

# ESTONIA: A GLOBAL LEADER

Amplifying small states' voices

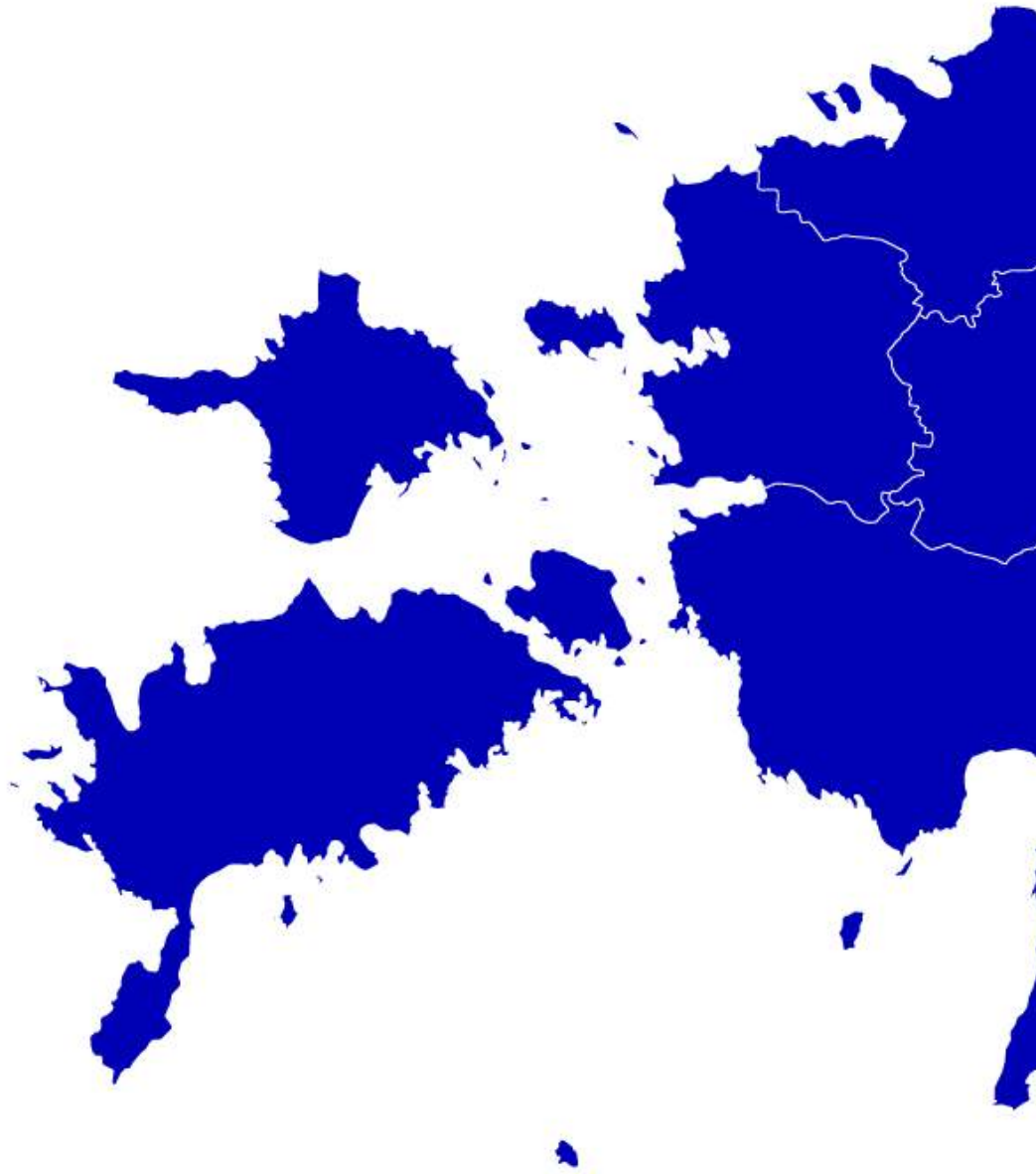
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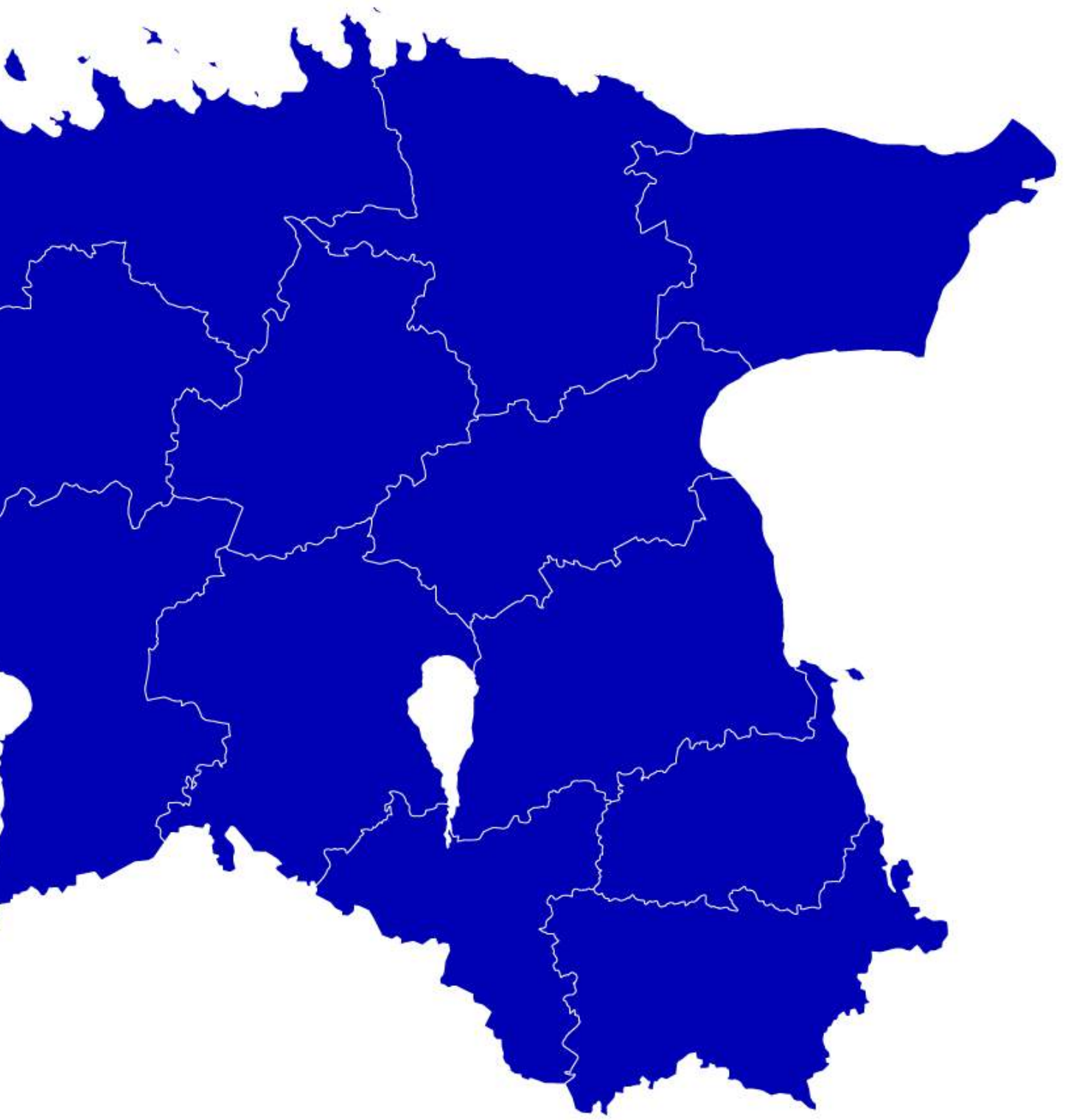


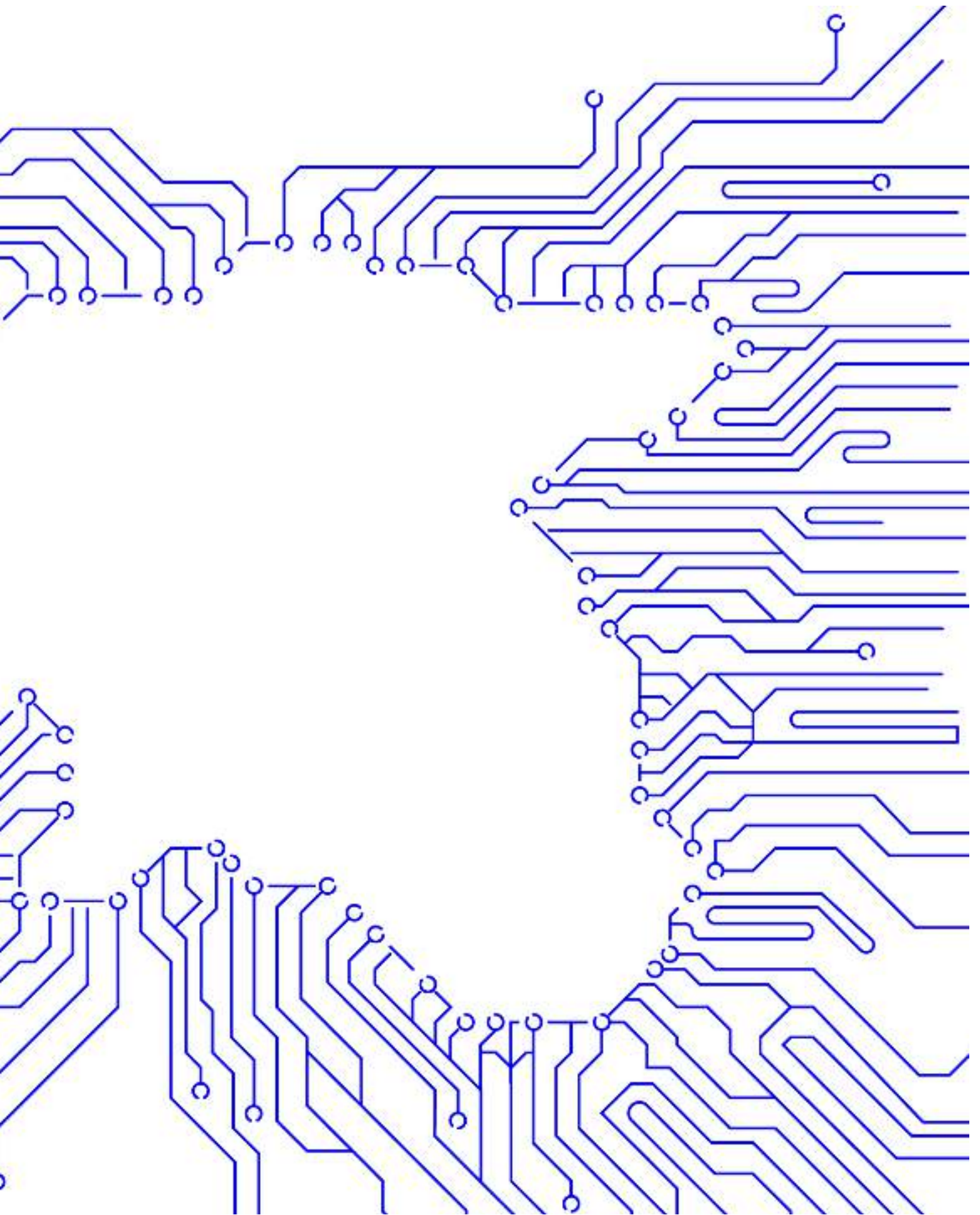
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Estonia: A Global Leader  
**Amplifying Small States' Voices**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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08 | ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

11 | ACRONYMS

12 - 14 | LETTER FROM JENIK RADON  
The Advisor of Capstone Project

16 - 17 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20 - 29 | PART A.  
CONTEXT

22 Introduction

24 Scope and Methodology

26 Small Countries

28 Why Estonia?

**30 - 131**

**PART B.  
POLICY**

**32 STRATEGY PILLARS**

**34 PILLAR A. STRUCTURE: GOVERNANCE**

**43 PILLAR B. POLICY AREAS**

44 **Culture**

60 **Digital**

76 **Diplomacy**

92 **Economy**

112 **Education**

**124 PILLAR C. MESSAGING**

**132 - 135**

**PART C.  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Short term - Very easy to easy

Medium term - Somewhat hard

Long term - Hard to very hard

**138 - 139**

**CONCLUSION**

**140 - 141**

**ANNEX**

**142**

**CAPSTONE TEAM MEMBERS**

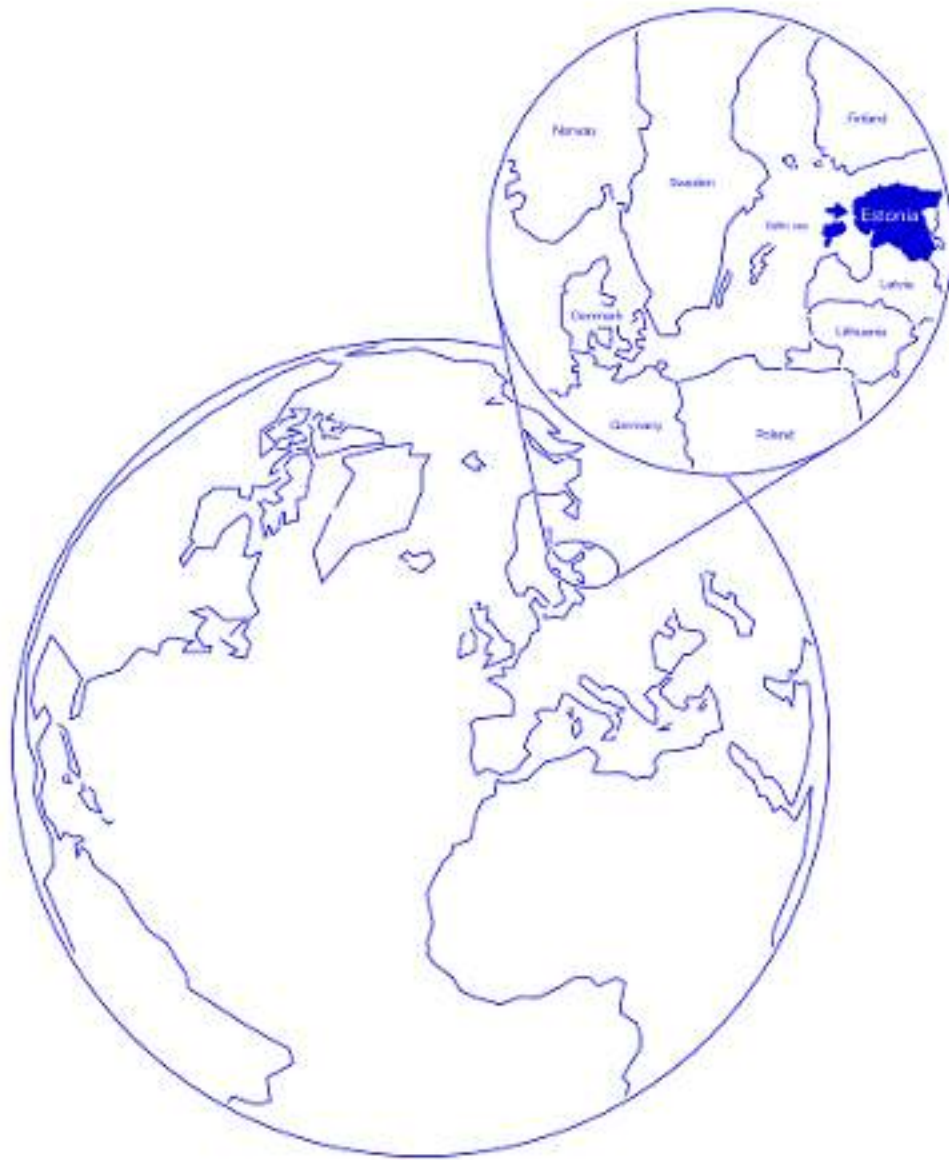
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# ACRONYMS

<b>AI</b> Artificial Intelligence	<b>ICT</b> Information and Communications Technology
<b>AIOSIS</b> The Alliance of Small Island States	<b>MoU</b> Memorandum of Understanding
<b>API</b> Application programming interface	<b>NUPI</b> Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
<b>AR</b> Augmented Reality	<b>PPP</b> Public-private partnership
<b>BOP</b> Balance of Payments	<b>SDGs</b> Sustainable Development Goals
<b>BSTS</b> Bhutan Sustainable Tourism Society	<b>SIDS</b> Small Island Developing States
<b>DSS</b> Decision Support systems	<b>SLH</b> Small Luxury Hotels of The World
<b>e-GA</b> e-Government Academy	<b>SSEC</b> Small State Esports Championship
<b>EBA</b> Estonian Business School	<b>UN</b> United Nations
<b>ECOSOC</b> United Nations Economic and Social Council	<b>UNDP</b> United Nations Development Program
<b>EGDI</b> E-Government Development Index	<b>UNEP</b> United Nations Environmental Protection Agency
<b>ESC</b> Eurovision Song Contest	<b>UNESCO</b> United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<b>EU</b> European Union	<b>UNGA</b> United Nations General Assembly
<b>FOSS</b> Forum of Small States	<b>UNSC</b> United Nations Security Council
<b>GDP</b> Growth Domestic Product	<b>UNWTO</b> United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>GFW</b> Global Forest Watch	<b>VR</b> Virtual reality
<b>ICP</b> Ideal Customer Profiles	<b>(MFA)</b> Ministry of Foreign Affairs



# Let All Voices Rise to the Heavens and Be Heard

## Foreword by Jenik Radon

Estonia, a small country in northern Europe, inhabited for over 11 thousand years, has managed to preserve its own distinctive language. Each language is unique and enriches our thinking as it provides its own prism of viewing the world. But a language needs a concrete expression to make a lasting impact. In this regard Estonia's history is short. Only about 200 years ago, in the early 19th Century, did Estonian literature, written by ethnic Estonians, begin to take its rightful place in world literature with the publication of Kristjan Jaak Peterson's poetry, in particular his cry for the recognition of the Estonian language:

Kas siis selle maa keel  
Laulutuules ei vői  
Taevani tõustes üles  
Igavikku omale otsida?

In English:

Can the language of this land  
In the wind of incantation  
Rising up to the heavens  
Not seek for eternity?

Fast forward to the latter half of the 20th Century, Jaan Kross, an Estonian writer, who was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in literature, shared his works and his ideas with the world. His works were described as historical

novels, focusing on the trials and tribulations that Estonia had to endure during the Soviet occupation. Another acclaimed author, Jaan Kaplinski, writes poems and stories, much embedded with liberal thinking forged in the Estonian experience, for a world audience. Alas, there are many more writers, but their voices are still local or domestic, limited in the main to an Estonian audience, but they echo the cry to be heard.

The cry to be heard is a cry for self-identification, for cultural recognition, in essence for freedom. It also sparked the birth of a Song Festival in 1869, a cultural and national awakening symbolized by a roaring flame. It is an event that is celebrating its 150th anniversary in July 2019. The cultural awakening of the Estonian people and its expression in song ultimately gave birth on February 23, 1918 to political freedom and independence. The independence of Estonia was restored on August 20, 1991. It is said that Estonians sang their way to freedom and their struggle is popularly referred to as the Singing Revolution. And now Estonian music, through the compositions of Arvo Pärt, touches and moves people on all continents. Why is this story of the struggle and awakening of Estonia and Estonians important not just for Estonia, but for all the people of the world, especially for the people of small states?

The answer is surprisingly simple: Estonian history, the struggle and success of a small nation, and its people, is a story for the ages, a story that can



inspire people around the world, people of all nationalities, people living in small states and people who just want to express themselves. It is literally a story that gives modern day meaning and life to the wisdom of the ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle who extolled the virtue of letting individual voices be heard. With modern day, 21st Century, digital technology, for which Estonia is world renowned, having popularized its name as E-stonia, and spearheaded literally free global communication with the creation of Skype, Estonia now has the opportunity to bring the spirit of freedom to the world.



(Estonian Song and Dance Festival flame lighting ceremony in Tartu 2019 by Rein Leib)

Some have asked how Estonia, with a small population of just 1.3 million people in a world topping 7 billion people, can even dare to take on such a leadership role. Others have questioned why should Estonia assume such a challenge, such a burden, as any challenge takes effort, work. The answer is again surprisingly simple. Although the parable “to whomever much is given, of him will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him more will be asked” has its origins in religious thought as set forth in New Testament, it has become common wisdom, accepted culture, not just in Europe but throughout

the world. And the parable applies to Estonia.

Estonia and Estonians have come to value culture, appreciate the bonds of community and have been endowed with a belief in freedom and its potential and its possibilities. Estonia has economically prospered and ranks among the most developed nations of the world, an achievement accomplished in the span of just 25 years. Estonia is so successful that it has become a hub for start-ups, companies which require creative energy to succeed. In short, Estonia has become a land of possibilities, e-possibilities if you wish. Estonia literally leads the world in digital freedom, which means, among other things, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom to be creative --- how else can a land become a start-up country. Estonia is a pioneer in digital life with digital- or e-health, e-governance, e-voting, cyber security, and the list goes on. Estonia is the ultimate modern state, a model for all.

The agreement that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has signed with Estonia attests to the fact that many countries of the world, especially developing countries, which includes many small states, are looking to Estonia for leadership in things digital with its endless possibilities. Estonia’s campaign for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as of 2020, underscores its belief that it can help to make the world a better place, a more secure and prosperous place. Its campaign sets forth its principles which will be the foundation of its two year tenure on UNSC:

- **Estonia, a small country**, will bring a small state perspective and act as an advocate for their common interests in the activities of the Security Council.

- **Estonia, an innovative nation**, is committed to sharing its experience and best practices in efficient governance and creative e-solutions.

- **Estonia will strive towards greater accountability, coherence, and transparency** of the Council's activities through increased inclusiveness and targeted action.

- **Estonia underscores that conflict prevention** needs more attention and resources within the UN system, and will work towards increased Security Council efforts dedicated to this end.

- **Estonia advocates responsibility**, a key premise for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals that are vital to drive economic growth, eradicate poverty and preserve the environment.

- **Estonia believes that everyone has the right to respect and dignity**, and will continue to actively participate in peacekeeping, invest in development and provide humanitarian aid.

With Estonia's election to the UNSC, these principles can serve as a guide for its initiatives and programs for years to come. Estonia is in a position to spearhead letting all voices be heard, especially the common interests of small states, views too often overlooked by the media of large countries.

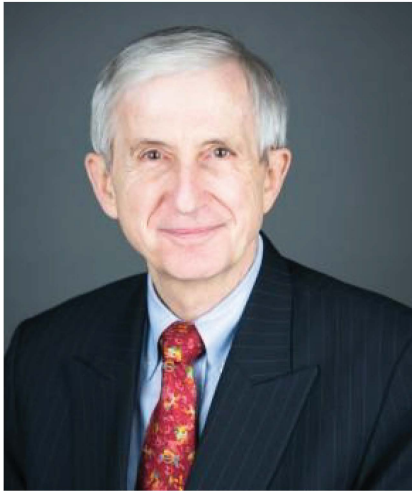
This report by Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs has sought to build on these principles, spark the imagination of Estonia and Estonians, in particular its innovative youth, of what is possible and what can be done, especially how Estonia can be "an advocate for [the] common

interests [of small states] in the activities of the Security Council" and also beyond. The recommendations of the Columbia Capstone team, as contained in the Report, range from the easily and readily implementable, such as cyber hygiene, to the more challenging, like the digital emergency response assistance. We hope that these recommendations also serve as inspiration for Estonia so that the NGO "Let's Do It" can become the first of many global NGOs having their birth in Estonia; that those very words, Let's Do It, become the driving motto for Estonian youth; that the Songfest sparks a global musical expansion with the creation of a worldwide small state song festival, where the voices of all small states rise in festive song; and that the youthful digital entrepreneurs and innovators of Estonia create an emergency (medical response mechanism for developing nations, cyber security for all, an app to disclose corporate beneficial ownership (no hidden owners, and other useful apps to be sold and used throughout the world. On a practical level, the Estonia-UNDP partnership can bring life to these initiatives. .

And speaking as a long standing friend of Estonia, I personally believe all of the initiatives that are being recommended --- and more --- are possible, are implementable and can be attained by Estonia. All it takes is for Estonia to let its perseverance and creativity, its story, as evidenced by its own history, be a living inspiration for small states and to accept that Estonia is, can be and should be a world leader, a voice for the common good, by being an initiator and a thought leader. With the inherent possibilities of the new e-world, Estonia can be a digital Acropolis innovatively driving economic growth, eradicating poverty and preserving the environment, all the while letting all voices be heard. We trust that this Columbia Report will

support this vision. Estonia, Let's Do It!

