a group</li> <li>- well-developed oral communication (speech and voice training on volume, pronunciation, confident behavior towards groups, etc.)</li> <li>- skills/techniques to lead various target groups in different outdoors conditions, including ability to adapt to changing conditions and customers needs</li> <li>- business economics/ management knowledge and skills (IT use for administration, marketing &amp; communication/, use of booking platforms, negotiation skills, assess the market situation, networking skills, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Requirements</b>	<p><b>Mandatory preconditions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 years with high-school diploma</li> <li>- English and/or other foreign language in at least B1-Level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR)</li> <li>- Basic IT knowledge (at least Office-Software and Internet use)</li> <li>- physically fit to handle active trips and longer distances during practice sessions</li> <li>- online application and succeeding in a pre-test on existing relevant knowledge</li> <li>- ability to attend minimum classroom and online courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o at least 90% attendance for full-time training for young professionals</li> <li>o at least 80% to 90% attendance for modules that have no or little connection to the respective professional qualification for applicants with "green professional background"</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Desirable factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- highly motivated in practicing the profession of a nature guide</li> <li>- genuine interest in nature, outdoor activities and nature protection</li> <li>- genuine interest in communication, service orientation, interaction with guests and in guidance</li> <li>- emotionally connected to his/her region and nature and being ambassador of local region</li> <li>- previous experience in volunteering, nature protection, nature conservation, public science fields</li> <li>- living in rural but economically weak region or living in Natura 2000 sites/ in protected areas</li> <li>- other foreign language(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Target Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>High school graduates</b> who want to take the first educational path as a Nature Guide.</li> <li>- <b>Higher education graduates</b> who want to develop skills as Nature Guide in a further training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o from nature and life sciences fields (ecology, botany, biology, etc).</li> <li>o from social and other sciences fields</li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Persons with vocational qualification</b> looking for career reorientation or special further training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o from "green professions" (nature conservation, biology, forestry, horticulture, etc.) with at least 1 to 3 years professional experience in the field.</li> <li>o from tourism sector with at least 1 to 3 years professional experience (guides, tour leaders, agents, etc.).</li> <li>o from other sectors,—but applicants have to verify non-formal education in nature guiding field (nature education, wilderness education, local nature knowledge, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ residents from Natura 2000 or protected areas, but applicants have to verify their non-formal learning competences in nature guiding field during application.</li> </ul>
<b>Areas of employment</b>	<p>Self-employment or part-employment possibilities to work in different sectors, depending on his/her own work experiences and specialization, and situation in job market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Organizer in nature and outdoor tourism field as part-employed</b>, e.g. in tourism and travel companies, tourism providers, hostels or larger protected areas.</li> <li>- <b>Guide in nature or tour leader as self-employed</b>, e.g. in nature and outdoor life, nature-oriented expeditions, tours.</li> <li>- <b>Worker in nature conservation field</b>, e.g. in local and regional authorities for, e.g. National/Nature Park/Biosphere Reserves or state-organized ranger associations, NGOs for nature conservation or environmental protection.</li> <li>- <b>Educator in nature-based education</b>, e.g. in NGOs, private or public institutions, private or public kindergarten/schools with focus on outdoor/nature education/sustainability, adult or social education centers.</li> <li>- <b>Practitioner of experiential learning</b> for private enterprises, NGOs, public institutions or private groups, e.g. experiential team-building, therapies, fun activities, awareness tours in an outdoor environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions of training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The training program includes the most important principles of guiding in nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods.</li> <li>- The training program consists of a well-balanced combination of theory and practice; a large part takes place in nature and includes practical exercises and outdoor experiences.</li> <li>- Experts from various key areas convey their know-how, skills and practical experiences lively and in presentations.</li> <li>- The basic training period is at least 600 hours (based on the European Norm for tourist guide training - EN 15565: 32008); optional further training units / specialization possible.</li> <li>- The structure of the training depends on education provider and target group and can vary from half a year to several long weekends. The size of the group is recommended less than 20 people for better learning reasons.</li> <li>- Application and registration process (incl. pre-knowledge test) before training start</li> <li>- Depending on applicant's previous experience, non-formal competences can apply in reduction of his/her training hours.</li> <li>- The training is held in native language, but at least 10% of the course units will be held by international lecturers (some of the learning units can take place abroad).</li> <li>- The training ends with a theoretical and a practical exam; upon successful completion, the participant receives certificate of a Nature Guide.</li> </ul>
<b>Main training elements</b>	<p>The training is based on four key components:</p> <p><b><u>I - Nature/landscape/ecosystems</u></b>  Basics of ecology and functions of ecosystems; basics of natural/biotic resources (plants, animals, etc.) and environmental material cycles; geographical characteristics and geology; basics on nature protection and its ethic foundations; basics on landscape management and development (protected areas, conservation legislation, institutions, land use conflicts, sustainable development); regional particularities of nature (espec. flora &amp; fauna) and landscape (evolution and characteristics).</p> <p><b><u>II - Human-culture-economy-relationships in land use</u></b>  Interactions of the socio-economic and natural environment (cultural dominated ecosystems (fields, grassland, cultural landscape elements, villages/cities, tourism etc.) and its effects on nature/landscape; meaning of cultural landscapes and culture in general as regional identity; meaning of ecosystem services (e.g. recreational resources for tourism, land/soil as base for food/wood, etc.); history of regional economy (craft, industry, trade, tourism) and land-use conflicts; principles of sustainable development and Agenda 21 (key issues and models/strategies).</p> <p><b><u>III – Interpretation, communication and guiding methodology</u></b>  Basics on communication (models, mode of action, conflicts, presentation/moderation skills); educational concepts and its application (techniques/tools of e.g. nature interpretation, friluftsliv, participatory education, environmental education, experiential learning, Education for Sustainable Development); the Nature Guide's profile and responsibilities; guiding and leading didactics/ methodology of guiding (tourist) groups; meaning of leadership role &amp; group dynamics; psychology and problem solving in group; environmental ethics; design and evaluation of interpretive storylines/routes interlinked to participants real life and aligned with the respective target group; preparation and testing of exciting outdoor activity tours (e.g. canoeing, cycling, photography) with first-hand experiences for guests (entertainment orientation); outdoor techniques and tools (espec. equipment, safety and orientation/GPS).</p> <p><b><u>IV - Business management, marketing and networking</u></b>  Background and functioning of the tourism industry; definition and market potential of nature tourism/ ecotourism/ nature guides as element of a sustainable regional development (espec. in protected areas); development and maintenance of a regional nature tourism network; product development (demand/supply, regional tourism market, specialization, customer orientation); specialization know-how (nature photography, birdwatching, animal tracking safari, etc.); business basics for Nature Guides (self-organization, fees, taxes, financial management and calculation, IT-basics, liability/ insurance, etc.); first aid course; tour planning and trip organizing (incl. risk prevention, accounting, communication to guests, etc.); marketing and communication/PR to guided tours and offers (strategies, tools, network partners, booking platforms).</p> <p><i>Training scope:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All key components strongly interact with the role and responsibility of Nature Guides and their activities, e.g. effects of Nature Guide activities for nature tourism and for nature conservation; personality of Nature Guide and its effect on group processes; networking with other actors from the region, etc.</li> <li>- All key components of the training are taught both theoretically and practically; the practical units are directly integrated into the teaching process through appropriate outdoor activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Training methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In all modules, a wide range of learning and teaching strategies and methods are used, such as: practical interactive methods/ workshops, collaborative learning, observations and research in nature, group work/debates, homework/online learning/tutorials, practical work during lectures, analysis of real situations; simulations/role playing, field trips.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus of the training is on nature heritage interpretation, applying internationally used techniques and models (e.g. flow learning, coyote-teaching, education for sustainable development).</li> <li>- At least 40% of the teaching units take place outside in different environments.</li> <li>- At least 20% of the training time is carried out independently by the participants (e.g. homework, tutorials and self-learning).</li> </ul>
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#### 4. NATIONAL ADAPTATIONS

