

North Livonia Coastal Region Initiative for Cross-border Social-Economic Development (NICE)

NICE Project Tourism Strategy

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Baltic Tourism Research and Training Centre

Pärnu College of the
University of Tartu



Project Partners



PÄRNUMAA ETTEVÕTLUS- JA ARENDUSKESKUS



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Contact Details	Dr Roger Evans R G Evans Associates 17 Euchan Place, Troon, Scotland, UK KA10 7JE UK Tel +44 (0)1292 315033 UK Mbl +44 (0) 797 6583873 Estonia +372 53 999 421
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1. Executive Summary

Aims and methods

This is the final report of a project undertaken as part of the North Livonia Coastal Region Initiative for Cross-border Social-Economic Development (NICE). The project runs from February 2005 – July 2007.

The tourism strategy was handed a set of core aims that enable it to contribute to the wider outputs of the NICE project. These are to identify tourism markets for North Livonia; to understand the needs of these markets; to build the capacity of businesses and communities to develop products that meet these needs and to achieve these aims through cross-border partnership and co-operation. Having profiled the target groups, the aim is to identify the needs of individuals, businesses and communities for training and support. This will enable the future development to be supported from within the region, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

The strategy was developed through a combination of visitor research, a document review covering a wide range of existing strategy and research documents and extensive consultation and discussion with public and private sector interests across the NLCR area. The findings therefore reflect a balance between

The strategy aims to provide added value to the area by:

Differentiation

The tourism product in the area will be differentiated from that of other competing areas.

Vision:

The strategy will add a visionary focus and be forward looking, capturing the wider ambition for tourism in the area

Integration:

The strategy will help to integrate a number of diverse interests, public & private sector across the area.

Key Markets

The research undertaken, combined with consultation, provides a focus on a set of key potential markets for the area. These are defined as:

- ❑ Baltic States (domestic markets)
- ❑ Scandinavia – (order of priority) Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark
- ❑ Russia and CIS (especially Belarus & Ukraine)
- ❑ The Netherlands
- ❑ Germany
- ❑ USA, Canada & Australia

These markets have the following characteristics that will form the basis of product development and marketing opportunities in the NLCR area:

- ❑ Activity holidays
- ❑ Nature holidays – ecotourism
- ❑ Health and wellbeing
- ❑ Food & local culture
- ❑ Boating & sailing
- ❑ Families with children
- ❑ Car touring
- ❑ Fishing
- ❑ Coastal holidays
- ❑ Events, festivals & cultural celebrations
- ❑ Cycling
- ❑ Fly-drive

Product Development themes and processes

On the basis of our assessment of potential markets, and having reviewed the potential of the area to develop tourism products to

exploit these target markets, we propose the following product development themes:

- Nature
- Outdoor
- Crafts
- Food
- Activities
- Coastline
- Roads
- Cycling
- Services
- Culture
- Water

As well as identifying the markets and product areas that can be utilised to develop tourism in the NLCR area, we have consulted stakeholders to identify how these things can be made to happen. These processes are very important in allowing the full potential of the strategy to be realised. We identified the following processes:

- Cooperation
- Marketing
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Learning
- Access
- Partnership
- Quality
- Infrastructure
- Interpretation
- Capacity building

Action Plan Priorities

These themes and processes were discussed in depth with stakeholders, who then translated the broad themes into more specific projects that were prioritised. The plan is:

- Develop a logo and slogan for the North Livonian area – binding the area together.
- Promoting the area at tourism fairs – showing the world that we exist!

- ❑ Familiarisation visits for journalists, tour operators, TIC staff...and local people.
- ❑ Promoting awareness of the area by advertising, using local advertorial as well as more widely publicising the area.
- ❑ Develop marketing and promotional materials for TICs, embassies, development bodies.
- ❑ Identify the 'typical features' that can be used as souvenirs
- ❑ Develop 10 cross-border itineraries.
- ❑ Development of tailored training programmes.

Some of these priorities contain more detailed sets of actions.

Three Key Projects

From the workshop, three key projects were identified as the first priorities. These projects encompass the basic principles that emerged from discussions in that they promote cross border cooperation, they are authentic and culturally based, they will need partnership and joint working and they are compatible with the identified target markets for the area. These are:

- ❑ Farm walks- cross border walking and cycling route
- ❑ Food festival-cross border food, menus and recipes
- ❑ Folk festival-cross border music and dance event

Tourism Development Forum

We have also described the establishment of a forum that will allow the partners to come together to develop the cross border tourism product through training and other business activities, to encourage the implementation of the Tourism Strategies and to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and activity and to encourage a coordinated cross border approach within the tourism bodies of NLCR.

2. Introduction

This is the final report of a project undertaken as part of the North Livonia Coastal Region Initiative for Cross-border Social-Economic Development (NICE). The project runs from February 2005 – July 2007.

The development of a tourism strategy is central to the NICE project because it sets the agenda for project implementation and is one of the principal methods of translating the goodwill and hard work of the partners into action. In turn, the actions identified as part of this strategy will act as the cement for the longer term sustainability of the NICE project and of the communities on both sides of the border that have identified innovative and achievable ideas for the social and economic development of the North Livonian Coastal region.

Project partners

Municipality of Häädemeeste (Estonia)

Municipality of Salacgriva Town with Rural Territory (Latvia)

SC Latvian State Forests West Vidzeme Forest Region (Latvia)

North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve (Latvia)

Pärnu College of University of Tartu (Estonia)

Vidzeme Tourism Association (Latvia)

South Estonian Tourism Foundation (Estonia)

Cesis City Council (Latvia)

Business and Development Centre of Pärnu County (Estonia)

Background

North Livonia is a historical region on the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea divided by border of Estonia and Latvia. The existing physical border between countries has led traditionally to a limitation of freedom of flow of people, services and goods, which is now changing as a result of EU membership and the easing of border controls.

Businesses are poorly developed, which means that the local people are not able to realise the potential economic and social benefits from tourism and are not in a position to capitalise on a favourable geographical location on the Via Baltica, mid-way between Riga and Tallinn by road, and in a favourable location for visiting yachts. There are extensive natural assets in the area although development and

exploitation is controlled because the North Livonia Coastal Region (NLCR) contains a number of nature and ecological reserves, where only compatible activities are allowed.

Municipalities on both sides of the border - Ainaži Town with Rural Territory, The Municipality Government of Häädemeeste and Salacgriva Town with Rural Territory have established partnerships with SC Latvia State Forests West Vidzeme Forest Region, North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve, Pärnu College of the University of Tartu, Vidzeme Tourism Association, South Estonia Tourism Foundation, Cesis City Council and Business and Development Centre of Pärnu County to develop new initiatives, to attract investments and to mobilize community members on cross-border business and human resource development.

The partners' overall objective is to improve cross-border cooperation for sustainable development in the North Livonia Coastal Region and neighbouring regions by creating joint space for economic and social activities. The specific objective is to elaborate coherent policy, joint services, products and infrastructure for environment friendly tourism development in the North Livonia Coastal Region, involving neighbouring regions and promoting private-public partnerships.

The main results of the project are: elaborated Business, Tourism and Marketing Strategy and Yacht Ports (Ainaži, Häädemeeste, Salacgriva) strategy; developed image of region and implemented promotion campaign; created cross-border tourism services and implemented pilot projects (Cross-Border Food Festival, ATV route, walking trail, tourism itineraries etc.), created preconditions for implementation of joint tourism infrastructure (renovation, architectural designs), established cross-border institutional capacity building system (partnerships, training course modules, manual for cross-border cooperation to be published on Internet, info seminars, conferences). During the project, assistance will be provided to local inhabitants in development of awareness of cultural and natural heritage and design of business plans as well as human resource development projects. Long-term impact of the project includes developed new businesses, strengthened capacity of non-governmental organisations and local groups, preservation of environment thus increasing competitiveness of the region.

Aims of the tourism strategy

The tourism strategy was handed a set of core aims that enable it to contribute to the wider outputs of the NICE project. These are:

- ❑ To identify tourism markets for North Livonia. The project aimed to research and identify a range of tourism markets for the region for which suitable tourism products exist or can be developed through cross-border projects involving the stakeholders.
- ❑ To understand the needs of these markets. As little information exists to inform the process of strategy making and developing products, there is an underlying objective of researching and defining the needs of existing and potential customer groups.
- ❑ To build the capacity of businesses and communities to develop products that meet these needs. Having profiled the target groups, the aim is to identify the needs of individuals, businesses and communities for training and support. This will enable the future development to be supported from within the region, ensuring its long-term sustainability.
- ❑ To achieve these aims through cross-border partnership and co-operation. The key component of the strategy is to ensure that the development of tourism is undertaken on a cross-border basis. Therefore the selection of actions will need to reflect the practical problems faced in working in cross-border partnerships.

As well as these core aims, there are two additional imperatives attached to the tourism work. These are:

The strategy is a key part of an Interreg IIIa project, funded by the EU and with its own requirements in terms of reporting and outputs.