Jenik Radon, Esq., Adj. Professor



Since his first visit in 1988, Columbia Professor Jenik Radon has been a lifelong friend and supporter of Estonia. At that time, during the periods of glasnost and perestroika, Radon gave the keynote address at an international investment conference in Tallinn and has remained engaged with Estonia ever since. During Estonia's struggle to restore its independence, Radon opened his New York home to Lennart Meri, Marju Lauristin, and many other Estonian leaders; his house was even nicknamed "Estonia House Two." In 1990, together with members of the Estonian Chamber of Commerce, he was the first to raise the US flag in Estonia since the Soviet invasion in 1940—a flag that had originally flown over the US Senate Building in Washington. The US flag was officially raised at a ceremony reclaiming the US Embassy at Kentmanni from the Soviet youth league, Komsomol.

Radon was a promoter of educational opportunities for Estonian youth. In 1989, he organized the first nongovernmental school-to-school exchange between the New York

Dalton School and the 21st School in Tallinn and several other high school exchanges. He sponsored Estonian students to study at a host of leading US universities, including Columbia, Harvard, and Middlebury. He was a co-founder of the Bentley College program for Estonian students and faculty. He created the Eesti and Eurasian Public Service Fellowship at Columbia that made it possible for about 150 Columbia students to intern in Estonian government and civil society organizations. Many lifelong friendships resulted.

Radon, a corporate lawyer, participated in the drafting of Estonian legislation on investment, corporations, and privatization. Radon is the founder of Domus Dorpatensis in Tartu with its dedication to supporting and promoting societal, cultural, and scientific activities in Estonia. President Toomas Ilves awarded him the Order of the Cross Terra Mariana.

On a personal note, Radon has attended many Estonian weddings. He celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary and 50th birthday in Tallinn with friends from around the world. As a friend of Estonia, he wants the world to know the remarkable achievements of Estonia and its people and have Estonia share its values of freedom and independence and its belief in openness, education, hard work, dedication, and community, and inspire all nations with its never ending dream that tomorrow can be better.

For more information on Radon's work, see the Harriman Institute's Spring 2017 article titled "Negotiating Transition: Jenik Radon's Quest to Help Developing Countries"

([http://www.columbia.edu/cu/creative/epub/harriman/2017/spring/negotiating\\_transition.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/creative/epub/harriman/2017/spring/negotiating_transition.pdf)).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Small states commonly face challenges to having their voices heard on the international stage. Their small economic size, limited human capital, the high cost of technology, and weak private sectors all impose significant barriers to the advancement of small countries.

Estonia, on the other hand, offers a counter narrative. It has shown the world how a small country can punch above its weight. Estonia has been constantly innovating and disrupting the older models of governance through efficient utilization of its limited resources. This report seeks to recommend options for Estonia to create innovative and collaborative pathways to the empowerment of small states.

Specifically, this report proposes the creation of a small state platform called FORTIS (parum fortis - "small but strong"), inspired by examples of successful minilateral alliances. The key goal of the platform is to identify a set of strategic interests shared by all members, and build a productive governance structure to advance them globally.

This report recommends FORTIS to invite as many small states as members, with commitment to the following principles of:

1. Amplifying the voices of small states
2. Developing best practices
3. Providing mutual support
4. Promoting transparency
5. Pooling knowledge and best practice

Based on in-depth desk research and field interviews, this report finds that Estonia can use its own experience and example of digital and government innovation to lead in the areas of culture, digitalization, diplomacy, economy, and education by working with other small states.

The following recommendations aim to provide the Government of Estonia with concrete action points and a timeline of implementation. They are marked based on the timeline of short (1-2 years), medium (2-5 years), and long (5-10 years) term, as well as the level of difficulty for implementation (easy to very hard).



**1. Culture:** preserve and advance the rich and diverse cultures of small states

1.1 Preserving Culture through Small State Cultural Exhibitions (short-term, easy)

1.2 Small State E-Sport Championship (medium-term, somewhat hard)

1.3 News Network (long-term, very hard)

1.4 Music Festival (long-term, very hard)

**2. Digitalization:** provide quality public services to everyone

2.1 Taking the e-Governance Academy global (short-term, easy)

2.2 Forum on Global Data and AI Ethics (medium-term, somewhat hard)

2.3 e-Civil Society (long-term, hard)

**3. Diplomacy:** strengthen multilateral cooperation to overcome security challenges

3.1 e-Heritage (medium-term, somewhat hard)

3.2 e-Embassy (medium-term, somewhat hard)

3.3 Disaster Preparedness (long-term, hard)

**4. Economy:** ensure a sustainable economic development to benefit all people

4.1 Joint Tourism promotion (medium, somewhat-hard)

4.2 e-Investment Platform (long-term, hard)

4.3 Digital-based forest management (long-term, hard)

**5. Education:** equip people to meet complex challenges

5.1 Cyber Hygiene for small states (short-term, easy)

5.2 e-Education (medium-term, somewhat hard)

This report recognizes the considerable resources Estonia has invested in the campaign for the UN Security Council membership, which would eventually serve to strengthen diplomatic relations as well as the strategic position of Estonia well beyond the one-year term.

This report concludes that small states can make positive and enduring impact on the international community if they choose to overcome their barriers through strategic alliances, participation in international fora, international law, and regulatory institutions.

The next step for Estonia is to become an active advocate for small countries and a global thought leader for the 21st century.









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PART A.

CONTEXT



# INTRODUCTION

In 1985, Peter Katzenstein's *Small States in World Markets* showed how, rather than disappearing under the effects of modernization and global change, some small states were not only surviving, but thriving.<sup>1</sup>

Constrained by their economic and political lightness, an agile response to opportunity allowed small countries to punch above their weight.

In Estonia, the year 1985 marked the beginning of a period of fundamental change:<sup>2</sup> in the wake of Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost reforms, Estonians began taking advantage of their unique and rich cultural tradition to encourage a national reawakening, a nation which had preserved its language throughout the Soviet period.

In autumn 1986, the idea of self-managing Estonia was enthusiastically discussed in Estonian society. A year later, Estonians gathered in the hundreds of thousands to celebrate their heritage in song, in what became known as "The Singing Revolution."<sup>3</sup> In 1991, the smallest country in Eastern Europe gained independence from the Soviet Union.

While some countries use their

history as excuses to be insular, Estonia has always sought how best to take advantage of its legacy, while avoiding getting trapped in it. In the words of former Estonian President Toomas Ilves, Estonia's approach is to simply "do nothing the way it was done before".<sup>4</sup>

Estonia's smallness, then and now in geopolitics a sign of a state's

"We, the Estonians, are so few that the goal of every Estonian (...) must be in immortality through creative and cultivated acts."

- School director Johan Wikman -

(in Jaan Kross's novel "The Wikman Boys")

redundancy, has become the creative impulse of a people of self-unleashing artists. Its mode of adaptation to conditions of scarcity have been efficiency, creativity and agility in response to the security and economic vulnerabilities posed by global change.

Like other small countries around the world, Estonia has understood that security does not have to be found in

military prowess. Rather, it has recognized that the more people know of its virtues and care about its existence, and the more countries it calls friends and allies, the more stable its security architecture becomes.<sup>5</sup>

Consistency, relentlessness and persistence have brought exceptional results and shown that well executed policy can transform a small state into an important actor in international politics.

Estonia has recognized that digital connectivity is the defining force of our age. When Estonia started building their information society about two decades ago, there was no digital data being collected on their citizens and the population did not have the Internet or devices with which to use it. It took great courage to invest in IT solutions and take the information technology route.

Now, the possibilities offered by e-Estonia seem endless and digitalization has become a great equalizing force. In 2018, Apolitical named four Estonians among its list of the 100 most influential people in government - a disproportionate Estonian presence relative to the size of its population.<sup>6</sup>

Estonia is often regarded as a global thought leader by building the world's most

1. Katzenstein, Peter J. *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*. Ithaca U.a.: Cornell Univ. Pr., 1985

2. Priit Rohtmetts, Ringo Ringvee (2013) *Religious Revival and the Political Activity of Religious Communities in Estonia During the Process of Liberation and the Collapse of the Soviet Union 1985–1991*, *Religion, State and Society*, 41:4, 355–393.

3. "Estonia Celebrates the Day of Restoration of Independence." *Estonian World*. August 21, 2018. Accessed April 24, 2019. <https://estonianworld.com/life/estonia-celebrates-the-day-of-restoration-of-independence/>.

4. "How Estonia Became a World Leader in Digital Governance." *The Aspen Institute*. November 02, 2016. Accessed April 25, 2019.

digitally advanced society. Yet, Estonians do not consider themselves natural leaders, nor are they vying for a place under the sun. In many ways, Estonia is a reluctant leader, a country that did not choose to be a leader, but was chosen for it.

The Baltic Journal of Management once described the Estonian leadership style as marked by “team spirit and team reinforcement” – leading in concert with others, never in pursuit of its own goals alone.<sup>7</sup> This report therefore concerns itself with the following question: how can Estonia lead in partnership to amplify the voices of small states?

Small states can become much more than negligible actors if they actively pursue their agenda and consolidate all elements of their national power to achieve their desired objectives. Strategic alliances, participation in international fora, international law, and regulatory institutions are the primary means by which small states overcome their barriers.

Indeed, there has been no more urgent time than now for small states to collaborate so that their voices are heard. The international rules-based order has come under duress on multiple fronts.

If this order continues to deteriorate, small states will become most vulnerable. In an increasingly interconnected world, countries face few options other than multilateral cooperation in addressing new global challenges.

This makes small states the natural defenders of the international order, which serves to protect them in return.

Against this backdrop, this report recognizes Estonia as a bridge builder that seeks to communicate new ways of cooperation between small states. This report sketches out pathways, which Estonia can forge to assemble a group of like-minded small states, and lead by the wisdom its experience has given it.

Specifically, this report proposes the creation of a collaborative network of small states, which can serve as a forum to amplify the voices and shared interests of small states around the world.

The key goal of the platform is to identify a set of strategic concerns common to all members, and define a governance structure that would effectively advance them.

This report recognizes the considerable resources Estonia has invested during the campaign to join the UN Security Council, the many new and strengthened relationships that have been forged around the world, and the strategic thinking around Estonia’s place in the international community.

**This report is structured as follows:**

**First**, it outlines the constraints faced by small states around the world and the need for collaboration between them. It then presents an argument for why Estonia is the focus of this

report.

**Second**, a possible structure for a collaborative small state platform “FORTIS” is discussed and recommended.

**Third**, five broad policy areas – culture, digital, diplomacy, economics, and education – which Estonia could strategically explore through FORTIS are outlined. Each broad policy area is sectioned into sixteen narrow policy areas, followed by a set each of implementation-focused conclusions.

**Finally**, the conclusion sums up the recommendations and provides an outlook for the direction Estonia might take.

The most critical factors for success is an open and global mindset. Estonia has proven this time and again: take the world as a market and redefine the meaning of pushing the boundaries. Twenty years ago, Estonia decided to take a “tiger leap” forward. Today, it is the shining example of administrative efficiency and humble leadership.

In the words of Lloyd George,<sup>8</sup>

**All the world owes much to the little “five feet high” nations.**

**The greatest art of the world was the work of little nations.**

**The most enduring literature of the world came from little nations.**

**The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom.**

5. 48forward. “Kaspar Korjus: How Nation States Become Borderless.” YouTube. April 08, 2018. Accessed May 01, 2019. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jCQ3\\_91Mk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jCQ3_91Mk)

6. “World’s 100 Most Influential People in Digital Government.” Apolitical. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://apolitical.co/lists/digital-government-world100/>

7. Krista Tuulik, Ruth Alas, (2009) “Leadership in transformational Estonia”, Baltic Journal of Management, Vol. 4 Issue: 2, pp.169-187

8. George, David Lloyd. Honour and Dishonour. London: Methuen &, 1914.

# SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

## Objective

The objective of this report is to identify strategies and recommend action-oriented policy interventions that can enable the government of Estonia to take the lead in building a collaborative platform “FORTIS” that effectively advances the concerns specific to small states and builds a network that helps them to overcome their structural constraints. In so doing, this report seeks to discern thematic and technical avenues for individual and collective engagement of a diverse set of small countries. Finally, the report proposes a set of actions Estonia can take in the short, medium and long term, based on Estonia’s competitive advantages and strategic priorities of other small states, to advance the priority areas put forth hereafter.

## Research Question

With this in mind, the research and analysis for this report was guided by the following question: how can small states effectively collaborate to overcome their common problems and challenges to amplify their voices in the international arena? The research question was analyzed through three axes: 1) Estonia’s concerns and strategic assets, 2) common challenges among small states, and 3) the broader international context.

## Methodology

The report adopts a three-pronged approach to ensure that analysis and recommendations are based on objective, up-to-date qualitative data that can inform and guide political decision-making processes. To this end, the Columbia Capstone team conducted an extensive literature review and desk research, complemented by interviews with small states’ Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, as well as field research in Estonia in March 2019. In the final step, the Columbia Capstone team analyzed and consolidated the analysis to formulate a set of policy recommendations.

**First**, a literature review was compiled to develop a deep understanding of the international context of small state engagement, discern common and emerging concerns for small states, and map promising models of international cooperation. In addition, the team carried out research on strategic advantages and challenges of over 100 small states,<sup>9</sup> based on a set of political, economic and social indicators. The knowledge gained from this compilation of data provided the basis for the ensuing research phases.

As a **second** step, the Capstone team conducted semi-structured interviews with small states’ Permanent Representations to the UN in New York, including UN Ambassadors of Malta, Rwanda, Singapore, and others. These interviews served to complement the data gained from the initial desk research, and provided insights into opportunities for collaboration among small states, along with Estonia’s potential to facilitate this. Moreover, they informed the report’s analysis by, aside from confirming the previously identified strategic concerns and strengths common to many small states, providing concrete suggestions on a possible governance structure of a small state platform.

**Finally**, the team conducted field research during a 10-day visit to Estonia to gain a more profound understanding of Estonia’s assets, and better gauge Estonia’s readiness to lead. The team organized over 30 interviews with policy makers, government officials, members of academia, civil society organizations, and the startup community.

This **three-pronged methodology** provided ample evidence and rich data, which allowed the team to formulate a set of feasible policy recommendations as proposed in this report.

9. The Forum of Small States (FOSS) defines this category as countries with a population of 10 million or under. Although currently around 12 million inhabitants, Rwanda will be counted as part of that definition for the purpose of this report. “THE DIPLOMACY OF SMALL STATES.” The Diplomacy of Small States. Accessed May 08, 2019. <https://learn.diplomacy.edu/pool/fileInLine.php?&id=20937#e3>.





# SMALL STATES

Small states are constrained by their small populations, which limits their aggregate structural power and influence. Nonetheless, “Citizens in small states have the same hopes, aspirations and natural rights as those in world powers. These people have every reason to expect and demand a life of freedom, peace and prosperity.”<sup>10</sup> On the quest to realize their ambitions, small states like their larger counterparts grapple with major domestic and global challenges.

Larger powers have often treated small states as “vassals rather than equals.”<sup>11</sup> This inequality is evident in the way small states and their foreign policy, are missing from global conversations.<sup>12</sup> Instead, it is major states that usually have the attention of the audience.<sup>13</sup> This makes it difficult for small states to gain international recognition and it places them on the periphery of decision making rather than at its center. It is important that the trials and triumphs of small states be met with due respect and the appropriate coverage. These challenges, however, should not

determine or confine the role of small states to one of an unimportant actor. For small states to realize their ambitions, it will require a committed pursuit of their agenda and consolidation of national strengths. In hindsight, it is these challenges and lack of visibility that have forced small states to be more imaginative and inventive in the way that they carry out their diplomacy and relations with their bigger counterparts.<sup>14 15</sup>

Small states have been known to “punch above their weight” beyond just the realm of international politics.<sup>16</sup> They have registered tremendous progress in both economic and human development. From Singapore’s ability to catapult itself from developing to industrialized country to Estonia’s unprecedented digitalization journey, these are just two examples of what small states are capable of achieving. Singapore is now considered a template for the economic values embodied by Asian powers.<sup>17</sup> Through its digital development, Estonia was able to leapfrog larger countries despite being left with

10. Carafano, James Jay. “Why Small States Matter to Big Powers.” *The National Interest*. August 11, 2018. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-small-states-matter-big-powers-28362>.

11. Vandenbosch, Amry. “The Small States in International Politics and Organization.” *The Journal of Politics* 26, no. 2 (1964): 293-312. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2127598>.

12. Lakatos, István. “The Potential Role of Small States and Their „Niche Diplomacy” at the UN and in the Field of Human Rights, with Special Attention to Montenegro.” PDF. *Pécs Journal of International and European Law*, 2017.

13. *ibid*

14. *ibid*

15. *ibid*

16. “David and Goliath: The Importance of Small Countries.” *Planet Mundus*. February 15, 2018. Accessed April 16, 2019. <http://planetmundus.com/importance-small-countries/>.

17. *ibid*

18. *ibid*



“no viable institutions at the time of independence.”<sup>18</sup> This fresh start proved to be fertile ground for innovation and opportunity. It is, nevertheless, important to note that small states are susceptible to shocks due to their small size and small internal markets,<sup>19</sup> albeit these notable successes. Furthermore, there is a shift in the international rules-based order.<sup>20</sup> If the international system continues to weaken, small states stand to lose the most.<sup>21</sup> With this risk looming, small states should be equipped to protect the “order that protects them”.<sup>22</sup>

Small states are not a monolithic group, but share a commitment to international cooperation and the rule of law. This is where small states can leverage their strengths in a number of ways. Their small size can allow them to be more agile in policymaking without the constraints of large bureaucracies. They are quick to recognize their limitations and strategically focus on a particular set of policy areas to cultivate unique expertise. For Estonia in particular, international cooperation has played a historically important role. As Lennart Meri, former president of Estonia, stated in 1998: “The nuclear weapon of small states is international law.”<sup>23</sup>

Small states have neither the military size nor economic resources to act unilaterally beyond their borders. To be effective, they must prioritize their interests and zero in on the topics they want to be a key player in.<sup>24</sup> It is through a “reliance on collective solidarity”<sup>25</sup> that small states can augment their bargaining power. Multilateral organizations and negotiations have proved to be platforms for small states to engage with the world in a meaningful way, and use their collective power to great effect. They also demonstrate the power that lies within small and cohesive groups.<sup>26</sup> This is a power that small states need to harness. Small states from different corners of the world, both developing and developed are bound by similar characteristics that can be attributed to their smallness. It is, therefore, paramount that small states speak with one powerful voice in defense of the order that maintains the balance between them and larger powers. In the last quarter of a century, Estonia has transformed into a success story and beacon of hope. This is owed to the bold and forward thinking policies and leadership of Estonia’s government, which can serve as an example for other small states.

19. *ibid*

20. Razza, Namie Di, Philip Obaji Jr., Renata Segura, Alice Debarre, Nasredeen Abdulbari, Jon Abbink, Ameya Ashok Naik, Abdul-Jalilu Ateku, Lyu Jinghua, and Global Observatory. “A Necessary Voice: Small States, International Law, and the UN Security Council.” IPI. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://www.ipinst.org/2019/04/small-states-international-law-and-un-security-council>.

21. *ibid*

22. *ibid*

23. Paavo Palk, “Eesti: väikeriigist advokaat” (“Estonia: Small State as Advocate”), *Postimees*, February 12, 1998 available at <https://arvamus.postimees.ee/2535661/eesti-vaikeriigist-advokaat>.

24. *ibid*

25. “Diplomacy of Small States.” *DiploFoundation*. July 06, 2018. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.diplomacy.edu/small-states-diplomacy>.

26. *ibid*

# WHY ESTONIA?

**Why Estonia? The answer to the question lies in its people.** The Estonian people do not seek hegemony or even the fame of growth and progress. Their history of suppression under numerous regimes gives the Estonian people with a humility, which instills compassion for other small states. While today, following the decades of Soviet occupation, Estonians are in a stronger and more advanced position than many other small states, Estonia does not preach and seek to dominate other small countries when they extend a helping hand to others through aid and guidance aimed towards development.

Their not-so-distant past allows Estonians to have frank conversations with their counterparts in other countries, all the while maintaining the ability to empathize with many issues that less-developed small states are still grappling with. Their ability to self-reflect on central policy issues such as

education, governance, cyber security, and economic development allows Estonia to be in the position of valuable critique to other small states that wish to navigate the future and attain similar results, such as the impressive achievements in the digital domain, to those that Estonia managed to construct for itself.

As a small nation, Estonia is well positioned to lead the evolution of small states from underdevelopment into the digital age as powerful allies. Estonia's rise from the low to middle-income status only within a span of generation is still vividly instilled in the memory of its leadership.

As a small nation, Estonia is well positioned to lead the evolution of small states from underdevelopment into the digital age as powerful allies. Estonia's rise from the low to middle-income status only within a span of generation is still vividly instilled in the memory of its leadership. Therefore, Estonia's

10. Carafano, James Jay. "Why Small States Matter to Big Powers." *The National Interest*. August 11, 2018. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-small-states-matter-big-powers-28362>.

11. Vandebosch, Amry. "The Small States in International Politics and Organization." *The Journal of Politics* 26, no. 2 (1964): 293-312. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2127598>.

12. Lakatos, István. "The Potential Role of Small States and Their „Niche Diplomacy” at the UN and in the Field of Human Rights, with Special Attention to Montenegro." PDF. *Pécs Journal of International and European Law*, 2017.

13. *ibid*


14. *ibid*

15. *ibid*

16. "David and Goliath: The Importance of Small Countries." *Planet Mundus*. February 15, 2018. Accessed April 16, 2019. <http://planetmundus.com/importance-small-countries/>.

17. *ibid*

18. *ibid*



leaders are ideally positioned to mentor other nations and their figureheads on the processes and challenges that the former were able to overcome themselves and continue to do so on many fronts. When seeking a coach and a mentor, it is most effective and productive to find one who is both capable of pushing the mentee past their limits, and at the same time, remembering what it was like to be in the current position of the mentee. Through coaching and mentorship, Estonia can further consolidate the voices of small states to serve as a model for those who wish to guide their people to pursue a vision that all can achieve.

Estonia is in the process of turning a number of exceptional stories (i.e., Estonia-based companies that have gained international recognition and popularity, such as Transferwise, Skype, etc.) into a vibrant culture of entrepreneurship. Through thoughtful economic policy and development, Estonia is bound to reap long-term benefits of a digital education system that is focused on the transfer of knowledge over the expenditures on physical spaces and educational platforms

hindered by borders that many nations remain constrained by as they try to modernize from within.

Emboldened by their success of warding off by the cyber attack in 2007 by its Eastern neighbor, which is one of the nuclear superpowers of the world, Estonia has demonstrated to the rest of the world that, with efficient planning and best practices, a small but beautiful state can hold its own in the digital frontier. These unique experiences provide a platform for Estonia to give a voice to small states as a future member on the United Nations Security Council.

Why is small beautiful? "What is the meaning of democracy, freedom, human dignity, standard of living, self-realization, fulfillment? Is it a matter of goods, or of people? Of course, it is a matter of people. But people can be themselves only in small comprehensible groups."<sup>27</sup>

27. Schumacher, E. F., and Bill McKibben. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as If People Mattered*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2014.









