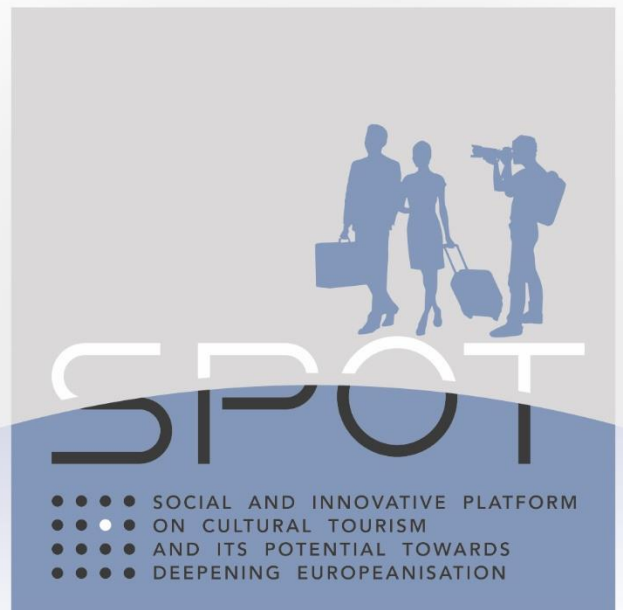


ESTONIA

# Policy Brief

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## Industrial Heritage Tourism in Ida-Virumaa Practice, potential and recommendations

**For local, regional and national policymakers**

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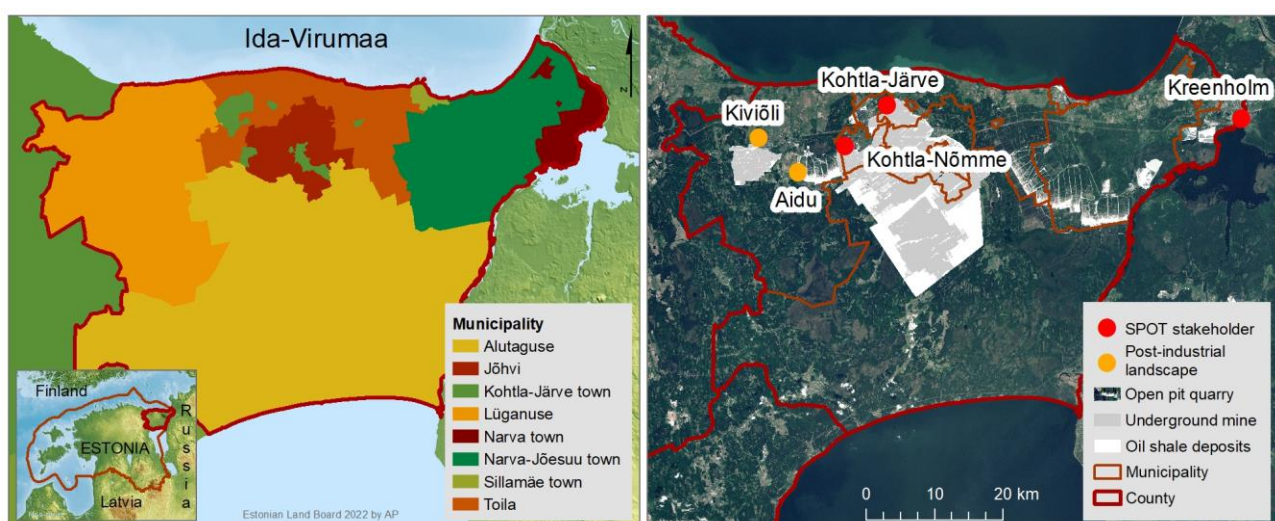
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## Introduction