Integrate with other projects. Given the recent history of the border areas of Estonia and Latvia, it is not surprising that a wide range of initiatives has developed in this area. It is important that this strategy attempts to build on and not duplicate, the existing efforts.

Added value from strategy

The strategy aims to give the partners significant added value through:

Differentiation

The tourism product in the area will be differentiated from that of other competing areas.

Vision:

The strategy will add a visionary focus and be forward looking, capturing the wider ambition for tourism in the area

Integration:

The strategy will help to integrate a number of diverse interests, public & private sector across the area.

Methodology

The methodology for this strategy reflects current best practice in the development of destination strategies across Europe and has been undertaken by experts in tourism, rural development with significant experience of delivering EU funded projects.

This means that the strategy aims to build a working consensus between the main stakeholders, and from that basis to develop an agreed range of projects that will fulfil the aims and objectives. This has involved:

Research

The research has been directed towards informing the discussions and debates between the partners and stakeholders in the project. It has not been used to drive the direction of the strategy because this may lead to the wrong conclusions being taken as to compatible products and markets.

The research programme involved both primary and secondary research. Primary research was undertaken through visitor surveys undertaken in:

- Häädemeeste (Estonia)
- Salacgriva (Latvia)
- Ainaži (Latvia)

In addition to surveys, a review of existing documentation, statistics and research in the region was undertaken. This revealed that very little is known about the visitors that come to the area and little detailed research has been undertaken in this area. Furthermore, since the relaxation of border controls at the different crossing points, no statistics are available as to the traffic travelling through the area.

“Unfortunately there has been no adequate statistics on Estonian rural tourism development gathered during the years of Estonian independence and therefore no thorough analysis have been done. No summarizing analysis have been made on rural tourism, using national tourism statistics and annual reviews”.¹

As a proxy for statistical information, we interviewed a number of people in both countries to find out the nature of tourism in the area, the origin and needs of visitors and the state of the current tourism product, as well as plans for the future. In the absence of published data this proved to be a very successful exercise and, although we cannot point to definitive statistical evidence in support of our conclusions, we are very confident that our findings reflect not only a true picture of the tourism industry at present but also a fair reflection of the aspirations and capabilities of the businesses, municipalities and public sector bodies in the area.

Consultation

As the strategy aims to reflect the needs of the communities in the project area, it has been important to consult with the stakeholders – councils, municipalities, public agencies, to make sure that they are fully engaged in the strategy process and to enable them to play a role in developing the ideas that form the basis of our recommendations.

Workshops

We have undertaken a series of workshops with stakeholders, principally at the meetings held in on 20/05/05, 29/07/05. These were conducted through a series of structured questionnaires seeking information on stakeholder views on tourism product and service development needs, strength and weakness analysis and constraints to development. Further workshops gave the opportunity to present the results of these questionnaires and to seek stakeholder views on development needs, marketing and support structures for tourism development in the NCLR area.

¹ Estonian Rural Tourism development Plan 2004 to 2007

Analysis

The information gathered was analysed in detail by the strategy authors before being collated in the form of presentations as well as this final report.

Feedback

Feedback on the strategic direction was sought at a workshop held on 12/09/05 where stakeholders were asked to prioritise key product development possibilities and development processes necessary to support the product development.

3. Assessing the area

As part of our assessment of the area we have conducted analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the area, based on our desk research, and interviews with partners in the area. Therefore this very much reflects the way the local authorities and businesses feel about their area.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- ❑ The border – a border is an attraction in its own right as it represents a gateway, or an important stage in a journey.
- ❑ Its location, between Riga and Tallinn – this area is roughly half way between the two capitals and an easy drive from either, making it both accessible to these population centres and their airports.
- ❑ As a stop on the Via Baltica - and a stopping place en route between them the two capitals.
- ❑ As the location of world class nature – the area's wetlands are internationally recognised for the quality of the natural environment and for the diverse wildlife, particularly birds.
- ❑ As the place with interesting coastal heritage – although the coastline is underdeveloped, there is an interesting fishing and industrial heritage associated with this area.
- ❑ Good location – beaches and transport. The area is renowned as having good quality beaches which are very popular in the summer.
- ❑ Good guiding services – there are good guiding services in the area and these are essential for areas where signage and interpretation are limited.
- ❑ Farm tourism which is close to nature – the area is essentially agricultural with an emphasis on diversifying farm businesses into sectors such as tourism.
- ❑ Development of walking and cycling routes – there are a number of initiatives to improve the quality of cycling and walking tracks in the area and more are planned.
- ❑ Recognition of the value of tourism in regional development – there is an existing commitment on the part of county and municipal

government, on both sides of the border, to tourism as an economic catalyst.

- ❑ Handicrafts- many entrepreneurs already produce crafts in the area.
- ❑ Local village events – there are developing events in villages across the area, particularly events that promote the local culture and produce.
- ❑ Effective TIC/TIP in some areas – although not yet consistent across this area, there is some excellent tourist information provision with professional and dedicated staff.
- ❑ Some active village societies – some villages have become active in promoting village life and looking at providing additional services and facilities that will encourage tourism
- ❑ Some enterprising entrepreneurs – there are some instances of businesses and enterprises developing in the area although these are still scattered.

Weaknesses

- ❑ Poor access to finance – one of the identified constraints to growth is the availability of finance. Likewise, restrictions on funding in the public sector means that progress in developing infrastructure can be slow.
- ❑ Insecure funding streams – funding streams have proved to be inconsistent meaning that implementing improvements can take a long time.
- ❑ Weak infrastructure – the basic visitor infrastructure is weak, from attractions and accommodation to eating out.
- ❑ Lack of joint marketing, tourist information, signage and image – there is evidence of confusion among the different public sector organisations as to who is responsible, and little partnership working to address the problem.
- ❑ Products frequently oriented to local market – because the visitor market is small, the goods are aimed at local people.
- ❑ Unpaved country roads – these are a real problem in summer when the weather is dry and act as a constraint on the developing of cycling.

- ❑ Lack of equipment for hire – lack of current demand means that there is little equipment available for visitors to participate in activities like cycling, canoeing.
- ❑ Poor coastal and beach infrastructure – although many of the beaches are very popular in the summer, the infrastructure along most of this coastline is limited, and frequently in poor condition.
- ❑ Short season – the summer season is very short although visitors are in the area for much longer and there is a weekend market from Tallinn and Riga
- ❑ Narrow range of products, accommodation and services – because of limited demand at present.
- ❑ Lack of co-operation between individuals or agencies – has been cited as an issue that may constrain development.
- ❑ Lack of umbrella organisation – there is no organisation that has the task of co-ordinating the activities of the small organisations across the area.
- ❑ Lack of appropriate knowledge, skills and initiative – these have been identified as constraints to business development.
- ❑ Closed minds have been identified as a constraint, meaning that people may not accept change easily.
- ❑ Insufficient human resource – there may be evidence of increased staff shortages and skills shortages at peak times.
- ❑ Lack of local heritage knowledge – there is a lack of knowledge about the whole area's natural and cultural heritage and tourism opportunities.
- ❑ Poor quality marketing materials – the marketing materials need to reflect ambitions.

Strategic Framework

This tourism strategy takes account of two key documents:

- **Estonian Rural Tourism development Plan 2004 to 2007, and**
- **Baltic Rural Tourism Marketing Strategy**

The Estonian plan's vision is :

By year 2013 Estonian rural tourism... :

... and entrepreneurship related to it has become a recognized branch of rural economy, which sustainably supports economic growth and development of rural life being the largest employer in rural Estonia and a recognized part of Estonian tourism sector

Is known in Europe and Baltic Sea region for its product quality, all-year-round attractions and active participation in natural and heritage environment.

and has as its goal:

The main goal of the document in question is to increase rural tourism product supply and attractiveness, by expanding the geographical seasonal spread and to improve rural tourism product quality.

One of the main strategic goals of the Estonian plan is:

International co-operation

In international co-operation the main co-operation is carried out with rural tourism organisations in Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. The main content of such co-operation is marketing (especially with Latvia and Lithuania) and exchange of information and experiences (especially with Finland).

The Latvian Plan has as its goals:

- ❑ Regional tourism is an integral and reliable segment in the Baltic tourism offer
- ❑ Regional tourism is an important sector of the economy
- ❑ Regional tourism is an accelerator of sustainable tourism, and
- ❑ Regional tourism is well organised

Key product development tasks identified by the Latvian document include quality improvement through the agreement of common standards, product diversification through developing theme holidays, encouraging low season tourism and developing special interest products. The final key task is market development, following the key priority markets identified.

Both strategies have similar aims in terms of:

- ❑ Improving the quality of product
- ❑ Providing employment
- ❑ Effective marketing
- ❑ Providing sustainable economic and social benefits to communities.

These are achieved through

- a) Quality improvement
- b) Product diversification and innovation
- c) Information, interpretation, marketing

4. Tourism Market Assessment

More growth in Northern Europe

World tourism continues to grow, fuelled by steady economic growth and the continued development of both markets and destinations. Growth in tourism arrivals across the world exceeds 10% per annum with the strongest growth shown in Asia and the Pacific at 29%, Europe, on the other hand records the lowest growth at only 4% on average². This is attributed Europe being a mature market, increased competition from new destinations and customer expectations of product and service quality.