**PART B.**

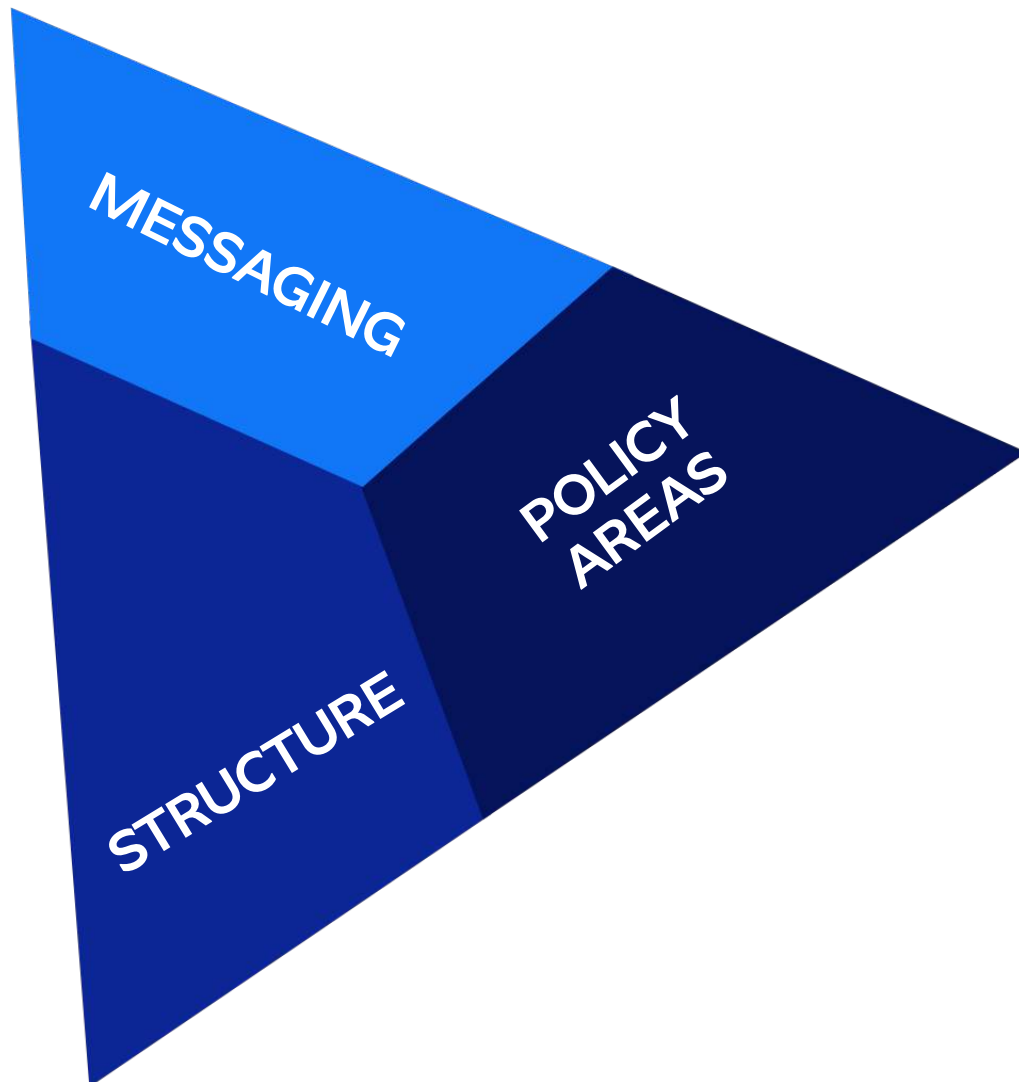
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**POLICY**

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# STRATEGY

# PILLARS





**A.**  
**Governance**



**STRUCTURE**

**B.**  
**Culture**  
**Digitalization**  
**Diplomacy**  
**Economy**  
**Education**



**POLICY  
AREAS**

**C.**  
**Branding**



**MESSAGING**

# PILLAR A.

## STRUCTURE: GOVERNANCE

Small states make up 105 out of 193 United Nation (UN) Member States, as well as some of the strongest advocates for the rules-based multilateralism that underpins the UN's mission and function.<sup>28</sup> However, despite their critical roles within the UN, small states still lack the institutional memory and diplomatic leverage afforded to larger countries, namely the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC).<sup>29</sup>

There has been no more urgent time than now for small states to work together to have their voices heard more clearly. As the rules-based international order comes under pressure, small states will become most vulnerable. At the same time, in an increasingly interconnected world, small states have the advantage of building "coalitions of the willing", which are groups of countries that share common values and collaborate more effectively to achieve common objectives.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, small states should begin creating a new institution that would help defend the current rules-based

international order against any attempts to undermine it.

Scholars of international relations have long illustrated that, the true source of a country's influence on the international stage stems from the depth and quantity of one's relationships, more so than its mere geographic or economic size.<sup>31</sup> Small states have already overcome their barriers through strategic alliances, participation in international fora, international law, and regulatory institutions. The success of regional models of cooperation support this claim.<sup>32</sup>

In contrast to the UN, which, in many ways, centers on the lowest common denominator of Member States, regional organizations have recognized and leveraged a common culture, history, philosophy and traditionalism. They have thus forged relationships that go

The name borrows from the Latin phrase, '**parum fortis**' meaning "**small but strong**".

deeper than self-interested cooperation, but speak to a specific identity.<sup>33</sup>

Estonia is ideally positioned to create a new small state platform that would amplify the voices of its

28. Súilleabháin, Andrea Ó, Paul D. Williams, Daniel Forti, Daniel Forti, Lesley Connolly, Annie Rubin, Global Observatory, and Global Observatory. "Small States Bring Big Ideas to the United Nations." IPI Global Observatory. December 02, 2014. Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/06/small-states-bring-big-ideas-to-the-un/>.

29. Adam Lupel and Lauri Mälksoo, "A Necessary Voice: Small States, International Law, and the UN Security Council," International Peace Institute, April 2019.

30. Interview by the Capstone team with President Kersti Kaljulaid, Tallinn, March 2019.

31. Long, T. (2017) It's not the size, it's the relationship: from 'small states' to asymmetry. *International Politics*, 54 (2). pp. 144-160. ISSN 1740-3898

32. Garzón, Jorge, and Detlef Nolte. "The New Minilateralism in Regional Economic Governance." *Handbook of South American Governance*, 2017, 173-90. Accessed April 5, 2019.

33. Interview by the Capstone team with Lauri Mälksoo, Professor of International Law at the University of Tartu, Tallinn, March 2019.

members and enable more positive leadership roles on the international stage.

The platform will be called, "FORTIS". The name borrows from the Latin phrase, '**parum fortis**' meaning "small but strong".

The FORTIS vision should be to function as a collaborative network of small states to exchange information and best practices. Its mission should be to identify opportunities to work together to meet the challenges of small states and collaborate to amplify small states' voices.

FORTIS communicates a new concept of small state cooperation. It is envisioned as a collaborative platform that prioritizes implementation, and practical solutions, and strives for mutual trust and support over the publication of statements, policies and position papers.

Based on examples of successful minilateral

alliances, FORTIS could gather a group of small countries that are regionally representative, economically and socially diverse, and committed to advancing a set of common.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of the small state,<sup>34</sup> FORTIS could adopt the Forum of Small States (FOSS)' criterion of 10 million or less in population.<sup>35</sup> As of 2019, this would include 105 countries that are diverse in their economic capacity and social structure across the globe.

A central outcome of FORTIS will be to create a group large enough to be considered a critical mass, and, once it has reached its full potential, FORTIS can position itself as an effective counterweight vis-à-vis large countries.

FORTIS membership should be as inclusive as possible, inspired by the shared goal of harnessing the unifying power of the combined voices small states in advancing global issues in a forum outside of the UN. Each member's goal should be to 1) amplify small

states' voices, 2) increase their power to shape key global governance issues, 3) facilitate cooperation to effectively overcome their structural and resource constraints to ultimately further and uphold the international rules-based order.

Estonia can use this forum to share and expand on its experience with building a digital society based on trust and innovation, as well as its bold initiatives to assist non-EU citizens, by encouraging them to realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

At the same time, FORTIS will be ideally placed to address other universal issues, including climate change, digital transformation, cybersecurity, education, cultural preservation, and economic development.

Successful examples of coalition building amongst small states support FORTIS' aim to actively advance their interests on the international

34. "A History of the Forum of Small States." World Scientific. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.worldscientific.com/page/9729-chewtaiso>.

35. Súilleabháin, Andrea Ó, Paul D. Williams, Daniel Forti, Daniel Forti, Lesley Connolly, Annie Rubin, Global Observatory, and Global Observatory. "Small States Bring Big Ideas to the United Nations." IPI Global Observatory. December 02, 2014. Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/06/small-states-bring-big-ideas-to-the-un/>.

stage. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which includes mostly small island developing (SID) states, has become one of the major players in raising awareness on climate change and advocating for strong international action.

Despite the major cultural and ethnic differences among participant countries, AOSIS has successfully built a common diplomatic discourse and influencing strategy in order to mobilize political leaders, influential negotiators, and advisors:<sup>36</sup> the significance of their central issue, climate change, to small island states has made the AOSIS an important force in the climate change debate. The key lesson is that the members countries' unity has increased the bargaining power of all its members, individually as well as collectively.

Even though the group Digital 9 (also known as D-9, soon to be D-10)<sup>37</sup> is not specifically built around small states, it nevertheless provides an interesting case study. The group is made up of "the most

digitally advanced governments in the world" with the goal of exchanging best practices and committing to the shared principles of harnessing the growth of digital economies to provide effective public services.<sup>38</sup>

Although D-9 welcomes countries of all sizes, the key lesson is that the founding members have seized on an issue that is of interest to all governments looking to improve the quality of their digital services. The success of the D-9 could inspire FORTIS to, in a similar fashion, focus on a set of pressing issues that are of interest to many small states, and rally small state governments around these collaborative efforts.

The following recommendations on FORTIS' structure are underpinned by a thorough literature review, close study of use cases, as well as interviews with Estonian government officials and other small state Permanent Representations to the UN in New York.

They are not intended to provide a universal and prescriptive list.

Instead, they are an attempt to understand what makes for successful collaboration on the international stage, and describe what can be done to maximize small states' collective impact. It is anticipated that once they are deployed in real world scenarios, new and interesting uses will develop, responding to needs and priorities as identified by Estonia and the founding members.

### Structure - Membership

Estonia is ideally placed to lead the creation and set up of FORTIS in close collaboration with a group of initially a limited number of like-minded small countries. These founding members should be 1) regionally representative, and 2) have a common interest in working with Estonia on building FORTIS.

The decision on which five countries will initially join together will depend on whether or not Estonia will hold a temporary seat on the UNSC as of 2020, as well as its strategic alliances and diplomatic priorities. It goes

36. Ourbak, Timothée, and Alexandre K. Magnan. "The Paris Agreement and Climate Change Negotiations: Small Islands, Big Players." *Regional Environmental Change* 18, no. 8 (2017): 2201-207

37. "The Digital 9." New Zealand Government. Accessed May 09, 2019. <https://www.digital.govt.nz/digital-government/international-partnerships/the-digital-9/>.

38. Cabinet Office. "D5 Charter." D5 Charter. December 11, 2014. Accessed April 20, 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/d5-charter>.

beyond the scope of this report to make concrete suggestions in this regard.

The founding members should refine and sign a FORTIS founding document, decide on the thematic foci for the first two to three years, and define topics of initial collaboration.

FORTIS can significantly deepen its impact by inviting a broader set of members to join the group within the first two to three years of operation. Any expansion should be agreed upon by the existing members and ensure that new member countries are regionally and economically diverse, and subscribe to the FORTIS principles. Still, the expansion should be based on a philosophy of openness to having all small states join but with the underlying mission of being effective.

This report suggests that, in line with the FORTIS vision of providing a collaborative network, each member may, as appropriate, designate other institutions to lead and participate in the initiatives.

Small states, who in the beginning do not want to become full members, may maintain observer status, which would allow them to participate in summits and other gatherings, but excludes them from the rotating presidency. Such an integrated structure would enable FORTIS to offer a proof of concept to interested small states, and gather support from like-minded states.

### **Structure – Founding Document**

The non-binding, but collaborative structure of FORTIS, is key to its broader vision. This report therefore recommends that FORTIS should not create a new treaty or an otherwise binding international legal document. Instead, and borrowing from the positive experience of the D-9, FORTIS could be based on the FORTIS Charter, signed by all members, which commits member states to work towards a set of principles.

While this report recommends that these should be refined and agreed on by all founding members, the following principles could serve as a

blueprint for the FORTIS Charter:

1. Amplifying small states voices: striving to collectively and individually amplify the voices and activities of small states on the international stage. To achieve this, create a multi-actor platform to reinforce exchanges, partnerships, and capitalization on experience among small states, organized around the execution of concrete actions.
2. Developing best practices: FORTIS members should lead by example, create and share best practices, learn from each other. The collaborative work focuses in particular on the sharing of information; the exchange of good practice; the design of projects and policies; and the promotion or funding of programs.
3. Mutual support: FORTIS members recognize and accept the need for partnership, and collaborate for the mobilization and provision of support to members with constraint capacity, knowledge and resources on specific issues.
4. Transparency: acting with the highest standards of transparency and accountability



to the other members at all times; members also play a role in communication and awareness raising.

5. Pooling of knowledge: Create a digital resource centre on FORTIS' topics, to make data and results, training resources and practice guides available to member States and the public.

Keeping in mind the diverse membership of FORTIS as well as the current global context, it is likely that not all principles can be met in the short term.

### **Structure – Governance**

The principles as laid out in the Charter, which will have been debated, negotiated and accepted by the founding members will provide the basis on which to base the governance of FORTIS.

This report proposes to implement a rotating Presidency determined by a member's geographic location, held by one country for 12 months each, to advance specific topics and shape the FORTIS agenda.

Estonia, with its pioneering role in creating the platform, is best positioned to hold the first

FORTIS Presidency and set the initial strategic direction of the platform.

It is reasonable to expect unforeseen circumstances and obstacles in the setting up of FORTIS, given the complexities of bringing an array of countries together under one umbrella. Keeping this in mind, the first Presidency could present a bit of an anomaly, and be initially held by Estonia for up to three years. Moreover, this first Presidency would run in parallel to its potential temporary membership in the UNSC and therefore provide another forum to gather support.

FORTIS should not be based in any specific location, but rather work through its members' embassies and UN permanent representations to ensure agile engagement with a range of stakeholders and fora. Ministries may be assigned to participate in meetings and advance the agenda based on their expertise and capacity.

Ambassadors of member countries may be designated to

speak on behalf of a group of countries on specific issues, based on consensus agreement. This will save time and financial resources, and ensure that states speak with a common voice.

### **Structure – Governing body**

In keeping with its commitment to lean governance, FORTIS could be governed by a rotating Secretariat of five members, which changes every year, six months after the start of a new Presidency, and oversees overall coordination. Membership is based on rotation and should be regionally and economically diverse. Each current Presidency chairs the Secretariat.

The Secretariat could be based in Tallinn together with the Small State Institute, while not treating the host country as political and decision headquarters. Rather, it should serve as an administrative seat.

### **Structure – Annual Summit**

In order to create momentum for its activities, increase

international attention and broaden its reach and influence, FORTIS would meet once a year with a rotating host state, which will chair the meeting as the President. Held annually, it would be an invite-only gathering of all Member State government leaders and ministers, Civil Society, the tech community, and influential thinkers. Each annual Summit would have a theme around which it evolves.

This annual Summit could consist of Ministerial discussions, specialized workshops and informative presentations. A joint statement would be released at the end of Summit to inform the agenda and priorities for the upcoming year and Presidency, and create an institutional memory around FORTIS' engagement. A key outcome of the Summit should be the mobilization and provision of support to countries, which lack the resources, knowledge and capacity to implement.

### **Structure - Decision Making**

A central interest of FORTIS would be to follow a lean and fast decision-making process. Unlike other international

organizations, FORTIS would not be dependent or rely on lengthy decision making processes, but prioritize outcomes. Members would decide on a case-by-case basis which joint initiatives will be funded and sourced.

Other projects may arise in the course of each Presidency. It should be possible for groups of countries to work together "mini-laterally" on specific issues of the group's interest, and which do not concern the broader group. The goal is mutual and extensive engagement of small states.

### **Structure - Working Groups and Implementation**

FORTIS should distinguish itself as a focused forum for all small states, not just the digitally advanced ones. The Working Groups as suggested below should seek close collaboration and build synergies with the newly created Tallinn-based Small State Institute.<sup>39</sup>

By ensuring that the

knowledge and experiences specific to small states are gathered and further developed, the Institute will contribute to the evolution of small state-specific thinking and scholarship. The members should agree to work together in the following areas of focus:

#### **I. Culture - to preserve and advance the rich and diverse cultures of small states:**

- Preserving Culture through Small State Cultural Exhibitions
- Small State E-Sport Championship
- FORTIS Stories (news network)
- Music Festival

#### **II. Digitalization - to provide quality public services to everyone:**

- Taking the e-Governance Academy global
- Forum on Global Data and AI Ethics
- e-Civil Society

#### **III. Diplomacy - to strengthen multilateral cooperation to overcome future challenges:**

- e-Heritage
- e-Embassy
- Disaster Preparedness

#### **IV. Economy - to ensure a**

39. Estonia Capstone Team 2018, "The Aspirational Imperative: How Estonia Can Punch Above Its Weight and Enhance Its International Recognition, Economic Opportunity, and Security," Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, May 2018. Please see Annex on Page 138-139 of this report. for the details on creation of the Small State Institute

sustainable economic development to benefit all people through:

- Joint Tourism promotion
- e-Investment Platform
- ForESTI (tech-based forest management)

**V. Education** - to equip people to meet complex challenges:

- Cyber Hygiene for small states
- e-Education

Implementation of the decisions made by the different Working Groups is up to each Member State. Depending on regulations, partnerships and strategic priorities of each Member State, projects may be carried out by an international organization, States, research institutions, producers' organizations, NGOs, development partners, foundations and businesses.

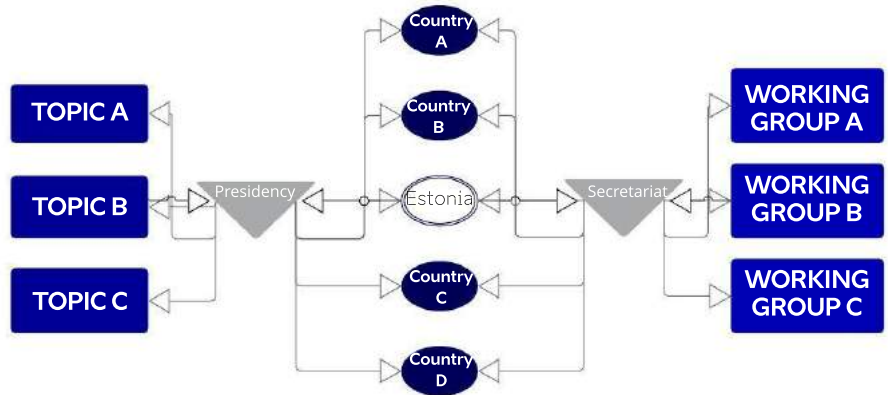
**Recommendations**

The following recommendations will support the initial process of set up and creation of FORTIS:

**Short-term (1-2 years):**

1. Designate a group within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will guide and oversee the set-up of

FORTIS' Structure for Decision Making



FORTIS.

2. Gather a group of a limited number of founding Members, who agree to establish FORTIS, refine and sign the Charter and begin to collaborate on areas of consensus.

3. Aim to reach 25 member states (ideally 5 from each region) by its fifth year, to gradually expand its membership and solidify its impact.

4. Organize and hold the first two annual Summits as a a test-run consisting of informal sessions and working groups at ministerial levels prior to further expansion. It is recommended that Estonia holds the initial Presidency for two to three years.

**Medium-term (2-5 years):**

1. Aim to have at least 50 members (10 from each region) by its 10th anniversary.

2. Solidify the formal structure of FORTIS based on lessons from the test runs, including presidential term rotations, annual meeting schedules, and outputs from the meetings.

3. Designate a certain department or appoint an official as the primary FORTIS point of contact in respective countries.

4. Begin setting annual FORTIS themes to guide their meeting agendas at all occasions and levels.

**Long-term (5-10 years and on):**

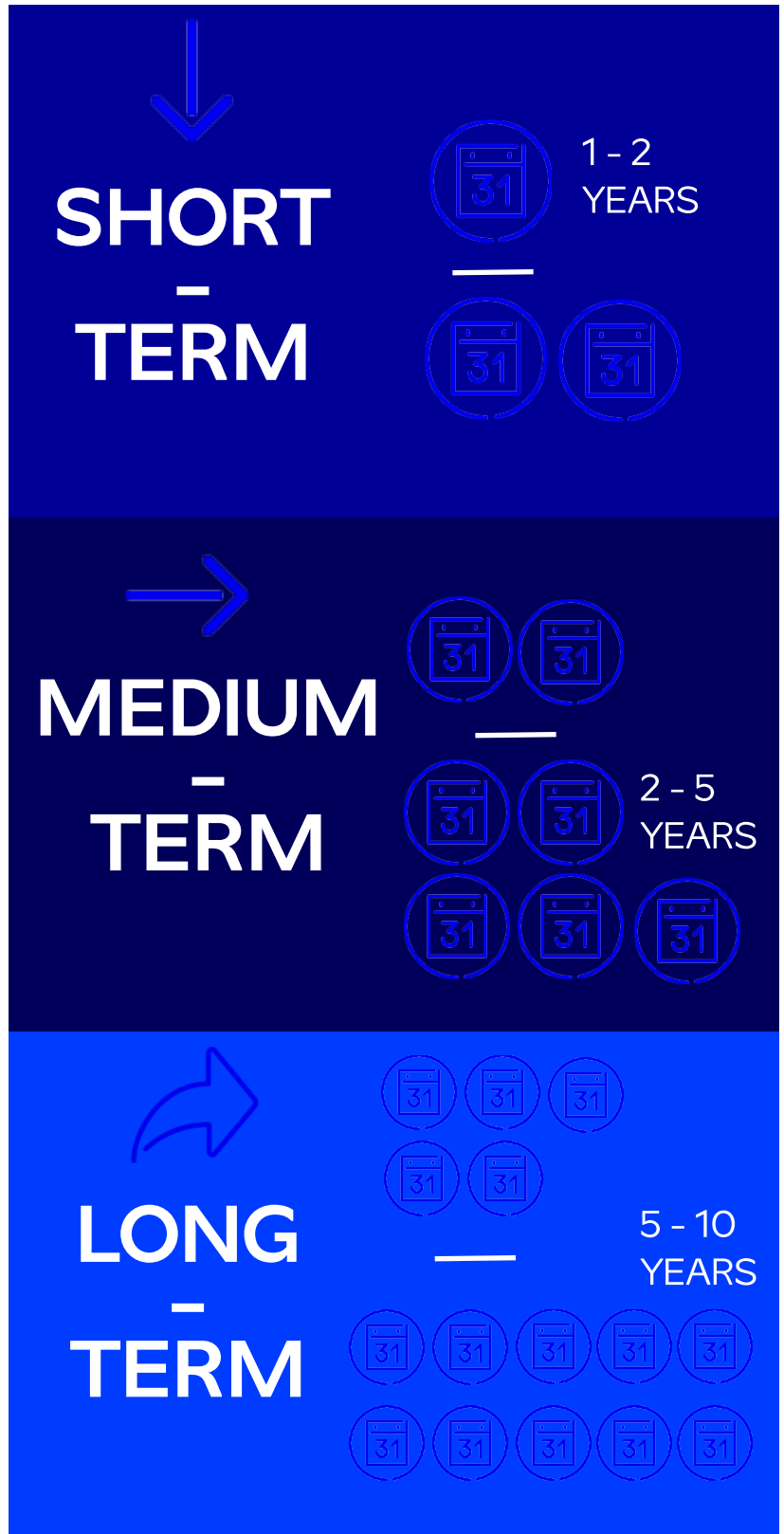
1. Continue expanding its membership without

compromising on its founding vision or mission.

2. Ensure that every region has been represented in the presidential term rotation.
3. Establish a membership contribution system for each party to allocate a proportionate amount of resources to help with the planning and execution of agendas.

FORTIS presents a new opportunity for Estonia, other small states, and the rest of the world. Although the UN was originally designed in a way that puts the responsibility of upholding the rules-based international order in the hands of major powers, it was in fact the 105 small states that have had just as much role in holding the order together through painstaking diplomatic efforts and subtle ingenuity. The international system needs a change, but not by undermining its values or mission.

FORTIS finally gives Estonia and other small states due credit by relieving them of structural barriers within the multilateral systems, and instead bolstering their capacity to freely voice their concerns amongst themselves in a way they could contribute more effectively to the international community. Estonia's promise to be the advocate of small states starts with FORTIS.





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# PILLAR B.

