

"Introduce Estonia" marketing concept for tourism

AN OLD COUNTRY IN A SHINY PACKAGE





By geographic location we belong in the Baltic region.

By language we belong in Scandinavia. By allies we belong in Europe.

By the prevailing religion we belong in Germany. By history we belong in Sweden, Denmark, Livonia and Russia. By climate we belong in the North.

ESTONIA IS THE BEST KEPT SECRET OF SCANDINAVIA

Our country boasts the 3000-year-old crater of an iron meteorite that influenced the religions and customs of the Baltic Sea region. We have one of the most authentic Medieval Old Towns. The Kunda and Pärnu settlements are older than most cradles of the European civilization. Our language contains about a thousand words that date back to the last ice age. Our capital has one of the most seamless wireless Internet networks in the world. And about 90% of our population pay their taxes through the Internet...

Estonia is a small country with a rich inner life. As a young state that has for long remained in the shadow, the introduction of our inner riches to the whole world is essential in regard to the preservation of Estonia's uniqueness and the growth of its people.

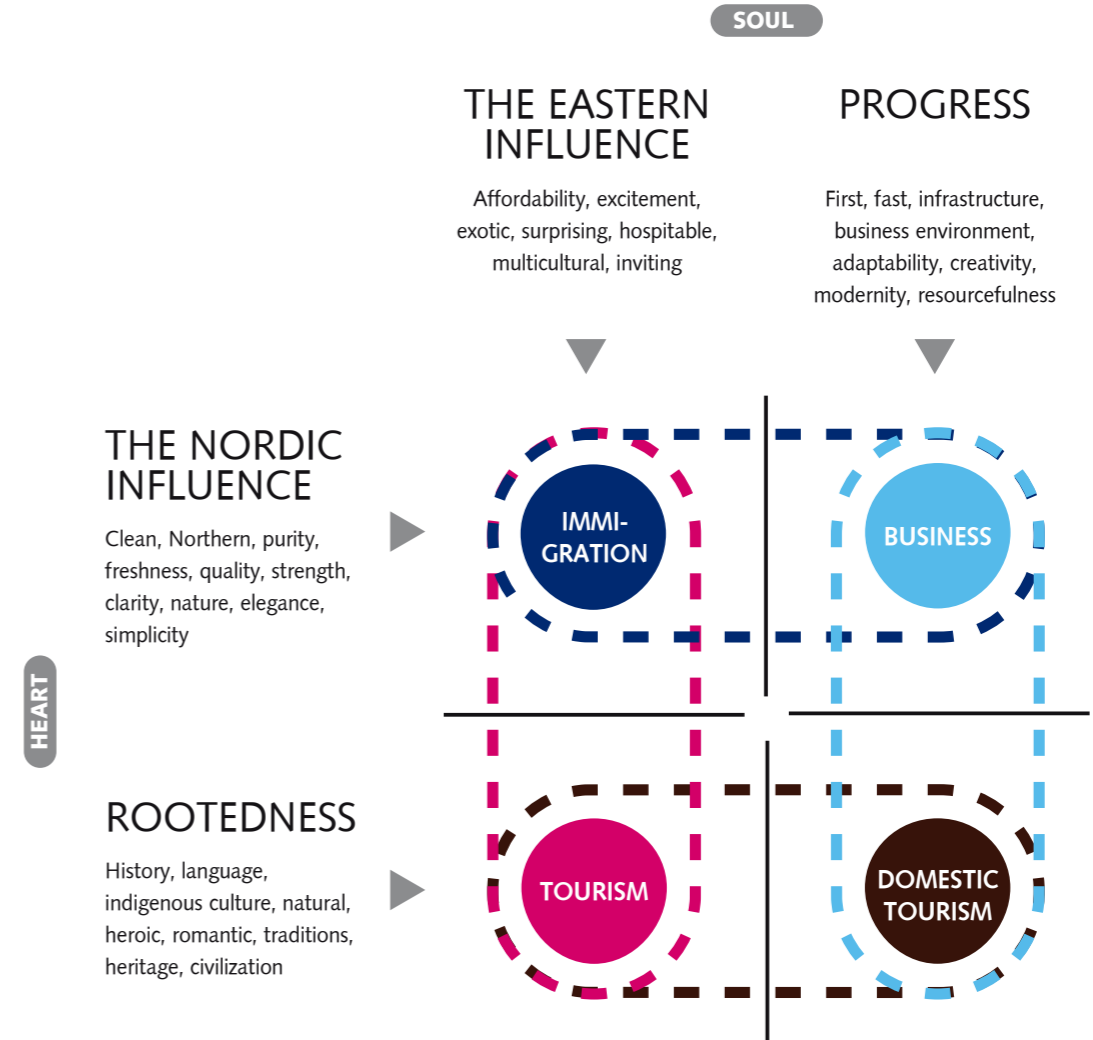
Being part of several different cultural areas at once, our country offers a wide range of sights and experiences. That is why tourism is a vital sphere when it comes to marketing Estonia. Our goal is to become a new memorable and exciting travel destination for people with diverse interests from all over the world.