Within Europe, the highest growth rates are being seen in Northern Europe, currently running at 7% per annum, outstripping the rate of growth in Western Europe (2%) and Southern Europe/ Mediterranean (3%)³. With Poland, Estonia and Latvia are currently showing the highest growth rates in European tourism.

Key trends

A key trend emerging is the loss of cachet associated with the holiday purchase. This is no longer regarded as a luxury purchase and the effective commoditisation of tourism products has major implications for destinations that are not prepared to deal with a set of new issues. Among these are the purchase on price and star rating, with the expectation that the quality of product is consistent and predictable and the effective exposure of local tourism products to international competition on price, value for money, accessibility, and so on.

There are far reaching implications for the strategic management of destinations in this trend including:

- ❑ The need to be able to gather, analyse and react to market information very quickly,
- ❑ The need for building customer feedback into the tourism business culture in order to ensure that customer requirements are met, and
- ❑ A heightened awareness of the competition.

² World Tourism Organisation 2005

³ European Travel Commission

The industry is increasingly coming to terms with short lead times to bookings, a trend consistent with the commoditisation of holiday products. This means that, across a large section of holiday product in the marketplace, the customer makes little differentiation on quality and the range of experiences. Instead the purchase decision will be based on circumstances – availability of cash, time off – and issues such as availability, price and travel time become the main factors to influence the purchase.

Economists have noted in recent years that tourism is becoming increasingly sensitive to the economic health of the country of origin, with, growth in tourism spend closely tracking the growth in personal wealth in different countries. In fact disposable income is now regarded as the most reliable indicator of tourism growth in most developed countries. It is no surprise therefore that price sensitivity will become increasingly important in selling destinations.

Other factors that are becoming important are safety, or the perception of a safe destination. In the current climate of international terrorism, safe destinations will benefit at the expense of those where security is not taken seriously (particularly in the eyes of North Americans). Equally the presence of minefields is hardly reassuring!

Global warming & the environment are issues that won't go away, so being a destination that can be aligned with the environmental tourism movement may have long-term benefits.

Oil prices are set to stay high and possibly keep on rising, with the possible prospect of the \$100 barrel on the horizon. Should this happen, there are a number of implications:

- ❑ The cost of travel will increase but new and unusual destinations may not suffer too badly because they are less price sensitive.
- ❑ The cost of air fares will increase significantly and the differential between the low cost carriers and the traditional carriers will be eroded. There will also be additional costs for cruise passengers and motorists.

Forecasts for the cruise market are slightly contradictory, with the operators forecasting continued growth along the lines seen in the past 10 years – but this is not reflected in the number of new vessels being launched, so the reality is probably more cautious. Certainly it is the fastest growing sector of international tourism but it is beginning to segment revealing the different types of cruising. The cruise market is also cyclical and dependent on the current 'fashion' in holidaymaking,

so it can be fickle. Cruise operators can – and do – shift fleets across the world if market or political conditions change.

The independent travelling market (both individuals and groups), as it relates to the Baltic states, is likely to continue to grow. This is for two reasons: it seems to be directly related to the propensity for young people and students for travel, this propensity being carried through life. Therefore, as people become comfortable with independent travel in their youth, they will be likely to travel independently through their life. The second reason is the increasing adventurousness of international travellers, and the ease of purchase of all destinations via the Internet – thus it is less of an ordeal to book independent travel because of the amount of information now available. What is less certain is the motivation for travel – there has to be a good reason to visit a destination.

5. Market profile

Current & Potential markets

Current identified markets and their characteristics in the NLCR⁴ are:

Source – Existing markets
Baltic States
Scandinavia
Russia and CIS
Germany
United Kingdom

Characteristics – existing markets
Activity holidays
Nature holidays
Health and wellbeing
Families with children
Car touring
Fishing
Coastal holidays
Events, festivals & cultural celebrations
Cycling
Fly-drive

Main market opportunities

⁴ Sources: Baltic Rural Tourism Marketing Strategy/ BTRTC/ EAS/ETB 2005 /

- ❑ Estonia & Latvia show the highest tourism growth rates in the EU
- ❑ Trends favour new sustainable destinations, health & wellbeing
- ❑ Northern Europe becoming more fashionable destination for tourists
- ❑ Price advantage
- ❑ Main route between Tallinn & Riga

To summarize, the main market opportunities for the NLCR area are likely to be activity-based including: walking, cycling, fishing, sailing, ornithology & other nature based holidays.

The source countries are likely to be the Baltic States, Northern Europe, Germany, Low Countries, the UK and Russia. Local Baltic Sea & Scandinavian markets will be particularly important in the next few years.

Access is very important, including the ability to promote low cost flights into Riga & Tallinn, and the relatively easy access to North Livonia from either capital.

The tourism industry is highly seasonal. The seasonality affects the availability of the product – in this area the winter product is very different from the summer product. But it is also worth remembering that the markets are highly seasonal as well.

Market intelligence

We have identified a lack of good market data as being a potential constraint on development. It is important that decisions taken on investment, whether on capital infrastructure or on training, marketing and promotion, are made on the basis of good information. Therefore we strongly recommend that steps are taken to collect, analyse and communicate information that will help individual businesses to make market-based decisions.

The partners should build up a knowledge of customers through

- ❑ Guest surveys in accommodation
- ❑ Regular surveys at attractions
- ❑ Traffic counts/ census
- ❑ Postal/ email feedback
- ❑ Interview tour operators
- ❑ Encourage governments to gather statistics

Target Markets

Based on our market assessment and in line with existing strategies covering the NLCR, we have identified the following key markets.

The markets identified for future development are as follows:

Source – Potential markets
Baltic States (domestic markets)
Scandinavia – (order of priority) Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark
Russia and CIS (especially Belarus & Ukraine)
The Netherlands
Germany
USA, Canada & Australia

Characteristics – Potential markets
Activity holidays
Nature holidays – ecotourism
Health and wellbeing
Food & local culture
Boating & sailing
Families with children
Car touring
Fishing
Coastal holidays
Events, festivals & cultural celebrations
Cycling
Fly-drive

It is clear that our assessment of the potential market concurs with that of other studies and strategies and that the basic elements of the tourism product already exist – although they do need development.

6. A possible framework for product development

Based on our research and consultations, we have identified a framework for developing the tourism product of the area. This is a logical representation of the process we have led to assist the partners in identifying products that can be developed and for which we believe there is a market. These are:

Potential products

Product	Description
Nature	The importance of nature as the core tourism product is again emphasised. Selling nature requires it to be packaged with other products & services and the sustainability of tourism in the NLCR needs to be put across to potential visitors. Nature could lead to an increase in, for example, educational trips, health and exercise visits, cross border walking routes, and improved accessibility.
Outdoor	Much of the attraction of the area is based on outdoor activity. This can be developed and promoted through local and cross border packaging with other products and services, and is compatible with the sustainable product ambitions of stakeholders.
Crafts	A lack of good quality crafts and souvenirs available for visitors gives a good opportunity to the area's craft producers to develop a new, market for their products.
Food	There is demand for regional food and drink and there is a wide range of local food and drink to be promoted, providing the proper support can be made available in terms of dealing with regulations, the need for licensed kitchens. The products may include local menus, recipes and foods; festivals and food trails; cross-border products
Activities	A significant market for activities has been identified across the NLCR. Development of these may require the provision of equipment/ safety equipment/ guides and instruction/ information (e.g. for yachts).

Coastline	The coastline is a major asset and needs active management to ensure that it is accessible, is of high quality and that there is adequate visitor management.
Roads	Unpaved roads and the quality of secondary roads is a big issue and a clear constraint in the development of walking and cycling. Action needed includes the provision of stopping places, signage and interpretation, developing tourist routes, catering & toilets and developing cross-border routes.
Cycling	Road safety & quality need to be addressed through the provision of safe cycle ways and the availability of support services such as equipment, repair facilities, cycle hire, luggage carriers, bike transportation to NLCR and developing cross border routes.
Services	Availability of services and the quality of service need to be developed through programmes to improve customer care, local knowledge, selling skills and other skills. Key services include tourist information centres which need to work closely together to promote the area.
Culture	Interpretation of local crafts & customs is an essential part of the development of tourism in this area as the 'encounter' is an essential part of the tourism experience for visitors. Initiatives may include producing guides, festivals & events and making better use of the range of museums & culture houses (and schools) across the area.
Water	The Yacht harbours are the subject of their own strategy but the water is a key asset in terms of access and transport, leisure pursuits (boating, fishing etc.)

7. Key Development Processes

Having identified the range of potential products for development, we were able to develop a series of 'processes' that describe the way in which the products should be brought to market and what values we should adopt in managing the tourism industry in North Livonia.