# POLICY AREAS

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By ensuring that the knowledge and experience gathered and further developed, the Institute's evolution of small state-specific thinking and should agree to work together in the following a

## 01.

### Culture

**OBJECTIVE:** TO PRESERVE AND ADVANCE RICH AND DIVERSE. CULTURES OF SMALL STATES

- 1.1. Cultural Exhibition Network
- 1.2. Small State E-Sport Championship
- 1.3. FORTIS Stories (news network)
- 1.4. Music Festival

## 02.

### Digitalization

**OBJECTIVE:** TO PROVIDE QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES TO EVERYONE

- 2.1. Taking the e-Governance Academy global
- 2.2. Forum on Global Data and AI
- 2.3. e-Civil Society

s specific to small states are  
ute will contribute to the  
d scholarship. The members  
areas of focus:

## 03. Diplomacy

**OBJECTIVE:** TO  
STRENGTHEN  
MULTILATERAL  
COOPERATION TO  
OVERCOME FUTURE  
CHALLENGES

- 3.1. e-Heritage
- 3.2. e-Embassy
- 3.3. Disaster Preparedness

## 04. Economy

**OBJECTIVE:** TO ENSURE  
A SUSTAINABLE  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT TO  
BENEFIT ALL PEOPLE  
THROUGH:

- 4.1. Joint Tourism promotion
- 4.2. e-Investment Platform
- 4.3. ForESTI (tech-based forest management)

## 05. Education

**OBJECTIVE:** TO EQUIP  
PEOPLE TO MEET  
COMPLEX  
CHALLENGES

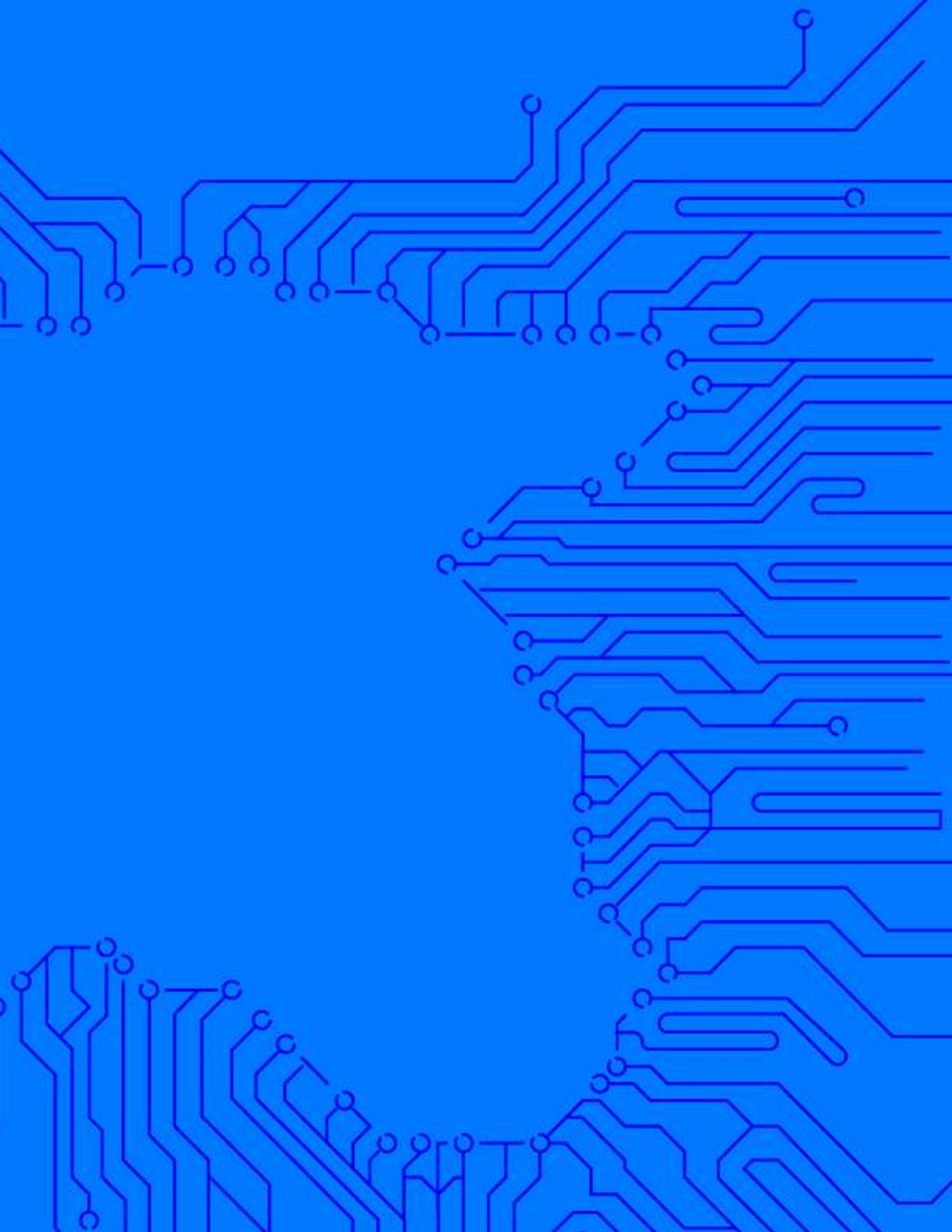
- 5.1. Cyber Hygiene for small states
- 5.2. e-Education



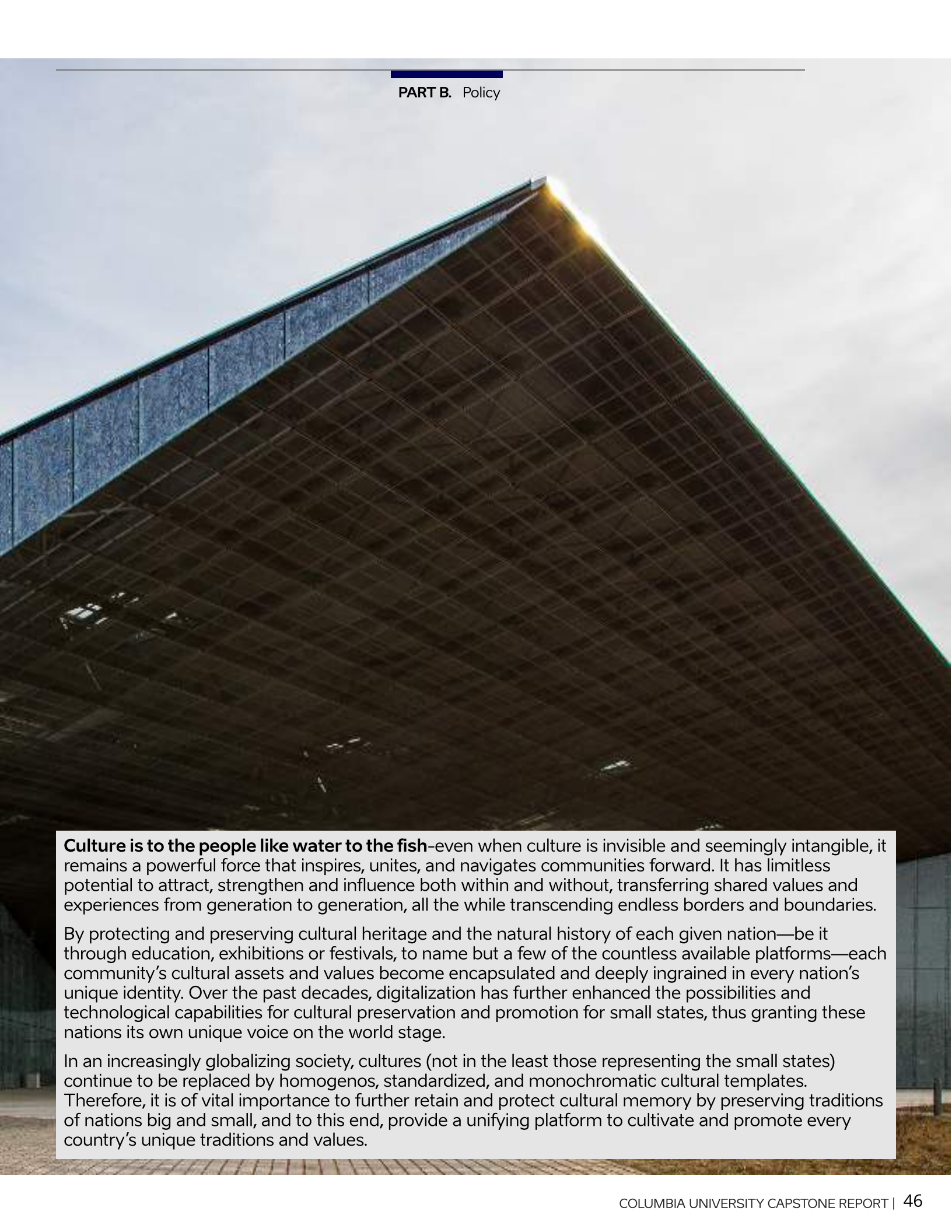
**POLICY AREA 01.**

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Culture







**Culture is to the people like water to the fish**—even when culture is invisible and seemingly intangible, it remains a powerful force that inspires, unites, and navigates communities forward. It has limitless potential to attract, strengthen and influence both within and without, transferring shared values and experiences from generation to generation, all the while transcending endless borders and boundaries.

By protecting and preserving cultural heritage and the natural history of each given nation—be it through education, exhibitions or festivals, to name but a few of the countless available platforms—each community’s cultural assets and values become encapsulated and deeply ingrained in every nation’s unique identity. Over the past decades, digitalization has further enhanced the possibilities and technological capabilities for cultural preservation and promotion for small states, thus granting these nations its own unique voice on the world stage.

In an increasingly globalizing society, cultures (not in the least those representing the small states) continue to be replaced by homogenous, standardized, and monochromatic cultural templates. Therefore, it is of vital importance to further retain and protect cultural memory by preserving traditions of nations big and small, and to this end, provide a unifying platform to cultivate and promote every country’s unique traditions and values.



# 01. | Area of Culture 1.1

## **CULTURAL EXHIBITION NETWORK**

Short Term - Easy: Preserving Culture through Small State Cultural Exhibitions

### **Setting the Scene**

In culture there lays privilege to identify, to express, and to exist. Through culture, individuals are able to explore values, commonalities, and security while navigating today's increasingly globalized society. Ultimately, cultures survive thousands of years of history because of persistence and resilience.

These very same cultures have remained the cornerstone of modern states due to cultural preservation, the very protection of talent and knowledge translated from one generation's context to the next.<sup>40</sup> As Marcus Garvey, leader of the Pan-Africanism movement once stated, "a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

### **Challenge**

Without preservation and perpetuation, cultures and languages will disappear.<sup>41</sup> President Kaljulaid has emphasized the critical role of promoting and preserving small state culture and language in light of ever-expanding globalization.<sup>42</sup> The Estonian President's words are representative of concerns echoed by many Estonians: they perceive small state cultures to be threatened, not least because of the dominance and omnipresence of languages such as English, Mandarin, and Spanish, languages which are spoken by millions.<sup>43</sup> As cosmopolitan, mainstream culture continues to penetrate the furthest corners of the world, cultural values, customs, and traditions begin to assimilate into indistinguishable norms. Thus, small states need to commit to pursuing contemporary solutions to preserve and promote culture.

### **Opportunity**

Estonia has the opportunity to strengthen its current cultural preservation efforts through a small state network of cultural exhibitions. According to Agnes Aljas, curator of Eesti Rahva Muuseum, the museum has already signed various cooperation agreements with mostly European museums in which exhibitions are shared with each other.<sup>44</sup> Moving beyond the limitations of these current bilateral exchanges, Estonia's Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs should explore the collective promotion and preservation of small state culture through a rotating cultural exhibition system.

40. "Preserving Culture and Heritage Through Generations." Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 14 May 2014, [https://www.amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/FORUM\\_REPORT\(1\).pdf](https://www.amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/FORUM_REPORT(1).pdf).

41. "When a Language Dies, What Happens to Culture?" National Public Radio, 18 June 2013, <https://www.npr.org/2013/06/18/193135997/when-a-language-dies-what-happens-to-culture>.

42. Kersti Kaljulaid (President of the Republic of Estonia), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

43. Woodbury, Anthony. "What is an Endangered Language?" Linguistic Society of America, [https://www.amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/FORUM\\_REPORT\(1\).pdf](https://www.amf.net.au/library/uploads/files/FORUM_REPORT(1).pdf).

44. Ibid.

## **Recommendation**

Estonia, along with other like-minded small states interested in cultural preservation, should establish a network of cooperation agreements among small states in order to formalize a rotating cultural exhibition system hosted by national museums. This small state cultural exhibition system will enable the circulation of small state exhibitions from national museum to national museum, ensuring the equal promotion and exchange of culture amongst participating states. Furthermore, Estonia can readily take leadership on spearheading the network of cooperation agreements among small states through a newly established culture-focused branch of the Small States Institute, so that national museums can learn from Eesti Rahva Museum's innovative and digitally advanced exhibition style, further protecting and fostering their culture's international presence and preservation..

### Short term:

1. Identify and reach out to potential partners among small states, especially those with existing cultural exhibition infrastructure.
2. Establish a culture-focused branch within the Small States Institute.<sup>45</sup>
3. Organize an online e-museum platform for small states with digital galleries and exhibitions.

### Medium term:

1. Facilitate the institutionalization of the small state cultural exhibition system with academic guidance of the Small States Institute.
2. Ensure national museums have the resources and capacity to host cultural exhibitions.
3. Collaborate with Eesti Rahva Muuseum in order to share digital strategies and best practices.

### Long term:

1. Commence small state cultural exhibition network operations and rotate exhibitions biannually.

45. Estonia Capstone Team 2018, "The Aspirational Imperative: How Estonia Can Punch Above Its Weight and Enhance Its International Recognition, Economic Opportunity, and Security," Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, May 2018.

## Rationale

Estonia has already positioned itself as a pioneer in cultural preservation through its distinguished national museum, Eesti Rahva Muuseum, which has integrated technology and innovative dialogue-based, multi-voiced, and participatory-oriented approaches which have contributed to the museum earning the 2018 European Museum of the Year Kenneth Hudson Award, “one of the most important prizes in the museum field in Europe that is given to projects and museums that put people on the foreground and communicate with people.”<sup>46</sup> In many ways, the Estonian national museum subscribes to the leitmotif of Estonian Ministry of Culture adviser on architecture and design, Dr. Veronika Valk, who believes that preserving culture does not mean replicating, and it does not mean destroying heritage either; when something new is being built, commit to it genuinely being new.<sup>47</sup>

The proposed network of cultural exhibitions will foster the sharing of best practices on cultural preservation among small states and their national museums. The Eesti Rahva Muuseum’s pioneering visionaries, for instance, will be able to utilize this platform to communicate their methodology, development, and presentation of innovative exhibitions with partner museums.

Moreover, Estonia can easily expand its current network of cooperation agreements; through the mutual understanding of culture’s important role in small states, a rotating cultural exhibition system would further amplify Estonian efforts to preserve and promote small state culture. Each small state will be able to not only preserve their own cultures and exchange curating practices, but also collaboratively educate their own populations about other small state cultures. These rotating exhibitions will also attract additional tourists both domestically and internationally to participating national museums given the common sense of affinity people from small states feel other small state cultures. Each small state exhibition will not only highlight one small state, but also underscore the importance of others.

46. “One of the Most Esteemed Award in Europe Awarded to ENM.” Eesti Rahva Muuseum, 11 June 2018, [www.erm.ee/en/news/emya-kenneth-hudson-ENM](http://www.erm.ee/en/news/emya-kenneth-hudson-ENM).

47. Veronik Valk (Estonian Ministry of Culture Adviser on Architecture and Design), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

# 01. | Area of Culture 1.2

## SMALL STATE E-SPORT CHAMPIONSHIP

Medium Term - Somewhat hard: Promoting friendship and understanding among small states through sports and esports.

### Setting the Scene

Sports play an important role to bring people all over the world together.<sup>48</sup> Olympics, World Cup, and other international sport events have become festivals not only for the athletes participating in the competitions, but for people from all countries watching their TVs and cheering their national athletes.<sup>49</sup>

Hosting Olympic Games not only brings economic benefits by selling tickets, promoting tourism and developing infrastructure, but more importantly, presenting a vibrant image of a country in the international community.<sup>50</sup> Through TV broadcasting, Internet and other forms of media, it is possible for a host country to comprehensively advertise itself, and its athletes, coaches, officials; and the visitors to the sporting events effectively become ambassadors promoting the host country.

Estonia has a long tradition in participating in top level sport events,<sup>51</sup> and has performed very well in number of sports like wrestling, weightlifting, cross country skiing, discus throw, rowing and judo.<sup>52</sup> Gerd Kanter, an Olympic gold medal winner in 2008, is regarded as a national hero in Estonia.<sup>53</sup> His promotion of the Olympic spirit and youth education has encouraged many in Estonia. It also underscores the power of bringing people in small countries together through sports by spreading joy and pride of winning championships, especially over large countries.

Esports is an up-and-coming form of sports, and is especially popular with young people. It uses video games as its medium.<sup>54</sup> It is usually played with individuals or teams as organized video game competitions. Esports has emerged and gained popularity all over the world in the past decade. In 2018, 427 million people were estimated to be watching esports globally, with revenues reaching 1 billion US dollars.<sup>55</sup> The growing market has encouraged more and more people to become professional players,<sup>56</sup> and there are increasing numbers of professional teams participating at

48. Spaaij, Ramón. "The social impact of sport: diversities, complexities and contexts." *Sport in society* 12, no. 9 (2009): 1109-1117.

49. FIFA.com. "2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ - News - More than Half the World Watched Record-breaking 2018 World Cup." [www.fifa.com](https://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/more-than-half-the-world-watched-record-breaking-2018-world-cup). Accessed April 10, 2019.

50. Sun, Q., & Paswan, A. (2012). Country branding through Olympic games. *Journal of Brand Management*, 19(8), 641-654.

51. After declaring independence from Russia in 1918, Estonia first competed as a nation at the 1920 Summer Olympics and 1928 Winter Olympics. Until 2016 Rio Summer Olympics and 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, Estonia won 34 medals and 7 medals in all the Olympics participated, respectively. Data retrieved from International Olympics Committee.

52. Data collected from International Olympics Committee database: <https://www.olympic.org>

53. Branch, John. "Estonia's Kanter Celebrates Gold Medal in the Discus His Way." *The New York Times*. August 23, 2008. Accessed April 10, 2019.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/24/sports/olympics/24thrower.html>.

54. Hamari, Juho; Sjöblom, Max (2016). "What is eSports and why do people watch it?". *Internet Research*. doi:10.1108/INTR-04-2016-0085. SSRN 2686182.

55. "427 million people will be watching esports by 2019, reports Newzoo". *ESPN.com*.

56. "Major League Gaming reports COWS GO MOO 334 percent growth in live video". *GameSpot*. 14 November 2012. Retrieved 8 October 2013.



different levels of competition, including professional leagues and championships, as well as cup games. The majority of players and viewers are between 18 and 34 years old.<sup>57</sup> Even though many top players are from large countries such as China, South Korea and the US, small countries have many players with strong followings, who have won major titles in esports competitions. Sweden, for example, is one of the leading countries in developing esports players and teams, and has outperformed large countries in different esports leagues and championships.<sup>58</sup> Estonia, as a small country, also has high achieving esports players. Clement Ivanov, the Estonian Dota 2 player, has earned more than 2 million US dollars prize money, and is one of the most successful Dota 2 players in Europe.<sup>59</sup>

## Challenge

Hosting a major sport event, however, can be very costly. This requires the host country to be sufficiently financially viable to cover the major cost of infrastructure development, marketing and human capital.<sup>60</sup> This is a significant challenge for small countries given their limited resources.

Competing in traditional sports is more challenging for small countries, especially for small developing countries. Due to the lack of investment into sports, small country athletes are more likely to receive less comprehensive training.<sup>61</sup> Even though there are many national heroes who have won Olympic gold medals in small countries, the overall number of gold medalists in small countries is relatively far less than large countries. Compared to countries such as the US and China, which are strong in a number of different sports, the limited resources available for training and developing a host of sports remains challenging for small countries.<sup>62</sup>

## Opportunity

Esports is more accessible for participants than traditional sports. Players use computers or smartphones to compete, which are more affordable compared to traditional sports.<sup>63</sup> Thus, there are professional esports players in almost every small country.<sup>64</sup> There is also a growing recognition of esports as a “real” sport. In 2017, the International Olympic Committee stated that “competitive esports” could be considered as a sporting activity.<sup>65</sup> There are more and more small countries recognizing esports as a sport. More than 10 small countries have joined the International Esports Federation, including Austria, Costa Rica, Georgia, Jamaica, Maldives, Namibia, New Zealand and Tunisia. This increased participation shows the possibility of organizing an esports for small countries.

57. Professional esports players earn their income through participating esports competitions winning prize money. Many competitions use a series of promotion and relegation play with sponsored teams, such as the League of Legends World Championship, but more recently, competitions structured similar to American professional sports, with salaried players and regular season and play-off series, have emerged, such as the Overwatch League

58. "Five Reasons Sweden Is so Good at Esports." The Local. August 08, 2018. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://www.thelocal.se/20180808/five-reasons-sweden-is-so-good-at-esports>.

59. Miozzi, CJ (August 1, 2011). "Valve Announces DOTA 2 Gamescom Tournament". Game Front. Archived from the original on December 24, 2013. Retrieved February 22, 2014.

60. For example, the Brazil World Cup in 2018 cost Brazil 15 billion US dollars to develop facilities, medical and health projects. Information from "FIFA Returns \$100M to Brazil; World Cup Cost \$15 Billion." USA Today. January 20, 2015. Accessed April 15, 2019.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/soccer/2015/01/20/fifa-returns-100m-to-brazil-world-cup-cost-15-billion/22050583/>.

61. "Sportanddev.org." Underdevelopment of Sport in Developing Countries. Accessed April 15, 2019.

<https://www.sportanddev.org/en/learn-more/economic-development/underdevelopment-sport-developing-countries-0>.

62. Estonia Olympic Committee, interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team at Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

63. For example, even though it's cheaper to buy a soccer ball compared to buy a laptop, it's more expensive to get intensive training in soccer than playing video games. It is always necessary to get professional training for professional soccer players, however, a lot of esports players purely become professional and outstanding based on their own practice which has little cost compared to soccer training. Also laptop has a lot of other functions while soccer ball is mainly just for soccer. See Linscott, Gillian. "All Roads Can Lead to Esports." Hotspawn. April 11, 2019. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.hotspawn.com/all-roads-can-lead-to-esports/>

64. "Highest Earnings By Country." Esports Player Rankings :: Esports Earnings. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.esportsearnings.com/countries>.

65. Grohmann, Karolos (28 October 2017). "E-sports just got closer to being part of the Olympics". Reuters. Retrieved 5 November 2017.

## Recommendation

Hosting an esports event becomes an opportunity for small countries, especially Estonia, to promote its image in the international community. It will also present the cyber culture in Estonia, and connect young people from all over the world. The esports event will become a celebration for the sport spirit, especially among the young generation in small countries. The small state participating players can have a platform to demonstrate their talents in esports by competing with their fellow players from other small countries.

A Small State Esports Championship (SSEC) will provide esports players in small countries a platform to not only compete, but also to promote communication and forge friendship among young people. By engaging the young esports players and fans all over the world, this championship can become a platform to connect and bond small countries through esports competition.

SSEC will have two stages: the online qualifier and finals. In the qualifier stage, teams will register and play on the server of the host country in their own country. Campaigns can be carried out during this stage to amplify the culture of small countries. For example, each player can use one of the scenic spots from their home country as the background profile picture. Also, the stories of each player's home country can be published on the competition website daily throughout the competition.

During the offline final stage, in addition to the competition, the host country will also organize different panel discussions and field trips for the players as well as participants and sponsors. The special offline events will combine the elements of sport, education, business and investment.

### The Organization of SSEC

- Title: Small States Esports Championship
- Format: Online and offline
- Participating games: League of Legends, Dota 2, Counter Strike
- Participants: Small state individual players for Dota 2 and Counter Strike, and teams for League of Legends ( Players are encouraged to team up with players from other small countries)
- Time: May and August
- May: Online qualifiers for the finals. Ten finalist teams/individuals for each game
- August: Offline final in the host country with an online live broadcasting.
- Organizer: Olympic committee in each country/esports federation in each country
- Funding: Government, private companies

### Short-term

In the first 5 years, SSEC should establish itself as one of the major esports events among the small states. It will champion the spirit of sports, which is to connect young people in small countries, and develop a comprehensive operating and organizing mechanism.

### Medium-term

SSEC can expand its reach to incorporate more players from more small countries and include additional esports. It can also provide extra educational and tourism modules during the offline finalist competitions. For example, SSEC should ask the finalists to visit schools in the host country to conduct a technology education forum and tourism campaigns.

### Long-term

SSEC can invite private software and hardware tech companies to hold a forum during the final stage of the championship. Through the forum, these companies can share their understanding of the future esports development and how technology could further support this development. It can also facilitate conversations among esports related tech companies to catch up with the frontier of esports technology to better develop their own products and services.

## **Rationale**

Esports have become a festival for young people all over the world. By starting SSEC, young players and fans from different small countries can get together in cyberspace to better understand each other's culture and make friends. The players will act as the ambassadors of their countries and culture by promoting and preserving the diversity in social media and other online platforms.

Estonia can play a leading role in esports because of its strong teams of globally popular professional esports players.<sup>66</sup> The digital culture in Estonia has made the country not only one of the esports friendly countries in Europe,<sup>67</sup> but also led to advanced digital infrastructure and human capital that make the country an ideal host for an esports event. The image of Estonia as a global cyber leader will be amplified by hosting the games. Other countries who would like to host can also use this event as a platform to brand themselves through the internet, which can effectively reach more young people given the audience is mostly people under 35 years old.

66. "Most Played ESports Games in Estonia." Which ESports Games Are Most Played in Estonia? Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://esportsflag.com/estonia>.

67. Gregor Sibold, "E-sportlased Saavad Kaitseväeteenistuse Läbida Lihtsustatud Tingimustel Nagu Jalgpallurid," Digigeenius, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://digi.geenius.ee/rubriik/uudis/e-sportlased-saavad-kaitsevaeteenistuse-labida-lihtsustatud-tingimustel-nagu-jalgpallurid/>.

