

### The development of new trans-border water routes in the South-East Baltic: methodology and practice

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THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF NEW TRANS-BORDER  
WATER ROUTES  
IN THE SOUTH-EAST  
BALTIC: METHODOLOGY  
AND PRACTICE

*E. Kropinova*\*

*A. Anokhin*\*



*This article offers an integrative approach to the development of trans-border water routes. Route development is analysed in the context of system approach as integration of geographical, climatic, meaning-related, infrastructural, and marketing components. The authors analyse the Russian and European approaches to route development. The article focuses on the institutional environment and tourist and recreational resources necessary for water route development. Special attention is paid to the activity aspect of tourist resources. At the same time, the development of all routes included an analysis of physical geographical, technological, infrastructural, economic, political, and social aspects. The case of water routes developed in the framework of the Crossroads 2.0 international project is used to describe the practical implementation of the theoretical assumptions. The work also tests the methodology of point rating for objects that can be potentially included in the route. The creation of trans-border water routes is presented as an innovative technology of identifying a territory's potential and its further development. The authors stress the trans-border nature of water routes is their essential characteristic based on the natural properties of water routes.*

**Key words:** spatial organisation of tourism, water tourism; infrastructure; international cooperation, methodology for evaluating recreational potential, South-East Baltic, innovations in tourism

Due to a number of factors, special attention in Russian research literature is paid to the development of tourist routes. Firstly, routes represent an integral part of any journey. Therefore, travel itineraries are offered as an aid to travel arrangements. Itineraries that meet tourists' needs can be obtained from tourist information centres, regional and municipal authorities and travel

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agencies, focusing mainly on inbound tourism. In this context, itineraries are considered to be a tourist product offered to consumers in its finished form. Secondly, experts elaborated itinerary development technologies. Thus in each case, the itinerary design specifics depends on the specialisation of people preparing it. Specialists in education wrote a number of research papers related to the educational aspect of designing tourist routes [7; 8]. Special focus is put on the emotional component, which is often related to history. There are also culture-related thematic tourist routes. For example, an integral part of a tourist route preparation is an attempt to form concepts facilitating the perception of folk culture in the northern regions (Khanty-Mansiysk). Other important factors taken into account in the preparation of the tourist route are specificity of the region, the selection of a means of transport, e. g. river vessel, etc. 'A tourist route is a kind of consumption scenario. Transformation of the region's tourist potential into a prospective and sought-after tourist offer (product) involves the creation of certain conditions on the route', says N. Garin, head of a group of young researchers. They propose to use the scenario planning method as a primary method of research in the tourist route design. It allows researchers 'to arrange elements of a tourist route as a single integrated system' [8]. In this context, a scenario means a certain sequence of actions in the preparation of a tourist route, which takes into account the needs of clients. The source base (chronology) underlies the method of the organisation of a tourist route in the preparation of the proposed guided tour, e. g. 'Pushkin, The Last Duel: How It Was' by E. I. Lelina et al. [22].

Historians believe that the fundamental principle in the formation of a tourist route is history of the place. The relevance of using historical and ethnographic material as a fundamental principle of a tourist route is described in the work of Professor V. S. Grigoriev [9]. Researchers of engineering professions consider other aspects as being important, i. e. technical aspects — selection of a means of transport depending on the route, the brand of a tourist bus [23], or a cruise ship [5].

In fact, procedural aspects of a tourist route development are most fully represented in educational materials and guidebooks for tour operators [6; 12; 15]. However, they are technology-savvy, multi-purpose and mainly focus on the generation of a package of services. With regard to the technology of creating a tourist route itself, it usually remains outside detailed consideration.

Tourist routes are often viewed as a way of developing a tourist and recreational system. For example, S. A. Sangadzhieva et al. in order to develop the tourist and recreational sector in the Republic of Kalmykia, propose a number of activities aimed at organising new routes, e. g. a specific travel route within the Tselinny district, which is part of the Silk Road. When elaborating a tourist route it is important to carefully select and include historical and cultural heritage in travel itineraries, make arrangements for visiting places of public recreation, as well as include specially protected areas in tourist itineraries as important landmarks [27]. L. M. Rodionova and A. Y. Trushkova believe that it is necessary to create a travel company spe-

cialising in the domestic tourism offering a wide variety of activities in the Orenburg region [26, p. 255]. According to researchers, tourist routes provide an incentive to the development of rural areas [28; 30].