##### 4.1. TRAINING FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM IN LITHUANIA

Topic	Description
<b>Main Focus</b>	<p>Aim of the program is to develop knowledge and skills to act as self-employed professional nature guide-interpreter. The course is designed for people who want to work as nature guides using interpretation tools and design experience-oriented trips to nature for individuals and groups. The program provides a model of guiding in the nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods by covering following fields:</p> <p>Nature/Culture/History/Interpretation/Methodology/Management/Communication/Legislation/Ethics.</p>
<b>Main Objectives</b>	<p><i>Graduates will be able:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to offer and provide high quality Nature Guides service on self-employment base with respect for local nature and culture</li> <li>- to interpret local natural resources, landscape, culture and history in changing environment for diverse target audiences</li> <li>- to understand holistic perspective of physical, natural and social environment interactions</li> <li>- to use communicative and interpretative techniques to transmit feeling of deeper connection with nature through senses and values, connecting people to certain place and its uniqueness</li> <li>- to employ tools creating self-sustained business in natural areas, including protected areas and Natura 2000 spots, which would promote nature protection values among public.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to employ experiential learning into guiding practice</li> <li>- to be familiar with nature protection system and state regulations in Lithuania</li> <li>- to be familiar with Lithuanian tourism laws and nature ethics standards</li> <li>- to be familiar with group management and psychology</li> <li>- to be familiar with natural resources and nature tourism routes</li> <li>- to understand ecosystem links and human-nature interaction</li> <li>- to learn broader perspective of Lithuanian natural and abiotic resources</li> <li>- to understand the nature, culture, history and geographical conditions of a certain region</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to have skills and methods to prevent and minimize risks while on route</li> <li>- to use interpretative and improvisational tools for various audiences for a good nature experience</li> <li>- to know methodology for designing and leading an interpretative route</li> <li>- to use rhetorical, interactive and group dynamic tools for being a host, mediator and leader in of group</li> </ul> <p><b>Competences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to organize enjoyable, safe and interesting trips to nature in protected areas and ecologically sensitive places</li> <li>- to lead various target groups in different outdoors conditions</li> <li>- to enhance creativity and innovations into a route</li> <li>- to be aware of responsibility for people and nature when guiding outdoors</li> <li>- well-developed oral and written communication and interpretation</li> <li>- to provide first aid</li> </ul>
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People completed secondary education</li> <li>• minimum age 18 years</li> <li>• Online application</li> <li>• Knowing at least one foreign language at least B2 level</li> <li>• Ability to attend minimum 80% of the course</li> <li>• ICT literacy</li> <li>• recommendation: physically fit for long distances</li> </ul>
<b>Target Group</b>	<p>Outdoor and nature interested person, who want to build up an existence in outdoor sector. Particularly, the course is dedicated to 4 target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protected areas workers with minimum 1 year experience</li> <li>- professional guides with minimum 1 year experience,</li> <li>- specialists, holding education degree in natural and life sciences,</li> <li>- nature knowledgeable people with non-formal learning in natural and life sciences (for example, local people)</li> </ul>
<b>Field of Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A nature guide will receive knowledge and tools for self-employment in nature tourism, working as a guide / interpreter/ tour leader/ instructor / organizer in nature and outdoor life, nature oriented expedition leader for a travel company or a private group.</li> <li>- She/he will be certified as an official nature guide in certain protected areas and will hold a quality symbol of certain protected areas.</li> <li>- A nature guide will enter networks with other outdoor guides, associations and outdoor guiding providers locally and internationally.</li> </ul>

<b>Frame of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 face-to-face training meetings, starting in the end of September 2019, finishing end of April, and 1 examination meeting in the beginning of May 2020, meetings will take place every second weekend of the month.</li> <li>• Mixture of theory and practice: a large part of the study program takes place in nature and includes practical exercises and the development of experience</li> <li>• Online application to the course</li> <li>• The course will take place in 4 different locations during weekends (2 days)</li> <li>• Most of the course's theory will be uploaded in online system (Moodle)</li> </ul>
<b>Contents</b>	<p><b>I module: Nature/Culture/History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basics of ecology and ecosystems</li> <li>- Natural resources and social uses (flora, fauna, fungi, etc)</li> <li>- Ecology and Recreational resources</li> <li>- Geographical characteristics and geology</li> <li>- Socioeconomic and natural environment interaction</li> <li>- Cultural landscape</li> </ul> <p><b>II module: Management/Legislation/Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature policy, legislation, and ethics</li> <li>- Guiding methodology and basics</li> <li>- Route planning and trip organizing</li> <li>- Ecotourism, protected areas and guiding</li> <li>- Risk prevention and safe guiding</li> <li>- Marketing and communication</li> <li>- Accounting and finance management</li> </ul> <p><b>III module: Interpretation/Communication/Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental interpretation and education</li> <li>- Nature guide's profile and responsibilities</li> <li>- Field leadership and rhetoric, communication's basics</li> <li>- Psychology and problem solving in group</li> <li>- Interpretive strategies and tools</li> <li>- Design and evaluation of interpretive routes</li> <li>- Outdoor techniques and tools</li> <li>- Preparing the route and on the route</li> <li>- Innovations and creativity being nature guide</li> </ul> <p><b>IV: individual studying during the course</b> (assignments, literature research, practice outdoors)</p>
<b>Learning strategies</b>	Focus of the training will be on interpreting nature, applying internationally used techniques and models. Learning and teaching strategies are of interpretative scope: practical interactive methods, collaborative learning, observations and research in nature, group work, workshops, practical and methodical work during lectures, analysis of real situations, debates, simulations, project work, field trips.
<b>Examination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of description of the tour (1 page)</li> <li>- Preparation of invitation to the tour (marketing side)</li> <li>- Practical tour in selected area (1 hour)</li> </ul>

## **TRAINING PROGRAM IN LITHUANIA**

<i>DATE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>DURATION</i>
<b>Introduction</b>			
September 21	Curonian Spit National Park	Kick-off meeting: Project presentation, training objectives, outcomes, main tools and team. Main concepts of nature guiding, current situation and perspectives in nature guiding in Lithuania	8 hours
September 22	Curonian Spit National Park	Practical nature guiding tour	6 hours
<b>I module: Nature/culture/history</b>			
October 5	Curonian Spit National Park	Basics of ecosystem ecology. Natural habitats and rare species in coastal areas.	8 hours
October 6	Curonian Spit National Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
October 19	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Coastal and lagoon ecosystems, importance to migration. Theory and practice. Hydrology of the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon.	8 hours
October 20	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
November 9	Curonian Spit National Park	Forest system in Lithuania: basics and practice for nature guide.	8 hours
November 10	Curonian Spit National Park	The coastal biodiversity. Visiting the Marine museum.	6 hours
November 23	Coastal Regional Park	Geology of the Western Lithuania. Practice outdoors.	8 hours

