

FLAG Factsheet: Business Association of North Kurzeme

“Ziemeļkurzemes biznesa asociācija”



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| Country: | Latvia |
| Region: | Kurzeme |
| Area: | Municipalities of Dundaga, Ventspils, part of Talsi (parishes of Īve, Lube and Valdgale), and Ventspils city |
| Code: | LV202 |
| Operational: | 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming period |

AREA

Description of the area and its main challenges

The Northern Kurzeme FLAG is located in northwest Latvia. The FLAG area is bordered by a 144 km stretch of the Baltic coast, from the parish of Jūrkalne to the Cape of Kolka, and 12 km of the coastline around the Gulf of Riga. The area consists of 17 parishes, one town and one city, Ventspils, which is considered to be one of nine development centres of national significance in Latvia. There are two important fishing ports – Roja and Ventspils.*

The Northern Kurzeme FLAG area is characterized by a very large forest coverage - 65.3%, and very low population density - 5.8 persons per square kilometer, far below the average population density in Latvia. In 2014 the unemployment rate in the area was 7.2 %.

*The area’s most important asset is the Baltic coast, noted for its **natural beauty** and its **fishing potential**.*

*The area also has a very rich **cultural heritage**, including religious architecture from the 16th-19th Century, Baltic German manor buildings, and Suiti (a small catholic community) and Liv (a Finno-Ugric ethnic group) traditions.*

*The coastal area has large beaches, which support many business activities, mostly in the **tourism** and **fisheries** sectors. The most popular holiday destinations are the Jūrkalne Steep coast and the Cape of Kolka. The Northern Kurzeme FLAG area is also characterised by its extensive **forests**, which cover about 71% of the area.*

Challenges:

For a long time (about 50 years during the Soviet occupation), the entire coastal area was closed to the public because of its use for military exercises by the Soviet army, which seriously hampered its economic development by restricting access to the area. This negative impact on the local economy was reinforced

by the military presence leaving behind discarded live ammunition, rocket silos, decaying infrastructure and pollution, as well as useless and mostly outdated fisheries infrastructure.

* In Latvia there are nine cities with the status of *development center of national significance*. In the current planning period most EU financing is going to be invested in these cities.

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| Population: | 19 888 (01.01.2016) |
| Population Density [Inhabitants/ km²]: | 5.7 |
| Surface [area/km²]: | 3 492 km ² |
| Coastal or inland: | Coastal |
| Protected areas: | There are 30 such areas, the most important being: Slītere National Park, Raķupe Valley, Kaļķupe Valley, and Moricsala in Usma Lake. |
| Employment in fisheries: | 893 |
| Fishing: | 199 |
| Aquaculture: | No information available |
| Processing: | 694 |
| Women employment in fisheries: | No information available |

STRATEGY

Short summary of the FLAG strategy

Fishing and tourism are the most important industries in the Northern Kurzeme Partnership area. As identified in the participatory needs analysis of the area, **coastal infrastructure** needs upgrading and fishing and fishing-related tourism services also need to be strengthened. **Infrastructure** improvements are also necessary in order to enhance the quality of life of those working **in fish processing**.

The local development strategy includes the following objectives:

- To promote the development of coastal enterprises and to enhance their competitiveness;
- To promote the value of the coastal environment and to support its conservation and sustainable exploitation;
- To develop and improve public infrastructure in coastal areas and improve access to cultural heritage.

The FLAG will support **coastal enterprises**, helping to improve production processes, marketing, and to encourage new activities. A higher priority will be given to projects that develop an **innovative** product or service.

Support will also be provided for projects that help to overcome the effect of seasonality in the fisheries and tourism sectors.

Tourism is indeed one of the key industries in the area. The FLAG will support initiatives that contribute to the **restoration and protection of the coastal environment** and its possible **integration into coastal recreational and tourism activities**. There will be support for the development of **public infrastructure** aimed at maintaining and making good use of the **sea and coastal heritage**. For example, the creation of recreational and fishing-related infrastructure along the coast, such as the restoration of trestles and boat slips.

As regards sustainable growth, support will also be provided for improving the **energy efficiency** of fish processing facilities and for increasing the use of **renewable energy**, as well as for improving the management of wastewater and surface water drainage.