This document is based on the results of the international Horizon 2020 funded project *Social and Innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and Its Potential Towards Deepening Europeanisation*. Among the 14 European case studies and Israel as the 15th, Estonia is represented by Ida-Virumaa, or the Ida-Viru county. Ida-Virumaa is noteworthy for a range of tangible and intangible heritage which has a controversial position in the society, such as war monuments, Soviet architecture and industrial complexes. Meanwhile, many objects have also been recognised in the national registry of cultural monuments (see: National Heritage Board of Estonia 2009). This policy brief focuses on the large-scale industrial complexes and their surrounding landscapes. Two recently published major research reports, *Adaption of Ida-Virumaa County's Economy and Labor Market to the Reduction of Oil Shale Industry* and *Heritage Tourism in Estonia: Potential and Development Perspectives* suggest that Ida-Virumaa could become the main target of industrial tourism in Estonia. This policy brief assesses this potential, drawing on the practical experiences and suggestions by local entrepreneurs and organisations. It is addressed to stakeholders on different levels and advocates regional cooperation in the development on industrial tourism.

The research featured here was conducted by the Tallinn University working group in the years 2020—2021. In Autumn 2020, surveys on the state of cultural tourism were conducted among tourism entrepreneurs, visitors, and residents in Ida-Virumaa. Next year, interviews were held with various tourism stakeholders in the region. They were identified and listed with the help of the coordinator of Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster (led by Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre). Interviews were also held with the coordinator of Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster and the representatives of Visit Estonia, the national tourism board at Enterprise Estonia. In addition, representatives from the local municipalities were invited to participate, but only the towns of Sillamäe and Narva joined. In total, 16 interviews were held (see the full list below). The meetings were constrained by the COVID-19 lockdown measures, so some of the interviews were carried out in person and others online. While the other conversations provided necessary background information, three interviews were especially insightful in terms of industrial heritage tourism: 1) Kohtla-Järve Oil Shale Museum, 2) Estonian Mining Museum, and 3) OÜ Narva Gate (Kreenholm area and Kreenholm Textile Factory; see map below). The locations of these stakeholders are marked in red on the map below, while other large-scale post-industrial developments are marked in yellow. The interview results were then compared with the development plans of all eight municipalities in Ida-Virumaa.



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# 1. Evidence and Analysis

Industrial objects have a steady place in the local cultural tourism offer, but regional policy documents make no references to industrial heritage nor industrial tourism as a concept. Industrial heritage rather features under the unspecified “cultural” or “historical” heritage.

In **stakeholder interviews**, cultural tourism was defined through places and events which in their unique combinations set people on the move. **Among residents**, next to historical locations and objects, post-industrial complexes and landscapes, such as the Kreenholm area, Kiviõli Adventure Centre, and Estonian Mining Museum dominate the list of places that are deemed the most attractive for tourism in the survey. Events held in those locations have already become established, such as the Station Narva music and urban festival and Narva Opera Days that have made use of the Kreenholm complex, or Mägede Hääl music festival, formerly held on the grounds of the Estonian Mining Museum and as of recent, at Lake Peipus.

As apparent from the **marketing materials** of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster and the **development plans** of the local municipalities, the industrial and post-industrial sites of Kiviõli Adventure Centre, Aidu Water Land, Estonian Mining Museum in Kohtla-Nõmme, Oil Shale Museum in Kohtla-Järve, and the Kreenholm Textile Factory in Narva heavily rely on tangible and intangible industrial heritage and have found their own niche to attract visitors. Nevertheless, most of them are not presented as industrial heritage tourism attractions. Instead, industrial heritage forms an essential part of adventure tourism (Kiviõli Adventure Centre, Aidu Water Land), nature tourism (Alutaguse Hiking Club tours), shock tourism (Avasta Eesti tours), history tourism (Kreenholm area), education (Oil Shale Museum), or edutainment (Estonian Mining Museum) and they often also serve as a backdrop for art(ists), theatre, events, etc.

Some of the key points that stakeholders criticised about cultural tourism also affect industrial (heritage) tourism:

- lack of clear goals and structure;
- scarcity of tourism providers (attractions, accommodation, catering and other services);
- little involvement of cultural institutions;
- too little substantial cooperation between the towns and rural municipalities.