These are:

Process	Description
Cooperation	<p>Forum:</p> <p>There is local support for the setting up of a forum that will act as a link between the municipalities, organisations (NGOs), businesses and individuals to ensure that the benefits from this project are captured. The forum is also intended to act as the means of driving forward the strategy into the future through creating the mechanisms and partnerships that will deliver identified projects. The forum will act as the means for organisations to access knowledge and skills and it will enable the delivery of training and support that will build the tourism sector's capacity over time.</p>
Marketing	<p>Consultees felt that it will be important to develop effective marketing and branding for the North Livonian area to ensure that there is a recognizable product in the market place. This will involve image (brand logo) development and the development of brand values that reflect the culture and products in the area. In developing this process, it is envisaged that there will be a need for brochures to be produced, web sites and the possibility of setting up joint marketing arrangements (e.g. between municipalities on either side of the border or between businesses) has been suggested as a route forward.</p>
Innovation	<p>The theme of innovation came through as an important element in the forward development of</p>

	<p>tourism. This needs to be based on a common understanding of what innovation is, as well as the level of risk that will be accepted. There are a few comparable innovation programmes in Europe that may be used as examples. The next stage would be the development of a toolkit and seminar to examine best practice.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The sustainability theme is seen as central to the area's future as a tourism destination, not only because it reflects the views of communities that tourism must be seen to be meaningful and compatible. The policy framework as characterized by LA21, the North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve & Nigula nature reserves needs to be fully reflected and supported by tourism actions. By acquiring ecotourism labels e.g. Green Globe, the area may be able to gain recognition for its sustainability work.</p>
Learning	<p>Learning is central to the NICE Interreg project and a significant emphasis has been placed on the importance of learning in meeting the project's aims in a genuinely sustainable manner. Possible ways forward include setting up training or learning journeys or training/ learning journeys for businesses. These could include cross-border projects or visits to other projects. Another important element that has been identified for inclusion in the learning programme is market knowledge – to build the capacity of local businesses to make good marketing and product development decisions based on the needs of tourist markets.</p>
Access	<p>Access and transportation are important in enabling the tourism product access to effective distribution channels. In effect this is a key element of the local tourism supply chain and has been identified as an aspect requiring attention. Elements may include both international, regional and local links, the timetabling and cost of</p>

	transport and the integration of transport within the products and services available to potential visitors.
Partnership	Partnership is seen as a key process in taking the tourism strategy forward. Partnership means different things in different contexts but includes encouraging businesses to work together to make their product more competitive; working cross-border to realize new and different tourism experiences of visitors; working to ensure that the peripheral areas work more closely with more central or accessible areas; networking between businesses, organisations and individuals to improve business prospects, to ensure dialogue and communication and to create learning and development opportunities. Partnership may also be used to develop new and better products and services and to identify knowledge gaps that can be addressed through learning.
Quality	With quality an increasingly important part of the process of purchasing tourism products, it will be important to embed processes into the development strategy that enable businesses at all levels both to understand the requirements of customers and to develop high quality products and services. This will include managing the expectations of visitors through information and marketing, rather than attempting to achieve the highest standards immediately. In fact it is unlikely that visitors to emerging destinations expect standards to be high so there is the opportunity to exceed expectations. This may need an examination of the way the value chains work in the area, a look at different quality models and systems, such as the new Estonian Tourism Quality Programme, the Green Key / value chains/ quality models/ e.g. ETQP & Green Key and use of the customer journey to identify areas for action.
Infrastructure	The area's infrastructure is very important as it

	<p>determines the accessibility for customers and affects the ability to explore. The main Via Baltica is a crucial artery for tourism in the area but is very busy and does not encourage people to stop and stay. The development of roadside services needs to continue and become more visitor friendly. Beyond the main routes the roads infrastructure is regarded as being of poor quality, largely unpaved and too dusty for cyclists and walkers in the summer. New cycling and walking routes are in development but perhaps requires more co-ordination and a strategic overview especially in cross border terms. Tourist facilities and routes need to be signposted and have good interpretation.</p>
Interpretation	<p>Overall it is recognised that signage, interpretation and tourist information provision needs to be improved and better co-ordinated across the NLCR area. This is especially important given this is a cross border region and there are two languages used. There is potential for a more co-ordinated way of implementing signage, for the introduction of more multi-lingual interpretation and also opportunities for guiding (in person & self-guide).</p>
Capacity building	<p>Capacity building will enable the project to become fully sustainable. This might be achieved through establishing private/public partnerships to deliver elements of the strategy, by focussed investment of resources aimed at achieving the greatest benefits, through the encouragement of cross border projects and through better integrating of private and public sector actions</p>

8. Stakeholder Feedback – Projects

Stakeholders prioritised the key products and development processes. The results of this process identified sustainability of nature, craft marketing, cultural interpretation, service quality and food quality as high priorities. The stakeholder and PMU workshops were able to work up these ideas into a series of concrete actions:

- ❑ Develop a logo and slogan for the North Livonian area – binding the area together
- ❑ Promoting the area at tourism fairs – showing the world that we exist!
- ❑ Familiarisation visits for journalists, tour operators, TIC staff...and local people
- ❑ Promoting awareness of the area by advertising, using local advertorial as well
- ❑ Develop marketing and promotional materials for TICs, embassies, development bodies
- ❑ Identify the 'typical features' that can be used as souvenirs
- ❑ Develop 10 cross-border itineraries:
 - Nature trails
 - Walking route
 - Orienteering maps
 - Yacht ports
 - Camping & caravan sites
 - Farm tours – for children
 - Skiing trails
 - Birdwatching trails
 - Cycling
 - Historical trail
- ❑ Development of tailored training programmes
 - Business Start up
 - Advanced Business Management
 - Public Sector

Youth Support

Tailored training programmes

Environmental & Cultural Interpretation

Tourism Development Forum

Bed & Breakfast

9. Major Projects

From the workshops, three key projects were identified as the first priorities. These projects encompass the basic principles that emerged from discussions in that they promote cross border cooperation, they are authentic and culturally based, they will need partnership and joint working and they are compatible with the identified target markets for the area. These are:

Farm walks

This project is a cross border walking and cycling route. Its aim is to explore the cultural heritage of the NLCR by expanding the network of safe routes for both cyclists and walkers throughout the area. There are some important distinctions: the idea that the routes, and 'packages' should incorporate visits to local farms is introduced to provide a link to the area's agricultural heritage as well as allowing different communities to develop services and products suitable for this market, such as accommodation, restaurants and cycle hire.

Food festival

This is characterised as a cross border event celebrating local food, menus and recipes. During consultation and discussion, people expressed enthusiasm for the wide range of food that was traditional to the area. There is wide variation in food between different communities so the area has the potential to put together a diverse, interesting and unique product for visitors. This needs to be researched, co-ordinated and promoted effectively and the support of local and national government may be needed in cutting through the confusion over food preparation and sale regulations so that the small entrepreneurs are able to offer their products to visitors. Obviously, close co-operation at all levels will be needed to promote this as a North Livonian tourism product and public sector support given in the formative stages.

Folk festival

Another initiative aimed at developing cross border cooperation is the folk festival, an event celebrating local music and dance traditions in different communities. Recent research⁵ shows the impact of events in

⁵ Hede A-M and Jago, L (2005) Perceptions of the host destination as a result of attendance at a special event: a post-consumption analysis *international Joournal of Event Management research* Vol 1, no 1 2005

promoting visitor destinations, with 25% of people attending an event indicating that their perception had changed as a result of attendance and almost all of these said it had changed for the better. The folk festival is another means of developing authentic attractions that utilise the culture and expertise of local communities and encourages their involvement in community and economic development.

These project ideas address the key strategic requirements for developing tourism in the area covered by the NCLR:

- ❑ Cross-border – each project has a key cross-border co-operation component.
- ❑ Emphasise the unique culture of the area – each project is based on the uniqueness of the areas natural and cultural and folk heritage.
- ❑ Potential to develop niche products – niche products can be developed from the key project activities based on the unique nature, food and heritage of the area.
- ❑ Low development costs – the projects will require limited investment thus offering relatively quick return on capital and local community time invested into the project activity.
- ❑ High profile for the area, projects should be developed to a high standard, and supported by appropriate information, interpretation and marketing materials to ensure the projects promote a high profile image for the area.
- ❑ Based on existing ideas and with existing support, these projects will be readily accepted by local communities and thus integrated into their forward development plans.
- ❑ Project groups established for each Key Project, each project idea should be supported by a project group to seek finance for the project and to secure the implementation of project plans.

10. NLCR Tourism Development Forum

Stakeholders identified the lack of an umbrella organisation supporting tourism in the NLCR as a major weakness in the development of tourism products and services across the area. Workshop feedback showed support for the formation of a tourism development group/forum, such a group should have wide representation from entrepreneurs, public sector and NGO's and be operated as a Public:Private Partnership (PPP). Wide representation across the tourism sector would help to embed the group/forum within the public and private sectors and help to maintain support for its activities thus promoting sustainability for the group/forum

The following as guiding principles for the development group/forum have been taken both from Stakeholder feedback and from Tourism Development Fora operating in analogous areas in other European Countries:-

Aim

To develop the NLCR cross border tourism products and services that meet the needs of the area's tourism markets so that the companies and tourism marketing agencies have a more attractive product to market.

