

Developing Sustainable Tourism in Hiiumaa

Project: Baltic Sea Knowledge Center

14.09.2011



Hiiumaa – Estonia’s “Other” Island

- ◆ Area: 1019 km²
- ◆ Population: 10 000
- ◆ Coastline: 326 km
- ◆ 70% of area under forests
- ◆ County centre: Town of Kärdla (3684 residents)
- ◆ 5 municipalities (Kärdla + 4 rural municipalities)



Hiiumaa's Protected Areas



Cultural Heritage of Hiiumaa



- ◆ Historical lighthouses (Kõpu, Tahkuna, Ristna)
 - Kõpu (1531) – one of world's oldest continually operating lighthouses
 - Pühalepa Church
 - Suuremõisa Manor House
 - Rural / folk heritage (Mihkli Farm, Soera Farm Museum)
 - Military history sites (WW1, WW2)

Cultural Heritage of Hiiumaa



- ◆ Historical lighthouses (Kõpu, Tahkuna, Ristna)
 - Kõpu (1531) – one of world's oldest continually operating lighthouses
 - Pühalepa Church
 - Suuremõisa Manor House
 - Rural / folk heritage (Mihkli Farm, Soera Farm Museum)
 - Military history sites (WW1, WW2)

Tourism Industry: Hiiumaa vs Saaremaa

SAAREMAA

- ◆ Higher brand / top-of-the mind awareness in Estonia and abroad
- ◆ Estonia's No. 3 tourism destination (after Tallinn, Pärnu)
 - 275 334 tourist overnights (2010)
- ◆ Popular spa / wellness tourism destination (Kuressaare)

HIIUMAA

- ◆ “Less known secret” domestically and internationally
- ◆ Estonia's No. 11 tourism county (of 15)
 - 31 499 tourist overnights (2010)
- ◆ No spas, no year-round tourism attractions / highest seasonality factor in Estonia

Tourism Development: Approaches

- ◆ To date, lack of strategic tourism planning on island (county) level; new tourism development plan in the works
- ◆ Island's destination marketing conducted by Hiiumaa Tourism Association – membership-based tourism trade organization
- ◆ Practical initiatives by local activists (municipality officials, entrepreneurs, civil society) , e.g.,
 - Lighthouse tourism
 - Special interest events (one-time, regular)
 - New infrastructure development, e.g.,
 - Port of Kärdla Reconstruction (3.2 million EUR, ongoing)
 - Baltic Sea Knowledge Center (concept development, feasibility study)