The final stage of SSEC will be a good opportunity for top players to compete and demonstrate their sportsman spirit. In the offline event, they can get to know the host country better and bring this understanding to their home countries. For example, Blizzcon, an esports competition event in California, successfully uses its offline event to promote gender diversity throughout the event.<sup>68</sup> Hosting SSEC can be an effective way to boost the international standing of the host country by presenting a cyber-friendly image to the world. In the 2018, League of Legends World championship hosted by South Korea had more than 90 million viewers in the opening ceremony alone.<sup>69</sup> The ceremony featured K-pop singers and AR technologies, which promoted South Korea's image as a technological powerhouse to the audience all over the world.<sup>70</sup>

Compared to traditional sport events, the cost of hosting esports is rather small, especially given the size of the offline final stage competition. This will enable small states with limited resources to participate in hosting major international sport events. This is also a good opportunity to engage the private sector, specifically tech companies.

Estonia is already home to global technology companies, including Transferwise, Taxify and Pipedrive. By hosting SSEC, Estonia can offer an opportunity for these companies to explore new opportunities in other small countries. Sponsors can reach young people who will be the consumers in the future. It will also enable personalized advertisement by, for example, having sponsoring company logos on the clothing of esports players. Sponsoring esports also offers new digital sales channels by permitting advertisements during the games as well as on online platforms.

SSEC will help tech companies with marketing themselves globally during the event and testing their products and services. For example, Israel has already benefited from developing its esports industry to boost the development of its technology sector.<sup>71</sup> Israel is already a leader in areas like video, data analytics, and monetization. Companies in Israel are trying to consolidate their technologies to provide more advanced hardware and software service in esports industry.

As for the US, Intel has welcomed its new development through participating in esports hardware development.<sup>72</sup> Companies from the host country can improve their products by meeting the standard of esports games. Usually, esports games require high level of software and hardware support, while the opportunity to participate in SSEC will incentivize the Estonian tech companies to improve the quality of their products and service in order to qualify as service providers.

68. Marshall, Cass. "BlizzCon 2018 Aims to Be More Accessible than Ever with the Inclusion Nexus." Polygon. October 03, 2018. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.polygon.com/2018/10/3/17929446/blizzcon-2018-inclusion-nexus-diversity-speakers>.

69. As one of the most famous esports events, the League of Legends World Championship is the annual professional League of Legends world championship tournament hosted by Riot Games and is the culmination of each season. See more on [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League\\_of\\_Legends\\_World\\_Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Legends_World_Championship).

70. Alexander, Julia. "The League of Legends World Championship Opened with an AR K-pop Concert." The Verge. November 05, 2018. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.theverge.com/2018/11/5/18064106/league-of-legends-opening-ceremony-performance-kda-pop-stars-ar-music-video>.

71. "Electronic Sports: Israel's next Hi-tech Frontier." WIN. April 14, 2019. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://worldisraelnews.com/esports-israels-next-athletic-frontier/>.

72. "Intel in Esports: Powering the Leaders in Pro Gaming." Intel. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/gaming/esports.html>.



# 01. | Area of Culture 1.3

## NEWS SERVICE

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Long Term - Very Hard

### Setting the Scene

Small countries, including Estonia, receive limited coverage in the global media unless there is a sensational or tragic occurrence. Many internationally-oriented news media tend to follow the 'US-plus' model of targeting the largest media market amongst high-income democracies in order to capture a large share of overall advertising.<sup>73</sup> Since most internationally-oriented news media pursue the expansionist strategy of reaching out to the largest audience, certain countries and even regions tend to get overlooked.

For example, although 12 out of 15 deadliest conflicts since the end of the Cold War took place in Africa, global media has focused more on smaller conflicts outside of the region.<sup>74</sup> Cyberattacks on Estonia in 2007 was the first of its kind but received only a modest amount of attention in global media until similar attacks took place elsewhere in Europe and eventually the United States. These are the proofs that small states have important information and stories to share to rest of the world, and yet lack the means to do so.

### Recommendation

FORTIS could, under Estonia's leadership, create its own global news service to tell unique stories from small countries. The objective is not to compete against media giants like CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera in terms of viewership but to create a niche service in which small countries can amplify their voices and promote their national brands. The network will be called, the FORTIS Stories (FS).

In the 2018 IMD World Talent Ranking, the top 5 were taken all by small states (from the first in order) – Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Austria, and the Netherlands. Estonia was ranked at #28, which was impressive enough to be higher than Japan and Spain, but not as competitive as the former's small state neighbors in terms of attracting talent.<sup>75</sup>

By hosting the FORTIS Stories headquarters, Estonia could attract new talents from other small countries who are interested in advancing key issues and unleash their creative storytelling. Moreover, Estonia could harness its digital infrastructure and the experiences of hosting global tech

73. Tom Nicholls, Nabeelah Shabbir, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, "The Global Expansion of Digital-Born News Media" (2017). Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. Accessed April 15, 2019 <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2017/the-global-expansion-of-digital-born-news-media/>

74. Nick Harvey, "Why do some conflicts get more media coverage than others?" (September 1, 2012). New Internationalist. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://newint.org/features/2012/09/01/media-war-coverage>

75. IMD World Talent Ranking, 2018. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.imd.org/wcc/world-competitiveness-center-rankings/talent-rankings-2018/>

unicorns capable of providing services to customers around the world. This could also boost Estonia's standing among other small countries by increasing the human-to-human engagement between people of each countries.

FORTIS Stories (FS) contents will be produced mainly in digital and mobile video format in keeping with the global trends. A limited number of special investigation reports and annual print editions could be available for paying subscribers. FS will be supported by funding from advertisers, governments, subscriptions, and endowments. FS could not only provide news stories but also a platform for businesses and organizations from small countries to advertise themselves to a global audience. FS programming would ideally be managed by a diverse group of producers chosen by an independent board in FORTIS. Instead of trying to imitate the model of other major networks, the executives will bring in fresh perspectives and experiment with newer formats of storytelling.

### Short-term

1. Estonia can start by having interested FORTIS members participate in initial programming development by offering to house the initial headquarters and provide appropriate digital infrastructure in Tallinn.
2. The initial members could appoint representatives to a planning committee to determine funding structures, intellectual property rights, employment systems, and journalistic standards.

### Medium-term goals

1. Once the planning board decides on the basic structure, it could launch FS as a startup and begin the fund raising process (advertisers, governments, donors), hiring personnel, and building a studio(s).
2. The launch date should be decided, as well as the goal numbers for viewers and revenue.

### Long-term

1. After the launch, FS should monitor the progress and adjust its strategy or model as necessary.

## **Rationale**

As mentioned before, small states lack the proper platforms and sufficient resources to tell their diverse stories. FS can act as the voice for small states that wish to showcase their issues, unique cultures, and roles in the international community but do not receive adequate coverage in the international media. Accordingly, Estonia is well positioned to take the initiative and provide the digital infrastructure, and collect input from other small states to kickstart the news service. By hosting FS headquarters, Tallinn could also become a hub for advocacy of small states and continue to attract new talent who are interested in advancing key issues from around the globe.

# 01. | Area of Culture 1.4

## MUSIC FESTIVAL

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Long Term - Very Hard

### Setting the Scene

Music unites people and brings groups together in common action through a commonly shared emotion.<sup>76</sup> Certain songs become “anthems” by capturing a sentiment that resonates with particular generations and cultures. Striking the right chord through a song has the ability to build cross-cultural bridges and foster cross-national cooperation, peace and dialogue through the universal language of music. Cultural celebrations have historically served as a source of inspiration, national awakening and successful re-establishment of a strong identity for a small but vibrant nation of Estonia. It was, after all, the Singing Revolution that ultimately ended the Soviet occupation and led to Estonia’s independence, which the country regained in 1991.<sup>77</sup>

International song contests are mainly used as catalysts for large nations, which dominate the scene. Local music festivals have also been successful at building up and maintaining a strong following in the host countries, however, their popularity and appeal have largely remained constrained to geographical borders and geopolitical realities, resulting in limited promotion of small state musical cultures across a wider world arena. Therefore, a cultural void persists on the international stage that could serve as a platform that allows both large and small states alike to equally defend their cultural development and uniqueness of each country in accordance with the nation’s values, devoid of all outside interference with a grand, admittedly ideal, mission of creating a multi-polar world.

While music plays an undoubtedly important role in the formation of national and cultural identities, the promotion of a nation’s musical uniqueness on a global stage is also crucial from a social perspective. To this end, on a pan-European scale, the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC), originally inspired by the popular Italian Sanremo Festival,<sup>78</sup> was created in 1956 in the aftermath of World War II as a cultural policy project aimed towards European unity and peace.<sup>79</sup> Since then, the ESC has served as a successful platform for international artist debuts, producing the

76. Nancy K. Baym, *Playing to the Crowd: Musicians, Audiences, and the Intimate Work of Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

77. Maris Hellrand, “Estonian Song Celebration,” *Estonian World*, July 4, 2014.

78. Beppe Severgnini, “Italy Looks Like an Endless Festival Because It Is One,” *New York Times*, January 29, 2019. Web. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/29/opinion/italy-claudio-baglioni.html>.

79. Dean Vuletic, *Postwar Europe and the Eurovision Song Contest* (London, U.K. Bloomsbury, 2018.)

likes of Celine Dion, Julio Iglesias and ABBA. On a more localized scale, the Estonian Song Celebration (Laulupidu) is a unique cultural event that has become an anchor of Estonian identity. The festival takes place every five years and brings together a choir of 25,000 people for one weekend in July.<sup>80</sup>

The Eurovision Song Contest, which has acquired global popularity, is mainly used as a catalyst for large nations that were the founding members of the event, such as the U.K., Spain, Italy, France, and Germany (the “Big Five”) who make the biggest financial contributions to the European Broadcasting Union and thus dominate the ESC scene.

The local music festivals, such as Italy’s Sanremo Song Festival and the Estonian Song Celebration have also been successful at building up and maintaining a strong following in the host countries, however, their popularity and appeal have largely remained constrained to and by geographical borders and geopolitical realities, resulting in limited promotion of small state musical cultures across a worldwide arena.

## **Recommendation**

As a small country with a culturally vibrant and digitally advanced society, Estonia is ideally positioned to serve as the pioneering host of the first “Olympics of Songwriting for Small States” - a unifying platform offering a unique opportunity for smaller nations, which would otherwise remain largely unnoticed by the rest of the world, to spread their cultural traditions and let their voices be heard on a global stage. Unlike the Eurovision Song Contest, which allows national entries to be composed and performed by authors and performers from other countries, the small state song festival would be restricted to entries that have been both composed and performed by nationals of each participating country.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, even though most song contests, particularly those with an international appeal and outreach, encourage songs to be performed in English, the small state song festival would ideally only allow entries in a language of a country that the song represents in the competition, thus cultivating and promoting the uniqueness of each country’s culture and language without imposing the cultural values of another—bigger and thus more influential—country upon it.

The songs will be evaluated by a distinguished panel of judges from small states, as well as TV and Internet audiences from the participating small states. The audience members and judges will not be permitted to vote for their own country’s entry in order to minimize the potential for showcasing

80. Maris Hellrand (Head of International Communications for the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

81. Exceptions can be made if the entry's performer and/or composer was born in the participating country but is no longer its legal resident/citizen.



national biases. All entries from every small state would have an equal stake and be offered an equal opportunity to showcase their talent and culture on a global stage alongside other fellow representatives from small states.

#### Medium term:

1. Bring small state television networks together towards producing and co-hosting a joint small state song festival.
2. Cultivate funding opportunities through federal television networks that will be broadcasting the event, as well as via the Global Trust Fund for Digital Development.
3. Organize and host the first inaugural Olympics of Songwriting for Small States in Tallinn, co-organized with the International Communications for the Estonian Song and Dance Celebration.

#### Long term:

1. Create an online music store accessible worldwide where songs from the festival will be available for purchase and the royalties will go directly to the songwriters and performers of each entry.

### **Rationale**

Estonia, as part of FORTIS, has the “soft power” know-how, an impressive track-record in showcasing small-state creativity and the digital experience<sup>82</sup> to host the first song competition of its kind for small states by offering the participants the festival’s inaugural stage and inviting a variety of tourists from around the world to come to Estonia for a weekend of memorable musical and cultural experiences.

Estonia has proved itself to be at the forefront of small state digital development, and it is therefore ideally positioned to also offer a technologically advanced platform for the song entries to gain a following by showcasing and promoting the selection through an online music store that is accessible from every corner of the world.

This will grant the otherwise little known songwriters and performers from small states the opportunity to not only acquire an international audience for the one night of the performance, but also gain a strong following by promoting their musical content digitally through a globally accessible online music store.<sup>83</sup>

82. Elizabeth Schulze, “How a tiny country bordering Russia became one of the most tech-savvy societies in the world,” CNBC, February 8, 2019. Web. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/08/how-estonia-became-a-digital-society.html>.

83. Heidi Scrimgeour, “How Technology Is Changing the Music Business,” Daily Telegraph, March 15, 2018. Web. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/connect/small-business/business-solutions/how-technology-is-changing-music-business/>; Dan Abelow, “If Our Future Is Digital, How Will It Change the World?” Wired, April 2014. Web. <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/04/future-digital-will-change-world/>; Patrik Wikström, “The Music Industry in an Age of Digital Distribution,” BBVA OpenMind, April 2014. Web. <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BBVA-OpenMind-The-Music-Industry-in-an-Age-of-Digital-Distrib.>



A blue background with a white network diagram consisting of interconnected circles and lines, representing a digital or data network.

**POLICY AREA 02.**

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Digitalization



**Digital technologies have been transforming nearly every aspect of our lives, including governments, economies and societies.**<sup>84</sup> Although underway for about half a century, the pace of change has quickened, as digital technologies develop rapidly combine in novel and innovative ways, often in unpredictable directions. The digital era and its underlying trends are reshaping both “hard power”—the ability to coerce others into accepting what one wants—and “soft power,” the ability to make others want what one wants.<sup>85</sup>

Governments have a crucial role in promoting the use of digital technologies for the benefits of their people. Digitalization for small states is dictated by need: a small country, for example, cannot afford a large army of public servants. Regardless, they need to be nimble and competitive, and open to trade.<sup>86</sup> According to researchers from Tufts University, larger economies ironically may be in danger of losing the digital race to smaller and more nimble nations. Several Nordic countries, Switzerland and tech-centric South Korea are ahead of the U.S. and Japan, according to a digital economy ranking.<sup>87</sup>

In just 20 years, Estonia has become one of the most wired and technologically advanced countries in the world — a true digital society. With internet access declared a human right, some of the fastest broadband speeds in the world widely available all across the country, and digital public services embedded into the daily lives of individuals and organizations, the country is now commonly called “e-Estonia”.<sup>88</sup> The Estonian story goes beyond innovating with technology. Estonia has shown how it can deliver with limited resources, by being efficient and innovative. Going digital has been a key factor in achieving this. As Siim Sikkut, the government’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) put it, “efficiency was the desire and has really been the fruit and outcome of this digitalization across all different fields of policy and sectors of life.”<sup>89</sup>

A digital society only works when people trust and actually use digital channels. Recognizing this, the keys to the success of Estonia’s e-revolution have been cooperation and reciprocity. Successive governments have backed e-Estonia since its launch, and the private sector, academic institutions and citizens have all cooperated to make the initiative a winner. This shows that making a government digital not just come down to technology. In order to build citizens’ trust in government institutions, and ensure transparency and accountability, they must believe that those institutions will act ethically, rigorously and with careful consideration of their interests.

Its digital agility, deep rootedness in principles of open government, and experience in innovating in the public sector<sup>90</sup> make Estonia a key player and ideal partner in supporting other small states in their digital transformation, innovating government–citizen relationships, and pushing data norms on a global level. Its capacity to show the way to a fully digital state is one of the flagships of Estonian global soft power, and a strategic asset for Estonia’s view towards the world.

84. OECD (2019), *Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives – Summary*, OECD, Paris. Accessed April 5, 2019. <https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/going-digital-shaping-policies-improving-lives-9789264312012-en.htm>.

85. Ernest J. Wilson III, “Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2008, 110-124.

86. “e-Experience export”, e-Estonia, <https://e-estonia.com/wp-content/uploads/faga4-v02-e-experience-1.pdf>.

87. Tartar, André. “Small Nations and Islands Are Winning the Digital Revolution Race.” *Bloomberg.com*, July 13, 2017. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-13/small-nations-and-islands-are-winning-the-digital-revolution-race>.

88. Malinja. “Estonia.” *Digital Single Market - European Commission*, December 10, 2018. Accessed May 04, 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/scoreboard/estonia>.

89. “Siim Sikkut on The Making of E-Estonia.” *IMF*. Accessed May 03, 2019. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Podcasts/All-Podcasts/2018/05/23/E-Estonia>.

90. “Tallinn Digital Summit.” *Tallinn Digital Summit*. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://www.digitalsummit.ee/>



# 02. | Area of Digitalization 2.1.

## **E-GOVERNANCE ACADEMY NETWORKS**

Short Term - Easy: Taking e-GA global

### **Setting the Scene**

Digital technologies can create digital pathways between citizens and governments and are strategic drivers to create open, participatory and trustworthy public sectors. With its potential to increase productivity and inclusiveness of service production and delivery in public welfare areas, investments in digital or e-Governance have been growing rapidly over the past two decades. The UN e-Government survey, conducted since 2001, in 2018 highlights “a persistent positive global trend towards higher levels of e-government development,” improving e-Government and public services provision online.<sup>91</sup>

For emerging and transitioning countries in particular, e-Governance represents a fundamental shift in the way governments are embracing their mission and offers the opportunity particularly for small states to leapfrog generations of technology.<sup>92</sup> In many countries, governments are more intensive users of information technology than firms<sup>93</sup> leveraging the power of information technologies in transformative ways to develop innovative approaches to contribute to national development and long-term sustainable growth. At a minimum, e-Governance can provide automation of internal records and make information and services publicly available. While important for all governments, e-Governance can play a crucial role in addressing the issues faced by small countries. By enhancing the ability of the public sector to overcome the barriers associated with small size and isolation, e-Governance can enable small state governments to cost-effectively and efficiently deliver service to their populations.<sup>94</sup>

Estonia, in the context of e-Government, is seen as a remarkable success story, and has thus captured the interest of international audiences and especially, emerging and transitioning countries.<sup>95</sup> Estonia has already become already synonymous with e-Governance,<sup>96</sup> standing on the front-row in terms of digital development and there is continuously a high interest from many developed and developing countries to learn from Estonian practice. Estonia is ideally placed to share its technological achievements in modern coding, CS, IT and e-administration and already cooperates smoothly with a range of countries on e-Governance, and its X-Road system is being employed in Finland, Ukraine, Namibia, and others.<sup>97</sup>

91. UN (2018), United Nations E-Government Survey 2018: Gearing E-Government to Support Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies, UN, New York; “UN E-Gov Survey 2018” hereinafter.

92. The World Bank (2016). World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends. Washington, DC: The World Bank; “WDR 2016” hereinafter.

93. WDR 2016, pp 154 f

94. Ming, Anthony, Omer Awan, and Naveed Somani. “E-Governance in Small States.” Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013. Accessed April 2, 2019.

95. Kalvet, Tarmo. “Innovation: a factor explaining e-government success in Estonia.” EG9 (2012): 142-157

96. Entering the search terms “estonia e-government” in Google in April 2019 produced 66,500,000 results

97. “X-Road - E-Estonia.” e-Estonia. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/interoperability-services/x-road/>.

## Challenge

Yet, e-Government is a complex issue and cannot simply be copied from one country to another. It needs to be tailored to each country's organisational, legal and technological context. On a global scale, there are diverse governance challenges, dependent on many factors, therefore any approach needs to be appropriate and adaptable. The transformational and facilitating powers of digital technologies are creating a paradigm shift in the public sector, but despite the sector's enormous influence, governments remain responsible for quality, standards, and ethics of public services, and for ensuring that no one is left behind. For small developing countries, especially those in the early stages of building an e-Government infrastructure, it is vital that they understand their e-readiness, and understand the regulatory and institutional barriers slowing their countries' progress towards fully digital societies. They must reflect upon the intrinsic components of an e-Governance action plan, and draw lessons from the success and failures of the various e-Government initiatives undertaken by other countries.

Estonia's e-Government Academy (e-GA) is the country's key institution for the creation and transformation of knowledge and best practice in the area of digitalization. It was founded for the creation and transfer of knowledge concerning the development of digital society. Through its collaboration with over 3,000 officials from more than 60 countries across the world,<sup>98</sup> the e-GA has determined Estonia's global reputation as a champion for e-Governance. In 2018, the e-GA launched new collaboration projects with the UNDP and the World Bank and obtained the status of a Full Mandated Body of the European Commission, which enables it to lead EU Twinning Programme projects<sup>[99]</sup> similar to public sector organisations.<sup>100</sup>

Despite Estonia's extensive international cooperation on e-Governance, cyber security and e-services, the e-Governance Academy's current structure and operations are not equipped to systematically capture, pool and further develop the insights gathered from global partnerships. Estonia's leadership in digital cooperation hinges on its ability to continuously innovate existing approaches, sharpen its competitive advantage and ensure the consolidation and development of e-Governance expertise. The 2018 UN e-Government survey has confirmed that other countries have already surpassed Estonia in terms of digital governance: Denmark, South Korea and Australia all score higher on the survey than Estonia, which only comes in on the 18th place.<sup>101</sup>

Estonia therefore needs to urgently consider ways to stay at the top of the digital governance race. The highly successful roll out of the e-GA's activities, its global partnerships specifically with small countries, and increasing interest of donor countries and potential clients alike, make the e-GA a high-potential export product. As noted in the e-GA's 2018 annual report<sup>102</sup>, the institution's main advantage is its practical experience, gained from Estonia's own experience in becoming one of the most advanced digital societies in the world. Transferring this experience has always been one of

98. "Estonian E-governance Think Tank Launches a Guide to Digital Society." Estonian World. February 07, 2019. Accessed April 15, 2019.

<https://estonianworld.com/technology/estonian-e-governance-think-tank-launches-guide-digital-society/>.

99. "Twinning Projects." International Cooperation and Development - European Commission. Accessed April 01, 2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/tags/twinning-projects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/tags/twinning-projects_en).

100. "Arvo Ott: Consistency Leads to Success." E. Accessed April 01, 2019. <https://ega.ee/news/arvo-ott-consistency-leads-to-success/>.

101. UN E-Gov Survey 2018

102. "EGA Yearbook 2018: Consistency Leads to Success." E. Accessed March 29, 2019. <https://ega.ee/publication/ega-yearbook-2018/98>

the main aims of the e-GA's training programmes. Former Estonian president Toomas Hendrik Ilves highlighted the e-GA's function as "shaping a new way of thinking in terms of how society as a whole is changing in the digital age", as a central vehicle to add "chapters to the success story of Estonia's e-state", and contribute to the understanding of the digitalised society and analyzing the problems and opportunities it presents.<sup>103</sup>

## **Recommendation**

The constraints created by the current e-GA structure can effectively be overcome by harnessing its reputation and good relationships with other countries. The e-GA should create a network of satellite e-GA chapters in each partner country to capture the knowledge on best practices, challenges and opportunities of e-Governance generated in the specific country contexts, and feed them into a digital resource centre that enables discussions and exchanges among actors and allows them to expand their digital expertise.

Each chapter would gather information in its community and provide feedback on best practices, challenges, pitfalls, to help further evolve model. An online platform, administered by the Tallinn-based e-GA, functions as an umbrella organization that gathers and consolidates best practices, works with local chapters to overcome barriers, and pools expertise to ensure that e-Governance principles continuously evolve. Estonia's X-Road framework integrates services from all parts of government as well as private or civil society groups according to protocols that govern data exchange and security standards. Estonia could build on this expertise and apply this technology to ensuring the secure storing and exchange of data among partners of the e-GA network.

Moreover, Estonia could seek to expand synergies between the e-GA network and other areas of collaboration as part of FORTIS. Given many small countries' lack of experience with robust cyber security structures, in particular among public officials, Estonia could integrate Cyber Hygiene training programs, as suggested under the chapter on education in this report, into its partnerships.

As confirmed in several interviews conducted by the Capstone Team in Tallinn in March 2019, [n]there is a strong demand by partner countries to have their own "Centers of Excellence" of e-Governance. While these require significant investment and expertise, the satellite e-GAs could lay the foundation for a more sophisticated network in the future. Mechanisms for cooperation or integration with the small state institute would allow for a deep analysis recurring challenges and research on emerging approaches.

Ensuring the ongoing support and sustainability of its initiatives is particularly important against the backdrop of the possibly limited capacity of small states to embrace e-Governance due to "considerable challenges [...] including the high cost of technology, the lack of infrastructure, limited

103. Speaking at the conference marking the 10th anniversary of the e-Governance Academy; THI

104. Small States." Small States | The Commonwealth. Accessed April 20, 2019. <http://thecommonwealth.org/small-states>.

human capital and weak private sector.”<sup>104</sup> This highlights the central character of e-Governance as going beyond the computerization of government operations as a process that supports fundamental elements of good governance.

