

**Initiative for the Large Infrastructure Project (LIP) in SEFR Interreg 2021-2027 Programme**  
Submission deadline for the Managing Authority: 31 March 2021.

<b>Title</b> [preliminary working name]: Sustainable development in cruise tourism at Lake Saimaa, Ports and routes investment project connecting with Vyborg and St Petersburg	<b>Action location</b> [country, region]: Finland, South-Savo, South Carelia
<b>Abstract</b> [max. 500 words] <p>1) The key aim of the project: The project will construct and/ or renovate port facilities for passenger cruise purposes on Lake Saimaa. The project will also help remove bottlenecks in inland navigation fairways. In order to enable operation of passenger vessels of up to 90-92m on Lake Saimaa. Access to larger vessels will open through the extension of the locks in Saimaa canal.</p> <p>River and expedition type of cruises are rapidly growing sector of tourism in the world, where operators are looking for opportunities to open new exotic destinations. Discussions with operators have shown that the route connecting St. Petersburg and Lake Saimaa (part marine and part inland waterways) is viewed as the most attractive route with great commercial potential. It combines one of the world's leading cultural destinations with clean and pristine nature of unique lake archipelago of the 4th largest lake in Europe. Development project for new type of cruise products for Lake Saimaa and Gulf of Finland has started. In the project's first stage it is estimated that Lake Saimaa ports need infrastructural development for cruise vessels operation.</p> <p>In the current form, the port infrastructure and fairways on Lake Saimaa are not ready to serve the needs of larger vessels operating a new type of cruise tourism in a sustainable way. The project will invest in high-quality port facilities and services for large cruise ships and their passengers in the ports of Savonlinna, Lappeenranta and Puumala with possible extension of routes to Ristiina (Mikkeli). Together, the ports will provide a platform for networked tourism business ecosystems serving large numbers of cruise tourists and providing them quality experience in an attractive setting. The ports will be designed as a platform for services provided by an extensive network of entrepreneurs and constitute a lively public space inviting visitors and locals to spend time, consume and enjoy new types of services. For cruise tourists, the ports will be designed to offer easily accessible multimodal and sustainable logistics solutions.</p> <p>Facilities for vessels in the ports will enable environmentally friendly handling of waste and provide electricity and essential maintenance, bunkering and ship chandler service as necessary.</p> <p>Participation of municipalities will be confirmed on the basis of expressed interest and participating municipalities will for a consortium for jointly carrying out the project.</p> <p>2) Cross-border impact: The project will reinforce the Finnish side of the cruise ports and routes and create a favourable and attractive environment for the promotion of cruise tourism – including incentives to implementing low-carbon and environmentally friendly solutions. Also, to reduce emissions of ships staying in the ports, electrical connection will be provided. In cooperation with Russian partners in Vyborg and St. Petersburg, the project will create an attractive and uniform infrastructure and concept for developing the Lake Saimaa – St. Petersburg route.</p> <p>3) Expected sustainable and tangible results: The cruise ports, both sides of border, will support tourism from third countries throughout the program area. The project will contribute for sustainable development through facilitating environmentally friendly solutions and boosting visitor economy sector and thus supporting social and economic sustainability. In the planning and implementation,</p>	



<p>special focus will be placed on the total carbon footprint of the operations and promotion of environmentally friendly energy sources &amp; fuels. The overall objective is to offer lower carbon footprint compared to other forms of tourism. Smart solutions to be develop for the network of ports will facilitate the optimization of resource use and minimization of environmental impact. A comprehensive evaluation and monitoring scheme will be part of the value proposition of the product communicated to the customer.</p>	
<p><b>Relevant Policy Objective</b> [X]</p> <p>Smarter Europe [ ] Greener low-carbon Europe [x ] More connected Europe [x ]</p> <p>If proposed more than one or other, not listed, justify: The overall objective is to offer lower carbon footprint compared to other forms of tourism.</p>	
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<p><b>Name of the main partner</b> [in partnering country]:</p>	<p><b>Contact</b> [name and e-mail]:</p>
<p><b>Total Preliminary Budget</b> [€]: 15 M€</p>	<p><b>Preliminary duration</b> [months]:</p>