“INTRODUCE ESTONIA”

“Introduce Estonia” is a marketing concept that establishes the manner and ways in which Estonia is to be marketed. A small country needs to make a significantly bigger effort in order to become internationally well known. Above all, its communication has to be clear and distinctive. We believe that our distinction is primarily founded on the strong contrasts created by the interaction of the cornerstones that have over time given shape to Estonia’s unique qualities in a compact area. These seemingly contradicting forces give rise to surprises wherever you look.

“Introduce Estonia” is an integral system that helps by means of its core value matrix to construe the cornerstones of Estonia (rootedness, the Nordic influence, the Eastern influence, progress) by assigning values and symbols to them. Through the matrix the cornerstones begin to interact in surprising ways, which can be interpreted as areas of communication. These are tourism, immigration, business and domestic tourism.

ESTONIA – POSITIVELY SURPRISING



Tourism is the most important area of application of the “Introduce Estonia” concept. It is also the only area that due to its different aspects employs nearly all combinations of the value matrix. That is why it is essential that everybody actively involved in marketing Estonia as a travel destination remain as consistent as possible in their reasoning.

First of all, each area stands for the respective target audience. While the target audience of the business area consists of the business circles who are interested in investing into Estonia or buying the local products, the target group of the tourism area is very broad. It includes individual travellers, groups and families, as well as different institutions from all over the world. They all shape their attitude towards Estonia based on Estonia’s marketing communication, among other things.

TOURISM AS THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA

ONE SYSTEM, SEVERAL ARGUMENTS

There is an old tale of five blind monks, who come across an elephant on their way. Each monk touches a different part of the animal, and they never reach an agreement on what kind of creature the elephant really is.

Estonia is not an elephant. However, it is certainly multifaceted and can therefore be interpreted in several ways. It is in our interests that upon “touching” Estonia, the five monks could gain a similar understanding of what the country is like and why it is worth visiting.

A big picture consists of small details. Likewise, presenting Estonia as a travel destination includes four main topics that are most important to us –

CITY HOLIDAY, CULTURAL HOLIDAY, NATURE HOLIDAY and WELLNESS HOLIDAY.

Each topic provides arguments in three points of interest: the general interest, business tourism and family tourism. The latter two are so-called special interests – additional arguments to the general interest. To put it simply, when talking about the Old Town of Tallinn, for instance, all general interest items also apply to business and family travel. But in the context of business tourism the Old Town is also (for example) a unique conference venue, and when it comes to family tourism, it is a fun and safe environment for people travelling with children.