Lighthouse Tourism

Kõpu 1531



Tahkuna 1875

Ristna
1874



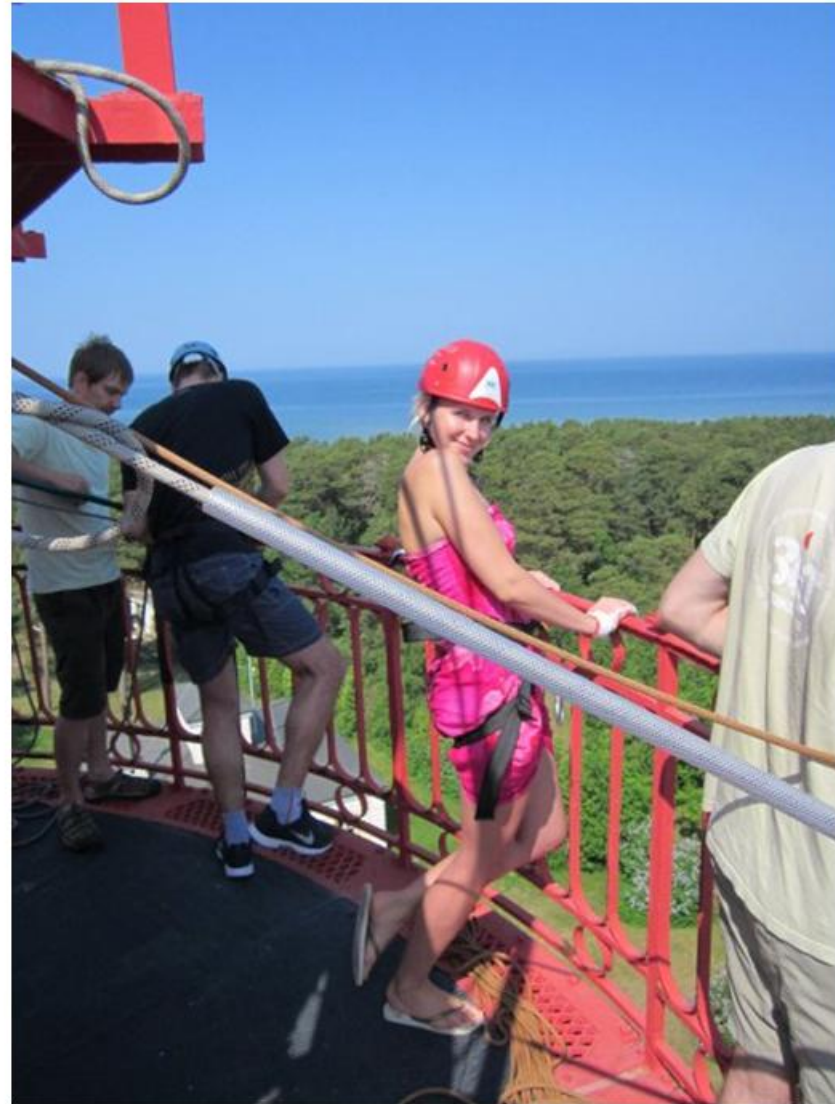
Lighthouse Tourism

- ◆ Participation in international projects (incl: “Lighthouse tourism in the Archipelagos of South-West Finland and Estonia”, Interreg IIIA, 2006-2008, Hiiumaa partner: Kõrgessaare Municipality)
- ◆ Estonian Lighthouse Society established at the initiative of Kõrgessaare Municipality
- ◆ 3 historical lighthouses (Kõpu, Tahkuna, Ristna) open for visitors (Kõpu: 18 000 visitors in 2010)
- ◆ New and innovative use of lighthouses for tourism development
 - Concerts (e.g., Kõpu Sunset Concerts)
 - Theatre in Tahkuna
 - Extreme / adventure tourism (rappelling)
 - Thematic routes and tours
- ◆ 2nd place in Estonia’s national EDEN (European Destination of Excellence) contest in 2011 (for lighthouse tourism development)

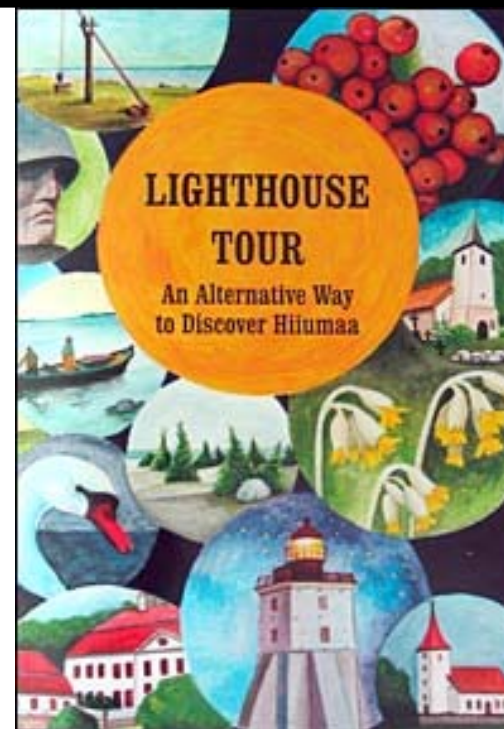
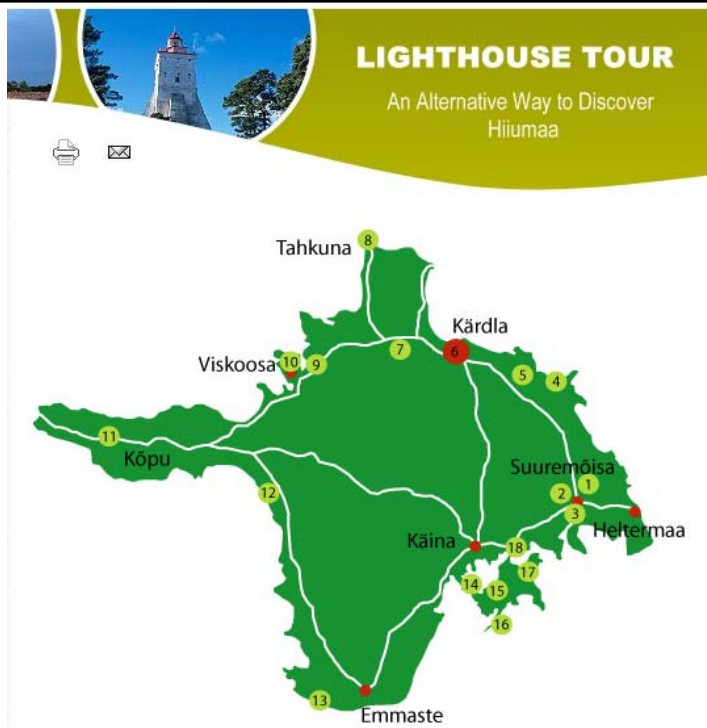
Theatre in Tahkuna