November 24	Coastal Regional Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
December 7	Curonian Spit National Park	Animal tracking. Theory and practice.	8 hours
December 8	Curonian Spit National Park	Meteorology of the coastland. Visit to weather station.	6 hours
<b>II module: Management/Legislation/Methodology</b>			
January 4	Klaipėda University	Basics of guiding in nature and trip organizing. Guiding legislation.	8 hours
January 5	Klaipėda University	Sustainable tourism. Ecosystems services.	6 hours
January 18	Klaipėda University	Environmental motivation, legislation and historical context.	8 hours
January 19	Klaipėda University	Tourism marketing and communication.	6 hours
February 1	Klaipėda University	Risk prevention and safe guiding, first aid training.	8 hours
February 2	Klaipėda University	Outdoor techniques and tools. Group dynamics.	6 hours
February 15	Klaipėda University	Finances and business management.	8 hours
February 16	Klaipėda University	Nature guide equipment. Practice.	6 hours
<b>III module: Interpretation/Communication/Techniques</b>			
February 31	Curonian Spit National Park	Forest interpretation. Storytelling tool.	8 hours
March 1	Curonian Spit National Park	Introduction into nature interpretation. History, concepts, techniques and tools.	6 hours
March 14	Curonian Spit National Park	Leadership and group management	8 hours
March 15	Curonian Spit National Park	Communication in nature	6 hours
March 21	Curonian Spit National Park	Environmental ethics and ethical guiding in nature. Nature observation and species identification.	8 hours
March 22	Curonian Spit National Park	Active tourism. Theory and practical cycling tour.	6 hours
April 4	Coastal Regional Park	Environmental interpretation and education. Nature guide's profile and responsibilities (English language)	8 hours
April 5	Coastal Regional Park	Nature interpretation: models and techniques (English language)	6 hours
April 18	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Designing nature routes	8 hours
April 19	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Tour leader training	6 hours
<b>Closure</b>			
May 4-9	Curonian Spit National Park, Nemunas Delta Regional Park, Coastal Regional Park and other areas	Practical exam in a prepared route with project team and one expert	1 hour each participant
May 10	Curonian Spit National Park	Closure of the training course with stakeholders, nature guides and journalists, certificates to participants	6 hours

#### 4.2. TRAINING PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM IN GERMANY

Topic	Description
<b>Main Focus and</b>	Aim of the program is to provide practical and theoretical knowledge and skills to be able to create an own business and act as a self-employed professional nature guide-interpreter in field of nature tourism, nature education and environmental awareness raising. The program is designed for people who want to work as nature guides using heritage interpretation tools and design experience-oriented and service-oriented trips to nature for individuals and groups. The program provides a holistic model of guest guiding in the nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods by covering following fields: Nature/Culture/History/Interpretation/Methodology/Management/Business/Communication/Legislation/Ethics.
<b>Main Objectives</b>	<i>Graduates will be able:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to offer and provide high quality Nature Guides service on self-employment base with respect for local nature, culture and people</li> <li>- to interpret a wide-range of local natural resources, landscape, culture and history in changing environment for diverse target audiences</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to understand holistic perspective of physical, natural and social-economic environment interactions</li> <li>- to use communication and heritage interpretation techniques to impart one's own behavior/ interaction and connection with natural and cultural phenomena through senses and values let the people perceive certain place and its uniqueness</li> <li>- to employ tools creating self-sustained business in natural areas, including protected areas and Natura 2000 spots, which would promote nature protection values among public</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to employ experiential learning into guiding practice</li> <li>- to be familiar with nature protection system and state regulations at EU level and in Germany</li> <li>- to understand ecosystem interdependencies, value of ecosystem services and human-nature interaction</li> <li>- to be familiar with the tourism laws, nature ethics standards and tourism market of Germany and in the respective region the guide is active in</li> <li>- to be familiar with natural (biotic and abiotic), geographical, cultural and historical resources of as well as nature tourism routes in a (or possibly more) certain region the guide is active in</li> <li>- to be familiar with group processes, conflict management and basics of psychology in education (e.g. learning models, awareness training)</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills and competences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge of methodology for designing, organizing and leading enjoyable, safe, sustainable and attractive nature tours/trips, especially in protected areas and ecologically sensitive places</li> <li>- skills and methods to prevent and minimize risks before and during the tour (e.g. outdoor first aid, appropriate planning of tours; check of weather conditions, etc.)</li> <li>- use of outdoor techniques/tools (e.g. dealing with various sports and familiarity with the appropriate equipment; orientation/GPS)</li> <li>- the ability to transmit (communicate) your own, holistic and comprehensive natural knowledge in a simple manner and thus create awareness for nature and the environment</li> <li>- appropriate use of different tools/methods for nature-based and experiential learning (e.g. heritage interpretation, experiential/outdoor education) for various target group to have inspiring nature experiences of interpretation</li> <li>- Knowledge and application of a variety of different communicative and didactic tools and methods (e.g. rhetoric skills, knowledge to promote interaction and solve conflicts between various actors, knowledge of group dynamic processes and how to deal with them) for being a nice and authentic host, mediator and leader of a group</li> <li>- well-developed oral communication (speech and voice training on volume, pronunciation, confident behavior towards groups, etc.)</li> <li>- skills/techniques to lead various target groups in different outdoors conditions, including ability to adapt to changing conditions</li> <li>- business economics/ management knowledge and skills (IT use for administration, marketing &amp; communication/, use of booking platforms, negotiation skills, assess the market situation, networking skills, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions of training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The training program includes the most important principles (see key chapter at "Main training elements") compare of guiding in nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods</li> <li>- The training program consists of a well-balanced combination of theory and practice: a large part takes place in nature and includes practical exercises and own outdoor experiences. This forms the basis for I) functional tour concepts and II) prepares the guide for a better didactic and empathic work with his/her clients (e.g. management of expectations, obstacles, fears)</li> <li>- Appropriate for the mixture of theoretical and practical units, experts from various key areas convey their know-how, skills and practical experiences</li> <li>- The basic training period is at least 600 hours (based on the European Norm for tourist guide training - EN 15565: 2008); optional further training units / specialization possible</li> <li>- The design of the training is the responsibility of the respective educational institutions and can vary, e.g. full-time training, part-time training on long weekends</li> <li>- Depending on the previous experience, ability and knowledge of the potential participant, the hourly training volume can be reduced</li> <li>- Prior to the training, a registration process (for motivation, previous experience and previous knowledge) decides on acceptance or not of the applicant</li> <li>- the training is mainly held in native language, but includes international exchange elements: at least 20% course units will be held by international lecturers in English language (some of the learning units can take place abroad)</li> <li>- Prior to the training, the applicant must show proof of first practical experience, internship or working alongside with an experienced Nature Guide (min. 80 hours must be verified)</li> <li>- The training ends with a theoretical and a practical exam; upon successful completion (incl. a passed first aid course), the participant receives a certificate</li> </ul> <p><b>Special German conditions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- training shall take part in cooperation with nature protection authority of federal state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and employers/enterprises of tourism industry</li> <li>- developed on the base of ZNL-Training and further developed with different experts of tourism, occupational training and nature protection</li> <li>- have a practical and theoretical examination with certificate possibly by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Germany/IHK</li> <li>- It would also be conceivable to put an academic degree (Bachelor's degree) on top of the training</li> </ul>
<b>Areas of employment</b>	<p>The mainly self-employed Nature Guide, rarely also full- or part-time employed, is able to work in different sectors, depending on his/her own work experiences and know-how and depending on the job market situation.</p> <p>Following sectors are <b>possible areas of employment</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) nature and outdoor tourism (always taking into account the sustainability principles), e.g. in tourism and travel companies/for tourism providers, youth hostels or for larger protected areas administrations (such as National/Nature Park /Biosphere Reserves)</li> </ol>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as a nature or travel guide/travel companion / interpreter/ tour leader/ tour organizer in nature and outdoor life, nature oriented expeditions</li> </ul> <p>2) local and regional authorities for environmental protection/ nature conservation/ nature education, e.g. administrations of larger protected area administrations (such as National/Nature Park/Biosphere Reserves) or state-organized ranger associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up experiential outdoor/nature education and learning and awareness activities for children and adults via guiding groups</li> <li>• additionally possible: performing practical nature conservation work (maintenance and repair of infrastructure and special conservation areas)</li> <li>• additionally possible: supporting awareness and communication work for environmental/nature issues via PR activities of a certain institution</li> </ul> <p>3) NGOs, private or public institutions for nature/environmental protection or nature based education/learning, e.g. private or public kindergarten/schools with focus on outdoor/nature education/sustainability; adult education centers; NGOs for nature conservation or environmental protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting up experiential outdoor/nature education and learning and awareness activities for children and adults via guiding groups</li> <li>• additionally possible: supporting awareness and communication for environmental/nature issues via PR activities of a certain institution</li> <li>• with appropriate experience and theoretical background: working as a multiplier/instructor in vocational education for e.g. educational staff/social workers, sustainable project management, etc.</li> </ul> <p>4) Team building activities for private enterprises, NGOs or public institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement experiential team-building measures, fun activities or awareness training tours (at business incentives travels / company trips) in an outdoor environment</li> </ul> <p>- Depending on work conditions as a self-employed or employed Guide and depending on seasonal influences: there are very different proportions of working outdoors (e.g. preparation and execution of tours, exploring new areas for new tours) and indoors (e.g. development and planning of tour concepts, communication/coordination of guests, financing/invoices, etc.)</p> <p>- The participation in network activities (official/ unofficial meetings, different communication activities) with other nature guides, public institutions, tourism providers is not a must, but useful in many ways, e.g. for information flow, substitute/replacement in case of illness, service partnerships, etc., and should be seriously considered.</p> <p>- The openness to accept also work that is not typical guide work increases the success as a self-employed person, because in off-season, guides can rarely make a living from guided tours; therefore most guides need several income sources and work simultaneously (especially in winter) in other jobs or offer different services (rental, craft, regional products, etc.)</p>
<p><b>Main training elements</b></p>	<p><u>The training is based on four key components:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I) Knowledge of nature, landscape and ecosystems as well as their protection, management and development</li> <li>II) Knowledge of human-culture-economic relationships in land use (social and economic aspects of nature and landscape)</li> <li>III) Knowledge of communication and guiding didactics / methods / skills</li> <li>IV) Knowledge of business, tourism economy, marketing and networking</li> </ul> <p>- All key components strongly interact with the role and responsibility of Nature Guides and their activities, e.g. effects of Nature Guide activities for nature tourism and for nature conservation; personality of Nature Guide and its effect on group processes; networking with other actors from the region, etc.</p> <p>- All key components of the training are taught both theoretically and practically; the practical units are directly integrated into the teaching process through appropriate outdoor activities.</p> <p><b><u>I - Nature/landscape/ecosystems – protection, management and development</u></b></p> <p>Basics of ecology and functions of ecosystems; basics of natural/biotic resources (plants, animals, etc.) and environmental factors/material cycles, geographical characteristics and geology; basics on nature protection and its ethic foundations; basics on landscape management and planning/development (protected areas, conservation legislation, institutions/responsibilities, land use conflicts; sustainable development); regional particularities of nature (espec. flora &amp; fauna) and landscape (evolution and characteristics).</p> <p><b><u>II - Human-culture-economy-relationships in land use</u></b></p> <p>Interactions of the socio-economic and natural environment (cultural dominated ecosystems (fields, grassland, cultural landscape elements, villages/cities, tourism etc.) and its effects on nature/landscape; meaning of cultural landscapes and culture in general as regional identity; meaning of ecosystem services (e.g. recreational resources for tourism, land/soil as base for food/wood, etc.); history of regional economy (craft, industry, trade, tourism) and land-use conflicts; ); principles of sustainable development and Agenda 21 (key issues and models/strategies).</p> <p><b><u>III - Communication and guiding didactics / methods / skills</u></b></p> <p>Basics on communication (models, mode of action, conflicts, presentation/moderation skills); educational concepts and its application (techniques/tools of e.g. nature interpretation, friluftsliv, environmental education, experiential learning, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); the Nature Guide’s profile and responsibilities; guiding and leading didactics/ methodology of guiding (tourist) groups; meaning of leadership role &amp; group dynamics; design and evaluation of interpretive storylines/routes interlinked to participants real life and aligned with the respective target group; preparation and testing of exciting outdoor activity tours (e.g. canoeing, cycling, photography) with first-hand experiences for guests (entertainment orientation); outdoor techniques and tools (espec. regarding to equipment, safety and orientation/GPS).</p> <p><b><u>IV - Business, tourism economy, marketing and networking</u></b></p> <p>Background and functioning of the tourism industry; definition and market potential of nature tourism/ ecotourism/ nature guides as element of a sustainable regional development (espec. in protected areas); development and maintenance of a regional nature tourism network; product development (demand/supply, regional tourism market, specialization, customer orientation); business basics for Nature Guides (self-organization, fees, taxes, financial management and calculation, IT-basics, liability/ insurance, first aid course, etc.); tour planning and trip organisation (incl. risk prevention, accounting, communication to guests, etc.); marketing and communication/PR to guided tours and offers (strategies, tools, network partners, booking platforms).</p>