Objectives

To develop the cross border tourism product through training and other business activities

To encourage the implementation of the Tourism Strategies with respect to the development of tourism in NLCR

To ensure that there is no duplication of effort and activity and to encourage a coordinated cross border approach within the tourism bodies of NLCR

Activities

Training co-ordination and promotion

Identification of training requirements across the tourism sector, identifying training courses and seeking funding to provide training for workers through the tourism sector in the area

Lobbying

To promote the tourism development needs of individuals, communities, public sector and infrastructure throughout the cross border NLCR area to both local and national Governments and implementing agencies for Government policies and activities.

Networking

To provide a key conduit for networking between all individuals and organizations with an interest in the tourism industry within the NLCR and to promote communication, information exchange and be pro-active in linking NLCR operators with external contacts. To regularly inform Forum partners on tourism development, news, training opportunities, product development possibilities and initiatives.

Sustainable development

To support and develop networking activities, education and information exchange between tourism operators and Bio-sphere and Nature Reserve Administrations' to identify sustainable and effective approaches to developing entrepreneurship based on the natural and cultural environment of the NLCR

Joint project writing and implementation

Promote and support the development and implementation of projects to enhance tourism products and services of the NLCR. To take the lead in initiating project preparation, co-ordinate the project writing activities and provide human resources where necessary to assist individual operators through the writing process.

Marketing and promotion

To support and initiate marketing campaigns, provision of information and literature on NLCR tourism. To identify funding sources, lobby national tourism authorities and promote the tourism product of the area.

Partnership formation

Local and cross border (entrepreneurs, local and regional government):- to be pro-active in the promotion and support for the active development of partnerships for the development of tourism in NLCR. In particular to support the development of cross border:- initiatives, entrepreneurial and community activity, events and projects developing and delivering tourism products and services. Key partnership formation will be with the North Vidzeme Tourism Association and the Pärnumaa Tourism Association (if the latter organisation is formed).

Organisation of common events

To provide support and initiative in the development and implementation of common cross border tourism related events and activities

Links with schools, further & higher education

To promote the career opportunities provided by the tourism industry and to encourage the development of a higher profile for the sector throughout the schools, colleges and universities. To encourage the spread of tourism related subjects throughout the educational curriculum.

Structure and operation

Structure:

Consideration should be given to structuring the forum on the basis of a public private partnership with representation from entrepreneurs, tourism companies, public sector organizations and NGO's from across the spectrum of tourism activities and services in NLCR.

It is recommended that the Forum is supported by one full time employee with experience of project management and group co-operation activity within the tourism sector. The funding for this post should come from both public sector contributions and successful project applications through the Forum.

Committee:

The Forum should have an equal number of public and private sector representatives on the management committee. It is also recommended that to ensure relevance and appropriateness of forum activities to entrepreneurs and tourism businesses that the Forum President and Deputy President should be from the private sector. Forum committee representatives should not expect payment for their time but normal expenses associated with the work should be recompensed.

Working groups:

Forum activities should be undertaken through working groups. Each working group should have a clearly prepared remit and fixed activity period or working life. Membership should come from both the public

and private sectors and should have at least one member from the Forum Management Committee. Funding should be sought to help support working group activities but representatives within each working group should not expect payment for their time but normal expenses associated with the work should be recompensed.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

In general, there is an optimistic outlook for the markets in which the Baltic States will operate in the next five years or so. However, it will also become more competitive as more destinations start to compete effectively for business. Curiously, it is the ability to be different (rather than the same as we see in many destinations around the world) that will determine the marketability of destinations in the future. Because elements of tourism are becoming commodified – travel and accommodation are sold on price not quality as the minimum international standard is taken for granted – there are real opportunities to develop unique appeal. But this assumes that the basics – travel and accommodation, customer service and safety/security levels are in place.

Our research and work with stakeholders in the NLCR area concludes that there is a significant opportunity to develop tourism as a sustainable and profitable element of the economy. Further, we have identified that there is a high level of correlation between the aspirations of the local authorities and communities, the businesses and providers and the product, and the potential markets for the area.

This report contains a summary of a lengthy process that enabled the stakeholders to formulate a consensus view as to where to develop tourism. This will best be achieved through the key recommendations which aim to bind the communities to the common purpose of developing sustainable tourism. These are listed below:

Recommendations

Overall, there is a cross-cutting theme in the central importance of nature, quality and sustainability to the tourism product. As a result, it is recommended that strong links are developed between the tourism providers and the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve in Latvia and the newly formed Nature Regional Reserve Administration responsible for South West Estonia.

The other key recommendations are:

- that an NLCR tourism development forum is established - to take the central role in networking and development of partnership working on a cross-border basis. Training for Forum Committee Members should be supported through the NICE training work package (see

point 3 below). This would also take the lead in many of the specific actions detailed in this report and would take a look at development possibilities across the whole product range we have identified.

- that the three cross border projects are developed and project groups formed from stakeholders as a first priority. The Forum should take responsibility for drawing these cross border project groups together.
- that the training programme is undertaken with pilots run in the rest of the NICE project

Implementation of the key recommendations will result in the development of tourism in a sustainable and manageable way for the communities on either side of the border.



12. Appendix 1: Visitor Questionnaire

Date..... Location: Salacgriva

Your Gender? Female Male

Your Age Group? under 25 25-39 40-60 over 60

Your Country and Town of origin?

Duration of your stay? day trip 1-4 nights 5-10 nights over 10 nights

Type of lodging?

Hotel/ motel Bed & Breakfast Campground
Apartment Rental Friends/ Relatives Country house

Other.....

Number of co-travellers? Alone 2-4 6-10 over 10

Do you have children? Yes No

Did you bring your children? Yes No

Purpose of your trip?

Business Spa & Wellness Friends/ Relatives



- | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Drive through | <input type="checkbox"/> | Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | Beach | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sailing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attractions | <input type="checkbox"/> | Festivals/ Events | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trekking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dining/Nightlife | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| Other..... | | | | | |



How did you get here?

Ship Plane Car Sailing boat/yacht Bus Train

Other.....

How often have you been in our region in the past five years?

Never 1 to 3 times over 3 times

How did you find out about our area?

Advertisement (TV, Radio, Newspaper) Internet Travel Agency
Friends /Relatives

Tourist Info Other.....

How do you rate the following aspects of this region?

1-Excellent 2-Good 3-Moderate 4-Poor 5-Very Poor

transport connections to the region
public transport/ taxis within the region
accommodation where you are staying
attractions (things to see and do)
the beaches and the sea
restaurants, bars, cafes
shops

How do you rate the provision of tourist information in this area?

How helpful was the information service provided by tourist information centres?

1-Excellent 2-Good 3-Moderate 4-Poor 5-Very Poor

How easy was it for you to find information about things to do in this area?

1 easy, 2 moderately easy, 3 satisfactory, 4 not easy, 5 difficult

How easy was it for you to find directions to tourism attractions, beaches,

nature attractions etc., ?

1 easy, 2 moderately easy, 3 satisfactory, 4 not easy, 5 difficult

Have you visited any of the following tourist attractions?

Tick off visited attractions.

- Salacgriva museum
- Ceramic Fresco "Lighthouses if Latvia" in Salacgriva
- Lamprey weirs in Salacgriva
- Latvian sauna
- Farms
- Vidzeme stony Seashore & Veczemju Red Cliffs
- Randu meadows - walking path / birds watching
- Boating down by Salaca river
- Walking along seaside
- Biking in surroundings
- Niedraju- Pilka bog (walking trail & observation tower)
- Fishing in Salaca river / sea/ pond
- Trips out to the sea with fishermen boat
- Yacht Port

Other.....

Did you miss anything during your stay in this region? Yes No

If yes, what?

What additional tourism facilities would you like to see provided in this area, which could improve your stay here?

What attracted you to come to this region?

With which words would you describe the region?

What image do you see when you think of the region?

Thank you for your time and have a pleasant stay in the North Livonian Coastal Region.

13. Appendix 2 Analysis of Visitor Survey

The questionnaire was compiled by the Baltic Tourism Research and Training Centre. The fieldwork was carried out with the help of students.

Questionnaire was carried out in 3 regions: Ainaži, Häädemeeste and Salacgriva, and all together 119 people were questioned. Most responses came from Salacgriva area-68,9% (82 respondents), Häädemeeste and Ainaži had rather smaller number of responses. Numerical data is given in below in Table 1.