Moreover, this two-way knowledge exchange allows the e-GA to operate in a modular structure and extend its service portfolio, by tailoring and recommending solutions to countries based on their characteristics. As countries grow richer, the demand for services by citizens increases. The 2018 UN e-Government Survey highlights the many and complex opportunities for deploying e-Government to build resilient societies, including basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, as well as sound infrastructure and utilities as pre-conditions.<sup>105</sup>

Questions around implementation of such diverse e-Government solutions come up regularly and are often very similar. The demand for tailored e-Governance assistance in specific policy areas was confirmed in interviews conducted by the Capstone Team with several small states’ Permanent Representatives to the UN.<sup>106</sup>

Estonia should therefore aim to expand its portfolio of e-Governance assistance to provide a set of e-services in areas such as health, education, and basic services. This flexible focus on a modular structure of e-services brings further benefits: it allows countries with less robust democratic institutions or levels of governance to build and expand their e-Governance capabilities, by slowly gaining the population’s trust in its digital capabilities in a few non-controversial areas; tangible benefits for citizens will lead to universal use of e-Government services, making such platforms also suitable for broad-based participatory policy making.

Countries can thus help each other deal with challenges they face in grappling with unexpected policy hurdles and unfamiliar regulatory issues. It gives those countries time to address the digital divide: despite some development gains and major investments made in several countries, the e-Government and digital divides persist. Fourteen countries among those with a low E-Government Development Index (EGDI)<sup>107</sup> are African and belong to the least developed countries.<sup>108</sup> Machine Learning modelling can support this process to build a predictive model to assess countries’ needs based on specific criteria.

The financing of such an extended structure requires creative solutions. Estonia recently partnered with other countries to set up a Global Trust Fund for Digital Development. More flexible in distribution of funds and conditions than some multilateral funding sources, such a Trust Fund could be a promising way of ensuring a continuous stream of resources that goes beyond merely project-based funding as is currently the case.

In addition, the e-GA network should consider charging for some of its services, which come on top of a basic free-of-charge set of services. Such a differentiated pricing structure would provide

105. UN E-Gov Survey 2018

106. Interview conducted by the Capstone team in New York between February and April 2019

107. UN E-Gov Survey 2018

108. Ibid.



further flexibility in adapting its service offering to needs and capacities of partner countries.

#### Short term:

1. Discuss with current e-GA partnership countries the interest, potential structure and added value of setting up satellite e-GAs;
2. Consider funding opportunities to overcome project-based funding, including via the Global Trust Fund for Digital Development, and creating a catalogue of core and extended services with a differentiated pricing structure;
3. Draft a branding strategy that highlights elements of partnership over leadership;
4. Liaise with universities in Estonia to become part of an expert network on e-governance and build a Global University Leaders Forum around e-Governance;
5. Borrowing from the model of the StartUp Nations Policy Hack<sup>109</sup>, set-up a yearly hackathon on the sidelines of the e-Governance Summit (s. below), in which coders from all partner countries are invited to hack policy challenges related to e-Governance.

#### Medium term:

1. Identify a group of pilot countries; build mechanisms for structure into current cooperation with those countries, i.e. start collecting best practices, problems and challenges;
2. Add a section to the annual e-Governance Conference for strategizing, exchange and planning for partner countries and market the e-Governance Conference as the premiere forum to lead global conversations; focus areas could include public-private partnerships in procurement, path dependency versus disruption in government innovation, etc;
3. Expand university cooperation to include student exchanges, visiting professorships and PhD-level research groups.

#### Long term:

1. Use the Conference to bring together business, government, academic and civil society leaders from around the world to help shape global, regional and national agendas on e-Governance;
2. Expand existing partnerships with UNDP and other multilateral bodies (Worldbank, OECD, etc) to become the key institution for implementation-focused digital governance policy.

109. "POLICY HACK." POLICY HACK | Global Entrepreneurship Network. Accessed April 25, 2019. <https://www.genglobal.org/startup-nations/policy-hack>.

## Rationale

This network-based structure will allow Estonia to prototype some of the concepts it has successfully tested within the EU in its collaboration with other countries. These include e-Twinning and digital youth exchanges, to ensure a peer-to-peer approach to knowledge exchange. The success and harnessing potential of the annual Tallinn-based e-Governance conference should be internalized by expanding the conference to become a yearly gathering of all e-GA chapters, to share world-class digital practices, learn from different models of digital transformation, collaborate to solve common problems, and support and champion the network's application of e-services in a meaningful and future-oriented way. The e-Gov policy Hack will pool disruptive thinking from each chapter to create new solutions for emerging challenges.

In order to distinguish itself from other global and especially UN-based fora, the e-Governance conference will have an applied focus on implementation and bilateral partnerships, rather than lengthy policy papers. The potential shortage of human resources and expertise can be overcome by engaging universities in partner countries to contribute research capacity and expert advice, to create a network of experts on e-Governance among small countries.

This model harnesses the power of decentralized networks to create smart societies and ensures coherent use of digital technologies across policy areas and levels of government. It allows Estonia to lead in partnership, while expanding the Estonian brand of e-Governance, generating trust in both its methodology and e-Governance overall. Especially in areas, where interconnectivity and collaboration are important – in norm setting and cyber security, among others- collaboration and exchange could be fruitful.

Finally, e-Governance is not possible without national political leadership, despite its technical success. In Estonia, e-Governance is anchored on a national vision, which serves as a unifying mechanism. It is critical for all of the actors, involved in the project of e-Governance, to understand that e-Governance is not just a technology project, but rather a government transformation initiative. The success of Estonia's initiative corresponds to a variety of favorable factors provided by its societal structure, such as moderate population size, highly educated citizens, lack of production-economic base, and financial capital to invest in the ICTs.

# O2. | Area of Digitalization 2.2.

## FORUM ON GLOBAL DATA AND AI ETHICS

Medium Term - somewhat hard

### Setting the Scene

Estonia has pledged to be “an advocate” for common interests of small states for its 2020-2021 UNSC term.<sup>[110]</sup> It is, therefore, crucial to identify what the common security interests of small states are, including security interests which are sine qua non of stability and development.<sup>111</sup> For example, when the United States had announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017, the rest of the signatories, especially the small states, actively made efforts to hold it together.<sup>112</sup> Small states understand that seismic threats like climate change require a multilateral response within the framework of international law rather than actions by individual nations.

Small states need agile responses to evolving threats. For example, Estonia became the first country to set up virtual embassies outside of its borders to backup personal data in case of another major cyberattack.<sup>113</sup> Rwanda has teamed up with an American drone company to deliver medical supplies and blood to remote areas with no accessible infrastructure.<sup>114</sup> Costa Rica has committed to complete decarbonization by the year 2050, not only out of environmental or economic but also national security implications.<sup>115</sup>

One emerging security issue that small states are already taking leadership on is data and artificial intelligence (AI) ethics. Mishandling of one’s data have already led to financial and physical vulnerability. Leaving machines to make decisions based on faulty or biased data could also have far-reaching security implications. But small states are already taking lead on these urgent dilemmas.

110. Estonia to the UN Security Council 2020-2021. Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://vm.ee/en/estonia-un-security-council-2020-2021>

111. Martin Bille Hermann (Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in New York City, USA. March 2019.

112. Valentine Rugwabiza (Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in New York City, USA. March 2019.

113. “Estonia to open the world’s first data embassy in Luxembourg” (June 2017). Government of Estonia.

<https://e-estonia.com/estonia-to-open-the-worlds-first-data-embassy-in-luxembourg/>

114. “Drones deliver blood and medical supplies in Rwanda” (May 1, 2018). BBC.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/technology-43886039/drones-deliver-blood-and-medical-supplies-in-rwanda>

115. “Costa Rica Commits to Fully Decarbonize by 2050” (March 4, 2019). UN Climate Change News. <https://unfccc.int/news/costa-rica-commits-to-fully-decarbonize-by-2050>

116. Daniel Wu, “How Policy Leaders Can Democratize Data Ethics” (April 4, 2019). LinkedIn.

For example, Singapore is a global leader in both ‘regtech’, which facilitates regulatory compliances, and ‘legaltech’, which helps with contracts and litigations.<sup>116</sup> Estonia is already grappling with how far AI should be integrated in the legal decision-making process.<sup>117</sup> There are already plenty of other international-level debates on the security implications of AI and data ethics but it is the small states actually taking initiative.

### **Recommendation**

Therefore, small states should leverage their agile governance structures, burgeoning human capital, and commitment to the rule of law to set the global legal standards for data and AI. FORTIS, under Estonia’s leadership, should create its own Forum on Global Data and AI Ethics. FORTIS could establish itself as the promoter, if not the guardian of the rules-based international order, and the premier forum on international AI and data legal standards. Moreover, FORTIS would work towards strengthening mutual trust by gathering best practices and expertise.

#### Short-term:

1. The forum should take place in conjunction with other major international gatherings such as the United Nations General Assembly or the FORTIS summit. It will be an informal session to facilitate dialogue amongst officials.
2. The meetings will have to be initiated by at least the five small state leaders in data governance - Estonia, Singapore, Finland, Denmark, and Israel.<sup>118</sup>
3. These states should invite other small states who are not as digitally advanced but willing to learn and help shape the global agenda on the topic.

#### Medium-term:

1. The forum should start inviting larger countries as observers as well as experts from the private sector and civil society.
2. The global debate on data governance and AI ethics will be inevitably influenced by the policies of larger countries, so it’s important to still include their input. This is an opportunity for small states to strengthen partnerships with countries like Japan, Canada, and France who want to start working on international law on data and AI ethics but have not been gaining as much traction.
3. Since the private sector is the most important consumer and producer of data and AI technology around the globe, the private sector needs to be engaged in the dialogue.

#### Long-term:

1. The forum should establish its official annual meeting, with a rotation of host countries.
2. The leader of each delegation will be nominated by the respective government.

118 Bell, Ganesh. “Why countries need to work together on AI”. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/09/learning-from-one-another-a-look-at-national-ai-policy-frameworks/>



Although many small states including Estonia, Singapore, and Finland are developing their own AI strategies and data governance models, the world is at an inflection point in which there needs to be at least a multilateral dialogue on how to govern data and AI internationally before the technologies become too precarious to manage.

## Rationale

Estonia is already a global leader in e-governance, cybersecurity, and recently, AI ethics.<sup>119</sup> Estonia is exploring AI as the next step of innovation in e-governance, especially in terms of improving interoperability.<sup>120</sup> Estonia hosts one of the major machine learning and data science conferences for developers called North Star AI.<sup>121</sup> Although the issues of data and AI ethics may initially concern developed small states, this may also provide an opportunity for all small states to learn and exert their own input on the international stage, and help shaping the future of humanity.

Estonia already sets an example to others on how to transform itself into a global leader in digital governance despite a late start and limited resources. Furthermore, by representing the common interests of small states, Estonia can ensure that the future of data and AI ethics are not dominated by major powers like the U.S., China, and Russia. As of now, small states like Finland, Denmark, and Singapore are grappling with the issues of data and AI ethics on their own. Estonia could play the critical role of bringing the best ideas and practices together to form a global legal framework.

This active leadership role could begin as soon as the UNSC term starts.<sup>122</sup> Estonia must continue harnessing its innovative example and its commitment to small state interests in order to help set the international norms and laws on data and AI ethics.



Getty Images: from "Can AI Be a Fair Judge in Court? Estonia Thinks So". Wired Magazine (3/25/2019)

119. Nathan Heller, "Estonia: The Digital Republic" (December 17 & 25, 2017) The New Yorker.

120. Siim Sikkut (Government Chief Information Officer of Estonia), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia. March 2019.

121. "Applied Data Science Conference for Developers." Applied Data Science Conference for Developers. Accessed May 4, 2019. <https://aiconf.tech/>.

122. "Estonia to the UN Security Council 2020-2021." Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed May 3, 2019. <https://vm.ee/en/estonia-un-security-council-2020-2021>.

# 02. | Area of Digitalization 2.3

## E-CIVIL SOCIETY

Long Term - hard

### Setting the Scene

Global movements ranging from #MeToo to the Arab Spring, and from #JeSuisCharlie to #RefugeesWelcome have rattled the status quo of what civic engagement can look like. At the core of this digitally-rooted activism is social media, in which online groups overcome well-known obstacles to participation - such as time constraints, lack of skills, and low income.<sup>123</sup>

Digital advocates exist in small states. Recently, Facebook and Instagram-based #MyEstoniaToo movement erupted following the 2019 Estonian parliamentary elections.<sup>124</sup> From a single Facebook page with 27,000 followers, over 1,000 organizers coordinated a “concert at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds [...] in support of its message [...] encouraging a more tolerant Estonia, [where] more than 10,000 people turned up to support.”<sup>125</sup> Digital platforms have helped facilitate civil society’s community-driven incubation and mobilization.<sup>126</sup>

Before assessing the potential of online outreach or advocacy, it is important to contextualize Estonian civil society. Similar to other small states, Estonia’s civil society plays a crucial role in advancing issues and contributing to social change.<sup>127</sup> This is by no means specific to Estonia. The Norwegian government sees itself as dependent on civil society in order for changes to come to life and materialize; according to the Minister Counsellor of Norway’s Mission to the United Nations, the small Nordic country craves a vital and vocal civil society.<sup>128</sup>

Estonia is a small state whose civil society is not often at the forefront of the news. As a post-soviet country, Estonia’s civil society organizations are considered advanced in the region, topping the United States Agency for International Development’s Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia for 2016.<sup>129</sup> According to Martin Noorkõiv, chair of the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, not only does the Estonian government nearly completely fund civil society organizations, but also many ministries form strategic collaborations with them.<sup>130</sup> It is a form of public-private partnerships.

123. Rohlinger, Deana. “How Social Movements are Using the Internet to Change Politics” Scholars Strategy Network, 1 January 2012, <https://scholars.org/brief/how-social-movements-are-using-internet-change-politics>.

124. “Kõigi Eesti movement launched by concerned residents.” ERR News, 23 March 2019, <https://news.err.ee/922982/koigi-eesti-movement-launched-by-concerned-residents>.

125. “Kõigi Eesti Laul concert brings 10,000 to Song Festival Grounds.” ERR News, 15 April 2019, <https://news.err.ee/930511/gallery-koigi-eesti-laul-concert-brings-10-000-to-song-festival-grounds>.

126. “Civil Society in the Digital Age.” Oxford Handbooks Online, 1 May 2012,

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195398571-e-27?print=pdf>.

127. Ivask, Pille, and, Pettai, Vello. “Nations in Transit 2018.” Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/estonia>.

128. Kjersti Tromsdal (Minister Counsellor of Norway’s Mission to the United Nations), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in New York City, USA, March 2019.

129. “USAID study: Estonia tops civil society viability ranking in 2016.” ERR News, 17 August 2018, <https://news.err.ee/613392/usaaid-study-estonia-tops-civil-society-viability-ranking-in-2016>.

## Challenge

Despite the Estonian government's strong relationship with civil society, the question arises: how can more citizens be engaged in today's digital era? Estonia is already a hyper-connected digital society, yet civil society still remains isolated in local contexts, bound by national borders.<sup>131</sup> In parallel to this challenge, digital platforms have yet to be formalized for advocates who utilize social media networks, as detailed in a study that argues Estonian social media has the opportunity to "be a more important channel to young people's participation, since the level of participation has previously been low."<sup>132</sup>

Due to the international realm's political and structural complications, collaboration among small state governments and their civil society stakeholders has yet to bring substantial impact to high-level multilateral discussions. Additionally, Estonia's civil society organizations rarely seek engagement and cooperation outside of Estonia, and at most is constrained within the Baltic region.<sup>133</sup> For many small states with conventional financial and political constraints, when civil society is consciously and subconsciously limited to artificial borders, this in turn restricts the possibilities for expansive and effective partnerships.

## Recommendation

In order to elevate civil society to meet the demands of the 21st century's online presence and global interconnectedness, as suggested by the chair of the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, Martin Noorkõiv, the Estonian government should broaden its support of civil society to include digital advocacy, and offer financial and political support to social media-based advocacy groups similar to the treatment they offer civil society organizations.<sup>134</sup> For example, each ministry should designate a government official who is already involved in community relations, partnerships, and outreach to serve as a point of contact for digital advocacy groups whose missions align with the ministry. In doing so, the ministry official can explore collaborative initiatives with these groups in a similar manner to what is already being done with legally-recognized civil society organizations in Estonia.

Estonia is recommended to engage with other governments and civil society stakeholders interested in exchanging and empowering each other with highly connected networks; through multilateral platforms, Estonia can animate e-civil society as a mechanism for social change and collective action. Regardless of the presence of civil society and the level of cooperation civil society organizations may have with their respective governments, the potential for collaboration exists

131. Kadi Kenk (Head of Partnerships of Let's Do It Foundation), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

132. Allaste, Airi-Alina, and Saari, Kari. "Social Media Participation in Different Socio-political Contexts: Cases of Estonia and Finland." *YOUNG*, 28 March 2019, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1103308819828879>.

133. Kadi Kenk (Head of Partnerships of Let's Do It Foundation), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

134. *Ibid.*

through common platforms such as efforts revolving around protecting and preserving the environment or promoting education.

Therefore, Estonia and small states with complementary relationships with their civil society organizations can create — through FORTIS - an informal consultation mechanism for civil society known as a Small State Civil Society Forum, in which participating small states and civil society stakeholders share best practices, and methods for governmental cooperation and engagement with civil society partners.

Critical non-governmental and stakeholders will also be present at these forums to contribute their perspectives and expertise as well. Discussions should also involve themes pertaining to digital and technological relevance in the civil society world, as such discourse will pave the way for civil society organizations to form civil society networks centered on collectively tackling global issues.

### Short-term

1. The Estonian government determines a criteria for identifying digital advocacy groups that are viable partners based on qualifications such as size, influence, and so on
2. Each ministry should assign a government official focused on community outreach to serve as a point of contact for digital advocacy groups whose missions align with the ministry
3. The Estonian Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology can help modernize existing civil society organizations that have yet to incorporate digital technology into operational, fundraising and promotional strategies

### Medium-term

1. Institutionalize and host an annual Small State Civil Society Forum through FORTIS to act as a consultation mechanism for civil society organizations and formalize international collaboration amongst small states, civil society organizations, and other non-governmental stakeholders
2. Exchange digital and non-digital best practices among governmental and civil society partners through multilateral organizations including FORTIS and the United Nations
3. The Estonian government kickstarts financial support and political collaboration with digital advocacy groups apace with financial and political cooperation received by legally-recognized civil society organizations

### Long-term

1. Digitally revolutionize the concept of civil society into e-civil society on a global scale, with the ultimate goal of ensuring all civil society organizations have strong digital foundations.



## Rationale

In today's digital world, civil society has found creative ways to enhance and amplify their advocacy. However, especially within small states with limited human capacity, people concentrate on advancing their own domestic situations rather than broadening their attention to global efforts.<sup>135</sup> <sup>136</sup> That being said, by strengthening civil societies financially and digitally, and by harnessing the collective energy and momentum of small states on an international platform, Estonia and other small states can garner greater impact to further social agendas such as limiting the effects of climate change or ensuring educational equity.

Estonia is also in an opportune position, given its digitalization expertise. Thus, the Estonian government will elevate the way in which small state civil society organizations realize global impact and influence because the digital champion is best equipped to upgrade civil society beyond traditional limitations through the use of digitalization and multilateral fora.

Acknowledging the importance of civil society, Estonia has already witnessed its locally inspired and internationally renowned civil society organization, Let's Do It Foundation, mobilizing tens of millions to tackle environmental and social problems in over 150 countries.<sup>137</sup> Indeed, digital platforms have become increasingly important in terms of Estonian civil participation: "existing studies in Estonia point out that online and offline participation can be interrelated, and new modes of participation tend to be more employed by active youths to reinforce existing forms and levels of engagement."<sup>138</sup>

This is why, Let's Do It Foundation's rise to international fame stroked the curiosity of small state-born nonprofit organizations which realize that they must be more creative and resourceful in contrast to nonprofits founded in large states which have the ability to easily inspire large movements; for instance, many small state delegations have visited and interviewed Let's Do It Foundation's leadership team to learn how they can emulate the Estonian nonprofit's success.<sup>139</sup>

Among other reasons for its success, the foundation's Head of Partnerships, Kadi Kenk, believes the grassroots movement benefited from extensive social media which produced much visual content, enabled translations, and ensured global access.<sup>140</sup> In parallel to Kenk's analysis of social media's intersection with civil society, Noorkõiv also recognizes the role of social media groups as they engage with populations in the same method civil societies do, the only difference being that social media's effect and influence is derived from digital advocacy.<sup>141</sup>

Consequently, Estonia has the ability to advance civil society even further - digitally and technologically - in order to transcend any and all characteristically small state challenges pertaining to civil society.

135. Ibid.

136. Kadi Kenk (Head of Partnerships of Let's Do It Foundation), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

137. "Let's Do It Foundation (Estonia)." UNESCO, 8 Oct. 2018, en.unesco.org/prize-esd/2018/letsdoit.

138. Allaste, Airi-Alina, and Saari, Kari. "Social Media Participation in Different Socio-political Contexts: Cases of Estonia and Finland." YOUNG, 28 March 2019, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1103308819828879>.

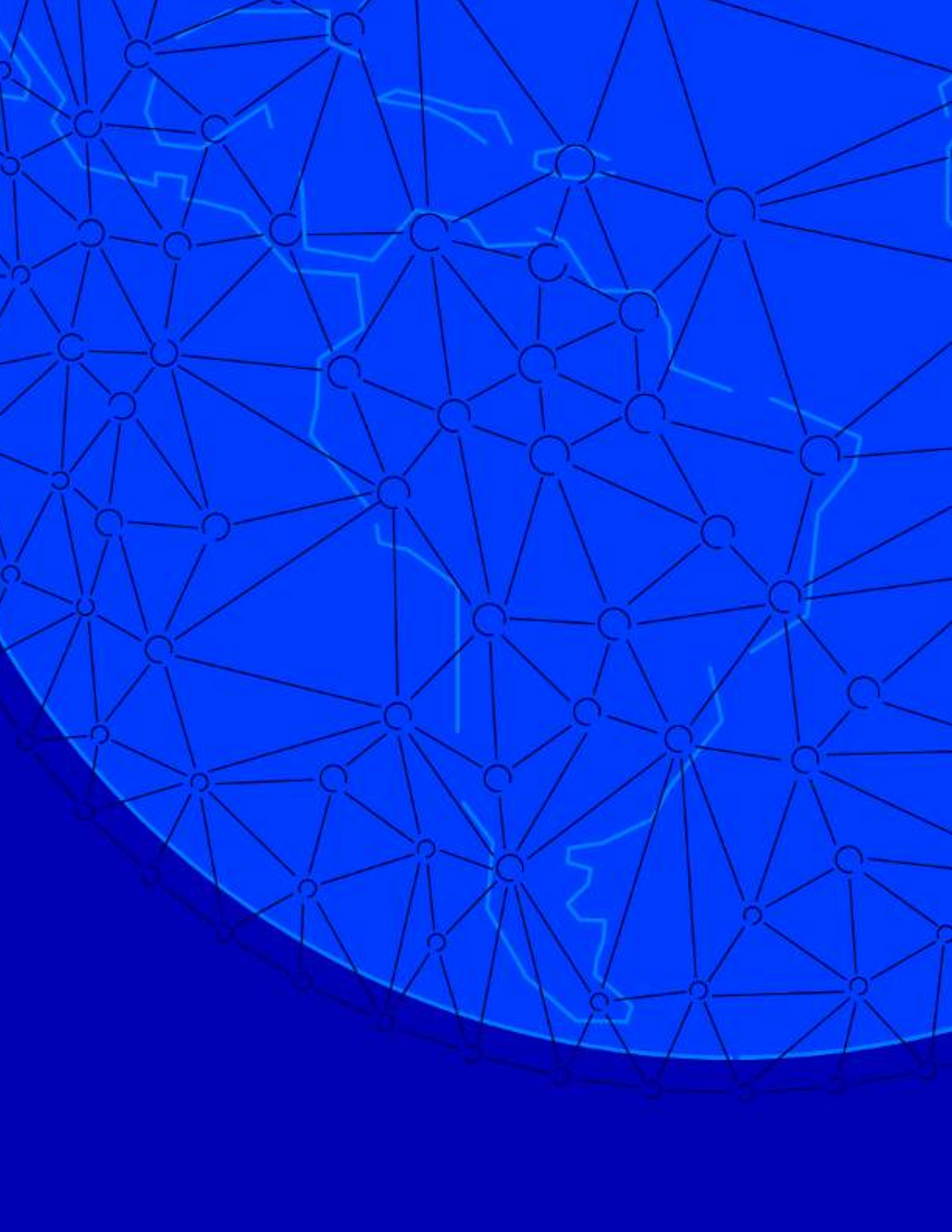
139. Kadi Kenk (Head of Partnerships of Let's Do It Foundation), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

140. Ibid.

# **POLICY AREA 03.**

# Diplomacy









**Diplomacy is the primary means for small states to amplify their voices and advance their values in the international community.** Many small states have creatively and strategically harnessed their diplomatic relations and participation in multilateral platforms to secure their interests as well as defending the rules-based order. Given limited manpower and gross domestic product capacity, small states have successfully leveraged their dynamic governance structure, high human capital, and keen sense of cooperation to earn prestige on the international stage.