Rappelling in Ristna



Hiiumaa's Lighthouse Tour



- ◆ Thematic route for car and bicycle tourist
- ◆ Guidebook in Estonian and English
- ◆ Offered by several tour operators
- ◆ Lighthouses incorporated into various special interest tours (e.g., military history in Tahkuna, nature tours in Ristna, adventure tourism)

12

(Regular) Events as Tourism Magnets

- ◆ Sõru Jazz Festival
- ◆ Hiiu Folk (Folk Music Festival)
- ◆ Kärdla Day of Cafes (15 one-day cafes)
- ◆ Hiiumaa Running Marathon
- ◆ LestaFest (Flounder Festival)
- ◆ Hiiumaa Chamber Music Days
- ◆ Festival of Wooden Boats
- ◆ and much more



Goals and Challenges Going Forward

- ◆ **Clarify positioning** on the tourism market - what does Hiiumaa as a destination stand for? What does it offer (and *not* offer) its visitors?
- ◆ **Improve destination brand awareness**, esp. for incoming visitors
- ◆ Reduce seasonality by **developing year-round tourism attractions**, infrastructure
- ◆ **Increase tourist flows** by creating more **reasons to visit** - both on and off-season
- ◆ ... while following principles of sustainable development

Project: Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre

- ◆ Original concept: “**Baltic Sea Lighthouse Theme Park**” – primarily outdoor attraction with small-scale models of Baltic lighthouses
 - Authored by Kõrgessaare Municipality
 - Builds on success in developing lighthouse tourism
 - However, does not address seasonality reduction goals, limited job creation opportunities; concerns about economic viability
- ◆ In 2010, lighthouse theme park concept transformed into broader, more ambitious “**Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre**” project
 - Going beyond lighthouses and even beyond tourism
 - Capturing and building on *genius loci* of Hiiumaa – the sea

Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre: Objectives

- ◆ Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre as Estonia's first marine education centre
- ◆ Mission: to raise awareness of Baltic Sea among Estonia's general public and to stimulate interest in Baltic Sea related professions and activities, especially among Estonian youth
- ◆ Modern, high-quality learning, training and research environment for organizations involved in marine education, science and environmental protection in Estonia and other Baltic Sea countries
- ◆ Centre should also serve as a tourist attraction, bring more visitors to Kõrgessaare Municipality, lengthen stay and increase spending

Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre: Partners

- ◆ **Kõrgessaare Municipality** – project initiator and coordinator
- ◆ **Estonian Marine Academy** (www.emara.ee) – Estonia's principal marine education institution on vocational, undergraduate levels
- ◆ **Marine Systems Institute** at Tallinn University of Technology (www.msi.ttu.ee)
- ◆ Several local partners (e.g., Hiiumaa Vocational School)

