

## Creating jobs through regional cooperation - a vision for a flagship project in the cross-border natural park Vistynets lake/Krasnolesye/ Rominten forest (2014-2016)

The project's objective is the sustainable development of a transnational cross-border natural park through a networking model, establishing links between municipalities, regional and national authorities, private businesses, ecologists, NGOs and creative sector in Russia (Kaliningrad region), Lithuania and Poland, with possible involvement of all states of the Baltic Sea region.



**At the moment** the communication and cooperation in this part of the common natural territory between RUS, PL and LT is almost non-existent; as a result nature protection, tourism and local communities do not enjoy the possible benefits of the fully realized potential of this unique area.

The level of development of tourism facilities and offers as well as nature protecting conditions in each part differs considerably. The visa regulations such as the necessity of Schengen visas for Russian visitors of the PL and LT parts and Russian visas for non-Russian citizens

together with the lack of border-crossing points as well as additional requirements such as special permissions to enter the parts of the park create considerable obstacles for movement of visitors and local population.

At the same time, there are active stakeholders in each country who have gained experience and capacities to improve the situation and are willing to work together based on a common coordinating platform which can be created through the CBSS initiative to develop the area.

### **Vision:** At the end of a three-year framework project launched in 2014, the visitors to the Vistynets/Rominten Forest area might benefit from:

- An innovative multi-media publication which creates an integrated vision of the area and shows its full natural and cultural diversity and unity. The first edition of such publication is foreseen already in June 2013, by the time of the SEBA conference in Kaliningrad. The publication will be developed based on such as series of interdisciplinary expeditions of researchers and artists which will enable exploring and mapping the park's potential together with the local communities;
- A regular calendar of educational and creative events and attractions (international workshops, summer schools and seminars) with the pinnacle of yearly festival where crafts, nature and culture of each country will be presented. The first festival is planned for summer 2014. a network of trans-border actors (municipalities, regional and national authorities, private businesses, ecologists, NGOs and creative sector) through the series of workshops, summer schools and seminars

- Common tracks and routes connecting culture and nature in all parts of trans-border area;
- Involvement into the activities of sustainable eco-villages (planned by the end of 2016) based on active inclusion of the local population and attraction of specific target tourist audience: ecologically-minded youth, creative sector etc
- A facilitated border-crossing regime

### **The local communities and stakeholders in each country will benefit from:**

- Increased employment and income based on the development of SMEs and cluster centres for nature, crafts, tourism and arts in the park to attract more visitors to the areas
- Intense and improve cross-border contacts with the neighbours, local communities and access to region-wide CBSS and SEBA networks

### **Main stakeholders:**

- Project coordination based in Kaliningrad, through the CBSS Secretariat, in cooperation with the NCM Information office in Kaliningrad
- Local municipalities in RUS (Nesterovsky and Ozersky district), PL (Goldap), LT
- Regional park institutions (Vystynetsky natural park RUS, Park Romintska puszcza PL, Vistycio regional park LT)
- Tourism, forest and international authorities of the regional (i.e. relevant Ministries of Kaliningrad region) and national level
- Local and international NGOs in environmental protection, education and sustainable development
- SMEs in tourism and crafts
- Artist/ creative industries institutions
- Border authorities