Studies performed by the Lithuanian (E. Spiriyavas et al.) and Polish (T. Palmovsky, Ya. Zaucha, V. Mikhalsky et al.) researchers focus on cross-border cooperation (including the tourism sector) [32; 33; 29].

The authors of the article considered the development of cross-border tourist water routes as an innovative approach to the identification of areas having certain tourist potential [21] (see Fig. 1). There are several types of potential. The hidden potential of an area is the aggregate of its natural and other resources. The identified potential can be defined as knowledge of the geographic and anthropogenic features of the area. The identified and hidden potentials can be called the ‘area DNA code’. In this case, the cognitive component (the index system, characteristics and their structure) as well as the axiological component of the aggregate potential are most important. The utilised potential is the third type of potential each area has. The correlation between the three types of potentials is given below.

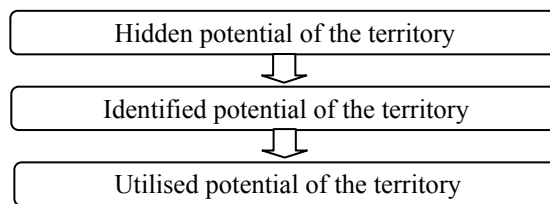


Fig. 1. Area potential development technology

Cross-border nature of water routes is an essential feature based on the fact that rivers may run across state borders. This feature is fully taken into account in the documents of the international Russian-Polish-Lithuanian project ‘Crossroads 2.0’, ‘Lagoons as Crossroads for Tourism and Interactions of Peoples of South-Eastern Baltic, from the History to Present’, which was launched in November 2012. The I. Kant Baltic Federal University is the lead project partner. In total, the project involves 13 partners including tourism administrations, education institutions and museums of the partner countries. Water tourism development is one of the priorities of the ‘Crossroads 2.0’ project area covering two lagoons — the Curonian Lagoon (jointly used by Russia and Lithuania) and the Kaliningrad/Vistula Lagoon (jointly used by Russia and Poland). Among 39 project activities, three yachting routes and one canoeing route were developed. Active water tourism is very well developed in the inland waters of Poland and, to a lesser extent, in the rivers of the Kaliningrad region and Lithuania. For the purposes of this project, it was necessary not only to develop routes, based on the geographical, historical, cultural, environmental and other aspects, but also to make a detailed study of the rivers and canals, as well as the surrounding area. Three expeditions were organized to perform the task.

The project included such water bodies as the Baltic Sea, the Curonian and Kaliningrad/Vistula Lagoon, the Kaliningrad region's inland waterways (the Kaliningrad Sea Channel, the Pregolya, Lava, Deima and Matrosovka rivers as well as rivers and canals of the eastern coast of the Curonian Lagoon located on polder areas).

The most important substantive characteristic of water routes is their consistency and resilience to external changes. A water route is in fact a part of cultural and historical heritage because waterways have changed in the history of civilisation least of all.

The best example is route E40 along the inland waterways of the Kaliningrad region. Along this route one can find modern cities and earlier settlements and castles that arose in the area in XIII-XIV centuries. Thus, almost any water route has a *historical and cultural potential* as a combination of coastal architectural sites as well as places that were once the territory of the medieval towns, trade settlements and ancient settlements of peoples. On most water routes, there are various hydraulic structures; in the studied area there are locks, the main function of which was to ensure the passage of vessels and to generate power (hydropower plants, water mills etc.).

The water route described above can be identified as being a special (*hydro engineering*) part of the historical and cultural potential. This subsection may include dams and pumping stations on polder lands, hydroelectric dams, locks, canals, etc.