Baltic Sea Knowledge Centre- Functionality

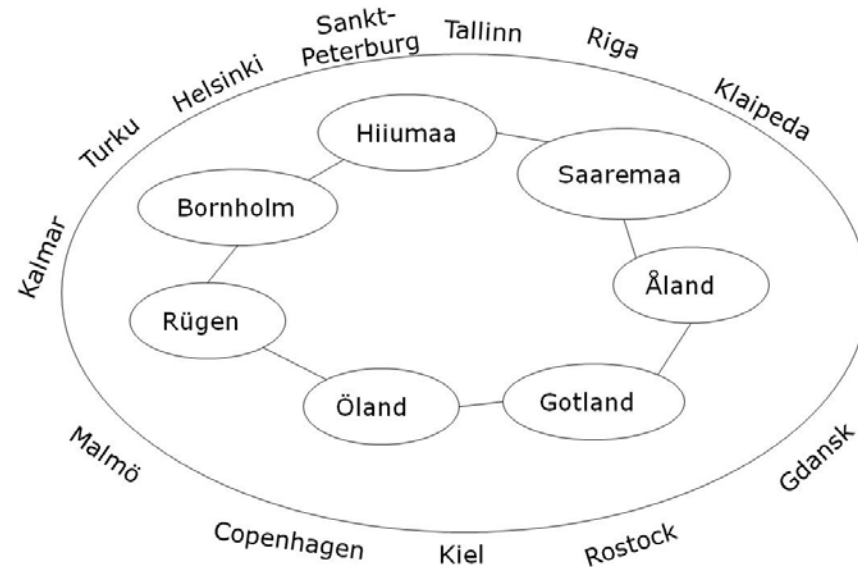
- ◆ Multifunctional Baltic Sea – themed center serving three primary areas: research, education and tourism.
 - **Research:** facilities for Marine Systems Institute (MSI) field base (incl offices, conference auditorium, workshop rooms)
 - **Education:** classrooms, (incl ‘sea practice’ room, simulator room)
 - **Tourism:** Exhibition room for permanent and temporary exhibitions about the Baltic Sea, souvenir shop, Baltic sea–themed walking path, children’s area, etc.
- ◆ **Supporting infrastructure:** cafeteria/restaurant, visitor apartments, etc.

