

Feedback from the FAM visit, April 2017

The aim: tour guides in each country would make observations during the visits and discussions on the FAM visit participants' comments related to the following points:

- What things/attractions etc. were considered as positive during the FAM visit? (What was seen potential/successful)
- What was negative/needs to be improved?
- How should the presented tourism provision/attractions/companies to be improved?
- Was something (some offer) missing from the visit that would potentially interest Japanese tourists in our countries?
- Were the products presented/packaged so that they can be bought, what about the prize-quality ratio?
- What could be USP (unique selling point) for our area in Japanese markets?
- Any other observations?

In addition, it would be useful to have feedback about the FAM visit and its successes and failures (the practical organization).

LATVIA

What things/attractions etc. were considered as positive during the FAM visit? (What was seen potential/successful)

- Kemeli National Park (close to Riga, boardwalk (?)) was an experience
- Birini Castle, making bread-workshops were quite new experience and close to Riga

What was negative/needs to be improved?

- Mazmezotne manor: all the rooms look different (size, interior, beds) so it is difficult to take a group of tourists there
- hot water had iron smell

How should the presented tourism provision/attractions/companies to be improved?

- see the previous point

Was something (some offer) missing from the visit that would potentially interest Japanese tourists in our countries?

- Experiencing a real lifestyle of rural areas, e.g. agriculture experience, mushroom or berry picking

Were the products presented/packaged so that they can be bought, what about the prize-quality ratio?

- Yes

What could be USP (unique selling point) for our area in Japanese markets?

- The fact that Latvian people still follow the traditions of Latvian animism (? = old belief toward nature) in their life and seasonal events.

Other observations:

We felt strong aspirations of Latvians who work for rural tourism sector. Seems like they constantly develop new unique product. Many institution/companies started their business still recently and they are very active (e.g. Laima ceramics). Restaurants try to develop unique and tasty dishes.

FINLAND

What things/attractions etc. were considered as positive during the FAM visit? (What was seen potential/successful)

Every place was attractive in its way and received positive feedbacks from participants. It was also fine that almost all local service providers emphasized the importance of using local food/beverage. According to short talk with members at the airport, it seems that they saw that Fiskars was most potential as a sales product overall.

What was negative/needs to be improved?

Scheduling on the Day 1: more time in Fiskars. Tammisaari walk and accommodation visit were quite fine, but spontaneous walk could have shortened if the group should have been in a hurry afterward. Actually, we were late for meeting with Mr. Kari Sälkälä in Fiskars as much as 15 min (of course, the guide should have been more attentive to time keeping too..) Anyway this was not a big problem on participants side - they told that schedules were delayed even 2 hours in other countries). Almost all essential services (shops) were open in Fiskars also on the 2nd Easter Day.

Was something (some offer) missing from the visit that would potentially interest Japanese tourists in our countries?

Some experiences, for example, I heard that some participants missed sauna (it might be less popular in more Swedish area). Boat ride in Siuntio was very fine but a bit short.

There would be attractive accommodations in Hanko although it is rather far. Maybe another time.

Were the products presented/packaged so that they can be bought, what about the prize-quality ratio?

All the gifts given were quite nice. Have to admit that the most potential product to tourists would be Iittala - it is an internationally known and quite strong brand both for Japanese mass tourism and more individual tourists too. The brand has been one of the important players which have created a positive picture of Finland to Japanese. It is a strong point that their products (incl. outlet products and tax-free services) are available in this region.

What could be USP (unique selling point) for our area?

Good contrast to and combination with Helsinki - retreat, more Swedish-oriented culture. And near distance from Helsinki. Culinary delights should be kept emphasizing.

Any other observations?

The whole area is so picturesque and could be promoted to the press group.

And, basically Japanese do not like salmiakki/licorice so much. It is safe to avoid to ordinary tourists (I did not comment on that before the tour because this was FAM trip for reps and we could talk on that on the spot). Lunch at Fiskars Wårdshus was simply excellent and fully represented local delicacies.

ESTONIA

What things/attractions etc. were considered as positive during the FAM visit? (What was seen potential/successful)

- Mooska Farm House:
It was very interesting to hear about the culture of the smoke sauna and the relationship with the spirituality of the Estonians. It was nice to have dinner with the ordinary household and have the dishes explained to us.
- Avinurve Wooden Handicrafts Centre :
All things in the shop were pretty and the workshop was fun. A place where Japanese travelers would like to visit.
- Hotel Lydia:
A new hotel in the center of Tartu. Fashionable and also the fact that the Estonian Wool brand (WOOLISH) is used was interesting.

From the other observer:

- ① Home visit at Mooska Farm, home cooking and smoke sauna experience. It was a shame that I could not experience the traditional smoke sauna due to time.
- ② Craft experience and shopping at AVinurme Wooden Handicrafts Center

What was negative/needs to be improved?

- *“Although I stayed at a good accommodation, I did not have enough time to spend at the hotel. I could experience the Estonian smoked sauna, so I wish I could see each one more slowly”.*
- *“At the beginning of each facility visit, I had hoped to hear Raili’s explanation of the purpose of seeing the facility of visit (what kind of traveler do you want to visit, significance of existence, etc.)”*
- *“I wanted to put a little time of shopping. I also wanted to experience myself, including experiences of the sauna, that my customers actually would do (it is easier for people to explain to the customer).”*
- *“To have a bit slower pace. I got tired a bit because the schedule was too packed. I wanted time to spend relaxing for about one day.”*

From the other observer:

- ① Vaskna Tourism Farm is not interested at all
- ② Vihula Manor Country Club & Spa does not feel necessary to be special

How should the presented tourism provision/attractions/companies to be improved?

See the previous point

From the other observer:

- Because everywhere the people were very friendly, I can not find any points to improve especially

Was something (some offer) missing from the visit that would potentially interest Japanese tourists in our countries?

- *“ It is good to have opportunities (for example, picking herbs together and cooking) that you can actually experience that local Estonia is local production for local consumption.”*

- *"If you take in places that you can go using public transport, you can correspond to customers of FIT."*

From the other observer:

- ① Look at the life of an ordinary person, touch those people and taste the country food
- ② Enjoy slow life instead of just sightseeing slowly
- ③ Shopping such as goods with small sense and goods for daily life
- ④ Tallinn's back street walking and B class gourmet taste

Were the products presented/packaged so that they can be bought, what about the prize-quality ratio?

- Yes (However, it was a little difficult to understand what the Vaskna Farm is for, how to sell it)

From the other observer:

- ① I do not understand the meaning of this question well, but I think the material quality is sufficient

What could be USP (unique selling point) for our area in Japanese markets?

- The fact that the sauna is rooted in Estonian culture and it's spiritual meaning in life was interesting.
- Providers were actively engaged in business activities.
- Estonia's image was of only modern restaurants in Tallinn, I did not think that we could enjoy farmer's homemade dishes. The warm atmosphere there was good.

From the other observer:

- ① To focus on the countryside as well, to show ordinary living, to touch, to experience
- ② Smoke sauna experience required
- ③ The Old Town of Tallinn is still wonderful, so here's the back street walking and a popular hidden famous shop for locals and restaurant, bar, etc. to taste

Any other observations?

- ① Enhancement of Japanese guide (in terms of number of people)