Another important aspect of any water route is its *environmental potential*. Riverbanks in the Kaliningrad region are often swamped due to their low-level location; they have dense vegetation and are poorly developed [16]. Cities and industrial facilities do not 'gravitate' towards rivers thus leading to the creation of many water bodies around the 'buffer area', in which the human presence is minimal. This forms the ecological potential of coastal areas — a set of biogeocenoses formed on soils with normal or excessive moisture under the conditions minimising the impact of anthropogenic factors and characterised by the presence of rare species of plants and animals.

From the point of view of water tourism, biocenoses have unique characteristics. Land access to them is essentially limited. Therefore, it would be most logical to work on water routes. It is important not to overlook the cognitive component of the ecological potential, i. e. knowledge of the plant and animal species and the aesthetic characteristics of each species in different periods of life cycle, e. g., the blooming of irises and water lilies in coastal areas in the first half of June, nesting and other stages of the life cycle of rare birds etc.

A third aspect of the tourist value of water routes is directly connected with the activities of tourists themselves. We would like to refer to it as the *activity potential*. Even if there are no historical and cultural sites or the ecological potential, tourists can be engaged in certain activities. It may be animation, bathing, socializing, contemplation, boating or yachting.

We will consider it to be optimal if all these different potentials are effectively used in order to achieve the synergy effect (see Fig. 2).

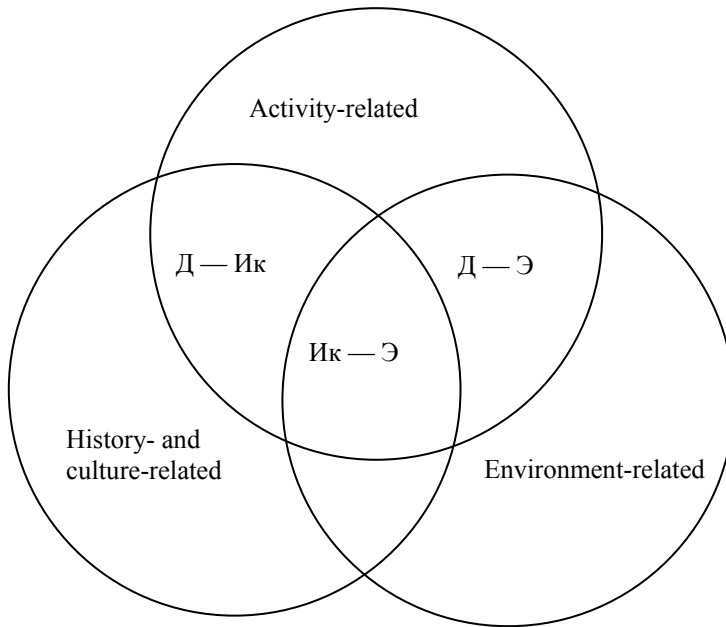


Fig. 2. Model of the synergy effect from the history- and culture-, environment- and activity-related potential of the water tourist route

As it can be seen in Figure 2, at the intersection of the historical, cultural and environmental components there is an area that can represent the formation of new biogeocenoses. An intersection of the areas of the activity and the historical and cultural potentials can be implemented in the form of a regular tour or an adventure game based on historical and cultural heritage. Fishing, spearfishing, amateur or professional photography are at the intersection of the activity and the ecological potentials.

The project has produced four cross-border routes, a brief description of which is given below.

*Water route 1* is designed for motor boats and yachts.

Individual parts of the route taking into account the constraints (bridges) can be used by both sail yachts and motor boats. The water route is shown in Figure 3. The route may start from several ports located in the waters of the Vistula Lagoon: Elblag (Frombork) or Krynica Morska — Krasnoflotskoye (border crossing) — the Balga castle — the Brandenburg castle (Ushakovo village) — Kaliningrad — Ushakovo village — Gvardeisk — Polessk — Curonian Spit — Rybachy village (border crossing) — the river Neman estuary — Klaipeda. The specified itinerary can be worked in the opposite direction, from Klaipeda to Polish cities on the coast of the Vistula Lagoon.