Finally, aiming to improve the **social inclusion** in the FLAG area a high priority will be given to projects that provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

| Importance of the following objectives for the strategy of your FLAG | Priority (1 is low, 5 is very high) | % of the budget allocated to them in the strategy |
|---|--|--|
| Adding value, creating jobs, and promoting innovation along the fisheries chain | 4 | 10 |
| Supporting diversification | 4 | 10 |
| Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets | 4 | 15 |
| Promoting social wellbeing and cultural heritage | 5 | 65 |
| Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development | - | - |

Project examples and ideas

- Support for fishing tourism, where visitors and tourists get to accompany fishermen to see what their work involves.
- Equipment for smoking and tasting fisheries products.
- Infrastructure for fishing enthusiasts and coastal environmental conservation measures.
- Upgrading of rain and surface drainage systems (nearly all coastal villages are suffering from excess water run-off).

Calls for projects

The deadline for the first call for projects was 13 June 2016. This call included only two of four planned objectives. A second call, focusing on the improvement of infrastructure related to cultural heritage and fishing traditions, will be announced in July 2016. At least two calls for each objective are foreseen before December 2018.

Thematic expertise and cooperation

Type of cooperation projects foreseen

| | |
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| Inter-territorial (within your Member state): | Yes |
| Transnational: | Yes |
| Sea basin: | Yes |
| Budget available for cooperation [€]: | N/A |

PARTNERSHIP

Lead partner or Responsible Legal Entity

Association "Ziemeļkurzemes Biznesa asociācija" (Business Association of North Kurzeme)

Other key actors/organisations in the partnership

The FLAG board (decision-making body) consists of 12 members, but all 56 members of the FLAG are actively involved. Together they represent four municipalities, six fishermen's organisations, 14 businesses, 23 NGOs and nine private individuals.

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| % of public actors (on the decision-making body): | 17 |
| % of fisheries actors: | 33 |
| % of other (non-fisheries) private / NGO sector actors: | 42 |
| % of environmental actors | 8 |
| Number of individuals/organizations in partnership/ general assembly: | 56 |
| Number of individuals on main decision-making body/ board: | 12 |

Links with LEADER or other CLLD groups:

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| FLAG territory is the same as (or overlaps with) one or several CLLD territory/territories | Yes |
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The territory is the same as the LEADER territory and is administered by the same entity. EMFF co-financed projects can be implemented only in Kolka, Tārgale, Vārve, Užava, Jūrkalne parishes and in Ventspils city.

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| FLAG shares its legal structure with a Leader LAG/CLLD group | Yes |
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The territory has one entity (LAG/FLAG) that administers the implementation of single local development strategy co-financed by the EMFF, the EAFRD and a national contribution.

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| FLAG shares certain (how many?) board members with a Leader LAG/CLLD group | Yes |
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The board of the FLAG is also the board of the LAG. There are 4 representatives of the fisheries sector. The board is made up of:

- 2 rep of local authorities;
- 5 NGOs (incl. 2 rep of rural women and 1 rep of youth);
- 5 business (incl. 4 rep of fisheries and 1 rep of agriculture).

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| FLAG and LAG have a common local development strategy (with separate sections for EMFF/ EAFRD/ other ESI funds) | Yes |
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There is one single local development strategy with separate action plans for each EU Fund.

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| FLAG coordinates its work informally with nearby Leader LAG(s) – how? | No |
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| FLAG has formal cooperation with Leader or other CLLD groups | No |
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Budget information

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| Total public budget allocated to the FLAG for 2014-2020 [€]: | 2 319 459.43 |
| EMFF [€]: | 1 971 540. 52 |
| Member State co-financing [€] | 347 918.91 |
| Source of co-financing? (national/ regional/ provincial): | National |
| Multi-funding: (Is your FLAG integrating different funding sources into its strategy?) | Yes (EAFRD – 1 835 449.76 with national co-financing (68%)) |
| If yes, please specify from which funds): | |

| Contact information | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|------------|
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| FLAG website | www.ziemelkurzeme.lv | | |
| Number of contracted staff in FLAG [FTE] | 3 | | |
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| Language information | | | |
| Language | Basic level | Intermediate level | Good level |
| English | | | X |
| German | | | X |
| Latvian | | | X |
| Russian | | X | |