<p><b>Requirements</b></p>	<p><b>Mandatory preconditions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18 years with high-school diploma</li> <li>- depending on the training type, a minimum attendance for classroom courses and online courses is expected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I) at least 90% attendance for full-time training for young professionals</li> <li>II) at a further training for career changers with a "green professional background" (e.g. agriculture, forestry, horticulture, etc.): individual recognition of professional qualifications (min. 3 years experiences); at least 90% attendance for modules that have no / little connection to the respective professional qualification</li> </ul> </li> <li>- mastering the English language in at least B1-Level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR)</li> <li>- Basic IT knowledge (at least Office-Software and Internet use) to be able to take part in online courses and finally to run the self-employment</li> <li>- physically fit to handle sport activities and longer distances during practice sessions</li> <li>- application + participating and succeeding in a pre-test on existing relevant knowledge</li> </ul> <p><b>Soft factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- highly motivated in practicing the profession of a nature guide with the above mentioned activities and conditions</li> <li>- genuine interest in nature and nature protection</li> <li>- genuine interest in communication, service orientation, interaction with guests and in guidance</li> <li>- emotionally connected to his/her region and to nature, for being ambassador of the region/ region representative</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target Group</b></p>	<p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• persons with genuine interests/strong motivation in outdoors and nature (who meet the conditions/requirements)</li> <li>• persons, who want to build up a existence in outdoor sector</li> <li>• persons who feel connected to "their" region, for being ambassadors of that particular region or rather a region representative</li> <li>• persons who want to share their knowledge and enthusiasm in a way that engages visitors and residents</li> </ul> <p>Two main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>younger persons</b> who want to take the <b>first educational path</b> as Nature Guide (after high-school diploma) as economic perspective in a rural but economical week region and meet the training program conditions and requirements</li> <li>• persons who would like to use the training as <b>a career reorientation or special further training</b> for professionals : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I) out of former "green profession" (nature conservation, biology, forestry, horticulture, etc.) with at least 3 years vocational experiences in that field; the intention to deal with the topics of tourism, tour guiding, communication, education didactics, group processes, marketing and business must be clearly recognizable</li> <li>II) out of tourism sector with at least 3 years vocational experiences; the intention to deal with the topics of ecology, nature and environmental protection and sustainability must be clearly recognizable</li> <li>III) out of a professional branches which have no connection to nature guiding or nature conservation, but where the persons can verify appropriate private training / further education (e.g. in nature education, wilderness education, etc.) as well as additional practical experiences in tour management and nature conservation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning strategies</b></p>	<p><b>Training methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In all modules, a wide range of learning and teaching strategies and methods is used, such as: practical interactive methods/ workshops, collaborative learning, observations and research in nature, group work/debates, homework/online learning/tutorials, practical and methodical work along lectures, analysis of concrete situations; simulations/role playing, field trips.</li> <li>- Since the heritage interpretation of nature and landscape elements is the key focus of the training, internationally didactic techniques and concepts (e.g. flow learning, coyote-teaching, education for sustainable development) are used</li> <li>- At least 40% of the teaching units take place outside in different environments.</li> <li>- English teaching units should train the participants, so that tours can also be offered to international clients/guests</li> <li>- At least 20% of the training time is carried out independently by the participants, e.g. through homework, tutorials and online learning</li> </ul>

## **DEVIATIONS OF THE GERMAN FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM FROM THE COMMON FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM**

During development of the specification of preconditions for a Nature Guide training and with the first development of the Nature Guide profile in spring / summer 2019 the partners developed common vision of the training with various national adaptations according to the needs and local situation in each partner country. Having this background, the documents already developed (analysis of training, specification of preconditions, draft of the Nature Guide profile) were used to develop a pilot training in Germany that should be tailored specifically to the needs of (future) German Nature Guides in South Baltic area.