TOURISM TOPIC OF ESTONIA

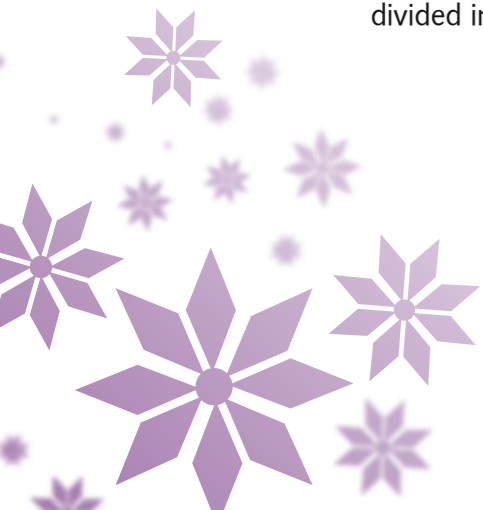
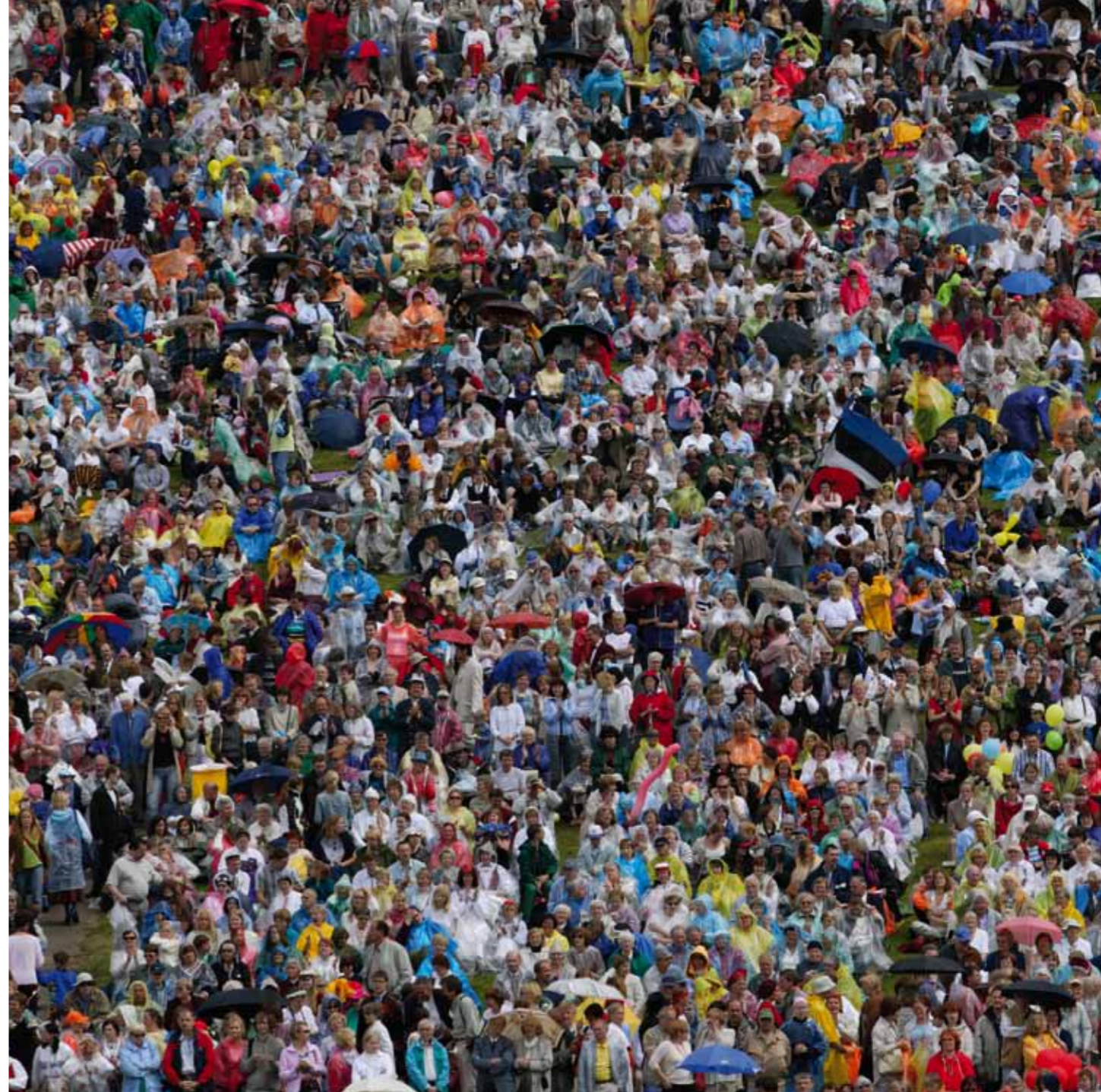
- 1 CITY HOLIDAY** – Tallinn is the face and tourism centre of Estonia. With its phenomenal Old Town and high-quality infrastructure Tallinn is not only a place for sightseeing and relaxing, but also a good starting point for a tourist who is planning to visit our neighbouring countries. Stockholm, Helsinki, Riga and Saint Petersburg are all situated close to Tallinn. Tallinn also functions as an excellent base for getting to know the rest of Estonia. With Tallinn (as well as other major Estonian towns), it is amazing how organically the modern society is intertwined with the historically rich and diverse city environment. Compared to Tokyo, London, Paris or Rome, Tallinn is certainly less known and considerably smaller, but with at least as diverse a community.