Similarly, proposals that would benefit cultural tourism could also have a positive effect on industrial (heritage) tourism:

- a clear definition of cultural tourism, which would help to develop the field and make its way into statistics and strategies;
- identification of specific sub-focus areas of cultural tourism, such as history, archaeology, industry, etc.

Another controversial topic to tackle are the local people that still remember the working days of the factories. According to some stakeholders, locals are often sceptical towards tourism endeavours in post-industrial areas, as they are convinced that tourism as a service-based sector cannot replace productive industry. Therefore, it is important to clearly communicate the benefits of industrial (heritage) tourism in other aspects, not only financial:

- tourism in general can function as an economic diversifier;
- industrial legacy as heritage can empower local communities that identify themselves with the (former) industry;
- tourism as a cultural exchange and informal education, in (post-)industrial areas especially as an introduction to environmental sustainability and justice.



## 2. Policy Implications and Recommendations

Industrial (heritage) tourism could be one of the easily developed tourism concepts in Estonia, as there are already many independent well-developed offers. The reanimation of large-scale post-industrial spaces in Ida-Virumaa can only take place if industrial heritage and industrial (heritage) tourism are recognised and funded on a state level.

Even though some stakeholders were sceptical about the implementation of development plans, agendas and tourism policies, they generally agreed that representation in such documents is important, especially when applying for funding. **Industrial heritage needs a clear definition to:**

- 1) **gain visibility;**
- 2) **increase thematic collaboration** in the region;
- 3) **develop international networks;**
- 4) **apply for funding** on a regional, national and international level.

On state level, **post-industrial spaces** that combine architecture and history and already draw international attention as elements in global networks, such as Estonian Mining Museum, **should be further promoted.**

In addition to recognising industrial heritage, the state should develop a **coherent strategy for funding** museums that focus on it.

On local level, **mechanisms to engage local people** in industrial tourism should be explored further, such as:

- 1) employing former workers as guides who are encouraged to share their personal stories;
- 2) offering locals with different skillsets volunteer positions at temporary events;
- 3) special offers or reduced prices for residents could help to mitigate the alienation from cultural resources felt by some of them and/or make them value their heritage and present it with pride.



## List of stakeholders interviewed in September and December 2021:

1. Kohtla-Järve Oil Shale Museum, 2.09.2021
2. Sillamäe Town, 3.09.2021
3. Estonian Mining Museum, 13.09.2021
4. Sillamäe Museum, 14.09.2021
5. Independent tourism entrepreneur and guide, active in Sillamäe, 14.09.2021
6. Viru Film Fund, 14.09.2021
7. Jõhvi Concert Hall, 14.09.2021
8. Vaba Lava Theatre Centre in Narva, 14.09.2021
9. OÜ Blueray (VR Toila 1938), 17.09.2021
10. Vaivara Sinimägede AS (Vaivara Blue Hills Museum and Narva-Jõesuu Ethnography Museum), 17.09.2021
11. OÜ Narva Gate (Kreenholm area and Kreenholm Textile Factory), 23.09.2021
12. Narva Art Residency, 23.09.2021
13. Alutaguse Community Centre, 29.09.2021
14. Enterprise Estonia (Visit Estonia)
15. Municipality of Narva, Department for Development and Economy, 7.12.2021
16. Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre (Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster), 15.12.2021



# Project Identity

<b>Project name</b>	Social and innovative Platform on Cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation (SPOT)
<b>Coordinator</b>	Prof. Milada Šťastná, Ph.D. Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic milada.stastna@mendelu.cz
<b>Consortium</b>	Mendel University in Brno, Czech Republic Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany CERS Institute for Regional Studies, Győr, Hungary Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen, Netherlands Tallinn University, Estonia Karl Franzens University of Graz, Austria University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom University of the Aegean, Mitiline, Greece University of Barcelona, Spain University of Verona, Italy University of Wrocław, Poland University of Ljubljana, Slovenia Constantine the Philosopher University, Nitra, Slovakia
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<b>Website and social networks</b>	<a href="http://www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu">www.SPOTprojectH2020.eu</a> fb: @SPOTprojectH2020 twitter: @H2020Spo
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