Unlike in Poland and Lithuania, Germany already has a number of different training courses at the interface between tour guiding and nature conservation (see analysis training) – according to this, there was no need to reinvent the wheel. But: None of these training courses meet the expectations for training as a professional nature guide, as it has been developed with the common framework curriculum. On the one hand, some trainings are both, very short and thematically rather superficial training. On the other hand, some trainings are very specialized in one direction and important topics affecting the Nature Guide are simply missing. It was obvious that additions and changes to an existing training program would be necessary. In order to ensure that the training providers also take nature conservation standards strictly into account, the blueprint was reduced to certified courses.

Due to its holistic approach in contents and methods, the German team decided to take the training „Certified nature and landscape guide“ (German short form: ZNL) and its structural model as the German blueprint for a comprehensive nature guide training. The ZNL training is administered by the BANU (National Working Group of State-sponsored Environmental Education Institutions in Nature and Environmental Protection) and is therefore in the hands of the environmental authorities. With the development of the common curriculum (with PL and LT) the existing curriculum of the ZNL was significantly expanded and supplemented both structurally and in terms of content. The results can be found in the training draft of the German training framework (see table above).

With regard to the training framework categories “Main focus”, “Main objectives”, “Learning outcomes” and “Main training elements” there is no deviation from the common framework curriculum and the German training program thus is fully in line with the ideas of Lithuania and Poland.

Smaller deviations can be found in the categories “Target group” and “Areas of employment”: The content in both categories is roughly identical to that of the common curriculum, but more closely aligned to the conditions in Germany and therefore presented in a more differentiated manner. This contains specific job opportunities and labor market for Nature Guides as well as potential employers and professional background of target group.

The general expectations towards nature guides, i.e. in addition to the decisive factors of school qualification and professional qualifications, is important to the German project partners and has therefore remained in the national curriculum. The basic attitude and motivation that a person who is interested in a Nature Guide training should have seem very crucial against the background of the great responsibility of the Nature Guides towards nature conservation and should therefore be communicated as target group aspect.

In the categories of “Conditions of training” and “Requirements”, there are greater deviations with regard to:

- Registration before the start of the course (need of a motivation letter and practical experience of school leavers),
- Mandatory practical experience of professionals (at least 3 years, no less),
- The obligation to attend when attending the course (at least 90%, no less) and
- The proportion of English course units (at least 20%, no less).

In summary, it can be said that the framework curriculum, developed jointly with Poland and Lithuania, largely corresponds to the requirements on the German side and deviations of the categories contents are marginal.

## **TRAINING PROGRAM IN GERMANY**

### **Monday, 11.11.19: Introduction and background to nature conservation**

9:00	<b>Welcome and introduction to the training week</b> <i>HOP e.V. and Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.</i>
09:20	<b>The project „Nature Guide Network“ &amp; ZNL as basis for Nature Guides</b> <i>Dr. Kathrin Lippert, Landeslehrstätte des Landesamtes für Umwelt (LUNG MV)</i> <i>Heike Brechler, Natur- und Landschaftsführer Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.</i> <i>HOP e.V./ Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.</i>
10:15	<b>Nature tourism as action framework for Nature Guides I</b> <i>Prof. Dr. Hartmut Rein, University for Sustainable Development Eberswalde (HNEE)</i>
12:00	Lunch break
12:45	<b>Nature tourism as action framework for Nature Guides II</b> <i>Prof. Dr. Hartmut Rein, University for Sustainable Development Eberswalde</i> <i>HOP e.V./ Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.</i>
14:00	<b>Getting to know each other and expectations</b>
15:00	<b>Landscape communication – A communication method for Nature Guides?</b> <i>Lars Fischer, Büro für Landschaftskommunikation Eberswalde</i>

### **Tuesday, 12.11.19: Business, Marketing and law – Part 1**

9:00	<b>Introduction to session „Business, marketing, law“</b> <i>HOP e.V. und Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.</i>
9:30	<b>Nature Guide Offers – Areas of conflict und Networks</b> <i>Martin Kaiser, Nationalparkamt Müritz</i> <i>Bert Balke, Tourismusverband Mecklenburgische Seenplatte e.V.</i>
12:00	Lunch break
12:45	<b>Nature Guide Offers - Guiding and booking processes</b> <i>Antje Enke, Abenteuer Flusslandschaft</i> <i>Frank Götz-Schlingmann, Vorpommersche Dorfstraße e.V.</i>
15:00	<b>Self-employment and product development for Nature Guides I</b> <i>Jan Brockmann, Regio-Ranger®</i>

### **Wednesday, 13.11.19: Business, Marketing and law – Part 2**

9:00	<b>Self-employment and product development for Nature Guides II</b> <i>Jan Brockmann, Regio-Ranger®</i>
12:30	<b>Corporate partnerships</b> <i>Ute Frasa, Industrie- und Handelskammer (IHK) Neubrandenburg</i>
13:00	Lunch break
14:15	<b>Starting your own business, income / funding opportunities, Marketing</b> Fishbowl-Discussion with: <i>Lia Mertens, WITENO GmbH</i> <i>Jan Brockmann, Regio-Ranger®</i> <i>Frank Götz-Schlingmann, Vorpommersche Dorfstraße e.V.</i> <i>Günther Hoffmann, independant Nature Guide</i>
17:00	<b>Evaluation of session “Business, Marketing and law”</b>

**Thursday, 14.11.19: Outdoor activities – Part 1**

9:00	<b>Introduction to session „Outdoor activities“</b> <i>HOP e.V. and Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.</i>
09:15	<b>Experiencing „Wilderness“ – Practical examples and reflection</b> <i>Maika Hoffmann, in natura Naturschule MV</i>
12:30	Lunch break
13:30	<b>Experiencing „Awareness“ – Practical examples and reflection</b> <i>Maika Hoffmann, in natura Naturschule MV</i>
17:15	<b>Evaluation of session Day 1 – Outdoor activities</b>

**Friday, 15.11.19: Outdoor activities – Part 2**

9:00	<b>Experiencing „Cycling“ - Practical examples and reflection</b> <i>Martin Hedtke, Martin's Freunde Zweiradservice</i>
12:30	Lunch break
13:30	<b>Experiencing „Canoeing“ and „Hiking“- Practical examples and reflection</b> <i>Martin Hagemann, Naturreisen MV</i>
17:00	<b>Evaluation of session Day 2 – Outdoor activities</b>