TOURISM TOPIC OF ESTONIA

2 CULTURAL HOLIDAY – being a new old European country, there are a lot of unique and hitherto unseen things to be discovered in our culture and history. At the same time, our variegated history rich in foreign conquerors provides the joy of recognition for people from many different cultural areas. We have stirring and amazing stories to tell about the ancient times of sovereignty, the rule of the Order, the heyday of the Hanseatic League, and everything else that is nostalgic for us and comprehensible for the rest of the world. In order to define the topic of culture more clearly, it has been divided into four fundamental focus topics:

- A** ARCHITECTURE
- B** TRADITIONAL CULTURE
- C** CONTEMPORARY CULTURE
- D** CUISINE





FOCUS TOPIC OF CULTURAL HOLIDAY:

2^A **ARCHITECTURE** has been given separate focus for landmark reasons. We have one of the best preserved Old Towns in Europe, over a thousand manors, hundreds of notable churches, and strongholds both in ruins and restored. Tallinn's workers' districts, such as Lasnamäe, and the wooden districts (Kalamaja, Kopli, Kassisaba, Supilinn, Karlova, etc.) unique in the European context are sights in their own right. We have architectural heritage from very different time periods and in various forms. The architectural diversity found in such a small territory is no doubt one of Estonia's positively surprising qualities.



FOCUS TOPIC OF CULTURAL HOLIDAY:


2^{B,C} **TRADITIONAL** and **CONTEMPORARY CULTURE** address our people and customs, as well as their products from yesterday and today. These two topics cover a host of themes that provide excitement for tourists with a deeper appreciation of culture. Estonian handicraft, Open Air Museum, Viljandi Folk Music Festival, Leigo Lake Music Festival, Nargen Festival and the Song and Dance Festival – these are just a few of our world standard cultural phenomena. It is amazing how a small introverted nation is able to preserve its culture for thousands of years up to the present day – and always stay on the ball.



FOCUS TOPIC OF CULTURAL HOLIDAY:

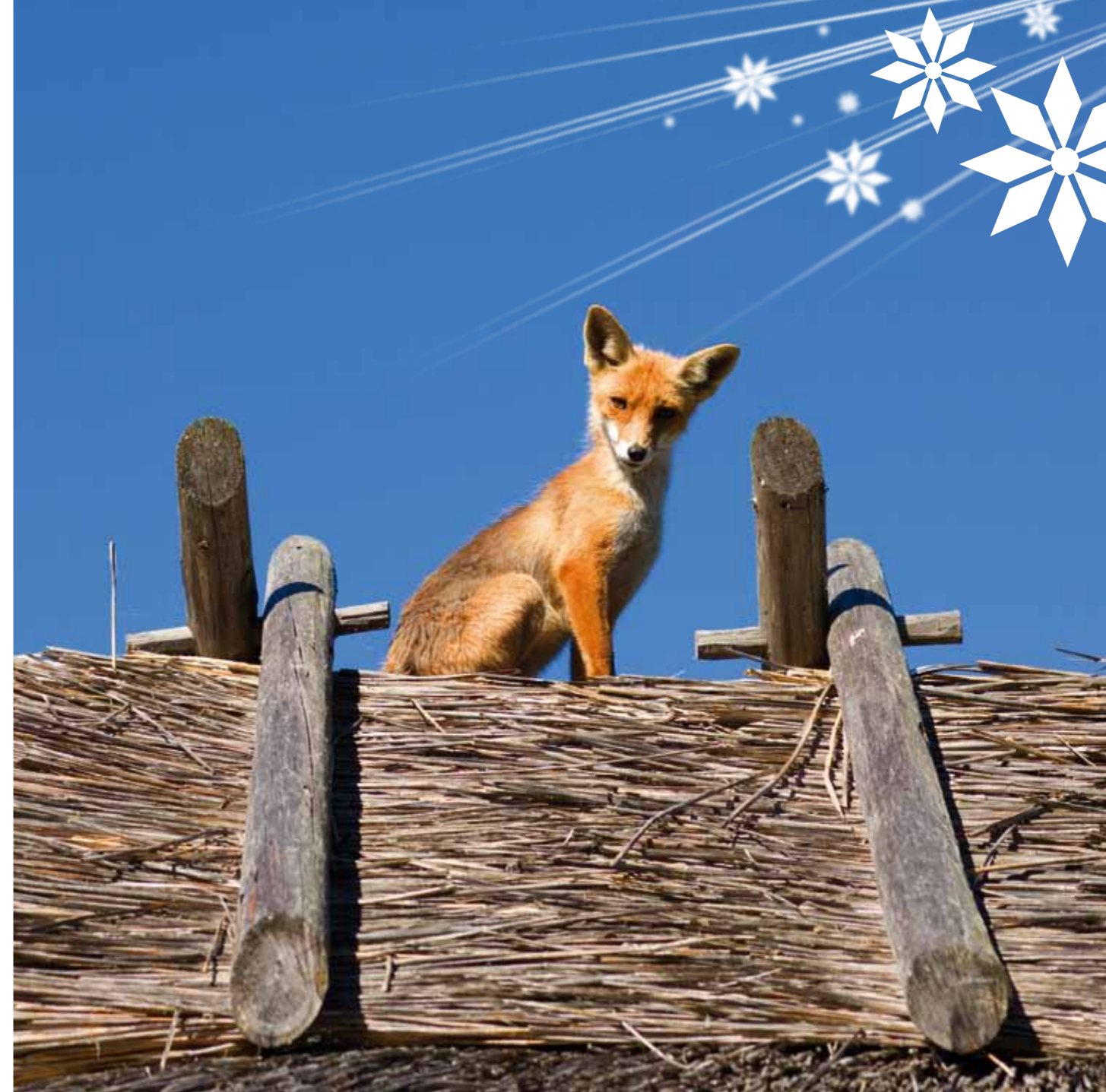
2^D

CUISINE is among the top reasons why culturally inclined tourists visit other regions. Estonian cuisine is pure and has a long tradition – our customary black bread and kama (a mixture of rye, oat, barley and pea flour), for example, are certainly remarkable phenomena. The mixture of Russian, German, coastal, forest and country cuisine is interesting and fascinating. It is said that the authentic Estonian cuisine is still only developing, but it has a lot of potential. What is positively surprising about our food is its wholesomeness, universality and the freshness of the tastes that have stood the test of time.



TOURISM TOPIC OF ESTONIA

- 3 NATURE HOLIDAY** – the crisp Northern climate in its temperate form is a source of wonderful discoveries for anyone who is willing to leave the town behind. Wild animals, primeval forests, swamps, bogs, drumlins, limestone banks, the sea, beautiful lakes and islands – our land abounds in everything that is rarely found elsewhere. The sparse population allows you to be completely undisturbed, but what is so charming about a small country is that the next moment you could find yourself in the middle of the cosy main street of a village. Estonian nature lets one experience four distinct and enjoyable seasons – and never fails to amaze.



TOURISM TOPIC OF ESTONIA

- 4** **WELLNESS HOLIDAY** – if there was a competition for selecting the spa kingdom of the world, Estonia could easily snatch that title. Tens of thousands of tourists flock to Estonia each year in order to spend their holiday in a local spa. Indeed, there is one for every taste and need – from those providing simple relaxation to highly specialised medical establishments. In addition to spas also sports and hiking tracks, different sports events, golf courses and simply relaxing by the seaside provide a healthy and invigorating change from the everyday routine.





