

Press release 15.12.2021

- Invitation to the Closing Seminar 16.12.2021

One destination - two distinct experiences ST. PETERSBURG SAIMA TRAVEL CORRIDOR

The three-year St. Petersburg - Saimaa Lakeland Travel Corridor project ("Corridor") is nearing completion. Travel corridor final seminar from 16.12. 10 am - 4 pm at Sokos Hotel Savonlinna Seurahuone. The event can also be informed. The event will be streamed.

The aim of the Travel Corridor project has been to develop new tourism offerings and co-operation between Saimaa, the Leningrad region and St. Petersburg, combining two different, popular travel destinations into one travel destination. During the project, co-operation has taken place in tourism marketing, product development and sales. The purpose of the Saimaa-St. Petersburg tourist corridor project has been to increase the awareness of both tour operators and tourists about the possibility of connecting these destinations in cross-border tourism. The common brand highlights the region's special culture, traditions, events and way of life on the Finnish-Russian border. New tourists to St. Petersburg and Lake Saimaa region are especially attracted from Central Europe.

The closeness of St. Petersburg and the free electronic visa, e-visa, are a major attraction for the Lake Saimaa region in the European tourism market. There are several tour operators in the Saimaa region that organize trips from Finland to Russia. The Saimaa – St. Petersburg Travel Corridor project has contributed to the concrete utilization of an important distinguishing factor for the Saimaa region.

As a result of the project, e.g. product manual for international tour operators, a joint brochure, travel packages tailored for Europeans with tour operators, various experience products, videos, a virtual tour of Imatrankoski, a common map, information boards for the Leningrad Oblast and a common aggregation website (travelcorridor.info). The cooperation will continue after the project.

The integration of St. Petersburg and Lake Saimaa into Travel packages has aroused great interest in international tour operators and the media. The latest media group to visit the region in November was a group of Italian journalists, who were convinced of the potential of Lake Saimaa and St. Petersburg. The travel packages created during the project (Voigt Travel, Fintouring, Saimaa Travel) will go on sale next year's summer season.

The Covid19 situation has brought its own challenges to actions on the project. For example FAM trips to tour operators and the media have been organized to a very limited extent. International tour operator workshops have also been held online. The border between Finland and Russia has also been closed, so it has not been possible to test productised travel packages in practice.

It is hoped that the borders can be opened by next summer, when international tourism can begin again. We believe that the Saimaa region will be an attractive destination for European tourists.

The project managed by Savonlinnan Hankekehitys Oy will end at the end of 2021. Imatra, Lappeenranta, Mikkeli and Savonlinna, who together form the Lake Saimaa Purest Finland marketing consortium, have been involved in the co-operation from the Saimaa region. Russia includes St. Petersburg and the Leningrad regions.

The project has received funding from the EU's South-East Finland - Russia 2014-2020 co-operation program.

The project will provide seminar participants with lunch and coffee. Leave your information via the link below: <https://forms.gle/CrRG8H6E5Z125YnC6>.

Behind the link you will also find the program of the day.

The seminar will be streamed, so online participation is also an option. A link to registrants will be sent separately before the seminar.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:



Webpage: www.travelcorridor.info (under construction)

Product Manual: Corridor-Manual-2021_final.pdf (travelcorridor.info)

More information about the project: <https://elinkeinopalvelut.fi/hanke/st-petersburg-saimaa-lakeland-travel-corridor/>