

Project:	Knowledge-driven Baltic Cider Production and Branding for Growth and Competitiveness of SMEs
Project ID and acronym:	EE-LV00145 – BALTIC CIDER

1st PROJECT PARTNER MEETING – KICK-OFF MEETING

8-9 July 2024, Institute of Horticulture, Dobele, Latvia

MINUTES



1. Opening of the kick-off meeting

Asnāte Ziemele, the Lead Partner (LP) representative, opened the meeting by welcoming all the participants. This is the first meeting of the Baltic Cider project. Each partner and participant introduced themselves to the group and explained their role in the project. Laura Jessup, the representative of the Estonia-Latvia Programme, welcomed the participants and shared key information regarding project implementation from the Joint Secretariat of the Programme. Following this, the meeting agenda was presented and agreed upon.

2. Status of the Project

Asnāte Ziemele continued the meeting by providing an update on the status of the project:

- all the conditions were approved by the Managing Authority (MA) of the Estonia-Latvia Programme on 3rd July 2024;
- the next step is for all partners to sign the partnership agreement by the latest on 3rd August 2024;
- signing the subsidy contract between LP and MA within 1 month after receiving the signed partnership agreement.

3. Overview of the Project

Asnāte Ziemele briefly described the main project summary, including its objectives, duration, budget, outputs, and partnership (see attached presentation for more details on it).

4. Project work plan

The next part of the meeting was dedicated to a detailed discussion of the project work plan.

Work package 1 - Solution development

Activity 1.1: Analysis of the Terroir

The discussion focused on the analysis of the terroir, scheduled to start in period 1 (months 1-4) and end in period 6 (months 21-24). The required data for the map includes climate or microclimates, soil types, and topography (valleys, elevations). LatHort (PP3) is responsible for conducting soil analysis from 35 apple growing sites in Latvia and Estonia, which includes 10 samples from LatHort gardens, 5 from EMÜ, and 20 from cider producers' gardens. The resulting Baltic Cider Terroir Map for Estonia and Latvia will be produced in print and digital formats, available in Latvian, Estonian, and English.

Activity 1.2. Impact of apple varieties on the taste of cider

This activity, also starting in period 1 (months 1-4) and ending in period 6 (months 21-24), will involve PP3 (LatHort) and PP4 (EMÜ) dividing the chemical analysis responsibilities. Chemical parameters in apples or apple juice, supplied from SMEs, will be analysed, with approximately 76 samples being studied. The results of these analyses will be used for experimental cider batches in the piloting phase.

Work package 2 - WP2 Solution Piloting

Activity 2.1: Know-how Baltic Cider Conference

Scheduled to start in period 4 (months 13-16) and end in period 5 (months 17-20), this conference aims to achieve international recognition for Baltic Cider. The conference will be held in Latvia and will include participants from the Baltic region, as well as international speakers from Nordic and European countries. Attendees will comprise craft cider makers, cider experts, horticulture experts, research institutions, and professionals from the catering sector. The agenda will cover impacts on cider quality, defining the taste of the Baltic Cider brand, and collaboration with the Nordic cider taste brand.

Activity 2.2. Experience Exchange and Training

Starting in period 1 (months 1-4) and ending in period 9 (months 33-36), this activity includes six combined events featuring experience exchange, partner meetings, and SME training. Each event will involve around 15 participants (6 from Estonia, 9 from Latvia). These sessions, held at or near various cideries, will be open to local SMEs, including fruit gardeners and cider makers. Training will focus on topics such as cider apple varieties, growing methods, and marketing integration based on WP1 findings.

Activity 2.3. Piloting

Starting in period 2 (months 5-8) and ending in period 8 (months 29-32), this activity involves piloting experimental cider batches in various regions of Latvia and Estonia. Participating cideries include seven from Latvia and three from Estonia (see attached presentation for more details).

Experimental cider batches will be produced using apples from their own gardens or regular suppliers. The aim is to test how biochemical analysis and terroir factors influence the desirable qualities for the Baltic Cider brand. Results will be shared with peers to inform the development of the Baltic Cider brand definition and guidelines.

Costs for experimental cider production can vary and will be covered up to 500 EUR per cidery, with reimbursement based on contracts with the piloting cideries and their reports. Deliverables include innovation in production and marketing, and improved competitiveness through quality and marketing under the Baltic Cider brand.

