

## URBANLINKS 2 LANDSCAPE

ONLINE WORKSHOP IN KULDĪGA  
10.-11.09.2020

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- Abstracts of the presentations



## Agenda's essentials

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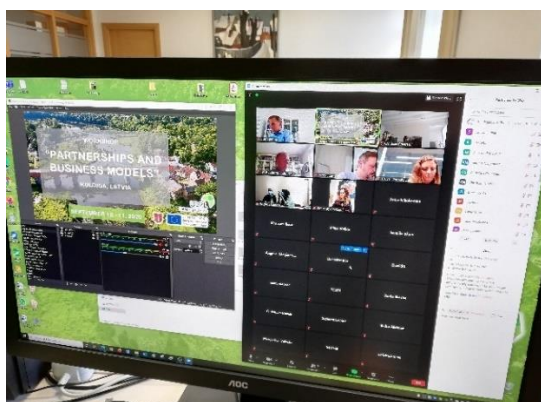
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  - ❖ Martin Wolthaus, Christian Grüssen - New use forms at urban fringes across Europe (Germany)
- **Steering Group Meeting (notes for internal use only)**

## Summary

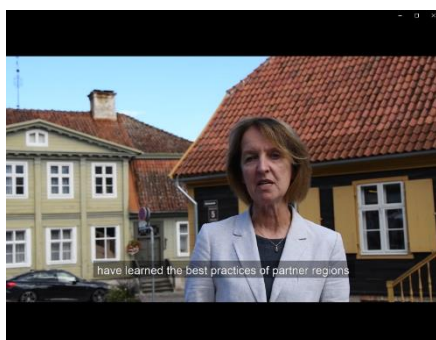
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The theme for the fifth workshop organised within the project “UrbanLinks 2 Landscape” was “Partnerships and Business Models” and it was hosted by Kuldīga District Municipality (Latvia). Due to Covid-19, the workshop was held online with more than 50 participants representing all the partner regions – Germany, Italy, Sweden, Poland, the United Kingdom and Latvia. Kuldīga District Municipality, together with other project partners and their stakeholders demonstrated different kinds of partnerships and business models in their presentations both in Latvia and other regions as well contributed to all major themes covered by UL2L. As Roswitha Arnold, the Lead Partner of UL2L, said in her closing remarks: “We saw eleven presentations today which covered all the key issues of the UL2L project: sustainability, landscape, accessibility to information and landscape, greeneries, business, heritage, climate change, urban spaces, countryside, links, health, ecosystems, cross-border cooperation, policies and planning, co-existence of biodiversity, flood retention, cooperation with the stakeholders and young entrepreneurs. *Interreg Europe* means learning from each other and doing cross-border exchanges. When we think about landscape we think about the future.”

The workshop had three sessions. The first two sessions mainly consisted of the presentations by Kuldīga District Municipality and the regional stakeholders covering the local, regional and national level. In the third session there were also presentations by the partners from Germany and Sweden telling about the elaborated case studies as well as a presentation by a stakeholder from Umbria Region informing about the seven priority topics for the peri-urban landscape in Umbria Region, best practices and strategies.



The virtual workshop was opened by **Inga Bērziņa, Chairperson of Kuldīga District Council** who greeted all the participants from the town with a soul - Kuldīga. Kuldīga is known as a



natural and cultural heritage site with well-preserved old town, Venta Valley as NATURA 2000 site, Ventas Rumba - the widest waterfall, as well as diverse creative developments and activities. The historic centre of Kuldīga is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage Latvian Tentative list and Kuldīga is currently in the process of preparing the nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage List. The municipality pays a great attention to the preservation of the cultural landscape and development of public space. The involvement of citizens, cooperation with entrepreneurs and the non-governmental sector plays an important role in these processes. In the UL2L



project the specialists of the municipality have learned the best practices of partner regions in the planning of urban and green zones, revitalisation of industrial areas, involvement of different social groups and development of ecosystem services.