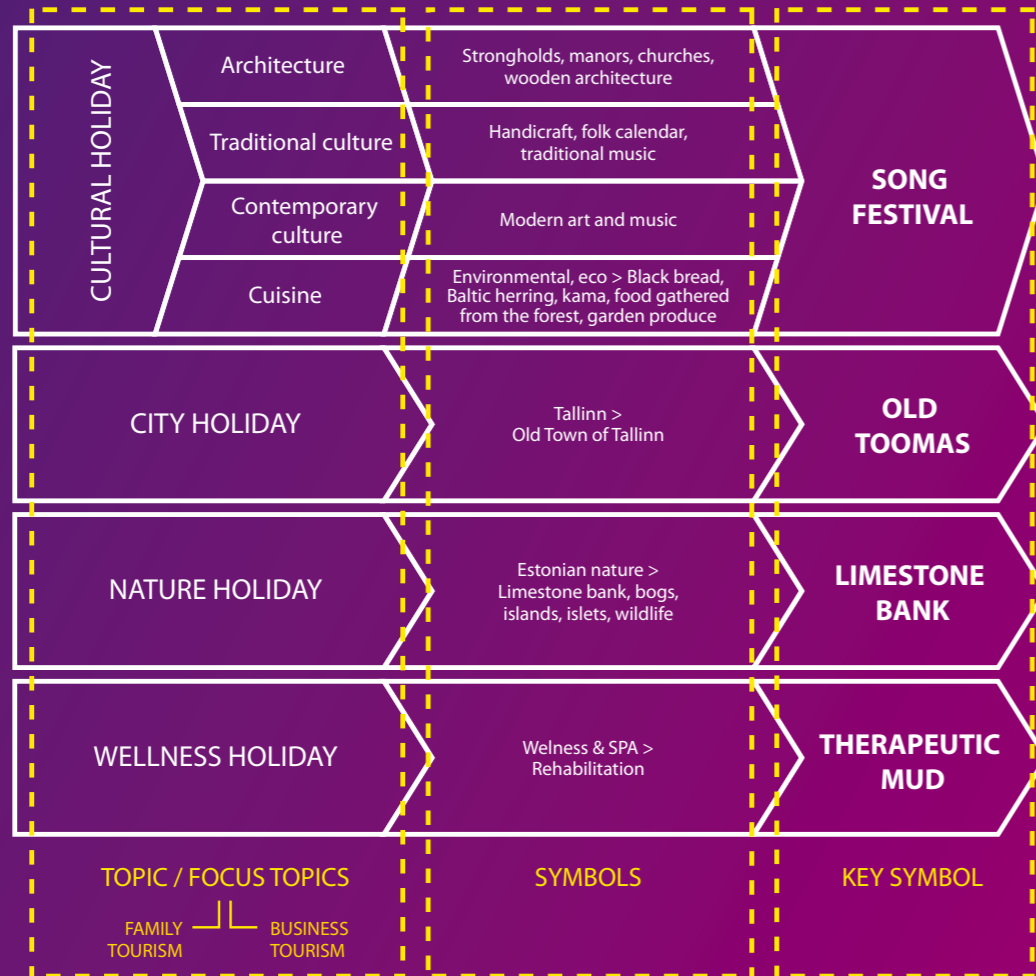
APPROACHING THE TOPICS AND PRIORITIES

Each topic is a small world on its own. In some cases those worlds intertwine. It is very difficult to approach the topic of city holiday with no heed for culture. And exploring nature certainly promotes good health. That is why it is important that those presenting the topics of Estonian tourism understand the turning point, where a city holiday becomes a cultural holiday, as well as the differences between nature holidays and wellness holidays. To prevent communication from becoming too vague and blurred, specific symbols have been agreed upon within each topic.

In the context of the marketing concept “Introduce Estonia”, the symbols – objects, events, phenomena or landmarks – are in fact the basic elements of stories, or sources of inspiration for developing a topic in accordance with the contrast principle of the “Positively Surprising” platform. They have been established so that those who generate texts, take pictures or create advertisements in order to promote Estonia can talk about the same Estonia through the same symbols. The goal is not to homogenize all advertisements, but to establish systematic and clear common arguments. Each topic (in the case of cultural travel also each focus topic) has several symbols which are presented in a logical order from general to particular. It cannot be anticipated in which context or how extensively a topic will be covered. In some cases it is possible to write lengthily and cohesively on the Internet or in a booklet, dissecting the topic in depth. In other cases there is barely enough room for a picture and a sentence. Our system, however, must be able to satisfy both needs equally.

So with a city holiday, for instance, we could on a general level talk about Tallinn, its history, architecture, position and surprising peculiarities. Under very limited circumstances, on the other hand, we could just show the key symbol of the city holiday – Vana Toomas (Old Thomas) – and say, “Come meet the best-known citizen of Tallinn – the 479-year-old Thomas.”

