

GEOSITES project and the experience exchange visit to Finland

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Latvia – Lithuania

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15.01.2026

GEOSITES

The GEOSITES project is co-financed by the Interreg Latvia–Lithuania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2021–2027.

The project's aim is to enhance the protection, management, and sustainable preservation of geological heritage in Latvia and Lithuania.

Project partners -

Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology;
Kurzeme planning region;
Žemaitija National Park directorate

Project implementation period -

March 2025 – February 2027



Main project tasks

» Geological heritage research and mapping

Inventory of onshore and underwater geological sites in Kurzeme (Latvia) and Žemaitija (Lithuania);

» Data collection and classification

Compilation of data from multiple sources and development of criteria for evaluating geological sites;

» GIS tools and interactive mapping

Creation of a unified GIS database and an interactive map of geological objects;

» Underwater geological studies

Research of Baltic Sea shallows and Lake Plateliai, focusing on seabed structures and glacial deposits;

» Education and public engagement

Development of 3D models, digital and tactile tools, and educational activities to promote geological heritage.



Experience exchange visit to Finland



Purpose & Participants

Experience Exchange Visit to Finland
23–26 September 2025 | Lahti, Finland


Purpose: to strengthen knowledge exchange with municipalities and experts on identification, protection and sustainable use of geological heritage, including its integration into territorial planning, nature conservation, environmental education and tourism development.

Participants: 25 specialists from 11 municipalities in Latvia and Lithuania.

Latvia (8): Liepāja City, Dienvidkurzeme, Kuldīga County, Saldus County, Talsi County, Tukums County, Ventspils County, Ventspils City

Lithuania (3): Plungė, Skuodas, Mažeikiai

Profiles: regional and spatial planners, geologists, environmental and nature conservation experts, GIS specialists, municipal development and tourism professionals, researchers and project managers.



Seminar & Presentations

Geosites inventory & classification in Finland

Overview of national geosite inventories and protection programmes (mires, rock outcrops, moraines, coastal and other), including clear classification criteria (international – local value) and a scoring system combining geological, biological and landscape values.

Geosites in Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark

Introduction to the UNESCO Global Geopark model, showing how geosites are used for education, sustainable tourism and local identity, with concrete examples and strong links between geological, natural and cultural heritage.

Establishing and managing protected areas – Lahti & Hollola

Practical municipal experience: how protected sites are selected, approved and managed; cooperation between environmental services, planners and landowners; use of management and use plans, visitor guidance, infrastructure (boardwalks, trails) and state funding instruments to balance protection and recreation.



Site Visits

Linnaistensuo Mire - protected Natura 2000 mire ecosystem.

Lahti Sports Centre & Häränsilmä - urban recreation area with a protected kettle pond.

Tiirismaa Hill & Pirunpesä - rocky gorge and forested hill with high geological value.

Kapatuosia Hillfort & Hollola Church - link between geological formations and cultural heritage.

Vääksy Canal - historic waterway connecting lakes Vesijärvi and Päijänne.

Pulkkilanharju (Päijänne NP) - nationally significant esker ridge and scenic protected landscape.



Next in the Webinar

14:10 - 14:25 | **Inventory of Geological Sites**

Jānis Puga - Kurzeme Planning Region

Comparison of geological site inventories in Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, focusing on classification, governance and practical use.

14:25 - 15:00 | **Nature Conservation Systems**

Madars Burnevics - Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia, Kurzeme Regional Administration

and **Ema Buivydaite - Žemaitija National Park Directorate**

Overview of nature conservation governance models in Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, including national park management.

15:00 - 15:20 | **Geoparks: Is It Possible?**

Ramūnas Lydis - Žemaitija National Park Directorate

Geopark concept, Finnish experience and key considerations for Latvia and Lithuania.

15:20 - 15:30 | **Discussion & Q&A**

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