Permanent exhibition: guiding principles

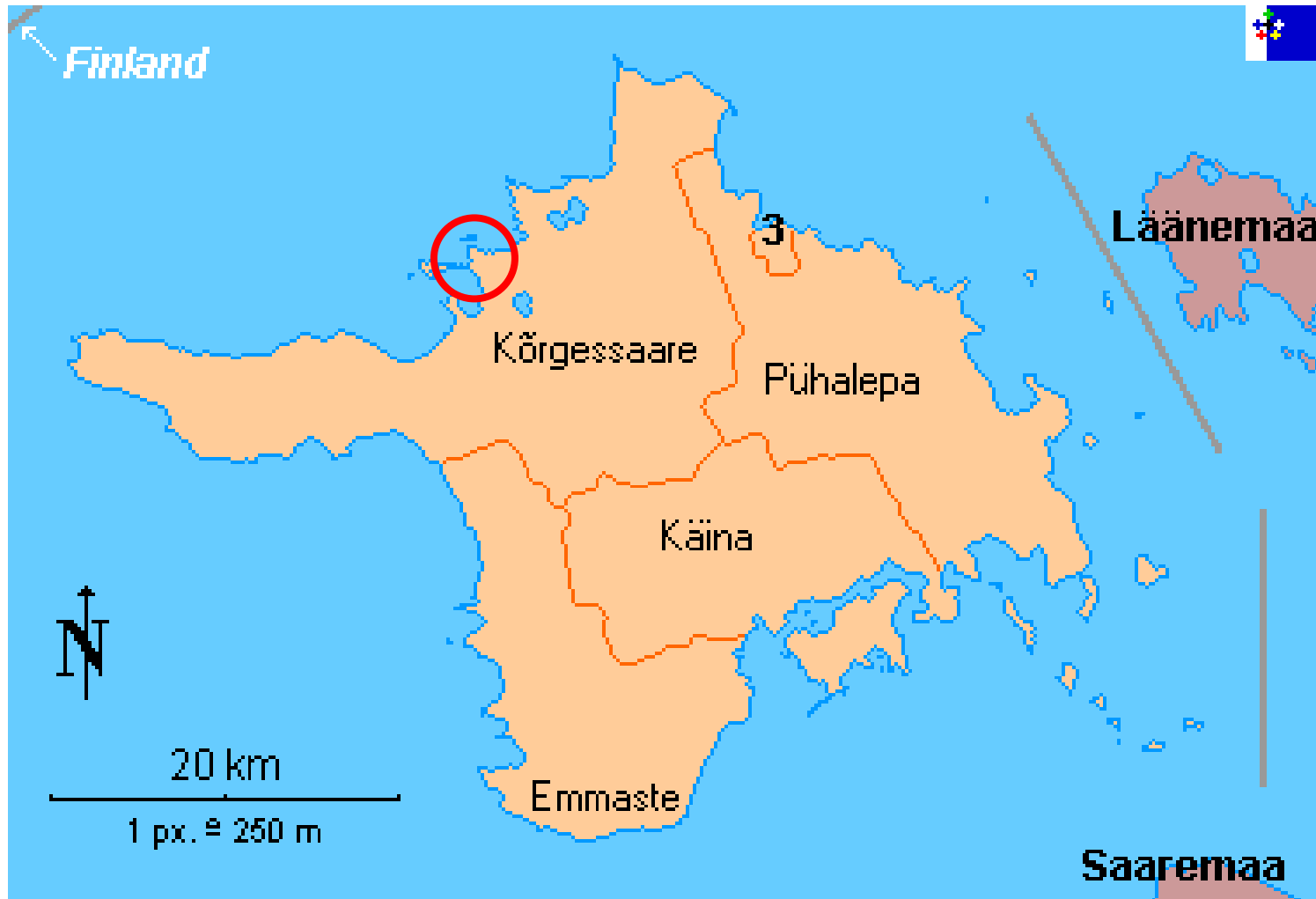
- ◆ Interactive, intellectually stimulating and visually appealing overview of various aspects of the Baltic Sea:
 - **History** (incl geologic history, historical maps, navigation, marine safety with a focus on lighthouses)
 - **Nature and environment** (incl. physics, hydrography, biology, state of environment, risk factors and mitigation)
 - **Economy** (incl trade, fishing, tourism, energy)
 - **Culture** (incl mythology, visual arts, literature, music, film)
 - **Future** (incl EU strategies/policies, cross-border projects, education opportunities, etc.)
- ◆ Predominantly virtual exhibition presented via touch-screen LCD monitors, focusing on interactive, dynamic and innovative ways of presenting complex information (simulations, games, 3D models, etc.)

Baltic Sea / B7 Theme Park: Concept

- ◆ Thematic walking path - visitors make an experiential circle around Baltic Sea 'coastline', learning on the way about key Baltic Sea cities and sites (outdoor information panels, models, etc.) in a *fun* way
- ◆ Mini-islands: within the boundaries of the walking path lie designated activity/play areas for each B7 island, e.g.,
 - Information about the island (history, key sites, tourism)
 - Children's attractions