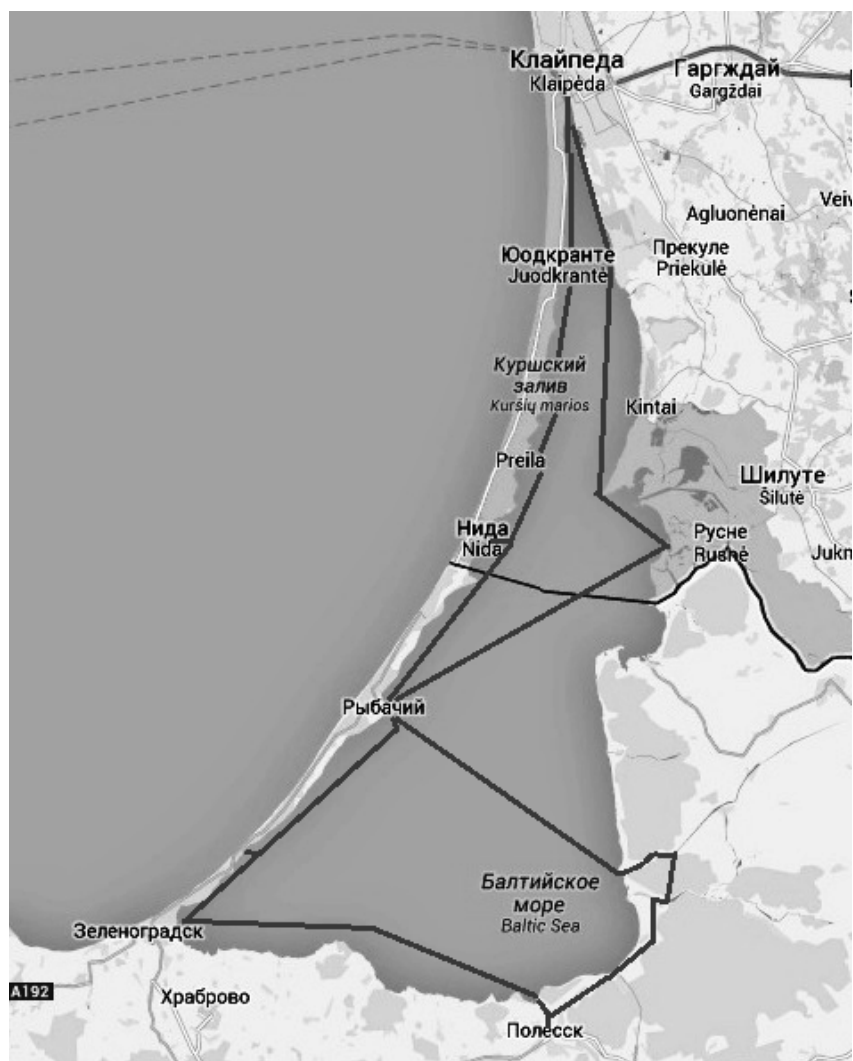


Fig. 4. Yacht route 2

*Water route 3* is designed primarily for sailing yachts as it allows tourists to go from Lithuania to Poland without any restriction in terms of the height of the yacht mast. As it can be seen in Figure 5, the water route can be organized in several ways. The Polish towns of Elblag, Frombork, Krynica Morska (when moving on the Vistula Lagoon) and Gdansk (when moving on the Gulf of Gdansk Bay of the Baltic Sea) can serve as a starting point. Currently, the route can go along the main waterway of the Vistula Lagoon or the Gulf of Gdansk.

Thus, we can propose the following route — Krynica Morska (Elblag, Gdansk) — the Vistula Lagoon (the Baltic Sea) — Baltiysk (border crossing) — the town of Yantarny — the town of Pionersky (border crossing) — Klaipėda.