Table 1 Replies to questionnaire by location

Location	Frequency	Percent
Ainaži	17	14,3
Häädemeeste	20	16,8
Salacgriva	82	68,9
Total	119	100,0

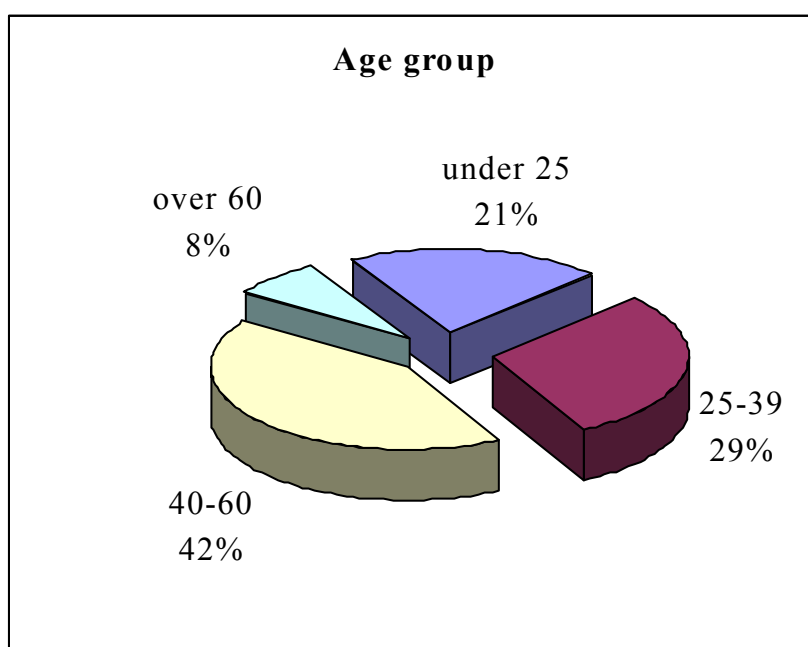


Diagram 1 Age range of interviewees

Interviewees were 46,2% male and 53,8%. were female. The age range of the interviewees can be seen in diagram1 below.

The largest group of interviewees was in the 40-60 (42%) age group, a little fewer were from the 25-39 (29%) group whilst only 1/5th were under the age of 25. The smallest number of interviewees were over 60 (8%).

Diagram 2 gives an overview of interviewees by countries of origin. The table also shows where these respondents were interviewed

Table 2 Countries of origin by interview location.

Country	Location			Total
	Ainaži	Häädemeeste	Salacgriva	
Homeland/Origin				
Not answered	0	1	1	2
Czech Republic	0	0	1	1
Estonia	4	6	1	11
Finland	1	6	5	12
France	0	0	1	1
Germany	1	0	9	10
Italy	0	0	1	1
Canada	0	1	0	1
Latvia	7	2	42	51
Lithuania	0	0	2	2
Netherlands	0	0	2	2
New Zealand	0	0	1	1
Norway	0	1	1	2
Poland	0	0	5	5
Russia	0	0	2	2
Sweden	2	3	2	7
Switzerland	0	0	2	2
United Kingdom	0	0	4	4
USA	2	0	0	2
Total	17	20	82	119

In Salacgriva more than half of the respondents were from Latvia, which is understandable as Salacgriva is in Latvia. There were also 9 German, 5 Finnish, 5 Polish and 4 English respondents. Questionnaires completed in Häädemeeste show that visitors origin was equally from Estonia and Finland, forming 2/3 out of the respondents but in addition there were 3 from Sweden, 1 from Norway, 2 from Latvia and 1 from Canada. In Ainaži the largest group of visitors come from Latvia (7 visitors) and 4 from Estonia.

From the duration of the trip, the most important figure is the destination itself as every destination is different, equally important is the presentation of the destination as well as the organization of lodging.

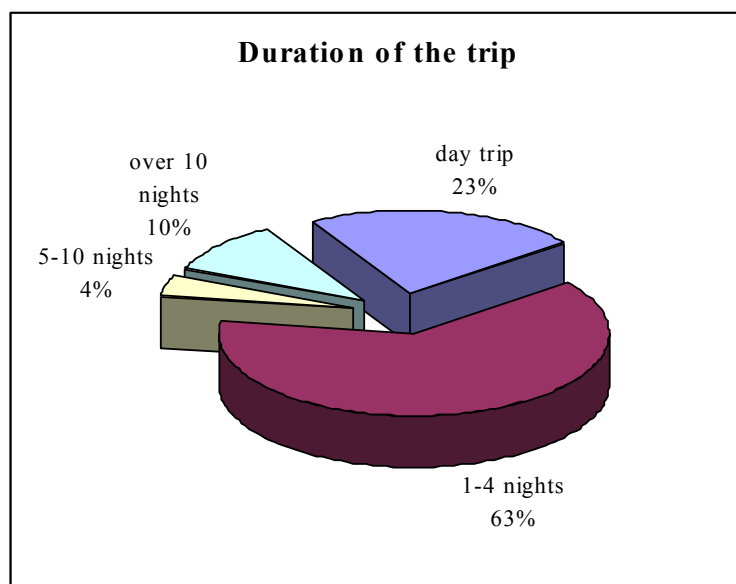


Diagram 2 Duration of the trip (in days)

Visitors most often stayed for 1-4 nights (63%), however the percentage division into locations is similar. The greatest number of day trips were made to Ainaži (29,4%) and the smallest number to Salacgriva (20%), but this can be explained by more attractions found in Salacgriva than in Ainaži, as the latter is the border town.

Due to the small number of respondents from foreign countries we cannot extract data showing the duration of their visits at the three destinations. Yet we can say that Latvians who had come to Salacgriva stayed more frequently for 1-4 nights, Estonians were most frequently daily travellers or stayed also for 1-4 nights. In comparison with other foreign visitors Finns had the most 5-10 night visits although

they most frequently stayed for only 1-4 nights. Diagram 3 shows the duration of stay in NLCR according to the country of origin.

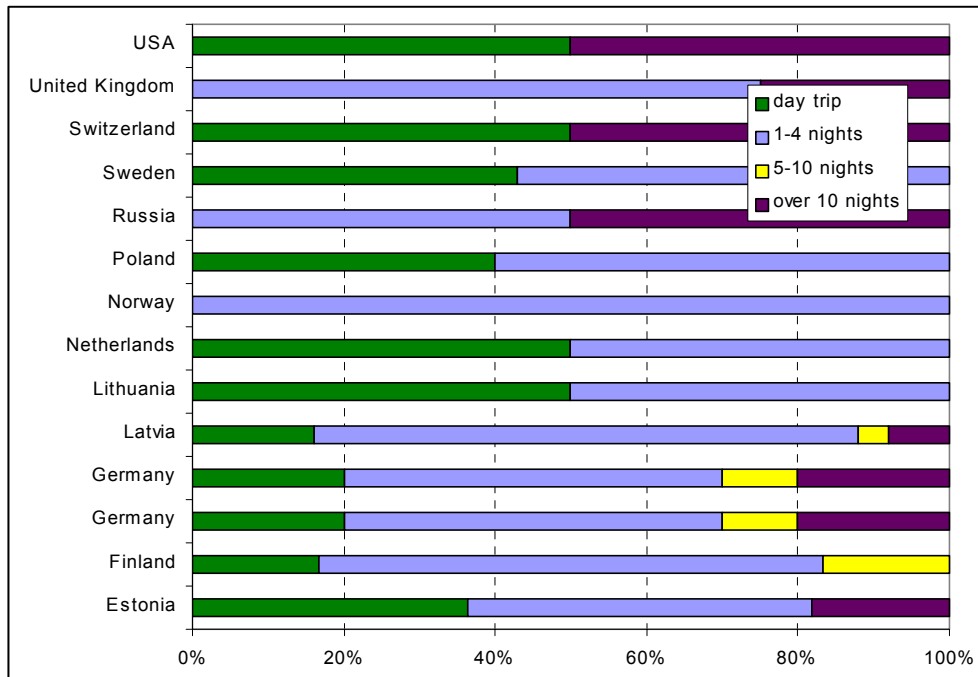


Diagram 3 Duration of the stay by different country visitors

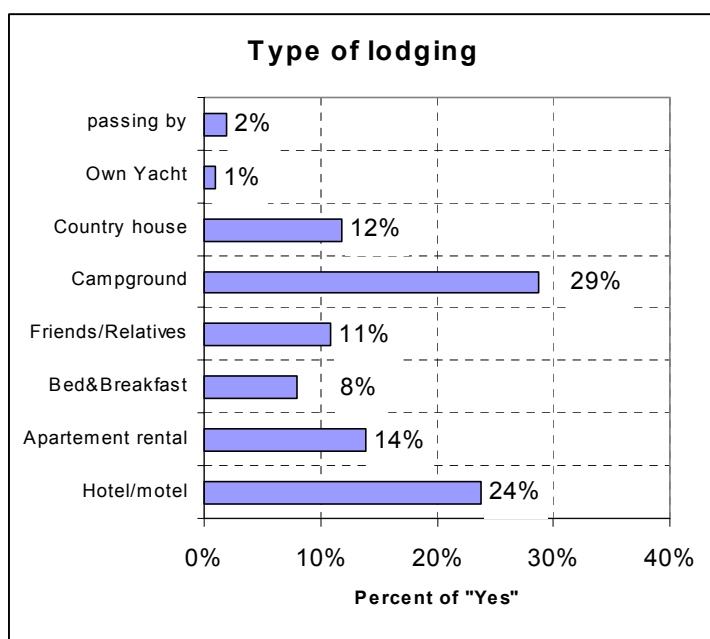


Diagram 4 Type of lodging

Diagram 4 shows the frequency of accommodation type used by respondents.

