

The overall project aim is to work with existing community-based tourism development plans to identify the development aspirations and needs for each of these communities and incorporate these into a 3D Landscape Theatre tool. In each of the pilot areas the potential for community-based tourism development is mapped out, the tourism potential is assessed objectively, development plans are made and a step-by-step road map is created to help the pilot areas to achieve their objectives. The communities will be engaged with the development and decision making processes. Local communities will have the final say on what kind of development will be implemented and how! In addition the project provides support for these communities to take these development steps in forms of research, capacity building and networking. The different development scenarios will be made more visual by using 3 D modelling of the impacts of the development on the landscape. The process in the pilot areas will be closely monitored and the best practices compiled as a tool, which can be used in enhancing community-based tourism in other locations.

The pilots

All the Comcot pilot areas focus on community-based tourism close to, or on water and shore-lines. The pilot areas include:

Võrtsjärv –region: development of the lake based tourism in the area

Union of Rural Municipalities of Setomaa: development of tourism activities along the route "Seto Külavüü"

Maidla municipality: rehabilitating an old mining area to create a water tourism centre

Lohja region: development of lake centre Porla and lake Lohja Islands

Kymenlaakso: further developing the coastal area and fishing harbour in Virolahti and finding new ways of improving tourism in Kaunissaari Island and the old village center of Pyhtää

The COMCOT-partners

The transnational partnership of the project consists of 8 partners from Estonia and Finland. We are happy to tell you more about COMCOT-activities!

Estonia:

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COMCOT

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for improving the
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A new approaches to rural tourism development - why?

Due to the fragmented ownership of land in Finland and Estonia, support from communities is essential when aiming to provide attractive environments and landscapes for tourism. Traditionally however, tourism development activities have been very trade focused, production orientated and targeted only to SMEs.

Especially in small rural communities **social acceptance of tourism development is nevertheless a key success factor for SMEs.** In order to success-



fully develop a touristic destination, whole communities must be brought together to give their support. When the decisions are made locally, people are more likely to feel "ownership" towards them and sustainability of the activities is more assured.

Local people are at the centre of development processes in community-based tourism. However, they are not often aware of tourists' needs nor what customers in new tourism markets expect in terms of quality and design. Therefore, they can benefit from external discussions and expertise in developing their products.

COMCOT for community-based tourism!

The aim of the COMCOT-project is **to promote community-based sustainable tourism and develop the capacity and networks for local people in order to assure the sustainability of tourism development activities.** In addition the aim is to create an innovative development tool for the use by tourism developers to provide objective information on the tourism potential for 5 pilot areas to support tourism related decision making in these areas.



Grass roots development in the pilot areas - a development tool for wider use!

Project activities can be divided into 3 categories:

- 1) assessing, evaluating and visualizing the tourism potential in the selected pilot regions
- 2) capacity building for key local people and developing their networks
- 3) creating the development tool for wider use and disseminating the results