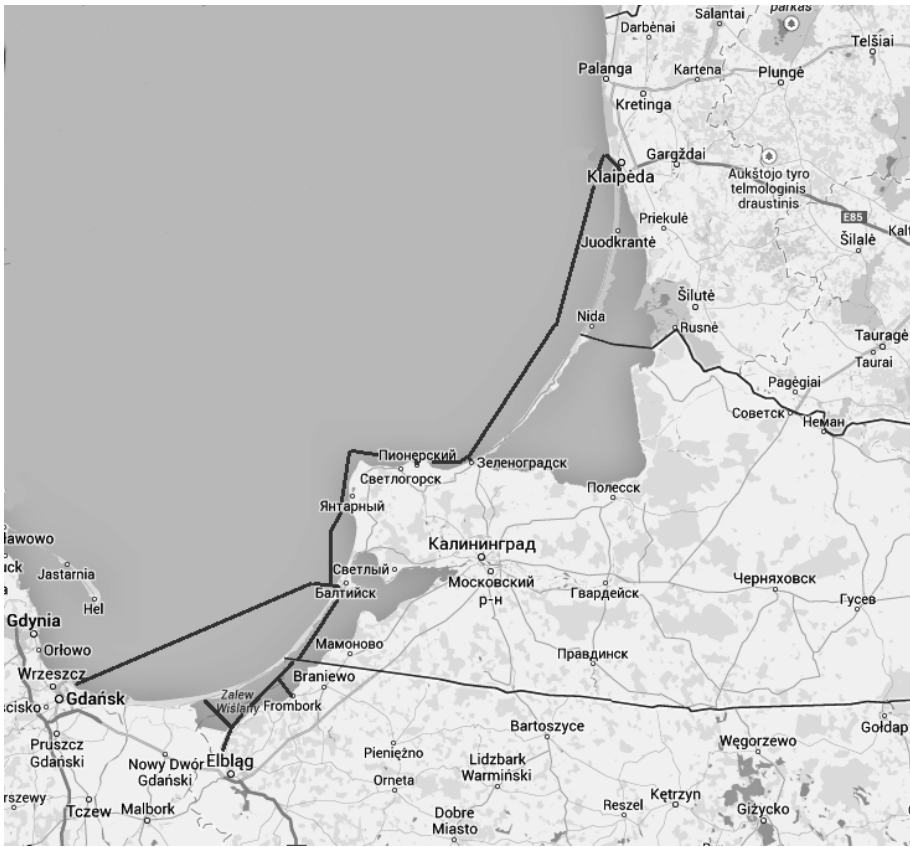


Fig. 5. Water route 3

*Water route 4* is designed for canoeing. The route is divided into stages, each of which has a direction:

Stage 1. Olsztyn — the town of Dobre Miasto — the town of Lidzbark Warminski — village Bartoszyce — border crossing — the town of Pravdinsk — Kurortnoye village — Druzhba village — Znamensk village — the town of Gvardeisk.

Stage 2. the town of Gvardeisk — the town of Polessk — Polessk channel — Malaya Matrosovka village.

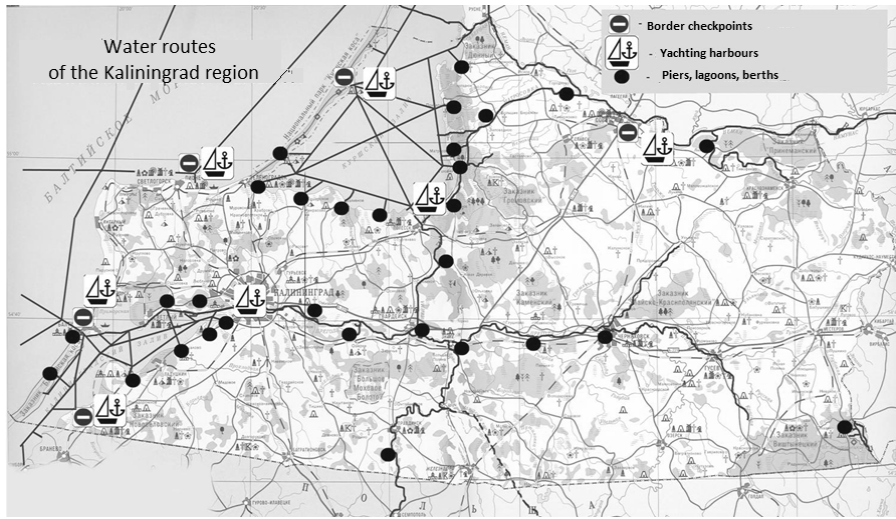
Stage 3. Leniskoye village — the river Matrosovka — Malaya Matrosovka village.