The welcome speech was followed by a short video about Kuldīga, thus allowing all the participants to have a look at the clay tile roofs, historical buildings, streets, parks and people of Kuldīga.

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September 10, 2020

## Presentations by Kuldīga District Municipality

### Values and management approaches. Kuldīga Old Town in the Venta Valley

*Inta Jansone, Architect of Building Authority, Kuldīga District Municipality*

*Kaspars Rasa, Deputy Head of Kuldīga Development Agency*

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The presenters introduced to the management approaches of Kuldīga District Municipality for the landscape of Kuldīga Old Town in the Venta Valley as a heritage asset. The process includes an effective environmental management, a balanced spatial development and a protection of cultural and historical values, and it is carried out in two

main levels: strategic, such as policy and urban planning, and day-to-day work with citizens as the real owners of the values of the place.

There are key values of urban environments such as well-preserved historical planning structure developed since medieval times, 400 historic buildings, roof landscape, diversity of architectural details (doors, windows etc.). Kuldīga historically developed on the banks of the river Venta, and natural structures were important for the city's history and landscape. The *Natura 2000* site – Venta Valley – overlays the town planning and archaeological monuments. The Venta Valley is an important place for migration and spawning of salmonids, lamprey and other species; freshwaters, slope forests and meadows on the riverbanks are important factors for biodiversity. Besides, the Rumba waterfall is a unique geomorphological monument formed on dolomite structures and a significant part of cultural landscape.

There are several levels of municipal planning documents: the long-term Sustainable Development Strategy 2014-2030, the Development Programme and the Action and Investment Plan. Land use is regulated by the Spatial Plan. The preservation and development of Kuldīga historical core, the urban landscape is a very important priority in these documents. Specific documents such as a local plan for the Old Town and a management plan for the potential UNESCO site are also being elaborated. There are also guidelines for creating a harmonious urban environment, such as parks, squares, street greeneries, street and square coverings, accessibility of environment, advertising design, traditional methods of maintenance and restoration of historic buildings, use of rivers and natural areas, colouring solutions for historic buildings.

The Cultural Heritage Management Model in Kuldīga is based on administrative (legislative framework and building regulation requirements) and support institutions. A support for a practical restoration and building maintenance is provided by the Restoration Centre of Kuldīga. Established in 2010, it contributes to the preservation of authenticity of the cultural



heritage of Kuldīga Old Town for next generations and ensures sustainability and continuity of traditional crafts and methods that are essential for preservation for historical buildings.

It is necessary to promote information about the cultural heritage preservation. A number of brochures about Kuldīga has been published to promote understanding about old-town values in Kuldīga to local people, for example, a brochure about windows, roofs, bridges etc. Competitions for restoration and conservation of historical buildings and improvement of multi-dwelling houses and courtyards in Kuldīga City are organized by municipality to support private initiatives.

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Kuldīga District Municipality is also working on improvement of water quality by cleaning the spawning places in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, State Nature Conservation Agency and inhabitants. A significant part of the public investments, including EU funds is attracted for creation of new walking trails and recreational areas.

A historical landscape and natural beauties are a kind of stage for various artistic activities too. A program for the Artists' Residence is carried out, and the municipality is currently working (in cooperation with Latvian Arts Academy, several European higher educational establishments and the Business Incubator) on establishing a creative cluster in the very centre of Kuldīga.

Working together to create a holistic view to our historical urban landscape and to keep it well preserved, liveable and living is a key objective for Kuldīga District Municipality.

### **Kuldīga on its way to UNESCO World Heritage List**

*Kristīne Duļbinska, Head of Marketing and Public Relations Department, Kuldīga District Municipality*

The historical building ensemble and street network, clay tile roofs, picturesque street perspectives and outstanding nature make the small Latvian town Kuldīga charming and exceptional. Kuldīga presently is in a final stage of preparing its UNESCO World Heritage List nomination file in which Kuldīga will be presented as the best-preserved and last remaining urban testimony displaying a street and plot layout with significant physical remains of architectural fabric and infrastructure dating back to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia.