SYMBOLS ORDERED BY TOPICS

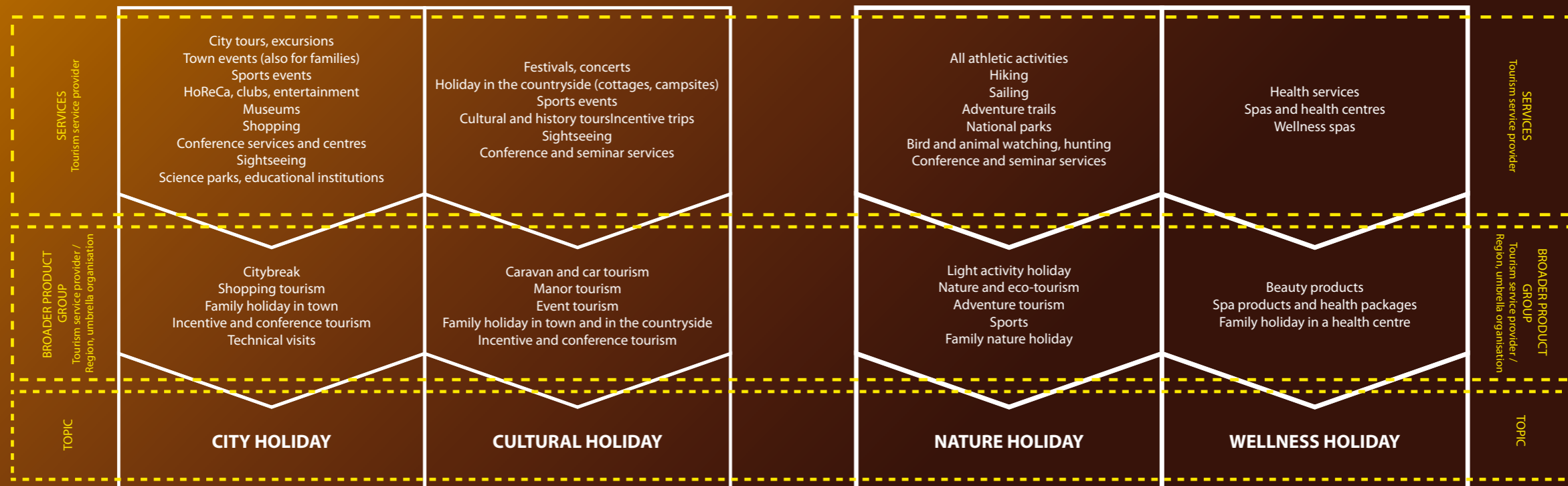


For each topic a separate guide has been prepared that functions as a practical tool and source of ideas for choosing the symbols for the topic. The topic guides have been put together on the basis of the most general level. They provide specific ideas on what to say and how to talk about a given topic. The guides also establish the key symbols for a topic sequence. That does not mean that everybody who talks about Estonia needs to strictly follow the prescribed sequences. The guides are intended as useful materials or constructors, which enable the presenter to create a set of symbols, themes and interesting facts about Estonia that is most suited to his or her needs.

The organizations dealing with incoming tourism are very diverse. The marketing concept “Introduce Estonia” and the logic of the message of its tourism sub-strategy are a universal tool for providing inspiration to any tourism service provider for presenting Estonia on a general level.

An organization or businessman representing a particular service or a broader product group is able to find topic-based generic arguments easily and comfortably by positioning itself on the table below. It is important to understand that the topics are not meant to overshadow the individuality and messages of different companies and organizations, but to bridge the service provider and the state as an integral system.

HOW TO FIND A SUITABLE TOPIC?



TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS

This system is, above all, designed to synchronize and prioritize Estonia's messages and arguments in the area of tourism.

There are many organizations and associations who are involved in presenting Estonia to foreign tourists. Broadly speaking, the users can be divided into three groups:

- 1 ORGANIZATIONS PRESENTING ESTONIA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION IN GENERAL** – predominantly organizations operating at state level, who are introducing Estonia in general terms, and whose goal is to promote tourism – any kind of tourism (e.g. Enterprise Estonia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, etc.). In their campaigns and in spreading general information they proceed from the “Introduce Estonia” marketing concept and the principles of the tourism sub-strategy according to procedural plans.



2 REGIONS AND UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

– in some cases tourism is one of the many areas of activity for an organization (e.g. local governments), in other cases tourism is addressed within a certain subset (e.g. Estonian Spa Association). With all these organizations, the principles of the tourism sub-strategy of the “Introduce Estonia” marketing concept can conceivably be used in the context of presenting Estonia as a travel destination. That means that this logic (topics > a selection of symbols or the main symbol for the given topic) can most efficiently be used in instances where Estonia is approached in general terms.

For example, it is not reasonable for Tartu to promote itself primarily as “a town in the vicinity of Tallinn”. However, on Tartu’s website or in a booklet, for instance, in the context of a city holiday it is certainly worth mentioning Tallinn as an additional benefit within arm’s reach to anyone visiting Tartu.