**4.3. TRAINING FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM IN POLAND**

Topic	Description
<b>Main Focus</b>	<p>Aim of the program is to develop knowledge and skills to act as self-employed professional nature guide-interpreter. The course is designed for people who work or want to work as nature guides using interpretation tools and design experience-oriented trips to nature for individuals and groups. The program provides a model of guiding in the nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods by covering following fields:</p> <p>Nature including conservation issues, pressure management, cultural assets of the region, Historical values of the region of Nature guide activity, Methodology, Tourism business Management, Communication tools, Legislation base, Ethics side of nature tourism.</p>
<b>Main Objectives</b>	<p><i>Graduates will be able:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognize customers' expectations and to match the offer to these expectations;</li> <li>- recognize birds and animals habitats and behavior as an good prepared offer base, tracking secrets and will learn how to find the information about local/regional flora and fauna</li> <li>- The training participant will know basic rules of customer service and marketing tools and basics of creation a tourist products.</li> <li>- The graduate will learn about legal and ethical conditions of functioning of the profession of a nature guide</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- practical application of the theory of tourist guiding in the context of the specific nature tourism in the area of Pomerania</li> <li>- to be familiar with nature protection system and state regulations in Poland</li> <li>- to be familiar with Polish tourism laws and nature guiding ethics standards</li> <li>- to be familiar with tourism management and psychology</li> <li>- to be familiar with natural resources and nature tourism routes</li> <li>- to understand ecosystem links and human-nature interaction</li> <li>- to understand the nature, culture, history and geographical conditions of a certain region</li> <li>- knowledge of the basis for providing first aid in circumstances surrounding the practice of field tourism</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to have skills and methods to prevent and minimize risks while on route</li> <li>- skill of adopting visit/tour/offer to specific target group's guests needs</li> <li>- skill of use knowledge of local/regional natural resources /birds and animals habitats and behaviors, tracking secrets and will learn how to find the information about local/regional flora and fauna as an offer</li> </ul> <p><b>Competences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to organize enjoyable, safe and interesting trips to nature in Pomerania Region in Poland</li> <li>- to lead various target groups in line with their expectations</li> <li>- to enhance creativity and innovations into a route</li> <li>- to be aware of responsibility for people and nature during nature guiding</li> <li>- well-developed oral and written communication and interpretation</li> </ul>
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Online application including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I – online interview as an Initial questionnaire;</li> <li>○ II - declaration about the will to take the course min 80%;</li> <li>○ III - declaration of will to participate in SBNGN;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Age criterion – adult + youth from the specialist schools - biology, tourism, environmental protection and volunteers of NGOs with the recommendation of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>Target Group</b>	<p>The training program is addressed to a person interested in nature guiding as a self-employment activity in South Baltic Region. In Poland we offer it to 5 groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- forest administration who want to do nature tourism;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- people living in N2000 areas or areas attractive for development based on natural resources, as Landscape Parks etc.;</li> <li>- people who want to start career as a professional nature guide in region;</li> <li>- specialists, scientists who like to start nature;</li> <li>- youth who are interested in nature tourism.</li> </ul>
<b>Field of Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A nature guide will receive knowledge and tools for self-employment in nature tourism, working as a nature guide / interpreter/ tour leader/ instructor / organizer in nature and outdoor life, nature oriented expedition leader for a travel company or a private group.</li> <li>- She/he will be certified as an official nature guide in certain N2000/landscape parks areas and will hold a quality symbol of SBNG Net.</li> <li>- A nature guide will enter networks with other outdoor guides, associations and outdoor guiding providers locally and internationally.</li> </ul>
<b>Frame of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Duration – six months course started from April 2020.</li> <li>● Number of full hours – 96 hours</li> <li>● Manner of organization – 3 weekend meetings every second month per 16 full hours each + 2 online sessions 2*8 h + 4 days training with expert coach ( 4*8= 32 h)= 96 hours course</li> </ul>
<b>Contents</b>	<p><b>I module: an effective offer, how to create it</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of target groups using the services of natural guides and their expectations.</li> <li>- Photographers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations</li> <li>- Birdwatchers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations</li> <li>- Nature lovers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations</li> <li>- Other potential target groups/ youth groups, retirees groups, participatory education groups/</li> <li>- Acquire the skill of adopting visit/tour/offer to specific target group's guests needs</li> <li>- Knowing ways of creation attractive nature offers/products which will stand out on the European market of nature guides based on ethics and regulation rules</li> </ul> <p><b>II module: Management/Legislation/Ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature policy, legislation, and ethics</li> <li>- Ecotourism, protected areas and guiding</li> <li>- Route planning and trip organizing</li> <li>- Risk prevention and safe guiding</li> <li>- Business of nature tourism</li> <li>- Guiding in nature</li> </ul> <p><b>III module: Interpretation/didactics/methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participatory education as a way of rise awareness</li> <li>- Nature guide's profile and responsibilities</li> <li>- Interpretive strategies and tools</li> <li>- Design and evaluation of interpretive routes</li> <li>- Innovations and creativity being nature guide</li> </ul> <p><b>IV module: Practice outdoors with experts</b></p>
<b>Learning strategies</b>	Focus of the training will be on interpreting nature, applying internationally used techniques and models. Learning and teaching strategies are of interpretative scope: e-learning, practical interactive methods, observations and research in nature, group work, workshops, participatory education, project work, field trips.
<b>Examination</b>	Practical exam: Preparation of one interpretative route in a selected natural place.

## TRAINING PROGRAM IN POLAND

No.	Topics of the classes, description of the content of the training in the area of educational classes	The dimension of classes	
		Theory	Practical
1.	<b>Identification of target groups</b> using the services of natural guides and their expectations.	2	
	Photographers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations	2	
	Birdwatchers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations	2	
	Nature lovers - European (global) market, silhouette, types, determination of expectations	2	
	Other potential target groups	2	
2.	<b>How to find and arrange photographic spots?</b>		
	The art of tracking, learning about the habits of birds and animals.	4	12
	Tools: waiting rooms, off-road car, camouflage	4	6
	Ethics, legal requirements	2	
	Creating a tourism product / offers for photographers	4	4
	<b>How do you find spots for bird-lovers?</b>		
	Tools: telescope, binoculars, bird guides, list of birds	4	6
3.	Ethics, legal requirements	2	
	Creating a tourist product / offer for bird-lovers	4	4
	<b>Nature lovers</b> – specifics interest as butterflies, plants, mushrooms, landscape.....	4	4
	Types of activity	2	
	Ethic legal requirements	4	4
	Creating a tourist product / offer for bird-lovers		
	<b>Sales tools:</b>		4
	Place and product marketing, story telling, e-marketing, branding, networking.	e-learning 4	
	Communication - personal training:		

	- how to crush ice, learn about expectations, how to adapt to expectations, safety and ethics.		
4.	<b>Nature protection</b> Combination of the role of a nature guide with nature protection - how a nature guide can actively engage in activities related to nature conservation - a guide as a guard. Legal requirements, how to report violations of law, cooperation with nature protection institutions and law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organizations.	e-learning 8	8

## CONCLUSIONS

The proposed cross-border Nature Guide training program is developed as a result of commonly developed analysis of existing education schemes, development of preconditions for every country and joint nature guide profile. Also, such training program proposals would not have been developed by constant communication with our associated project partners, project network members and practitioners in nature guiding. As such international training is first of its scope, the partner countries elaborated ideal training program which will be implemented in project partner countries and could be adapted in other regions in Europe. We used results from carefully made analysis of existing education schemes for nature guides training and we could say the training framework is high-aiming because it provides perspectives to adaptations according to target groups and focus of the training in national locations.