Stage 4. By road: Malaya Matrosovka village — the town of Sovetsk (border crossing) — settlement Gargzhdai village.

Stage 5. Gargzhdai village — the river Miniya — Rusne island.

Crossing the border is an essential point for cross-border water routes. Currently, the Russian Federation border is crossed by a river at the checkpoint 'Bagrationovsk — Bezledy'

All the above-mentioned routes take into account the existing and future water infrastructure development projects, as shown in Figure 6.



Yacht marinas:  
Pionersky, Baltiysk, Kaliningrad,  
Krasnoflotskoye, Polessk, Rybachy

Harbours:  
of the regional yacht club, Vzmorye, Gvardeisk,  
Zalivino, Ushakovo, Zalivnoye, Zelenogradsk,  
Morskoye, Sovetsk

Fig. 6. Piers on the Kaliningrad region's water routes  
(from the draft Water Tourism Development Concept up to 2020,  
prepared by S. Zhadobko and commissioned by the Ministry of Infrastructure  
of the Kaliningrad region, 2011)

Figure 6 shows piers on the canoeing route that will be built in the town of Pravdinsk, Znamensk, the town of Gvardeisk, Sosnovka village, the town of Polessk, the town of Malaya Matrosovka, Matrosovo, Zapovednoye and Leninskoye. In our opinion, it is also advisable to plan the construction of other canoe piers, e.g. in the villages of Kurortnoye and Druzhba. This is necessary for giving tourists a better chance to see the existing attractions, landmarks and fully enjoy the identified potential areas.

For each of the offered routes we identified synergy interaction aspects illustrated in Figure 2. The content of the synergy aspects is presented in Table 1. We used the systematisation method proposed for recreational activities by A. Zorin for the analysis of the content. According to the information presented in the table, all kinds of recreation can be defined as individual elementary recreational classes (ERC) grouped according to the type of recreational activities (TRA). As part of the holiday programme individual ERCs of different TRA are formed according to mutually reinforcing feature into recreational activity cycles (RAC).

As part of the *historical-and-cultural-activity synergy area* routes 1, 2 and 3, we have identified the TRA  $\beta_{14}$ ,  $\beta_{17}$ ,  $\beta_{22}$ ,  $\beta_{23}$ ,  $\beta_{24}$ . Route 1 includes tours to such attractions as the Balga and Brandenburg castles, the

cities of Kaliningrad, Gvardeisk and Polesk, bus tours to the Curonian Spit, the towns of Svetlogorsk, Yantarny and others. Visiting museums (all museums of Kaliningrad, the Baltic Navy Museum in Baltiysk) and the museum in the Labiau castle (Polesk).

Table 1

Route	History-culture-activity-related	History-culture-environment-related	Activity-environment-related
No 1, 2, 3	β14* — socialising, β17 — shopping, β22 — bus tours, β23 — walking excursions, β24 — visiting museums	The content of the tour material in terms of the formation of anthropogenic landscapes	β1 — bathing, β12 — walking, β27 — fishing, β33 — cruises, β34 — boat tours, β35 — diving, β36 — yachting, β52 — intense tourism
No 4	β14 — socialising, β23 — walking excursions, β24 — visiting museums	The content of the tour material on hydraulic structures in the beds of rivers and channels	β1 — bathing, β11 — walking holiday, β12 — walk, β26 — picking mushrooms and berries, β27 — fishing, β29 — harvesting, β39 — Robinson-life, β52 — intensive tourism

*Source:* compiled by the author on the basis on the classification of recreational activities designed by A. Zorin [14].

Route 2 offers a tour of the Curonian Spit showing the natural and anthropogenic landscape, Zelenogradsk, bus tours to the city of Kaliningrad, Svetlogorsk, Yantarny and others, and visiting museums (museums Zelenogradsk, the Curonian Spit and the museum in the Labiau castle (Polesk).

Route 3 is designed for tours to the towns of Baltiysk, Yantarny, Svetlogorsk, Pionersky and Zelenogradsk, bus tours to Kaliningrad and the Curonian Spit, visiting museums in these towns and on the Curonian Spit. The ‘socialising’ and ‘shopping’ TRA are optional, as they complement the main purpose and experience of the tour [3].