Baltic Sea Knowledge Center - Location



Location

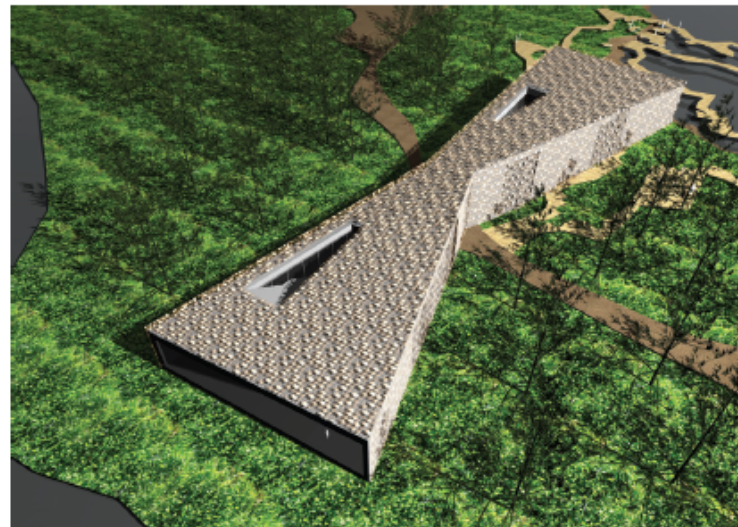
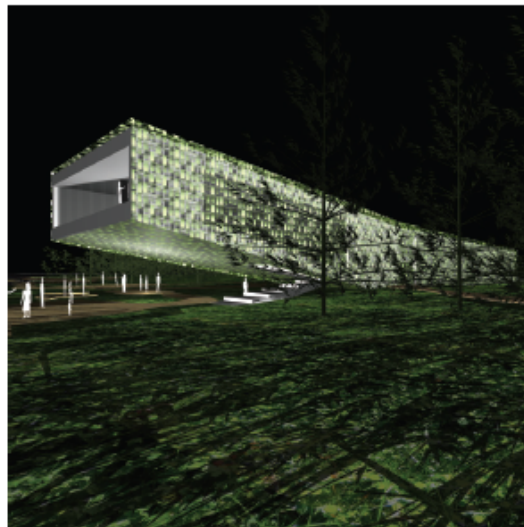
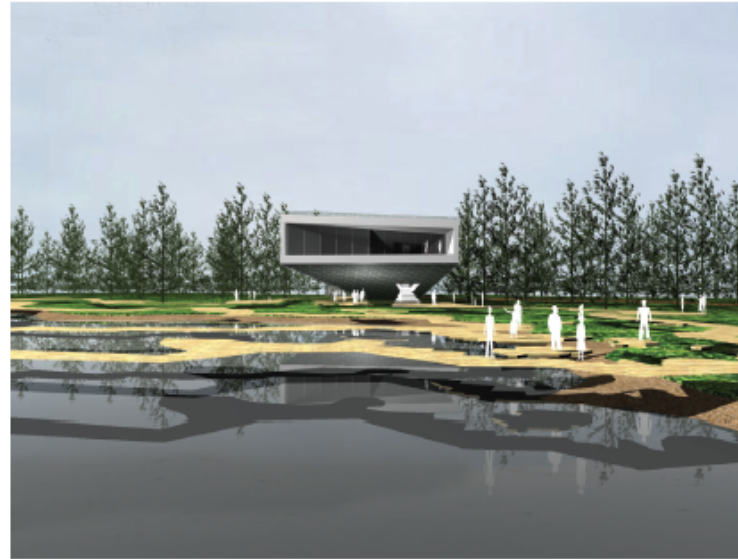