## River banks: how to achieve a coexistence of biodiversity, recreation and flood retention?

*Elīna Voika, Project Manager of Kuldīga Development Agency*



The case study is about the use of a river in a historical environment. Latvia is crossed by the river Venta, the total length of which is 346 km; 178 km is in the territory of Latvia. The length of the river in the study area is ~6 km. The pilot area covers the valley section of the river Venta in the city of Kuldīga with its bank slopes, terraces and the adjacent main bank. The total study area is ~220 ha. The vast majority of the area of the study is occupied by the nature reserve “Venta Valley” that concentrates its natural values. In addition, the geological and geomorphological nature monument “Waterfall Ventas Rumba” is located in the nature reserve.

There were four main tasks of the case study:

- To prepare a comparative overview of the use of rivers and riverbanks in historical urban areas: situation, problems and solutions. And to evaluate the plans and projects implemented and make proposals for the transfer of experience.
- To research on the importance and use of the Venta river and the riverbanks in Kuldīga as a pilot area, its impact on the urban environment with a detailed analysis of the period from the end of the 19th century to the present.
- To perform assessment of the landscape and ecology of the river Venta and the riverbanks in the area of Kuldīga.
- To develop proposals and recommendations for the development of the river Venta and the riverbanks in the urban environment, balancing biodiversity, recreation and water management aspects.

The study document is structured in two parts: a comparative overview of the use of rivers in historical urban areas, or adjacent to watercourses: situation, problems and solutions in the field of cultural heritage, specially protected nature areas, landscape and geological situation, ecological status. Second part – recommendations for the development of rivers and river banks in the urban environment. The case was elaborated by Kuldīga District Municipality in cooperation with Ltd. Grupa93 and it is available at <https://www.interregeurope.eu/ul2l/>.

## Natural / cultural heritage – a trigger for development of creative initiatives

*Ilze Supe, Head of Kuldīga Artists’ Residence; Project developer – Establishment of Branch of the Art Academy of Latvia in Kuldīga*

A story of Kuldīga Artists’ Residence 2015-2020:

- Motivation for establishing an artists’ residence in Kuldīga.
- Examples of creative projects;
- Expansion from artists’ residence to a new, international master degree study programme in service design;
- Co-working of public, private, NGO and higher education sectors;



- Examples of improved city spaces / town landscapes through creative industries.

### Support of initiatives of inhabitants in Kuldīga District

*Terēza Strauta, Project Coordinator, Kuldīga District Municipality*



The presentation was about how the initiatives of the inhabitants in Kuldīga District are being supported within the project “Let’s Do it by Ourselves”. The area of this project is the territory of Kuldīga District, but this kind of projects are being implemented all over Latvia. The residents know the best what is needed in the place they live, so they can help the authorities to make plans and they can even

carry out these plans, their own ideas by themselves receiving some financial support. People take responsibility of their own environment, of their own quality of life and work together. This team-building activity improves social cohesion. Moreover, the projects are more long-lasting, because they look after the infrastructure, outcomes of the results.

The project started in 2006 by Dutch foundation KNHM. The idea behind it was that it is a quality of life competition. The number of projects has increased from 25 projects per year to about 40 projects per year.

### Presentations by regional stakeholders



#### **The multifaceted assets of landscape in Latvia – policies and planning at different levels**

*Dace Granta, Senior expert of the Spatial Planning Policy Division, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*

Latvia is one of the greenest and less urbanized countries in Europe representing high diversity of species, natural habitats and landscapes. Therefore, the landscape policy is of great importance for Latvia. Approaches to the landscape policy have changed during the last century. There were several periods of different focus of landscape policy and methodologies.

The method of scientific investigation dominated in the first part of the 20th century – studies of landscapes were based on the studies of terrain and vegetation and a result of these studies were identification of different types of landscape.