The most frequent type of lodging was on camping grounds (29%) and this was most popular with Estonians and Latvians.

Similarly popular were hotels and motels (24%), and these were frequented by Finnish, German and other visitors from foreign countries. The proportion of visitors staying with friends and relatives was (11%) and in a rented apartment was (14%). Renting an apartment was popular among Americans, Norwegians, Italians, Russians, Swedes and Latvians.

Over 70% of visitors travelled in groups of between 2 and 4 and whilst more than half (54,6%) of respondents said that they had children only 27,7% brought their families with them.

The purpose of visitors trips and their frequency is shown below in Diagram 5.

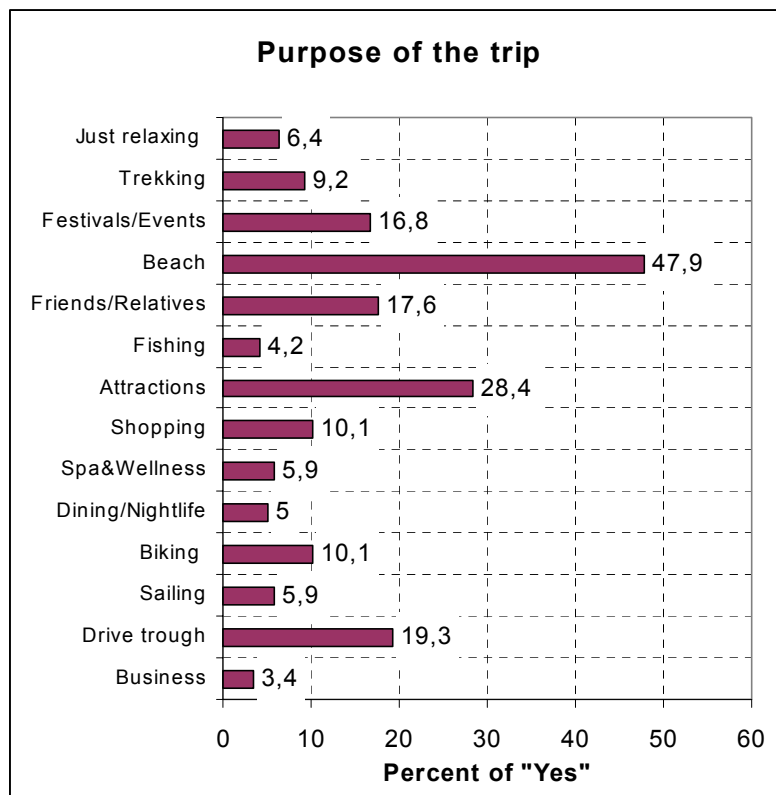


Diagram 5 Purpose of the trip

The most popular purpose of visit expressed by respondents was to visit the beach (47,9%). Somewhat less frequently (28,4) respondents visited attractions and 1/5th were just driving through. 17% were visiting friends/relatives or came to attend a festival. 6,8% were those who just came away from the noises of big cities or just for leisure and 3 visitors came to Häädemeeste to see the damage resulting from the storm of January 9th.

Details of mode of transport to reach NLCR are given in Table 3 below. The most frequently used mode of transport (71,4%) was the car, and this was most commonly used by Latvians and Estonians. Those who arrived in the area by bus were mostly Latvians, Americans and English whilst 11% of respondents came by bicycle.

Table 3 Transportation used to get to the destination

How did you get here	Frequency of "yes"	Percent of "yes"
----------------------	--------------------	------------------

Car	85	71,4
Plane	5	4,2
Bus	15	12,6
Train	1	,8
Sailing boat/yacht	2	1,7
Ship	1	,8
By bike	13	10,9
Motorcycle	1	0,8

The number of visitors who were new to the region was high at 44.5% yet 36,1% were repeat visitors having been to the region more than 3 times previously.

The source of information about the area was most frequently given as friends/relatives(37,8%), whilst 21% obtained the information from the internet. Rarely was the destination introduced by travel agencies (1,7%), advertisements influenced 6,7% of visitors and the directions were given by TIC to 10,1% of visitors.

Evaluation of the NLCR

The following table (Diagram 6) shows the evaluation by respondents of various aspects of the NLCR destination according to 5 point scale system,

Respondents generally evaluated the area highly at between moderate to good or excellent.

Visitors particularly rated the information service in TIC's highly (4.01) as was the provision of tourist information in the area (3.53). Visitor rated accomodation especially highly at 4.14 and were evidently satisfied with most aspects of the area.

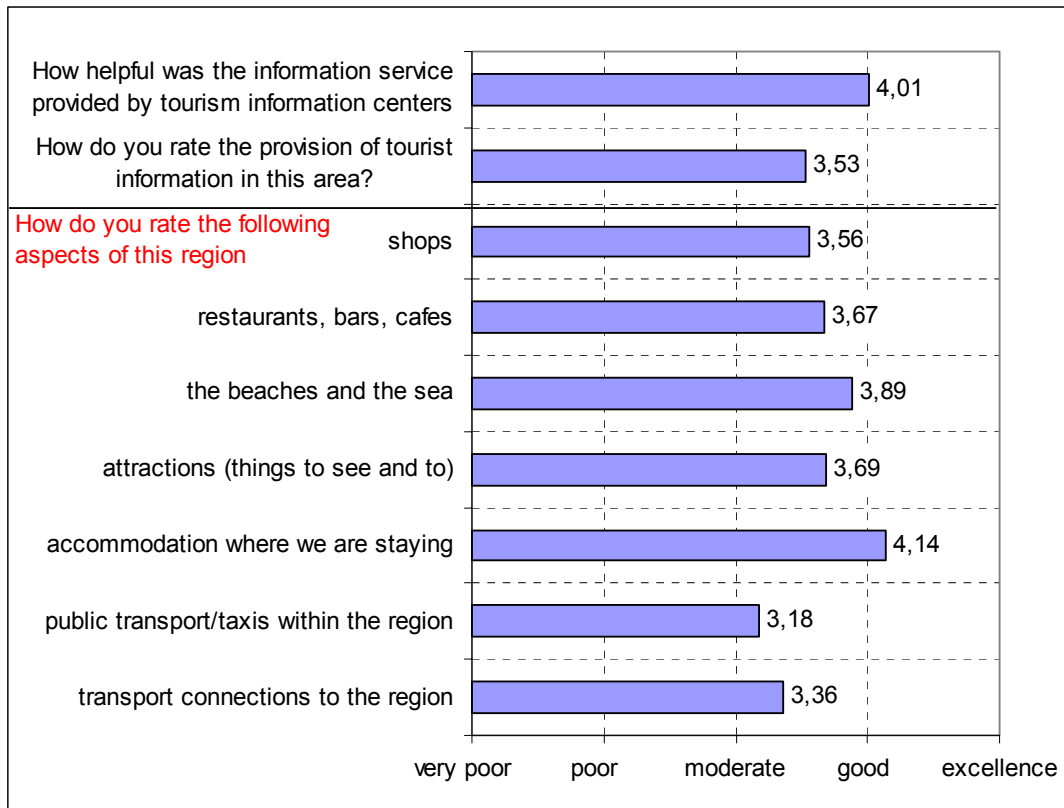


Diagram 6 Evaluation of various aspects of destinations

Few visitors found it very difficult or not very simple 13,4% to find information whilst 36.1% found it fairly simple or very simple to source information.

The NLCR area prides itself on the quality of the natural resource and Diagram 6 shows that is valued by tourist visitors too. In the opinion of tourists the nature and environmental importance for the destination is either important (21%) or very important (75%) whilst 27% and 65% said that Nature (conservation) added much or very much to the area.

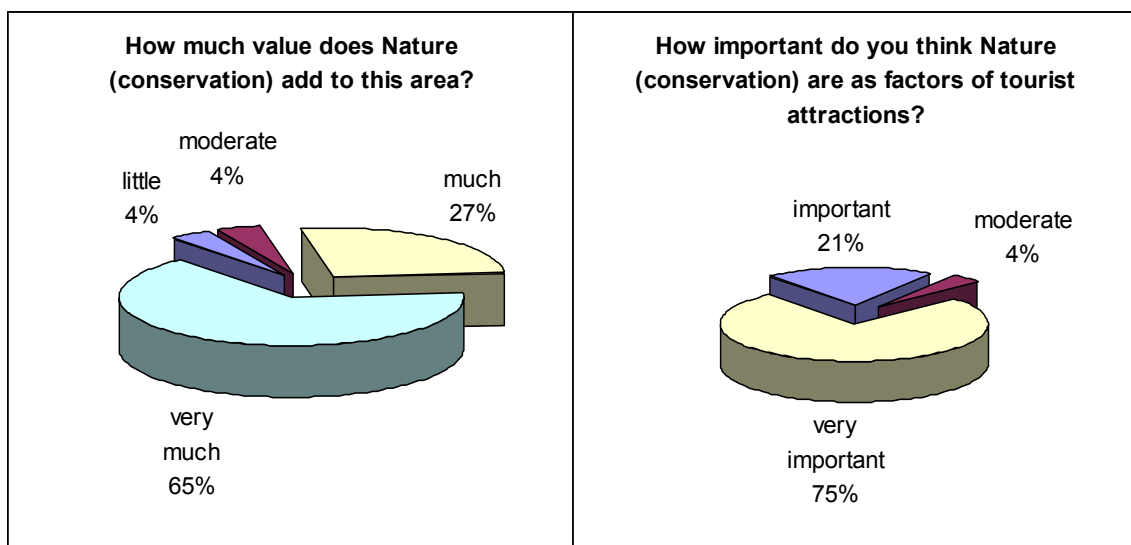


Diagram 7 Importance of the environment for the NLCR destination

Respondents were asked to identify which tourist attractions they visited during their stay in NLCR and the following tables show the popularity of the various attractions in the area.