Location



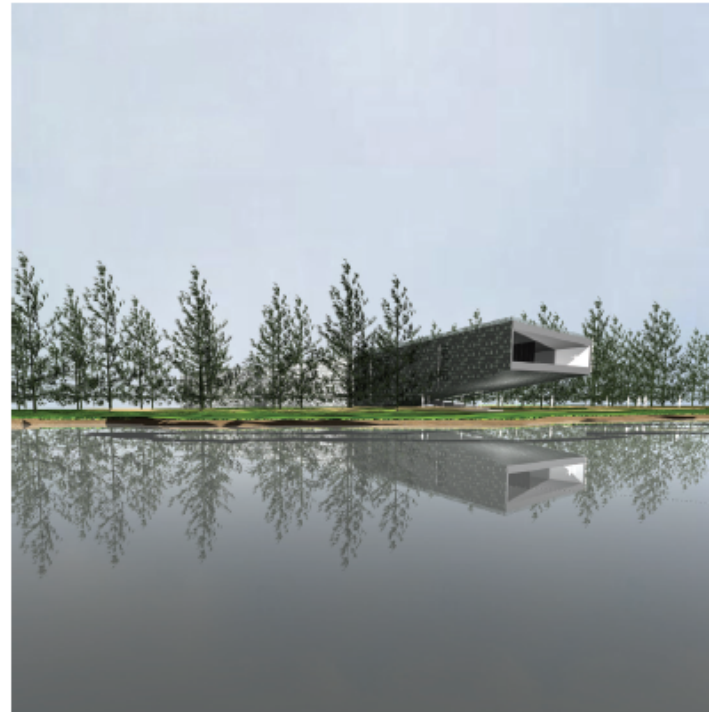
Architectural Sketches

LABORIO TECNICO DI VILLAZZANO **GALTO**

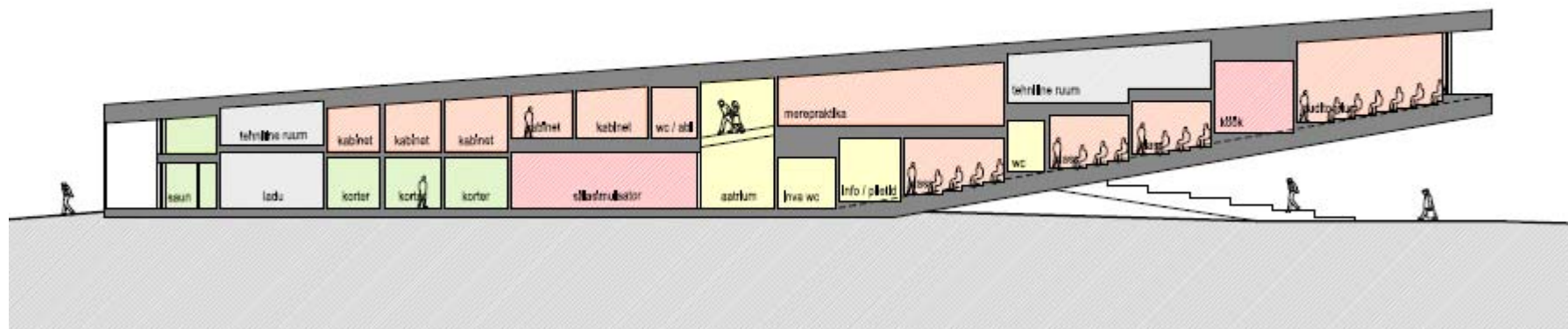
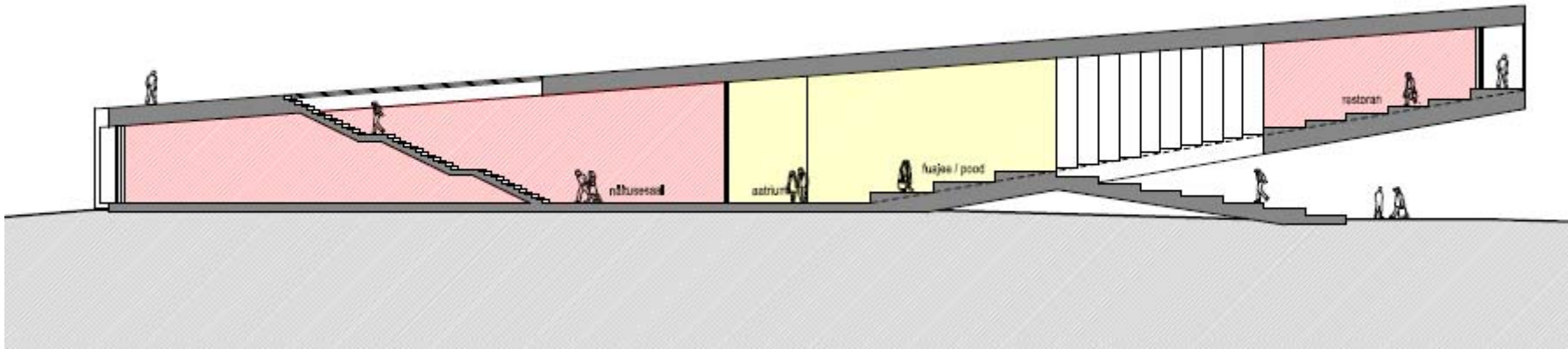


Architectural Sketches

L'ESPRESSO TRADING HOUSE
30 VEGALLANONNOLE **ELTO**



Floor Plans



Success Factors

- ◆ Ensure support of key Estonian public institutions (e.g., Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Estonian Tourist Board)
- ◆ Identify international partners from Baltic Sea countries for joint projects, development
- ◆ Actively participate in a network of marine education centers around the Baltic Sea and Europe

Further Info / Contacts

- ◆ Kõrgessaare Municipality:

- Katrin Sarapuu, Deputy Head of Municipality
(kati@korgessaare.hiiumaa.ee, Tel +372 534 15285)

- ◆ Consumetric

- Oliver Loode, Managing Director (oliver@consumetric.ee, Tel. +372 513 2992)