After incorporation of Latvia in the USSR on the second half of the last century, all land was nationalized and farms were managed as collective farms or kolkhozes. Therefore, the evaluation of landscape served for the purpose of intensification of the agriculture that included the consolidation of small properties and massive drainage campaign. BUT we can be proud - based on landscape studies, the areas with limited economic activity - nature parks, national parks and areas of landscape protection were established.



After the regaining of independence, Latvia launched a site assessment according to criteria, which were agreed in the policy documents of the EU. Therefore, the assessment of sites focused on the inventory of natural habitats with EU importance, but in the same time several international projects were carried out.

A new perspective was opened in Latvia by ratification of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in 2007 and the next step was the development of the Latvia's landscape policy that started in 2008. The Landscape Strategy was elaborated in cooperation with other ministries, planning regions, as well as universities and NGOs and a working group was established.

The Landscape Policy Strategy was approved by the Government of Latvia in the year 2013. Two main priorities were defined in this Strategy:

- Improvement of landscape governance and legislative framework;
- Building of understanding about landscape values and enhancement of education, expert training and research in the field of landscapes.

An assessment report of the landscape policy of Latvia is developed this year. The report includes information related on implementation of ELC at different planning levels. It is very important to understand the situation on each planning level, but the main challenge is the integration of all planning levels. Therefore, we would like to share our experience in this area.

The first example is Landscape Award of Council of Europe (CoE). Since 2010 Latvia has organized 5 national selections for Landscape Award. The second national selection in the year 2014 was won by the town Kuldīga. The next national selection won the project Regeneration of Daugavpils Fortress, which was the best on European level and was granted the Landscape Award of Council of Europe. It was great and a significant contribution for public engagement because the gala event was organised in cooperation with the Council of Europe in Daugavpils town. National selection for Landscape Award of CoE is very important for local municipalities and the general public. But it is important to involve the regional level as well. Therefore, all applications are first evaluated by the planning regions.

The second example is the campaign "A Gift to Latvia – an electronic repository of landscape treasures: Latvia's Landscape Treasures Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" that was developed by the ministry in cooperation with the planning regions and the Latvian National Library in honour of the 100-year anniversary of Latvia.

The activity of citizens was surprising. More than 1000 proposals for landscape treasures were received during the first 2 months. Taking into account the visual and cultural values, landscape experts selected 243 proposals that were submitted for electronic voting on the website of National Library. There were 46 000 votes during 2 months and a dedicated board of landscape experts summarized them and developed a list of 10 treasured landscape values for each of 5 planning regions. In the concluding additional information, photos, memories and wishes for future were collected. During 3 months 959 photos and 72 personal memories about landscape treasures were handed in by citizens. A traveling exhibition and the electronic storage which is also available in English [www.ainavudargumi.lv](http://www.ainavudargumi.lv) were developed.

The described activities are very important for raising awareness of the importance of landscapes for local municipalities and the general public, but the main challenge for us is now the scientific landscape assessment in cooperation with social partners within the framework of the National research programme. Expected results from the landscapes assessment are:

- Identification of «National landscapes»
- Electronic Landscape Atlas
- Recommendations to ministries, planning regions, municipalities.

This assessment will serve as a basis for the National Landscape Policy Plan.

However, the contribution of international projects is very important. Therefore, many thanks to the project UL2L and we look forward to successful cooperation and exchange of experience in the future.

### Cross-border cooperation in the landscape and green infrastructure planning in Latvia and Lithuania: ENGRAVE project

*Evija Ērkške, Project Manager of Zemgale Planning Region*

*Kristīna Veidemane, Chairperson of the Board, Baltic Environmental Forum*



The presentation reflected the multi-institutional collaboration for landscape planning in Zemgale Planning Region which was implemented by the Interreg Latvia-Lithuania cross-border programme project "Enhancement of Green Infrastructure in the Landscape of Lowland Rivers/ ENGRAVE". Within the project, the Stakeholder Panel was created to exchange the views of different parties on landscape and green infrastructure, to carry out capacity building activities on these issues and developed several planning cases in Latvia and Lithuania cross-border area.