Therefore, in our partner countries, national adaptations were made and they were provided in this document. Considering national adaptations, all of them still are focusing on preparation of a professional nature guide with wide range of competences. All trainings frameworks aim at to apply his/her knowledge in nature tourism area and to become self-employed in this business. All the trainings will cover nature specific learning, nature interpretation and business management modules, so this universal combination of knowledge is the key feature, which differ this cross-border framework from other nature guiding vocational trainings. Another common perspective in our international Nature Guide training program is emphasis on providing interpretative-sensational experience while keeping high standards of nature ethics and advocacy for nature protection. Moreover, the training framework suggests that graduates will receive a possible model how to work in nature tourism but his/her success and further expertise will depend on his/her own interest and learning. All training programs' courses will have evaluation criteria on a national level and will follow Quality Assurance Methodology outline, which was developed within the Nature Guide Network project and sets a common basis for the quality standard of international scope for the training program.



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## **WP3 ACTIVITY 3.4. Drafting of the Nature Guides Training Programme for Lithuania**

10<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Klaipėda, Lithuania

Lead Partner:



Project Partners:



Deutsche Umwelthilfe



## INTRODUCTION

This document presents results of Activity 3.4. Drafting of the Nature Guide Training Programme with its best practices, their necessary modifications, adaptations and processing of the determined new developments towards the intended Nature Guide training program in Lithuania. This document has two parts: first presents Definition of the framework of the training course and second presents The Nature Guide Training Programme.

## METHODOLOGY

Drafting the Nature Guide Training Programme was conducted as a continuation of previous Activities 3.1., 3.2. and 3.3. in WP3 in cross-border cooperation with Polish and German partners. The training program was the core element in the whole project in all three countries, but during development of the program we faced different needs in creating a cross-border training program which brought us to our national specifications that differ in length and implementation time but are similar in their principles and scope.

In Lithuania, the background for the training were documents of Activity 3.1., Activity 3.2. and Activity 3.3., were the developed structure was followed and all relevant topics were included into this result. Additional topics were included, like Learning outcomes and learning strategies due to our national specification. In Lithuanian team there were several face-to-face meetings (7th May, 5th June 2019 and 3rd September) of expert group from CSNPA and Klaipėda University to determine the concept of the training and its framework of the program, mainly discussing what topics would be relevant for the training, where the division in three modules and examination procedure appeared. The initial training program was approved by Lithuanian Quality Assurance Committee on 3rd September.

The structure of the program was presented during 3rd partners meeting in May 2019 in Poland and 4th partners meeting in October 2019 in Lithuania during WP3 presentation, and some non-essential modification were made after partners commenting.

## RESULTS

These two tables present development of Nature Guide Training program: the first one presents the background for Nature guides training in Lithuania, and the second one presents the actual planning of the training program with locations, topics and durations, with collaboration with the training organizer, who organized part of the lectures. The definition of the framework has not changed much since the beginning of the training course and the training course managed to keep up to the description and goals of the framework.

### 1. Definition of the framework of the training course

Topic	Description
<b>Main Focus</b>	Aim of the program is to develop knowledge and skills to act as self-employed professional nature guide-interpreter. The course is designed for people who want to work as nature guides using interpretation tools and design experience-oriented trips to nature for individuals and groups. The program provides a model of guiding in the nature and is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach regarding content and methods by covering following fields:  Nature/Culture/History/Interpretation/Methodology/Management/Communication/Legislation/Ethics.
<b>Main Objectives</b>	<i>Graduates will be able:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to offer and provide high quality Nature Guides service on self-employment base with respect for local nature and culture</li> <li>- to interpret local natural resources, landscape, culture and history in changing environment for diverse target audiences</li> <li>- to understand holistic perspective of physical, natural and social environment interactions</li> <li>- to use communicative and interpretative techniques to transmit feeling of deeper connection with nature through senses and values, connecting people to certain place and its uniqueness</li> <li>- to employ tools creating self-sustained business in natural areas, including protected areas and Natura 2000 spots, which would promote nature protection values among public.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to employ experiential learning into guiding practice</li> <li>- to be familiar with nature protection system and state regulations in Lithuania</li> <li>- to be familiar with Lithuanian tourism laws and nature ethics standards</li> <li>- to be familiar with group management and psychology</li> <li>- to be familiar with natural resources and nature tourism routes</li> <li>- to understand ecosystem links and human-nature interaction</li> <li>- to learn broader perspective of Lithuanian natural and abiotic resources</li> <li>- to understand the nature, culture, history and geographical conditions of a certain region</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to have skills and methods to prevent and minimize risks while on route</li> <li>- to use interpretative and improvisational tools for various audiences for a good nature experience</li> <li>- to know methodology for designing and leading an interpretative route</li> <li>- to use rhetorical, interactive and group dynamic tools for being a host, mediator and leader in of group</li> </ul> <p><b>Competences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to organize enjoyable, safe and interesting trips to nature in protected areas and ecologically sensitive places</li> <li>- to lead various target groups in different outdoors conditions</li> <li>- to enhance creativity and innovations into a route</li> <li>- to be aware of responsibility for people and nature when guiding outdoors</li> <li>- well-developed oral and written communication and interpretation</li> <li>- to provide first aid</li> </ul>



<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People completed secondary education</li> <li>• minimum age 18 years</li> <li>• Online application</li> <li>• Knowing at least one foreign language at least B2 level</li> <li>• Ability to attend minimum 80% of the course</li> <li>• ICT literacy</li> <li>• recommendation: physically fit for long distances</li> </ul>
<b>Target Group</b>	<p>Outdoor and nature interested person, who want to build up an existence in outdoor sector. Particularly, the course is dedicated to 4 target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protected areas workers</li> <li>- professional guides</li> <li>- specialists, holding education degree in natural and life sciences,</li> <li>- nature knowledgeable people with non-formal learning in natural and life sciences (for example, local people)</li> </ul>
<b>Field of Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A nature guide will receive knowledge and tools for self-employment in nature tourism, working as a guide / interpreter/ tour leader/ instructor / organizer in nature and outdoor life, nature oriented expedition leader for a travel company or a private group.</li> <li>- Successful graduates will be certified as an official nature guide in certain protected areas and will hold a quality symbol of certain protected areas.</li> <li>- A nature guide will enter networks with other outdoor guides, associations and outdoor guiding providers locally and internationally.</li> </ul>
<b>Frame of Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 210 hours in 15 face-to-face training meetings, starting in the end of September 2019, finishing end of April, and 1 examination meeting in the beginning of May 2020, meetings will take place every second weekend of the month.</li> <li>• Mixture of theory and practice: a large part of the study program takes place in nature and includes practical exercises and the development of experience</li> <li>• Online application to the course</li> <li>• The course will take place in 4 different locations during weekends (2 days)</li> <li>• Most of the course's theory will be uploaded in online system (Moodle)</li> </ul>
<b>Contents</b>	<p><b>I module: Nature/Culture/History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basics of ecology and ecosystems</li> <li>- Natural resources and social uses (flora, fauna, fungi, etc)</li> <li>- Ecology and Recreational resources</li> <li>- Geographical characteristics and geology</li> <li>- Socioeconomic and natural environment interaction</li> <li>- Cultural landscape</li> </ul> <p><b>II module: Management/Legislation/Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nature policy, legislation, and ethics</li> <li>- Guiding methodology and basics</li> <li>- Route planning and trip organizing</li> <li>- Ecotourism, protected areas and guiding</li> <li>- Risk prevention and safe guiding</li> <li>- Marketing and communication</li> <li>- Accounting and finance management</li> </ul> <p><b>III module: Interpretation/Communication/Techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental interpretation and education</li> <li>- Nature guide's profile and responsibilities</li> <li>- Field leadership and rhetoric, communication's basics</li> <li>- Psychology and problem solving in group</li> <li>- Interpretive strategies and tools</li> <li>- Design and evaluation of interpretive routes</li> <li>- Outdoor techniques and tools</li> <li>- Preparing the route and on the route</li> <li>- Innovations and creativity being nature guide</li> </ul> <p><b>IV: individual studying during the course</b> (assignments, literature research, practice outdoors)</p>
<b>Learning strategies</b>	<p>Focus of the training will be on interpreting nature, applying internationally used techniques and models. Learning and teaching strategies are of interpretative scope: practical interactive methods, collaborative learning, observations and research in nature, group work, workshops, practical and methodical work during lectures, analysis of real situations, debates, simulations, project work, field trips.</p>
<b>Examination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of description of the tour (1 page)</li> <li>- Preparation of invitation to the tour (marketing side)</li> <li>- Practical tour in selected area (1 hour)</li> </ul>

The proposed Nature Guide training program framework in Lithuania represents the first of its scope such training and is created for testing with pilot training. The basis for the training are previous findings of other nature guide trainings in Europe analysis and cooperation with our project partners to set common aspects for the cross-border training concept. However, the proposed training framework is an ideal vision of such training, but some aspects might change after the real implementation and testing in practice, and some modifications would be added.