FORTIS will serve as a key platform for Estonia and other small states to synergize their diplomatic strengths for the goal of exerting more positive influence on the international community. Estonia has already set an example for other small states by not only building a world-class digital society but also sharing its development model with the rest of the international community.

Yet, this is just one of many other areas in which small states like Estonia could lead in. FORTIS will provide Estonia with a wide range of diplomatic tools as well as options to rally other small states in order to effectively tackle global challenges at low cost.



# 03. | Area of Diplomacy 3.1.

## E-HERITAGE

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Medium Term - Somewhat Hard

### Setting the Scene

Migration is a constant factor in human history. In many ways, migration can contribute to a country's development through the sending of remittances, knowledge transfer and diaspora commercial activity. At the same time, especially small states are grappling with the so-called brain-drain, i.e. the emigration of highly skilled nationals. Moreover, many small states have lost significant portions of their nationals through traumatic events. Especially Pacific Island States and Caribbean small states face negative net migration rates<sup>142</sup> El Salvador, for example, in 2017 had a negative net migration rate 202,000 people. At a population of just over 6 million, this represents close to 3.3% of the population lost in one year to emigration.<sup>143</sup>

Through World War II (WWII), Estonia lost a considerable part of its population. Approximately 200,000 people were displaced from the Baltics and more than 11 million from all over Europe.<sup>144</sup> Many people were displaced by effects of the war, others resettled through Soviet-led redistribution programs. Overall, about 23 percent of the population are reported to have been relocated from Estonia and other Baltic countries,<sup>145</sup> and more than 95,000 of those relocated to Siberia by the Soviet Union.<sup>146</sup> These populations scattered throughout the world later, as some formed local enclaves that retained their Estonian Heritage, whereas others dispersed. From a small state perspective, this represents a significant group of people with cultural ties to the country's issues and heritage.

Norway presents another example: there are almost as many people of Norwegian ancestry in the United States (4.2 million) as in Norway (5,3 million).<sup>147</sup> <sup>148</sup> Countries like Ireland have strong ties with their 2nd and even 3rd generation of emigres citizens. In part thanks to programs funded by the Irish government, many third generation immigrants proudly self-identify as Irish-American. This, for better or worse, has enabled Ireland to wield more political capital through the U.S. than it would typically have if the current inhabitants of the island just represented it on the international stage.<sup>149</sup>

142. "Refugee Population by Country or Territory of Asylum," Data, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sm.pop.refg?end=2016>.

143. "New Migration," Data, accessed April 15, 2019, [https://data.worldbank.org/indicators/SM.POP.NETM?year\\_high\\_desc=false](https://data.worldbank.org/indicators/SM.POP.NETM?year_high_desc=false)

144. "Remembering Estonia's WWII Refugees," Estonian World, September 19, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, <http://estoniaworld.com/life/remembering-estonias-wwii-refugees/>.

145. Paul A. Goble, and Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy, "Stalin's Deportation of Baltic Peoples in June 1941 Remembered," Euromaidan Press, June 14, 2016, accessed April 15, 2019, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/06/14/stalins-deportation-of-baltic-peoples-in-june-1941-remembered/>.

146. "Estonians Pay Homage to Victims of Soviet Deportations," France 24, March 25, 2019, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190325-estonians-pay-homage-victims-soviet-deportations>.

147. "The World Factbook: Norway," Central Intelligence Agency, February 01, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>.

[148] Data Access and Dissemination Systems (DADS), "American FactFinder - Results," American FactFinder - Results, October 05, 2010, accessed April 11, 2019, [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_1YR\\_S0201](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_S0201).

[149] Ciaran Cannon, "Why Ireland is Putting Its Diaspora at the Center of Its Global Engagement," IrishCentral.com, July 20, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/others/irish-abroad-global-diaspora>.

Two definitions of heritage are important to the cultural identities of small states. One is focused on tradition. The second is something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor.<sup>150</sup> These are both valuable concepts that expand the soft power of small states. In Estonia, e-Residency evolved into a viable governance program for the digital age. The process allows for the foundations of business to be initiated from anywhere in the world. Currently the process of getting your e-Residency card costs 100 Euros plus processing fees.

Although the e-Residency process was revolutionary when it started, its security and verifications standards are held to a high standard to help ensure banking fraud is not committed. These standards allow for verification of identity but they utilize legacy technology that can be leapfrogged by focusing on a new problem sets outside the EU Regulations.<sup>151</sup>

### **Challenge**

Moreover, small states have limited human capital and other resources compared to bigger countries. Due to the limited perceived voices of small states, specific challenges of many are never heard on the international stage until they reach a critical mass. The cost of instituting e-Residency provides a barrier that resource-deprived small states have difficulty justifying.

### **Recommendation**

As part of FORTIS, Estonia can offer an updated kind of e-Residency as e-Heritage to other small states. The requirements for verification and security could be reduced by limiting the burden of verification giving small states a first step into digital governance. Digital fingerprints and facial recognitions could be combined with medical information to provide a multi-factor authentication providing strong verification criteria.

It could also simply be a declaration of empathy for the small states' history and culture. By providing a digital solution that does not require a physical card or the expense sending it, Estonia can offer a form of e-Governance to small states. This e-Heritage platform could become the standard for digital identification. This identification platform will provide a strong security network for individuals within the context of disasters.

150. "Heritage," Merriam-Webster, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heritage>.

151. Thomas K. Running, "The Ultimate Guide to Estonian E-residency, Banking, and Taxes," Nomad Gate, December 23, 2018, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://nomadgate.com/estonian-e-residency-guide/>.

### Short-term:

1. Initiate e-Heritage pen pal program with one Estonian school and one school with a large Estonian diaspora heritage.
2. Develop criteria for an e-Heritage platform that streamlines the processes of e-Residency and allows for maximum deployment throughout the world.

### Medium-term:

1. Actively market e-Heritage to people with Estonian heritage through DNA sites and in-hubs of Estonian diaspora from WWII their descendants and diaspora that formed following the collapse of the USSR.
2. Within the UN Security Council, propose e-Heritage as a viable first step to provide displaced people from war torn regions with a digital record of their lives and backgrounds that could be accessed from any digital platform.

### Long-term:

1. Harness the power of e-Heritage as a security platform for small states to rally support in times of international crises. Programs connecting residents of small states with e-Heritage diaspora could provide a catalyst for enhanced tourism as well as offer substantial networks for residents to access in case of disasters.

## **Rationale**

By providing Estonia and other small states with a platform to connect with diaspora throughout the world, small states and the people of small states will strengthen their cultural identity. e-Heritage will act as a backstop for identification for people of small states in case of disasters, natural or man-made. Small states could issue e-Heritage as a backup documentation.

Finally, by connecting these groups through something tangible, the cultures of people will dramatically strengthen security through this cultural connection.

# 03. | Area of Diplomacy 3.2.

## E-EMBASSY

Medium Term - Somewhat Hard

### Setting the Scene and Challenge

Small states lack the human and financial resources to open permanent diplomatic locations in every region, let alone every state. Estonia hosts 46 foreign embassies and consulates in Estonia and Estonia itself has 31 Embassies and 99 Consulates all over the world. Many of its consuls are honorary.<sup>152</sup>

In an interview, Ambassador Daniel Schaer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) recounted his experience as Ambassador-at-large to Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.<sup>153</sup> The decision to have his office in Estonia, specifically Tallinn, and have him divide his time among these four countries more or less equally allowed him to focus on each country. The traditional alternative would have been to have him physically locating his mission in Serbia, where he would naturally also spend the most of his time. His location would inevitably have dictated a stronger connection with Serbia at the expense of the other three countries.

The Swiss Ambassador Weschler is credited with being an early adopter of the Pop-Up Embassy model with Australia, the Netherlands, and Haiti, which broke the structure of physical limitation as practiced in the application of historic diplomatic norms.<sup>154</sup> <sup>155</sup> Haiti opened a pop-up embassy in Washington D.C. to showcase the products of Haitian American entrepreneurs to help drive sales of goods from Haiti.<sup>156</sup> These diplomatic events drive awareness of a country with their focus on issues or events.

The e-Government Academy and Lift99 in Estonia both have visitors to Estonia basing some or all of their operations out of the co-working spaces available to them in Tallinn.<sup>157</sup> <sup>158</sup> These spaces offer many benefits. The delegations pay only for the days they in fact use the spaces; and they have access to conference and meeting rooms, desk space and, most importantly, they are connected with locals' who use the space as well. This creates connection between host nation citizens and foreign delegations enabling better understanding of regional complexities.

152. "Estonia - Embassies and Consulates Worldwide," Embassy WorldWide, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/estonia/>.

153. Daniel Schaer, Ambassador at Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia. March 2019.

154. Rosemary Feitelberg, "Haiti's Embassy Hosts Pop-Up Shop for Haitian-American Entrepreneurs," WWD, May 31, 2017, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-scoops/u-s-embassy-hosts-pop-up-shop-for-haitian-american-entrepreneurs-10896622/>.

155. Urgent, "Open Embassy, a Pop-Up Swiss Embassy in Denmark," Urgent.Agency, August 01, 2017, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://urgent.agency/open-embassy>.

156. Rosemary Feitelberg, "Haiti's Embassy Hosts Pop-Up Shop for Haitian-American Entrepreneurs," WWD, May 31, 2017, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-scoops/u-s-embassy-hosts-pop-up-shop-for-haitian-american-entrepreneurs-10896622/>.

157. "Study Tours," E-Governance Academy, last modified 2019, <https://ega.ee/study-tours/>.

158. "About Us - Lift99," last modified 2019, <https://www.lift99.co/tallinn>.



## Recommendation

As part of FORTIS, small states can designate or brand locations at co-working spaces and sites as preferred pop-up embassy locations for diplomats and official visiting delegations. These FORTIS embassy locations will facilitate dialog among small states both in terms of economic development and diplomacy by creating spaces where diplomats from small states congregate when they are away from their flagship embassies it will expand their networking opportunities building bonds that will help keep small states connected.

### Short-term:

1. The MFA identifies pop-up embassy locations and designates them as FORTIS embassies. The diplomatic community is informed of these locations and the resources associated with these facilities that are available to their visiting diplomatic missions.
2. MFA contacts local coworking/incubator sites in Tallinn and arranges for diplomats and official small state delegations to have priority for conference rooms and workspaces. The rooms and space dedicated with FORTIS welcome visiting foreign delegations much like a branded airport lounge creates a space of comfort in a busy airport.
3. Through model UN initiate co-hosted events with other small states at Pop Up-Embassy locations raising awareness in Estonia. By including students who are participating in Model UN the locations of the designated Pop-Up Embassies can be established as spaces of international public connection and debates. This will offer students the chance to interact with actual diplomats in the international arena.

### Medium-term:

1. Maintain an informational document detailing costs and events in Estonia and from other small states providing a general template and analysis of the benefits to both visiting and visited states proposing that they join the FORTIS e-Embassy network and or create their own dedicated e-Embassies.

### Long-term:

1. MFA analyzes the short and midterm e-Embassy initiatives and determines if a dedicated building for diplomatic co-working space within the FORTIS architecture is appropriate within the regional Flagship. By providing the short and midterm solutions Estonia can gauge the utility of dedicating a building for diplomatic missions to Estonia providing more robust diplomatic spaces for visiting delegations.

## **Rationale**

Many of these recommendations are already implemented in Estonia in an organic way although not under the umbrella of an organization like FORTIS. As mentioned above co-working spaces are already being used by delegations, Australia and Switzerland already have successfully held Pop-Up Embassies. Bringing them under the umbrella of FORTIS and expanding would structure the process and provide a model for a global platform of agile diplomac.

By restructuring the physical locations of diplomacy small states can start to level the playing field by working together. The benefit of shared working space is a concept that was first initiated by Bell Labs and is now foundational approach used by many tech startups since it increases connections between people and thereby further stimulates synapses that drive progress.<sup>159</sup>

159. Jon Gertner, "Opinion | Innovation And The Bell Labs Miracle," NYTimes.com, last modified 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/26/opinion/sunday/innovation-and-the-bell>

# 03. | Area of Diplomacy 3.3.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Long Term - Hard

### Setting the Scene

Natural disasters carry significant human and economic costs, and nowhere are economic ramifications more visible than in small states.<sup>160</sup> Small states incur, on average an annual cost of two percent of their GDP: that is 4 times higher than that for larger countries. For more severe disasters, the cost for small states can go up to 15% to 30% of GDP. These are levels of devastation that larger states will almost never experience.<sup>161</sup> Specifically, in smaller Middle Eastern countries, 16 percent of the population is affected when a disaster strikes compared to one percent in their larger neighbors, and a 16 percent in small countries compared to 2.5 percent in large countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>162</sup> These effects are even more prevalent at a time where small states have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of catastrophes<sup>163</sup> For Estonia, in particular, the key areas of concern are winter storms, forest fires and flooding.<sup>164</sup>

In light of these characteristic statistics, small states are well placed to lead from the frontlines and become drivers of change and leaders in innovation to help mitigate the impact of these disasters: according to Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, "Small countries are at particular risk [of climate change]. Fortunately, small states have intrinsic strategic agility, often offering innovative solutions, serving as catalyzers of global change. We count on and learn from their experience in tackling environmental challenges."<sup>165</sup>

Digital innovation can bring solutions to sectors that have previously lacked access to technology. Disaster management is one of the areas where this gap has existed. The continuous development in technological innovation suggests that technology stands to make its most significant societal impact in the humanitarian sector.<sup>166</sup> As of 2017, the overall and increased demand for disaster relief support has become unprecedented.<sup>167</sup> This is an example in which small states can become influential players and make significant contributions towards providing digital solutions for a growing challenge.

160. Fund, International Monetary. SMALL STATES' RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE - ROLE FOR THE IMF. Report. Accessed April 17, 2019. Keyword: Small States' Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change - IMF.

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid.

164. Spassov, Philip. ESTONIA: Capabilities, Organisations, Policies, and Legislation in Crisis Management and Disaster Response. Report. Institute of Information and Communication Technologies CDSM | Centre for Security and Defence Management. Accessed April 17, 2019. Keyword: ESTONIA - IT for Security Department.

165. "Climate Change Increasingly Affects Small Countries - World." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 12, 2019.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/climate-change-increasingly-affects-small-countries>.

166. Yoo, Tae, and Cisco. "4 Ways Technology Can Help Us Respond to Disasters." World Economic Forum. Accessed April 11, 2019.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/4-ways-technology-can-play-a-critical-role-in-disaster-response/>.

167. Ibid.

## Challenge

According to the World Economic Forum, "In 2017, the American Red Cross delivered more relief support than it had in the previous four years combined."<sup>168</sup> The effects of climate change are projected to worsen and continue to affect small states disproportionately.<sup>169</sup> This will invariably have a negative impact on the various economic sectors and ecosystems that are crucial to these countries. Tackling the debilitating effects of climate change should be a global priority, however, the investments put towards providing a solution do not match the level of urgency required.<sup>170</sup> The adjustment needs of small states remain underfunded by up to \$1 billion annually.<sup>171</sup> Due to the disadvantage of small states in size, skills, manpower, and financial resources,<sup>172</sup> and as small states disproportionately bear the brunt of the effect of these challenges, there is enormous pressure for them to strategize and contribute to the world in a manner that compensates for these limitations. Digital solutions can help address some of these environmental disasters.

The legal principles and division of labor amongst government agencies surrounding crisis management in Estonia are regulated by emergency law.<sup>173</sup> Crisis management committees have been formed in different parts of Estonia. Rescue centers have developed crisis communication skills; and carried out a nation-wide radio communication system to facilitate information exchange between agencies.<sup>174</sup> Additional training has been carried out across the country and investments have been made in equipment to combat the effects of flooding and storms. However, more can still be undertaken in the area of disaster management. The efforts of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, for example, can be expanded. It is already carrying out virtual training exercises which help in both the training and development of crisis management specialists both locally and regionally.<sup>175</sup>

## Opportunity

Estonia has become synonymous with digital advancement. This has made administrative, legal, and business transactions more efficient and more transparent. These developments have changed the mindset of Estonia's government to one that adapts its policy and regulatory framework to the changes in innovative technology.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, Estonia can readily take on a new challenge, by marrying already existing expertise and systems with new ones specifically designed to address disaster management.

Estonia has fully embraced digitization and is now viewed as a pioneer. Today, Estonia is considered one of the most advanced e-governments in the world. The use of technology is dominant in the private and public sector.

168. Ibid.

169. Fund, International Monetary. SMALL STATES' RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE - ROLE FOR THE IMF. Report. Accessed April 17, 2019. Keyword: Small States' Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change - IMF.

170. Ibid.

171. Ibid.

172. Steinsson, Sverrir, and Baldur Thorhallsson. "The Small-State Survival Guide to Foreign Policy Success." The National Interest. September 28, 2017. Accessed April 11, 2019.

173. Ibid.

174. "Security and Crisis Management in Estonia." Climatechange.org. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://www.climatechange.org/estonia/security-and-crisis-management/>.

175. Spassov, Philip. ESTONIA: Capabilities, Organisations, Policies, and Legislation in Crisis Management and Disaster Response. Report. Institute of Information and Communication Technologies CDSM | Centre for Security and Defence Management. Accessed April 17, 2019. Keyword: ESTONIA - IT for Security Department.

176. Ibid.



A new company can be set up in 20 minutes, close to 95 percent of Estonians declare their income online, just to name a few ways digital has come to be part of the everyday life of Estonia.<sup>177</sup> Estonia's digital journey has been informed by a need to compensate for the small number of public servants.

With the help of digital tools, Estonia can cooperate with other small states and liaise with key multilateral institutions on the mechanisms that are already in place to better address disaster management. Investments can be made in disruptive technologies such as drones to help with monitoring, detecting, and access.<sup>178</sup> Estonia could promote the application of the already established national e-ID system to help with quick identification when disaster strikes, and in the event of displacement. The national e-ID system can provide crucial information to first responders providing assistance to those in need of medical attention based on their digitally stored health records. Moreover, Estonia should consider specialized training in disaster management to university students who are already pursuing studies in the digital field. Lastly, training of these digital solutions should be extended to responders.

## Recommendation

Estonia can continue to position herself as a valuable partner and boost foreign relations with other small countries by leveraging the country's digital knowhow to meet the growing challenge of disaster management. Estonia's Disaster Relief Team meets international standards<sup>179</sup> and can be well trained and equipped for international rescue missions. Through technology countries can not only intervene when disaster strikes, but also take preemptive measures. Opportunities lie within these gaps. By incorporating technology in seeking solutions and developing mechanisms to better manage disasters, Estonia is consistent with her brand as a digital innovator and problem solver.

### Short term:

1. Engage in discussions with small states and their relevant public institutions that deal with environmental protection and disaster management. Given Estonia's growing relationship with African countries and following the complete destruction countries in Southern Africa have faced due to the recent Cyclone Idai, this would be a timely initiative. The total devastation that has followed as a result, with some cities like Beira in Mozambique counting 90 percent damage.<sup>180</sup> Beyond Africa, Estonia has in the past contributed to Caribbean Islands that were hardest hit in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, by contributing 30,000 euros in relief.<sup>181</sup> Given Estonia's recent participation at both the AU and CARICOM, both of these forums represent a good opportunity to explore possibilities for increased engagement through the use of digital innovation.

177. Iives, Toomas Hendrik. "Estonia's Digital Dividends." Let's Talk Development. January 13, 2016. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/estonia>  
178. "ITU Report Highlights Use of Disruptive Technologies in Disaster Management." PreventionWeb.net. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/64439>  
179. "Estonia as a Provider of Humanitarian Aid." Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://vm.ee/en/estonia-provider-humanitarian-aid>  
180. "Mozambique: "90 per Cent" of Beira and Surrounds Damaged or Destroyed." International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/press-release/mozambique-cyclone-90-per-cent-beira-surrounds-damaged-destroyed/>  
181. "Estonian Foreign Ministry Provides 30,000 Euros for Hurricane-ravaged Caribbean Islands - Antigua and Barbuda." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 18, 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/antigua-and-barbuda/estonian-foreign-ministry-provides-30000-euros-hurricane-ravaged>.

Medium -term:

1. Identify a number of countries where pilot projects and partnerships can be established. The choice should be made based on countries that have shown the most interest and commitment in tackling the issue of disaster management as a national priority. Partnerships can be established by continuing to be involved and represented in different multilateral discussions around digital inclusion. There are many opportunities to leapfrog and gaps to be filled, especially in the developing world.

Following the adoption of the AU Humanitarian Policy Framework in January 2016, the AU identified disaster management as a key area that needed more attention.<sup>182</sup> The African Risk Capacity (ARC) and the African Union Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) held discussions end of last year around the theme “Transforming Disaster Risk Financing towards Agenda 2063” and the ARC has provided institutional support in disaster risk management to 16 out of 34 countries that are ARC treaty signatories in addition to \$400 million of policies drought insurance.<sup>183</sup> The ARC is currently supported by the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, France, The Rockefeller Foundation and the United States.<sup>184</sup> There is room for Estonia to engage the AU in talks about expanding partnership beyond just e-governance training and into the realm of disaster management.

2. Disaster Relief International was established in 1948 by William Zimdin, an Estonian immigrant.<sup>185</sup> The organization aims to “to equip health professionals in resource-poor communities to meet the challenges of diagnosing and caring for people without regard to politics, religion, or ability to pay.”<sup>186</sup> The work and outreach capabilities of this organization can greatly benefit from Estonia’s technological saviness, which can help create faster and more efficient ways of delivering medical equipment and emergency care after the disaster hits.

3. Source funding from international organizations such as ITU which are invested in seeing increased incorporation of technology in disaster management. ITU recently released a report on “use and opportunities of ICTs and disruptive technologies for disaster risk reduction and management.”<sup>187</sup>

Long term:

1. Estonia’s Disaster Relief team meets international standards and is equipped to participate in international rescue and reconstruction missions.<sup>188</sup> Implement adequate training programs for EDRF team members on how to use technology to respond to these disasters. With the use of technology, the EDRF team does not necessarily have to travel to the affected areas. They can provide relief and training through digital channels.

182. "International Disaster Response Law: A Key Pillar of the African Union Humanitarian Policy Framework." International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/2018/07/10/international-disaster-response-law-key-pillar-african-union-humanitarian-policy-framework/>.

183. "African Risk Capacity & African Union Open Workshop on Transforming Disaster Risk Financing towards Agenda 2063 - World." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/african-risk-capacity-african-union-open-workshop-transforming-disaster-risk-financing>.

184. Ibid.

185. "History." Direct Relief. September 06, 2018. Accessed May 10, 2019. <https://www.directrelief.org/about/history/>.

186. "Work." Direct Relief. February 01, 2019. Accessed May 10, 2019. <https://www.directrelief.org/work/>.

187. "ITU Report Highlights Use of Disruptive Technologies in Disaster Management." PreventionWeb.net. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/view/64439>

188. "Estonia as a Provider of Humanitarian Aid." Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://vm.ee/en/estonia-provider-humanitarian-aid>.

2. The advanced National ID System in Estonia can help with the crucial identification process of people during and after disaster strikes, especially those who are most vulnerable. Beyond basic identification information, the ID-card includes information such as medical records and prescriptions.<sup>189</sup> This is vital information that can be used to identify those who need immediate medical attention.

3. Training programs for university students who are already in the Digital/STEM field and disaster response teams. Set up some type of digital consulting service (This can be done in partnership with stakeholders such as: Ministry of Education and The Department of Rescue and Crisis Management Policy at the Ministry of the Interior in Estonia) where the trained individuals can share their expertise via online correspondence or exchange work visits.

## Rationale

By exploring a new challenge such as disaster management, Estonia can become a prominent voice in the fight against climate change, a cause that requires collective efforts, expertise, and a heightened culture of preparedness. Estonia's digital track record is well documented and has garnered the respect and admiration of its peers.

Estonia has become a trailblazer in the digital world and this technical know-how has slowly developed into the country's soft power catalyst.<sup>190</sup> Estonia's message has resonated around the world, from Africa to neighboring European countries, and foreign leaders have turned to Estonia for guidance and expertise to help fulfill their own digital aspirations.<sup>191</sup> Most recently, Estonia signed a Memorandum with the African Union on the development of a training system for E-governance<sup>192</sup> This sets a good precedent for the exportation of Estonia's digital expertise.

Given the rest of the world's keen interest in adopting Estonia's best practices, the country is best placed to pioneer digital solutions that tackle new challenges, such as the growing risks and disasters brought about by climate change. Therefore, Estonia is in the best position to expand its digital footprint into the humanitarian sector. Beyond being a voice for the promotion of a more digitally inclusive, solution-oriented world, exploring the aforementioned possibilities is a good way to create allies and long lasting partnerships.

189. "ID-card - E-Estonia." E. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/e-identity/id-card/>.