### Business incubator – a support instrument for establishing and developing entrepreneurial activity and a community of young entrepreneurs in Kuldīga region

*Rimants Safonovs, Senior Project Manager, Kuldīga Business Incubator*



It's very exciting that new start-ups don't shy away from small towns to start and run a business instead of big cities. And by looking carefully, we can see benefits that only small towns can offer. It's a place where to live and bring up a family. The distance between office, home, kindergarten etc. is 5-7 min drive. Time is the most valuable thing. It's the time that you can spend with your

family, friends and time for yourself. Big cities are unable to compete.

For businesses nowadays there are no borders and there is no such a thing as impossible. Air travel and internet give us all the possibility to be and work from anywhere. That's why there is no need to be in big cities anymore. You can still run a profitable and exportable business from a small town like a Kuldīga. Heritage – old town, history and centuries of stories – help

to build strong brand for local service businesses. All this becomes the new beating heart of towns like Kuldīga. Businesses maintain the old town, invest in repair of premises, creating a new face of Kuldīga, respecting history and writing new stories for the next generation.

### A Story of Success: Holiday House “Raxti”

*Aija Pušilova, Entrepreneur*



It is a real example and a success story of Kuldīga Business Incubator. The hosts returned to their hometown Kuldīga after living abroad for 15 years. They bought and renovated a 132 years old property which was in a very bad condition preserving the original features as much as possible. In total, there are four different accommodations and they can accommodate 18 people. They also

organize different workshops including workshops for children. Joining Kuldīga Business Incubator was very helpful and gave a lot of opportunities.

Holiday house *RAXTI* is located almost in the very heart of Kuldīga. Just a five-minute stroll away from the Kuldīga city centre you can enjoy the magic of a log house which’s decorations were handmade with exceptional love by an artist with Latvian traditions in mind. The holiday house is furnished with furniture made from natural materials preserving the house’s cosy and rustic charm.

## Presentations by partners/stakeholders from other regions

### Two years of good relationship

*Roswitha Arnold, the Senior Project Manager of Rhineland Regional Council and the Lead Partner of UL2L (Germany)*



Roswitha Arnold told her regrets for not being able to meet all the participants personally and by showing pictures from the previous workshops in Sweden, Poland and Italy, reminded what project activities have been done so far. “We are from different countries

with different landscapes and we are working together to find links between urban spaces and a landscape. We could meet personally, see the places and share experiences. We did all of this to prepare our action plans, which had to be finished in May 2020. And we all did it in the very best way!”



## Business models for green spaces in and around cities

*Kajsa Aldman, Sustainable Strategist at Kristianstad municipality (Sweden)*



The purpose of the study was to identify challenges and solutions that would provide entrepreneurs access to recreational areas on public ground, increase ecosystem services and in turn make the areas and services accessible to the public and visitors.

To clarify the purpose and function of the business models, three made-up cases and conceptual scenarios were developed to exemplify the existing challenges.

The conclusion of the study showed a common interest in the topic for the entrepreneurs, municipality and visitors but that accessibility to information, good collaboration and a leading role would be required for practical action.

## 7 priority topics for the peri-urban landscape in Umbria Region, best practices and strategies

*Christian Novak, Architect - external expert of Umbria Region, part of the multidisciplinary group specialized in territorial policies and landscape design (Italy)*



Christian Novak together with Giulia Giacchè (Agronomist) and Angela Magionami (Landscape Architect) has developed a research on the Umbrian peri-urban landscape and identified the priority themes for the peri-urban landscape, as well as best practices and participation processes. The first step was to define and design the Umbrian peri-urban landscape through two

different and convergent approaches: a qualitative approach, centred on landscape elements and perception, and a quantitative approach oriented to the search for measurable elements. The qualitative criteria for defining the peri-urban area perimeter can be summarized as:

- building density
- presence of infrastructure
- functional mix
- compromised areas
- agricultural plains
- administrative boundaries
- boundary between urban and peri-urban areas
- boundary between peri-urban areas and the agricultural or natural landscape.