## 2. The Nature Guide Training Programme

### RESULTS

In this table we present an updated version of Lithuanian Nature Guide training program. Every training topic was elaborated according to the needs and vision of the training course for nature guides in line with previously developed documents in cross-country collaboration activities, and in close cooperation with our associated partners and training organizer. The table presents final program of the nature guide training in Lithuania, the way it was implemented:

<i>DATE</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>TOPIC</i>	<i>DURATION</i>
<b>Introduction</b>			
September 21	Curonian Spit National Park	Kick-off meeting: Project presentation, training objectives, outcomes, main tools and team. Main concepts of nature guiding, current situation and perspectives in nature guiding in Lithuania	8 hours
September 22	Curonian Spit National Park	Practical nature guiding tour	6 hours
<b>I module: Nature/culture/history</b>			
October 5	Curonian Spit National Park	Basics of ecosystem ecology. Natural habitats and rare species in coastal areas.	8 hours
October 6	Curonian Spit National Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
October 19	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Coastal and lagoon ecosystems, importance to migration. Theory and practice. Hydrology of the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon.	8 hours
October 20	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
November 9	Curonian Spit National Park	Forest system in Lithuania: basics and practice for nature guide.	8 hours
November 10	Curonian Spit National Park	The coastal biodiversity. Visiting the Marine museum.	6 hours
November 23	Coastal Regional Park	Geology of the Western Lithuania. Practice outdoors.	8 hours
November 24	Coastal Regional Park	Ecology and recreational resources in certain PA. Protected areas and guiding. Guided tour. Cultural landscape.	6 hours
December 7	Curonian Spit National Park	Animal tracking. Theory and practice.	8 hours
December 8	Curonian Spit National Park	Meteorology of the coastland. Visit to weather station.	6 hours
<b>II module: Management/Legislation/Methodology</b>			
January 4	Klaipėda University	Basics of guiding in nature and trip organizing. Guiding legislation.	8 hours
January 5	Klaipėda University	Sustainable tourism. Ecosystems services.	6 hours
January 18	Klaipėda University	Environmental motivation, legislation and historical context.	8 hours
January 19	Klaipėda University	Tourism marketing and communication.	6 hours
February 1	Klaipėda University	Risk prevention and safe guiding, first aid training.	8 hours
February 2	Klaipėda University	Outdoor techniques and tools. Group dynamics.	6 hours
February 15	Klaipėda University	Finances and business management.	8 hours
February 16	Klaipėda University	Nature guide equipment. Practice.	6 hours
<b>III module: Interpretation/Communication/Techniques</b>			
February 31	Curonian Spit National Park	Forest interpretation. Storytelling tool.	8 hours
March 1	Curonian Spit National Park	Introduction into nature interpretation. History, concepts, techniques and tools.	6 hours
March 14	Curonian Spit National Park	Leadership and group management.	8 hours
March 15	Curonian Spit National Park	Communication in nature.	6 hours
March 21	Curonian Spit National Park	Environmental ethics and ethical guiding in nature. Nature observation and species identification.	8 hours
March 22	Curonian Spit National Park	Active tourism. Theory and practical cycling tour.	6 hours

April 4	Coastal Regional Park	Environmental interpretation and education. Nature guide's profile and responsibilities (English language)	8 hours
April 5	Coastal Regional Park	Nature interpretation: models and techniques (English language)	6 hours
April 18	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Designing nature routes	8 hours
April 19	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	Tour leader training	6 hours
<b>Closure</b>			
May 4-9	Curonian Spit National Park, Nemunas Delta Regional Park, Coastal Regional Park and other areas	Practical exam in a prepared route with project team and one expert	1 hour each participant
May 10	Curonian Spit National Park	Closure of the training course with stakeholders, nature guides and journalists, certificates to participants	6 hours

## FINDINGS

**Best practices** during the training course so far were:

- Very good planning and team work in the preparational step.
- Very professional function of Quality management committee who solved some practical training organizing issues.
- Very good communication with the training organizer, who organized and planned carefully some parts of the training course.
- Very clear and well-planned course structure for the participants.
- Majority very motivated participants in the training, who dedicated their 11-weekends time to the training.
- Great function of online learning platform Moodle, which was created and provided by Klaipėda University.
- Well planned course evaluation system in Mentimeter.
- Well-planned modules and topics with leading scientists, nature experts, famous environmentalist and educators that shared their know-how experience, their passion for nature, their methods and findings.
- Well-planned lectures in advance with training organizer and lecturers.
- Well-planned and prepared practical information to participants about training locations, logistics and accommodation possibilities.
- Well planned examination procedure with 3 components of the assignment, that fully demonstrate the learning outcomes of the three training modules: theoretical-scientific, business-organizational and interpretative-communicative.

### Modifications:

Several modifications to the training course could be proposed:

- It would be helpful to have skype interview with applicants because the written application sometimes did not fulfill our expectations with the applicant.
- The course should be dedicated to more specific target group. Selecting 4 target groups was challenging for the training content, lecturers and organizers because participants differed too much in their interests, experience and expectations.
- We recommend having 20 people in a group maximum because for field trips more than 20 is too much.
- The logistics sometimes was too difficult for participants and changing locations for some participants was hard, therefore it would be better to have less places.
- The assessment procedure should be clearer from the very beginning to the participants and all lecturers should give equal value assignments. So far, in the training course there were 8 home assignments and for some participants they were challenging to accomplish because they found them too academic and not applicable to their interests.

### Adaptations:

- We propose to select very specific target group for the training. The course should be rather dedicated only to: 1) professional guides, 2) only to nature science graduates, 3) only to protected areas workers, and 4) only to local people. In this case, the training should be modified in its length and topics, even one-week training would be a suitable option instead of half a year training.
- Some main lectures could be lasting one weekend instead of one day. Many lecturers found it challenging to go deeper into their topic during 8 or 6 hours, and many participants were overloaded with scientific information they were not familiar at all.
- The training course should be more practical than academic, meaning the theory could be explained in combination with practice, which in some lectures was missing because of nature of the lecturers.
- The training program could have several levels when it comes to nature learning, for beginners and advanced participants.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Nature Guide Training in Lithuania, as first pilot training of such scope, set a very high standard for the training, which to the date was successfully achieved. Along with international training framework, together with training course organizer we in Lithuania developed a 15-weekend long training course, inviting 30 well-known nature practitioners and scientists from Lithuania and Norway. The program attracted more than 100 interested people in registration phase and raised interest among public for such training further. This shows growing interest in such profession and we believe we were right on time to provide such training and promote nature guide concept in professional manner. So far the course is not finished, but from current meetings and evaluation from participants, the course reached quality standards and educational level which was outlined in the training framework.

As for the first training of such scope, several modification and adaptations could be made in the future for such training course in order to improve the quality and provide better education outcomes, mainly selecting more specific target group and shortening duration of the training.