



IDA-VIRU TOURISM CLUSTER

Keywords: tourism cluster, collaboration

The aim of the project: The Cluster's mission is to support its partners' capability and offer the best tourism service.

Partners: 50 tourism enterprises of different scale and all 8 local municipalities.

Project implementation time: autumn 2008—ongoing

Priority line/Specific objective: The goal of the Tourism Cluster is to make Ida-Virumaa the second most popular tourism destination in Estonia by 2030+.

Context:

Ida-Virumaa is located in the most North-Eastern part of Estonia. It is one of 15 counties in the country and home to approximately 136,000 people. Traditionally seen as an industrial region that supplies the country with its energy, Ida-Virumaa is not usually seen as the first choice cultural tourism destination, but is rather known for its adrenaline-packed adventure tourism. Adventures can be enjoyed underground, on top of a hill, on the water, and on the tops of trees. Ida-Virumaa was also chosen as one of the world's twelve undiscovered treasures at MATKA 2019, the largest tourism fair in the Nordic countries.

Description:

The Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster is run by the Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre (IVEK) and consists of 50 partners, 8 of whom are municipalities and the rest are organisations and enterprises offering tourism service. The aim of the cluster is to introduce Ida-Viru county as a place with multiple opportunities worth discovering and this way to engage new target groups and grow number of visitors to Ida-Virumaa. The main target markets are Estonia, Finland and Russia. The main target groups are families with children (aged 5—12), in Estonia also adult couples and groups of friends.

Based on its innovativeness and know-how the cluster offers a tourism experience that is full of contrasts and the most versatile in Estonia by developing the "Ida/Viru Adventureland" brand. To achieve its goals, the Cluster participates in various tourism projects, collects and shares regional tourism statistics and acts as a mediator and representative in tourism matters between the region and state. The Cluster is constantly developing the common branding concept of the region and organises meetings, workshops, trainings, study trips, marketing (including at fairs and on social media) and competitions (such as "Best Adventure of the Year") for its members, familiarisation trips for journalists from Estonia and abroad, and campaigns that bring together the local community, tourism enterprises and tourists (examples include the annual gastronomy campaign "Taste Adventure" and the "Here's Safe!" certificate given to partners that take appropriate measures against COVID-19). In Summer 2020, the "Invite a Friend for Visit!" campaign where locals could invite friends to Ida-Virumaa, participate together in example activities provided by the Tourism Cluster, and win prizes, received the best branding award from Enterprise Estonia (EAS).

Results:

The Ida-Virumaa Tourism Cluster has put Ida-Virumaa as "Adventure Land" on the tourism map. The Cluster is considered as the best-uniting tourism organisation by the stakeholders and has also received several notable tourism awards in Estonia. In addition to collecting and sharing information in general, the Cluster has proved to be extremely helpful in mediating local issues on a regional and state level during the COVID-19 crisis.

Success factors:



- * Collaboration between public and private sector.
- * Shared vision on Ida-Viru tourism development goals.
- * Motivated and active partners.
- * Progressive participation fees for partners.
- * Specialisation on target markets and groups.
- * Well-developed brand and marketing strategy.
- * Purposefully coordinated activities.
- * Quick crisis response (EU Green Deal, COVID-19).

Limiting factors:

- * Small team.
- * Specialisation on target markets and groups.
- * Restrictions to specialisation in offer due to the variety and large amount of partners.

Applicability and upscaling:

The tourism cluster model can be applied in any area interested in pursuing a joint tourism image. The two main keys to success are motivated partners that are willing to make compromises for a shared vision to unite the cluster and good public relations skills to represent it. It is possible to upscale the model, however, to avoid sacrificing the distinguishing characteristics of each partner, this would require subdivisions and specialisation on different types of tourism.

Others:

Homepage of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster: <https://idaviru.ee/en/>

Description of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster on the homepage of IVEK: <https://ivek.ee/en/about-us/programs/tourism-cluster-e3/>

List of partners (in Estonian): <https://idaviru.ee/klastri-partnerid/>