3 TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDERS

– the “Introduce Estonia” marketing concept with its tourism sub-strategy is the best tool for all tourism service providers, enabling them to understand the arguments we have in our favour and the ways in which Estonia can present itself to the world. The state in cooperation with structural funds is no doubt the most important promoter of Estonia as a travel destination. By conducting campaigns in different target markets, developing Estonia as a brand,

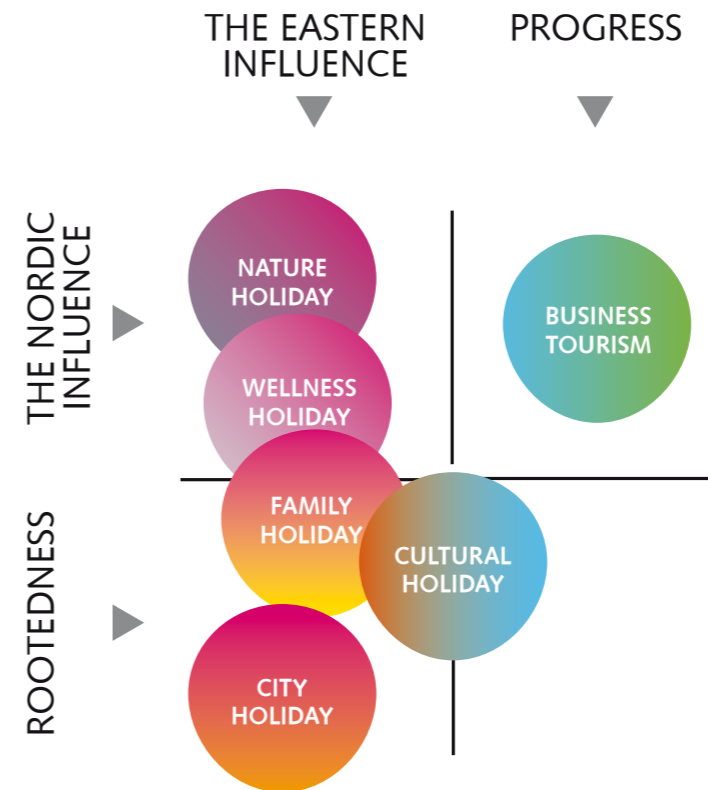
participating in exhibitions and conferences, creating information materials and developing the portal visitestonia.com, the state is taking considerable steps to help businessmen find clients from abroad. At the same time, tourism companies’ own contribution to creating new contacts is important. By using in their communications the same symbols that the state does, a much needed amplification effect is created for tourism service providers, helping the private sector cut down costs – there is no need to invent Estonia all over again.

THE POSITION OF TOPICS IN THE "INTRODUCE ESTONIA" VALUE MATRIX

The value matrix provides a basis for creating and modelling the stories needed for introducing Estonia. Through its four cornerstones it helps establish exciting and surprising contrasts for four different areas.

Tourism as the most extensive area has been defined in the matrix as the intersection of the Eastern influence (hospitality, radiance) and rootedness (culture, history), expounded by the Nordic influence (nature and clarity). However, when approaching tourism and its needs in broader terms, the special interests and the wide scope of the topics mean that in several aspects tourism goes far beyond its centre. For example, we could claim that business tourism (predominantly conference and incentive tourism) represents first of all the interests of the business area's target audience (business to business), and only then those of classical tourism. Similarly, nature tourism which plays an important role as a general topic tends to avoid the sparkling facade tourism and is seclusion oriented.

Insofar as the value matrix also establishes standards for illustrations, colours and design elements in addition to the contrasting values and ideology, it is essential to be aware of the position of the topic in the value matrix in order to facilitate the creation of illustrative variations.



In addition to the four main topics special interests have also been positioned in the matrix as these are specific target audiences that will most likely sooner or later require the development of specialized promotional materials.



marketing@visitestonia.com
www.visitestonia.com

The “Introduce Estonia” marketing concept with its sub-strategies is an integral system for presenting Estonia as a travel destination with clear arguments for each area. “Positively Surprising” is a unique position with abundant applications. The creation and presentation of contrasts depends solely on the boldness or needs of the creator/presenter.

These are also the very same aspirations of the “Introduce Estonia” marketing concept – it is rather designed to provide leads and priorities for tourism promoters, not to establish a solid set of rules for each step of the journey. The marketing concept for tourism is a practical tool and aid to everybody who is interested in selling Estonia to foreign tourists. Also the topic guides contained within the concept are intended for the same purpose. All materials are freely available at tutvustaeestit.eas.ee.

The success of the “Introduce Estonia” concept solely depends on how actively it is used. It is only through actual experience and constructive feedback that it can be developed and improved. Each question is valued, all criticism is welcome.