As part of the *historical-cultural and environmental synergistic area* of Route 1 we identified the content of the tour to the Curonian/Vistula Spits, the lagoons of the town of Baltiysk and Nasypnoy island as their landscape formation results from human activities.

Route 2: the tour includes the Curonian Spit as a unique natural and anthropogenic landscape, the history of the creation of the canals and polder lands on the eastern coast of the Curonian Lagoon.

\* This table and the following ones present types of recreational activities offered by A. Zorin.

Route 3: the tour offers visits to the Sambia Peninsula, Svetlogorsk as a spa resort with park plants of rare species, and the park in the town of Yantarny.

As part of the *activity- and environment-based synergy area* of Routes 1, 2 and 3, we identified the following TRA:  $\beta 1$ ,  $\beta 12$ ,  $\beta 27$ ,  $\beta 33$ ,  $\beta 34$ ,  $\beta 35$ ,  $\beta 36$ ,  $\beta 52$ . Some shallow bathing areas can be arranged in the lagoons, and deeper ones — on the rivers Pregolya and Deima. The routes include walking tours in the urban environment (Elblag, Kaliningrad, Baltiysk, Gvardeisk Polesk and Nida). Fishing is one of the targets in the TRA and can be done all along the route, but is particularly attractive in the lagoons. Cruise, boat trips and yachting are the key TRA targets for the route.

For the canoeing route within the *history- culture- and activity-related synergy area* we singled out the following TRA:  $\beta 14$ ,  $\beta 23$ , and  $\beta 24$ . Walking tours of the towns of Pravdinsk, Znamensk, Gvardeisk, Polesk and Sovetsk, visiting the museums in Pravdinsk, Gvardeisk and Polesk are integral parts of eh routes.

The *historical- cultural- and environmental synergy area* of the canoeing route contains the tour material on the dams of the hydroelectric plants GES-3 and GES-4, Mazury channel gateways, dams and sluices in Znamensk, hydraulic structures on the river Matrosovka, Polesk channel and others. The present state and possibility of using the rivers and canals in the Kaliningrad region are considered in the studies by V. Gusev [10].

The *activity- and environment-based synergy area* of Route 4 includes:  $\beta 1$  — bathing (there are small beaches all along the route),  $\beta 11$  — a journey on foot (along chosen trails),  $\beta 12$  — walk along the whole route trails,  $\beta 26$  — picking berries and mushrooms in some places along the route,  $\beta 27$  — fishing,  $\beta 29$  — collecting rare medicinal plants in different seasons,  $\beta 39$  — ‘robinsonade’, i. e. individual ‘survival’ in nature. We also consider relevant TRA  $\beta 52$ , incentive tourism, because this practice is now very common in our region (including for the purpose of team building).

In the study, we developed a method for scoring places of interest to be included in the route. All types of potential are evaluated — the history- and culture-related, environment-related and activity-related potential. Special attention was paid to transport accessibility along the water route. It is also advisable to examine such a parameter as the distance from one place of interest to the following since it has an impact on the ‘saturation’ of the route.

Taking one of the routes as an example, we demonstrate principles for including places of interest in it.

For this study, we chose a 5-point scale where ‘1’ corresponds to the minimum potential, and ‘5’ — to the maximum one. Identification of the value of each place of interest was performed using the expert evaluation method. In assessing the transport accessibility, 5 points were assigned to the places, having piers, 4 points — to those where piers are to be built, and 3 and fewer points were assigned to places having the technical constraints for building a pier, or to places where a pier is not planned to be built.

Estimation of the attractions of Route 1 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Attraction score of itinerary 1

Places of interest/attractions	Potential			Transport accessibility
	History- and culture-related	Environ-ment-related	Activity-related	
Elblag	4	2	4	5
Fromborg	4	2	3	5
Balga castle	4	3	4	3
Ladushkin	2	2	1	3
Brandenburg castle	4	3	4	5
Baltiysk	4	2	3	5
Yacht club	1	1	2	5
Kaliningrad	5	3	4	5
Protestant church in the Rodniki village	3	2	2	3
Protestant church in the Ushakovo village	2	2	2	3
Gvardeisk	4	2	3	4
Polessk	4	2	3	4
Rybachy village	3	4	2	5
Rusne island	1	4	3	5
Klaipeda	2	2	2	5

Source: compiled by the authors.