The quantitative criteria for defining the perimeter of the peri-urban area:

- percentage of soil consumed
- average population density
- urbanization gradients.

The second step was to define the priority issues for developing strategies and involving institutional stakeholders such as:

- Degraded landscapes
- Urban-rural transition
- Green infrastructures and ecological connections
- Historical and archaeological landscapes
- Old towns' accessibility
- Peri-urban agriculture
- Infrastructures and landscapes.

The third step was to select a series of best practices to facilitate interaction with public administrations and stimulate different and more innovative and effective approaches to landscape design. All together around fifty best practices were investigated. A particular attention in the selection process was paid to:

- simple and economic design solutions
- projects to carry out in stages
- projects with low maintenance costs
- projects that involve local stakeholders
- projects able to trigger virtuous economic processes
- innovative and sustainable projects.

Finally, two actions were identified:

**Action 1:** Building a participatory planning process between local authorities, planners and the Region concerning the Nera river cycle-track project.

**Action 2:** Triggering a capacity building process at regional level aimed at addressing the priority topics for Umbrian peri-urban landscapes into urban planning policies.

### Innovative open spaces – Best practice examples

*Martin Wolthaus, UL2L Communication Manager; Christian Grüssen, UL2L Project Manager (Germany)*



Christian Grüssen and Martin Wolthaus introduced the case study by explaining how in the progress of writing the study, the initial title “New use forms at urban fringes across Europe”, has to be replaced by “Innovative open spaces” in order to cover a wider range of good practices and how the study is structured.

From the eleven chapters of the study, five were presented by best practice examples.

From the chapter “CREATING SURPRISING LANDSCAPES” the waste to energy power plant Amager Bakke or CopenHill in Copenhagen (Denmark) is an example how grey infrastructure can be designed in a way to become an attractive site and landmark without compromising the technical functions.

The Hortillonnages in Amiens (France) are a good example for the symbiosis between art and nature and the rise of touristic attraction by this (“LANDSCAPES DESIGNED BY ARTS FOR ARTS”).

The bottom to top approach of the project “Lelijke Plekjes” by the Intercommunal Leiedal (Belgium) included the habitants in a process of city renewal. It is reflecting on the historical change of sites and how modern planning can be inspired by heritage (“DISCOVERING FORGOTTEN HISTORY THANKS TO LANDSCAPES INTERVENTIONS”).

The chapter “CONNECTED TOWNSCAPES AND LANDSCAPES” was illustrated by the example of the Lammasaari Boardwalk in Helsinki (Finland) where a simple, yet beautiful design helped to make a nature reserve accessible for the citizens, while protecting the wild life at the same time in an effective way.

The municipality of Kokkedal (Denmark) combined flood prevention with a whole set of socially and recreational tasks. The participation of many local groups and stakeholders fostered a holistic approach far beyond the technical task of water management (“SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS”).

The last chapter presented was “FLOOD PREVENTION, WATER MANAGEMENT & WETLANDS”. This time the example came from Switzerland, where the River Aire in the Canton of Geneva was renatured, while at the same time its old canal was transformed into a place for leisure time and recreation. This way, the project honoured the 19th century structure as part of the historic development and integrational part of the landscape.

For the authors, the study is useful as an inspirational think book. Only a few of the projects presented in the study are located in the urban fringe or create links between urban areas and the landscape. But all projects, thanks to their innovative and multi-layered approach, show that urban areas and landscapes have a lot of (hidden) values that can be safeguarded and enhanced, raised and communicated thanks to fabrics of buildings and imagination that go far beyond “the normal”.

The whole study, which also includes summaries of the good practice examples identified during the implementation of Phase 1 of the UL2L project so far, is available on the UL2L project website: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/ul2l/>