Beaches were by far the most popular along with walking in the nature trails and the red cliffs, popular also were nature based activities such as bird watching and the nature centre in Kabli. Heritage activities such as museums, churches had differing levels of popularity whilst active tourism (fishing, boating and sea trips) were less frequented.

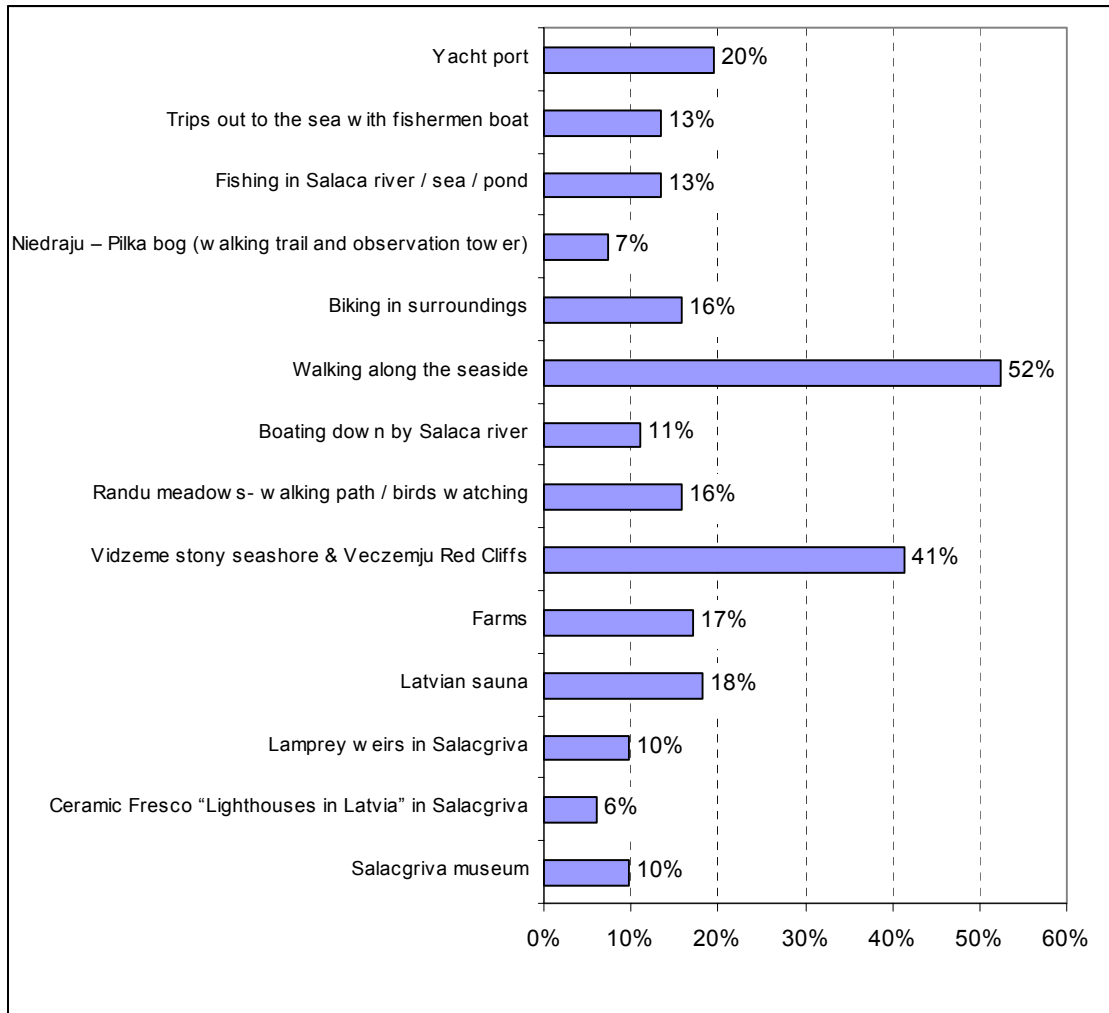


Diagram 8 Places visited in Latvia

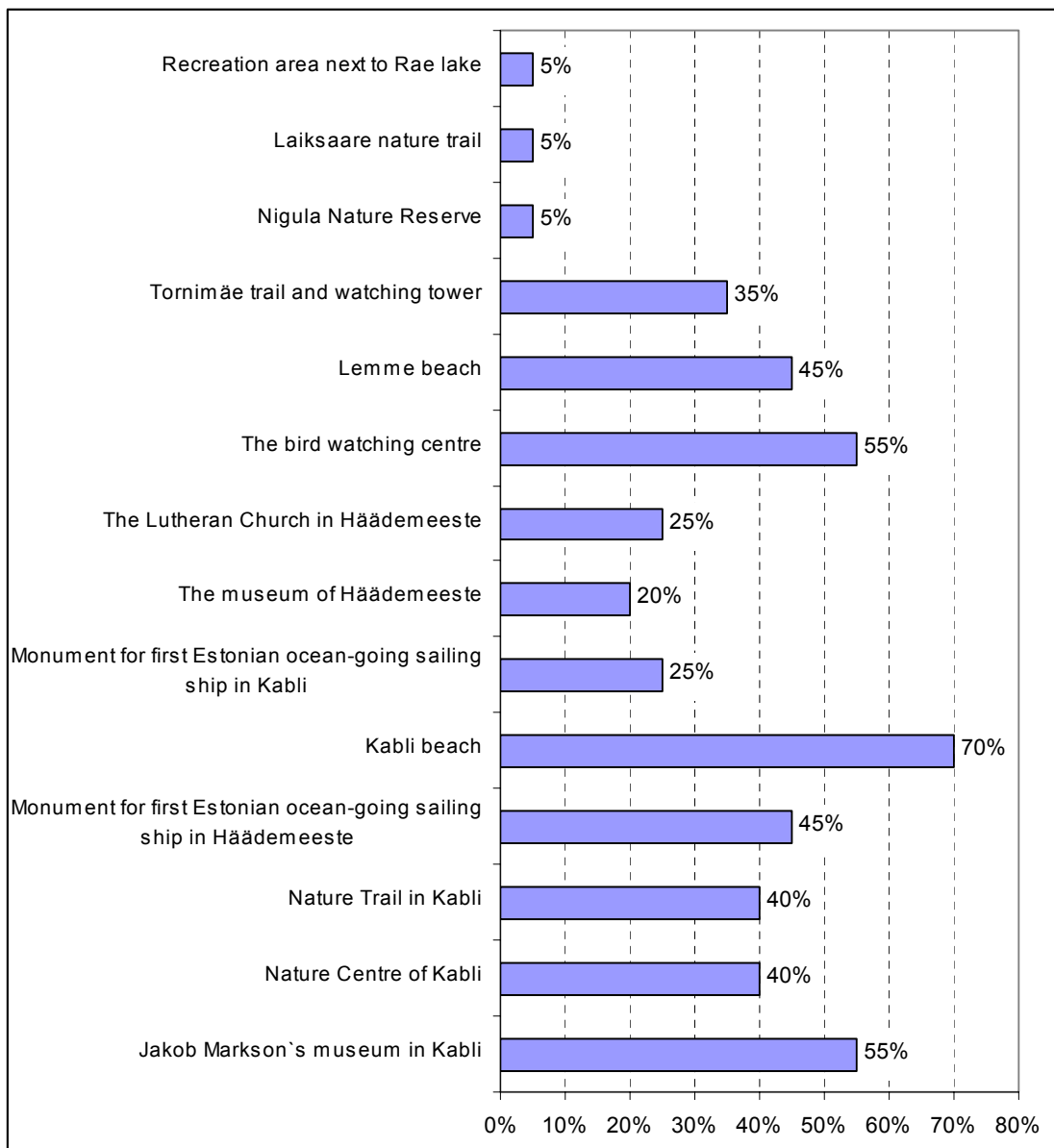


Diagram 9 Places visited in Estonia

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- 7. European Travel Commission (to follow)**