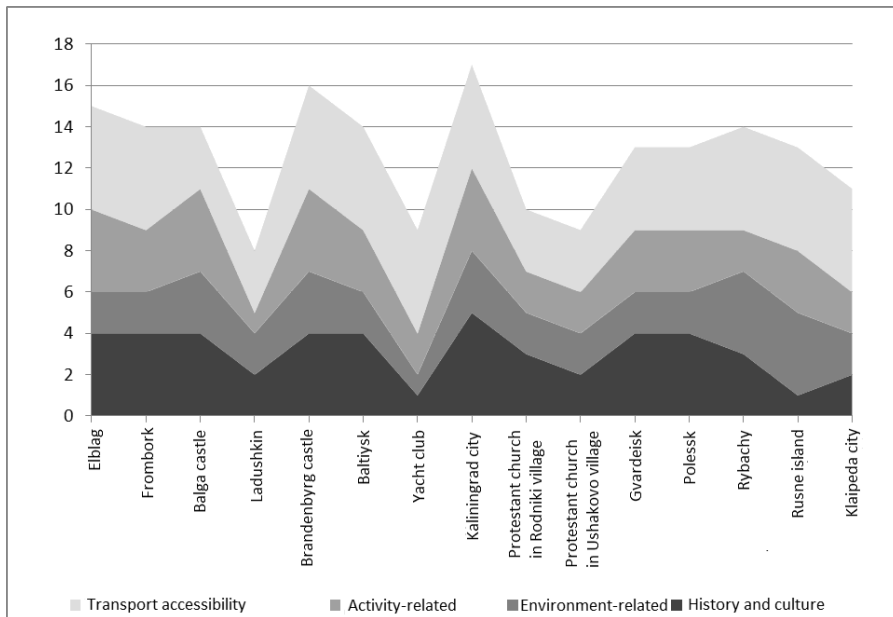


Fig. 7. Selection of attractions for Route 1 by summarising the scores according to Table 2 (prepared by the authors)

Expert assessment of the city in this study is done for an average tourists. For example, the activity potential of the yacht club is assessed for an average visitor travelling on a motor boat. For this traveller a pier itself is an important factor. One might think that other piers located in or closer to the city of Kaliningrad could be part of this route (Figure 5). However, for a yachtsman, who enjoys not only navigating a boat but also mixing with fellow sailors, the activity potential may be substantially higher. So the yacht club can definitely be included in the route.

This approach allows us not only to create a route but also offer reasonable variations of the route taking the activity factor into account. Thus, it is clear that Ladushkin and the yacht club cannot fall under the category of a standard route with the dominant historical and cultural component. Protestant churches in the villages of Rodniki and Ushakovo may or may not be a stopping point since all of them are on the way. Facilities for other routes are also selected using the same method.

The proposed method has another important advantage. By changing the values of the activity potential or transport accessibility, we can change the value of facilities and complement a route with new ones.

#### Conclusions:

1. Any geographic area has a potential. In this article, the key focus is on recreation.

2. The potential of an area can be divided into the used, identified and hidden ones depending on a stage of its use. Initially, a hidden potential is to be identified and used in tourist route planning. However, even the identified potential is not always used to the full, which slows down or even prevents further development of an area.

3. In studying the potential of an area the historical, cultural, environmental (natural) and activity-related aspects are of special interest. At their intersection, the so-called synergy areas can be identified.

4. As part of the Crossroads of 2.0 project, four water routes were developed. The main goal of developing the water routes is discovering the potential of coastal areas and using them for the development of tourism. For each route, the content of its synergy areas is identified and described in detail.

5. Cross-border tourist routes facilitates innovative development of an area as they make it possible to use their identified and hidden potential.

6. An optimal effect is achieved when including all the synergy areas in the preparation of a tourist route.

7. The author's method of scoring the potential of places of interest can be used to effectively develop new routes and modify the existing ones.

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