WP3 Baltic Cider brand promotion for competitiveness

Activity 3.2. Promotional materials for craft Baltic Cider brand recognition

Starting in period 2 (months 5-8) and ending in period 9 (months 33-36), this activity focuses on developing the Baltic Cider Route. Initially involving 10 cideries offering on-site visits, festivals, and shops or cafes, the route will expand during the project. Visual materials, including the Baltic Cider visual identity and Terroir map posters, will be created. The Baltic Cider Route will have an online section on the LP1 website, available in LV, EE, DE, and EN languages, along with a digital and printed map.

Activity 3.2. Promotional materials for craft Baltic Cider brand recognition

From period 2 (months 5-8) to period 8 (months 29-32), this activity involves creating promotional items (coasters, postcards, packaging) and conducting photo and video sessions in cideries and orchards to capture the cider production process and seasonality. Brand images will showcase the production cycle and use of natural additives, highlighting the unique Baltic taste.

Activity 3.3. Promotional Baltic Cider video

From period 5 (months 17-20) to period 7 (months 25-28), this activity involves creating videos and reels to promote the Baltic Cider brand. The content will highlight the excellence of the Baltic Terroir, stories from craft cider makers, and insights from the piloting phase. Latvian and Estonian

SME cider producers will share their experiences and discuss brand development. The videos will be used in online media and promotional events.

Activity 3.4. Participation in international fairs/events

From period 3 (months 9-12) to period 9 (months 33-36), this activity involves participating in international events such as Ciderworld in Frankfurt, the Sweden Cider Festival, Asturias, NICA in Nordic countries, and CiderCon USA. Ten SME cider producers from Latvia and Estonia will join the project team to promote the Baltic Cider brand at these events.

5. Management of the Project

Iveta Skilina presented project management requirements. Important to note:

- partner meetings, in total 6 meetings (3 in EE and 3 in LV) to monitor progress, set next tasks, address any problems;
- keeping project files, accounting documents with a separate book-keeping code;
- keeping documentation for 5 years from the final payment year-end; state aid recipients for 10 years from the aid grant date;
- 10% budget line flexibility of overspending, otherwise, request for changes through LP;
- request for changes: new/changed activities, budget reallocation exceeds 10%, official name of the partner, etc.;

6. Reporting Requirements

Iveta Skilina presented reporting requirements. Important to note:

- submitting partner and project reports via Jems;
- reporting period is every 4 months, with 9 periods; 1st period: 01.07.2024 - 31.10.2024;
- submitting partner reports within 10 working days after the period ends (1st report by 14.11.2024);
- reporting in English; supporting documents can be in Estonian or Latvian;
- including financial data and activity descriptions to attribute expenditures to specific actions;
- submitting reports even if no costs ("0" costs) are reported.

7. Publicity requirements

Iveta Skilina presented basic publicity requirements:

- partners must prepare and post information about the project in their own webpages; lead partner will draft and share this information;
- A3 poster must be located in a public place. Lead partner will prepare and share it. Partner should put it in a visible place in their premises.
- remember to use logos! Use Interreg logotype, EU emblem, and "Co-funded by the European Union" statement;
- document visibility with photos for reporting;
- follow publicity rules to ensure ERDF funding eligibility (more info on estlat.eu for guidance).

8. Questions and Work Plan for 2024

LatHort (PP3) outlined the proposed tasks for 2024:

- LatHort and EMÜ will select 25+10 potential apple varieties for analysis, agreeing on the analysis protocol, including methods for juice extraction and timing of analysis;
- LatHort and EMÜ will identify 25+10 locations for soil analysis, including orchard sites for cider producers and apple suppliers, and establish protocols for sampling and delivery;
- involved cider producers will prepare juice samples (2 per producer) for analysis, ensuring timely delivery to EMÜ and LatHort laboratories;
- LatHort and EMÜ will select 3 identical apple varieties in Latvia and Estonia for experimental cider production and identify producers ready to prepare small volume experimental ciders over two years.

9. Agreed Tasks:

- Prepare a Google document for cider producers and both institutes to list apple varieties **by 31.07.2024** (responsible partner: LC in cooperation with LatHort).
- Develop a methodology for apple analysis (including the method for juice extraction and the timing of the analysis) **by end of August/beginning of September 2024** (responsible partner: LatHort with EMÜ).

10. Next Meetings:

- Online meeting **on 19 August at 14:00** to discuss the methodology for the chemical analysis of apples.
- The next project partner meeting will be held in Estonia from **12-13 November 2024**.

Minutes prepared by: Iveta Šķiliņa, Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku celotajs"