190. Ives, Toomas Hendrik. "Estonia's Digital Dividends." Let's Talk Development. January 13, 2016. Accessed April 14, 2019.

191. "Small State Power in the Digital Era | Holbrook Publication." American Academy. October 23, 2018. Accessed April 11, 2019. <https://www.americanacademy.de/small-state-power>

192. The Baltic Course. "Estonia Recommends African Union to Create E-government Training Module." The Baltic Course | Baltic States News & Analytics. Accessed April 12, 2019. <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=137111>.

193. "International Disaster Response Law: A Key Pillar of the African Union Humanitarian Policy Framework." International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/2018/07/10/international-disaster-response-law-key-pillar-african-union-humanitarian-policy-framework/>.

194. "African Risk Capacity & African Union Open Workshop on Transforming Disaster Risk Financing towards Agenda 2063 - World." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 14, 2019. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/african-risk-capacity-african-union-open-workshop-transforming-disaster-risk-financing>.

195. Ibid.

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Through technology countries can not only intervene when disaster strikes, but also take preemptive measures. Opportunities lie within these gaps. By incorporating technology in seeking solutions and developing mechanisms to better manage disasters, Estonia is consistent with her brand as a digital innovator and problem solver.

196. "Estonia as a Provider of Humanitarian Ai." Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed April 12, 2019. <https://vm.ee/en/estonia-provider-humanitarian-aid>.



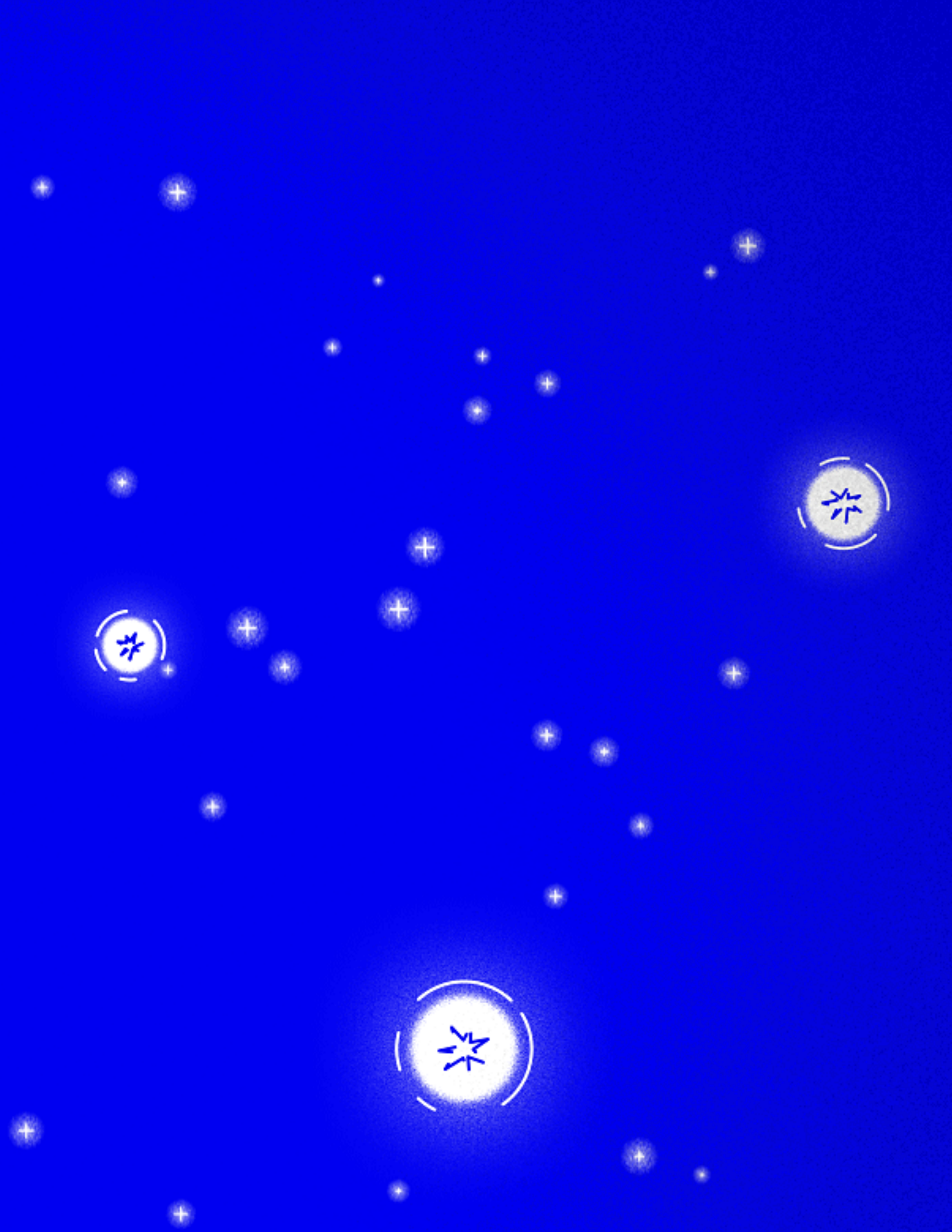




# **POLICY AREA** 04

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# Economy







**Small states have always been more vulnerable in the global economy and depend on open economies.**<sup>197</sup> Trade comprises a larger proportion of their economic activity, and they lack the power to set the terms or make any of the rules that govern globalization.<sup>198</sup> Some small states, while varying in their level of development and the size of their economies, share a number of intrinsic characteristics that result in particular development challenges such as vulnerability to economic shocks and lack economies of scale.<sup>199</sup> Further, these states share challenges associated with their geographic size, isolation, and remoteness, including weak technical capacity, limited access to affordable finance, and disproportionate impact of natural disasters and climate change.<sup>200</sup>

Despite the disproportionate focus on their vulnerabilities, small countries have managed to deal with external pressures in different ways. A more integrated global economy enables smaller states to adapt quickly to changing conditions, and to more readily pursue strategic development policies. Openness to international trade provides small states with opportunities to address the problem of size, since it enables greater access to larger markets and thus generating economies of scale.<sup>201</sup>

Estonia has become a textbook example of how a small country can use its resources efficiently to great effect. Estonia's main tool has been the holistic digitalization of virtually all areas of economy, government and society. Through technology, it has transformed its economy, to become a lean, agile, a paperless digital and tech-savvy society. Its e-residency program attracts entrepreneurs and startup founders from all over the world and has made it an attractive point of entry into the EU single market.<sup>202</sup> It's an active member of the European Union and most international organisations and ranks very well by most global measurements when it comes to the business environment.<sup>203</sup> Against this backdrop, the following examines a number of activities that Estonia could effectively pursue and promote through collaboration and knowledge transfer with other small states using FORTIS as a channel. FORTIS can help build capacity of small states, enable countries to share their knowledge and experiences as well as access information on how to address these development, financing, and climate challenges.



# 04. | Area of Economy 4.1.

## JOINT TOURISM PROMOTION

Medium Term - Somewhat hard

### Setting the Scene

As the second-fastest growing sector in the world, the global travel and tourism industry experienced a 3.9 percent increase in 2018, contributing \$8.8 trillion to the world economy as well as 319 million jobs.<sup>204</sup> That is, one in ten jobs worldwide were created in the tourism industry.<sup>205</sup> What's more, job growth in tourism stimulates other parts of the economy as well including transport, food and beverage services.<sup>206</sup>

This data confirms tourism as an important source of income for many economies, and one of the drivers of economic growth and job creation. This is not unique for large countries, but crucially applies to small states like Austria, Costa Rica, Denmark, Maldives, and Jamaica as well.<sup>207</sup>

Tourism represents the most important part of the services trade in the majority of small states.<sup>208</sup> Tourism represented 34–35 percent of total exports in small states between 1995 to 2006,<sup>209</sup> contrasting with only around 10 percent of total exports in the rest of the world.<sup>210</sup>

Tourism contributed 5.02 percent of total GDP in almost all of the small states, which is considerably higher than the share of about 2% of global GDP.<sup>211</sup> Despite the high importance of tourism, small states have not necessarily fully realized their tourism potential.

197. A Big Question on Small States - Finance & Development, September 2013. Accessed May 06, 2019. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2013/09/Jahan.htm>.

198. "Small States in a Global Economy." UNU. November 17, 2016. Accessed May 05, 2019. <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/small-states-global-economy>.

199. "Small States, Big Challenges, Unique Solutions," accessed April 20, 2019, <https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/small-states-big-challenges-unique-solutions>.

200. "Small States' Resilience to Natural Disasters and Climate Change - Role for the IMF." IMF. Accessed May 05, 2019.

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2016/12/31/Small-States-Resilience-to-Natural-Disasters-and-Climate-Change-Role-for-the-IMF-PP5079>.

201. Arnold McIntyre et al.

202. Tamppuu, Piia, and Anu Masso. "Welcome to the Virtual State: Estonian E-residency and the Digitalised State as a Commodity." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 21, no. 5 (2018): 543-60. Accessed April 5, 2019.

203. "Digital Economy Estonia: From IT Tiger to the World's Most Pre-eminent E-state." *New European Economy*. May 25, 2016. Accessed April 11, 2019.

<https://neweuropeaneconomy.com/fdi/digital-economy-estonia/>.

204. "Travel Tourism Continues Strong Growth Above Global" *Travel Tourism Continues Strong Growth Above Global GDP*, WTTC, accessed April 6, 2019,

<https://www.wttc.org:443/about/media-centre/press-releases/press-releases/2019/travel-tourism-continues-strong-growth-above-global-gdp/>.

205. Ibid.

206. Glauco De Vita and Khine S. Kyaw, "Tourism Specialization, Absorptive Capacity and Economic Growth," *Journal of Travel Research* 56, no. 4 (May 18, 2016): 423–35,

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287516650042>.

207. Ibid.

208. Massimiliano Cali and Jane Kennan\*, "The Global Downturn and Trade Prospects for Small States," ed. Dr Mohammad A Razzaque, *Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics* 62 (August 1,

2009), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14217/20719914>.

209. Ibid.

210. Ibid.

211. GDP (Current US\$) | Data," accessed April 12, 2019, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2015&>.

According to data from the UN World Tourism Organization, there will be more than 1.8 billion world travelers by 2030,<sup>212</sup> increasing about 50 percent from the number making an international trip in 2015 which totaled more than 1.2 billion.<sup>213</sup> Given this trend, the tourism industry has significant potential for the world, including for small states. Therefore, this can provide an opportunity for small states to increase their income by harnessing their tourist assets<sup>214</sup>

At the same time, tourism brings risks with it, including environmental degradation. A key question therefore emerges: how can tourism reach its potential as an economic opportunity and development catalyst while at the same time promoting environmental sustainability? The balanced, and effective management resources through sustainable practices will allow tourists to bring social and economic benefits to local communities, and support the protection of natural and cultural heritage.<sup>215</sup> In the long run, it will enable further social, economic and cultural improvement that lead small states to long-term growth and development.<sup>216</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with the 2030 Agenda included tourism as central among the other targets, specifically in Goals 8,<sup>217</sup> 12,<sup>218</sup> and 14<sup>219</sup> on inclusive and sustainable use of oceans and marines' resources, respectively.<sup>220</sup>

Accordingly, by implementing sustainable tourism, small state economies around the world will advance SDG implementation on the ground, and satisfy some of the SDG obligations of small states. This also provides small states opportunities to work closely and develop and further the

## Challenge

Small states are often associated with limited human capital, and thus, face capacity constraints that impede them in scaling up their products and services.<sup>221</sup> As a consequence, they are not able to achieve economies of scale, and this results in the high or higher cost of public and private sectors.<sup>222</sup>

Due to a narrow resource base and small domestic markets, the production base and exports of these countries are also often undiversified.<sup>223</sup> To diversify their production, some small states try to harness their potentials in the tourism sector as one of few economic opportunities that is relatively feasible to pursue. Through the diversification of their economies, they aim to improve

215. Marija Kostić and Melita Jovanović-Tončev.

216. Annie Fitzsimmons, "Why Is Sustainable Tourism So Important?," *The Virtuoso Life* (blog), March 2, 2017, <https://blog.virtuoso.com/tips-and-trends/sustainable-tourism-important/>.

217. Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

218. Goal 12: Ensure sustainable Consumption and Production patterns

219. Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

220. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals - Journey to 2030* (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2017), <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284419401>.

221. "The World Bank in Small States," Text/HTML, The World Bank, accessed April 6, 2019, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview>.

222. "A Big Question on Small States - Finance & Development, September 2013," accessed April 6, 2019, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2013/09/jahan.htm>.

223. Gene Marvin Tidrick, "Small States: Making the Most of Development Assistance, A Synthesis of World Bank Evaluation Findings," Publication (Washington DC, August 2006), <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/7084>.

their incomes. However, the aforementioned capacity and resource constraints have also hindered them to fully tap their tourist potential, trapping them in an economic vicious cycle.

In addition, some countries are struggling to promote their tourist sites to international visitors as the per capita costs of public goods and services, including cost of the effort, is relatively expensive compared to their economies.<sup>224</sup> This is demonstrated by, among others, overall spending on travel and tourism promotion such as commercials, which can total a considerable part of government budgets or spending.<sup>225</sup> Seychelles, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica, for instance, spent 22.4 percent, 21.8 percent, and 17.1 percent respectively of their government spending (excluding defense and welfare) on travel and tourism expenditure in 2013.<sup>226</sup>

Another challenge is formulating a pro-active, sustainable export-oriented national tourism strategy that is developmental in scope and maximizes the linkages between tourism and other economic sectors.<sup>227</sup> To embark on the efforts to realize their potential by defining a clear working framework and strategy, finding adequate funding, as well as integrating and advancing technology may be a daunting task for a company, and different investees require varying amounts and types of

## Recommendation

Tourism development requires a collaborative partnership to increase the value and importance of tourism products.<sup>228</sup> A joint tourism promotion with small states will enable a more integrated and innovative output that expands the efforts, leading to the achievement of all dimensions of development, including sustainable development agenda.<sup>229</sup>

The similar model of cooperation has been established between some countries, such as Slovenia and Croatia,<sup>230</sup> which admittedly are neighboring countries, or between cities like New York and Tokyo.<sup>231</sup> There is also a collaboration between The Visegrád Group member states (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia),<sup>232</sup> which are also neighboring countries. This kind of collaboration will become a complementary of such existing regional cooperation among small states, and therefore strengthen the tourism development efforts.

224. Alberto Alesina, "The Size of Countries: Does It Matter?," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 1, no. 2-3 (May 2003): 301-16, <https://doi.org/10.1162/154247603322390946>.

225. Mark Fahey Wells Nick, "Tourism: How Much Do Countries Spend to Attract Tourists?," September 30, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/09/29/tourism-how-much-do-countries-spend-to-attract-tourists.html>.

226. Ibid.

227. Luther Gordon Miller, "Small States In Transition - From Vulnerability To Competitiveness: Redefining Tourism as An Export And Development Opportunity" (Ministry of Trade and Industry Republic of Trinidad and Tobago; Commonwealth Secretariat; IT Executive Forum, January 2004), [www.intracen.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=52371](http://www.intracen.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=52371).

228. Luther Gordon Miller.

229. "Tourism," accessed April 20, 2019, <http://www.intracen.org/itc/sectors/tourism/>.

230. "Slovenia, Croatia Continue Joint Tourism Promotion in China," accessed April 20, 2019, <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/slovenia-croatia-continue-joint-tourism-promotion-in-china>.

231. "New York and Tokyo Doing Joint Tourism Promotion: Travel Weekly," accessed April 20, 2019,

<https://www.travelweekly.com/North-America-Travel/New-York-and-Tokyo-doing-joint-tourism-promotion>.

232. Petit Press a.s, "Joint Promotion Helps Build Tourism," *spectator.sme.sk*, December 13, 2010, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20038370/joint-promotion-helps-build-tourism.html>.

One of the tools that can be utilized through this joint promotion is sponsored events and giveaways that specifically tie in with small states destinations. This will create a level of prestige for small states.<sup>233</sup> A contest that provides winners an experience to travel to small states can be a strategy to raise awareness of this initiative and attract online followers.<sup>234</sup> The world tourism day on September 27th can be considered as the day to launch this cooperation and announce this giveaway, since it will be easier for the audience to remember.

Unique digital capabilities have been one of Estonia's competitive advantages. It is recommended for Estonia to harness this power by initiating a collaboration with small states to conduct a joint tourism promotion. Estonia can analyze and identify small states that have capacity constraints in promoting their tourism industry and countries that need to diversify their economies and would like to unleash their tourism potentials, such as Gambia,<sup>235</sup> UEA,<sup>236</sup> and Lao.<sup>237</sup> Afterward, it can reach out to their states representatives to pitch the idea of this initiative, and work closely to develop the implementation plan, including a financial plan. Estonia may seek financial contribution from other small states such as online promotion fees, in addition to grant from multilateral organizations like the UNDP for promoting sustainable tourism.

Through this cooperation, Estonia can share and offer its expertise in technology and digitalization such as big data and AI to target potential tourists and visitors for campaigns and promotions. Estonia can develop a data unit that consists of Data Collection sub-unit for a coordinated data collection and analysis<sup>238</sup> and Data Management sub-unit that will manage the data to be used for targeting the potential tourists and streamline flow of content from small states through official website and other online platforms.

Seeking a strategic partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by utilizing the concept of sustainable tourism as the key message for the campaign would be worth pursuing. Moreover, since Estonia and UNDP have launched a cooperation project to support the digital transformation of UNDP and developing countries in a high-level side event of the 73rd UN General Assembly in September 2018.<sup>239</sup> Estonia can also further expand the cooperation with World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which also has joined forces with UNDP in 2017 to ensure that tourism advances sustainable development through 2030 and beyond. Ultimately, a greater

233. "Tourism Promotion and Marketing," accessed April 20, 2019, <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/tourism-promotion-marketing-57157.html>.

234. "Promote Tourism with Online Contests and Giveaways," *News about Digital Marketing Applications on Facebook* (blog), August 24, 2018, <https://www.easypromosapp.com/blog/en/2018/08/promote-tourism-contests-giveaways/>.

235. Joe McClain, "Gambia Tourism Authorities to Invest in the Sector | .TR," accessed May 8, 2019, <https://www.tourism-review.com/gambia-tourism-to-boost-the-economy-news5432>

236. "Tourism Key for Economic Growth and Diversification in the MENA Region | Communications," accessed May 8, 2019, <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-04-25/tourism-key-economic-growth-and-diversification-mena-region>

237. Tae-jun Kang Diplomat The, "'Visit Laos Year 2018': A Real Boost for the Tourism Industry?," *The Diplomat*, accessed May 8, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/visit-laos-year-2018-a-real-boost-for-the-tourism-industry/>.

238. Camilo Muñoz et al., "Promoting Economic Growth Through Digital Innovation In Tourism," (2018).

239. "EGA to Start Cooperation Project with UNDP," e-Governance Academy, accessed April 10, 2019, <https://ega.ee/news/ega-to-start-cooperation-project-with-undp/>.



cooperation with the private sectors such as key players in online travel apps or platforms will allow the joint promotion to have a seamless integration with transaction and thus, can be translated into the countries' improved incomes.

An integrated brand strategy and management will play a key role in this effort since it is a basis and tool to leverage this cooperation and a means to build engagement with the audience as a collective entity. The wide array of countries participating will enable this integrated brand to reach potential market more efficiently, credibly, and memorably, stand out from the competition, and eventually will expand small states' markets or customers' base.

Therefore, brand management should be set as one of the deliverables of short-term plan. After the brand management plan is developed, in the mid-term, online platforms that consist of a joint website and other online platforms such as social media and mobile apps should also be created to enable the promotion and tourism packages purchasing. Later on, interactive features in these online platforms will be developed in the long-term to enhance the experience and engagement of the audience.

Greater cooperation with the private sector will also allow small states to engage with other partners from across sectors. This also accommodates small states to piggyback with partners that already have connections and capacity to reach larger markets. For instance, by collaborating with key players in travel and tourism or hospitality online platforms for special deals, promotion, and payment service. As a result, the promotion can have a seamless integration with transaction and thus, can be translated into the countries' improved incomes. In this case, the partnership is key to success,<sup>240</sup> since it allows centralized, 'one-stop' purchasing system as well as effective channel and ease to purchase tourism services from small states.<sup>241</sup>

Another way to increase the benefits for small states joining this initiative is by expanding opportunities to bundle tourism services among small states. As an example, countries that have not fully tapped their tourism potential can sell their tourism products as a package with countries with popular tourist destination. This will be beneficial for both countries as they can attract tourists with needs of popular attractions and those who have enthusiasm to explore hidden gems. Some UNESCO sites in small states for instance can become hidden gems offered by this promotion.

240. Camilo Muñoz et al., "Promoting Economic Growth Through Digital Innovation In Tourism," (2018).

241. Ibid.

### Short-term:

1. Analyze and identify small states that have capacity constraints in promoting their tourism industry and countries that need to diversify their economies and would like to unleash their tourism potentials.
2. Reach out to the small states representatives to pitch the idea of collective promotions.
3. Coordinate to seek strategic a partnership with the UNDP and UNWTO.
4. Tourism Contest to visit small states.
5. Develop brand management strategy and plans.
6. Develop the MoU / framework of the cooperation.

### Medium-term:

1. Look for a potential collaboration with the key players in hospitality or travel online apps or platforms.
2. Develop a joint website and other online platforms such as social media and mobile apps to enable the promotion and tourism packages purchasing.

### Long-term:

1. Leverage big data to target potential tourists and visitors for campaigns and promotions.
  - Develop Data Unit to provide a functional platform and team to leverage the potential data.<sup>242</sup>
  - Standardize data process
  - Collect online data
  - Create a centralized database

## **Rationale**

Small states often feel their voices are too small to be heard, and that their relevance to the world is underestimated. In the era of competition, where markets are constantly contested, some small states are struggling to have their potentials fully tapped. A collaboration in the form of joint tourism promotion, in this matter, will present an opportunity for them to realize their potentials, and bring mutual growth for each other. Such partnership will also complement and thus strengthen the existing cooperation they may have had before.

242 Camilo Muñoz et al., "Promoting Economic Growth Through Digital Innovation In Tourism," (2018).

Looking at the challenges some small states are facing and opportunities presented for them, a tourism platform may become a solution for their capacity constraints. Scaling-up practices and joint campaigns on sustainable tourism can reduce their promotion costs, reach larger audiences, and take advantages of the expertise of more developed countries such as Estonia in technology and digitalization.

In particular, Estonia can, for example, offer technology advancement in big data and AI to target potential tourists and visitors for campaigns and promotions. According to research, tourism industry experts underline importance of coordinated data collection and analysis in an attempt to define target profiles and content in tourism industry.<sup>243</sup> Therefore, Estonia's expertise can play a key role in this initiative.

This tourism initiative is also important to widen tourism products for the small states. As tourists demand has evolved over time, there is an urgency to redefine the scope and breath of the tourism products. Small states are therefore required to promote and sell a more diversified and competitive products. Furthermore, to enhance the opportunities to develop small states' tourism, it is necessary to increase linkages between tourism and the manufacturing sector, agriculture, and the creative and cultural industries sectors.<sup>244</sup>

This platform will then provide small states chances to expand their competitiveness and market bases through technology advancement such as big data and AI. These two tools can provide data about potential tourist behaviors, as well as information about areas of tourism that can be broadened, and other sectors that can be linked to. To that end, small states tourism can better target the potential visitors and compete in global market.

In addition, this cooperation can also provide small states a strong and huge network that is necessary for them to grow. This will not only expand the market, but also building and growing the network. When small forces create an alliance, they will no longer be small. They now have a power to achieve their common goals. Even more, they can develop high engagement with their audience through their brands.

An instructive example is a cooperation of small hotels in the world called "Small Luxury Hotels of The World" (SLH). This cooperation consists of more than 500 hotels in more than 80 countries

243. "Tourism Promotion and Marketing," accessed April 20, 2019, <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/tourism-promotion-marketing-57157.html>.

244. Luther Gordon Miller, "Small States In Transition – From Vulnerability To Competitiveness: Redefining Tourism as An Export And Development Opportunity."

245. "Boutique Hotels & Resorts | Small Luxury Hotels of the World | Small Luxury Hotels," accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.slh.com/>.

246. Debbi Kickham, "Small Luxury Hotels Of The World Is Just The Ticket," Forbes, accessed April 20, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/debbickickham/2018/11/19/small-luxury-hotels-of-the-world-is-just-the-ticket/>.

247. "How To Market A Small Boutique Hotel And Attract More Clients," The Experience Experts, February 16, 2016, <https://theexperienceexperts.com/market-small-boutique-hotel/>.

around the world from cutting-edge design hotels to historic country mansions and remote private islands.<sup>245</sup> Although all of the hotels are different, they share common characteristics: enviable locations, highest quality, personalized service and an authentic way to discover a destination.<sup>246</sup> SLH understood that it is challenging for small hotels to compete for business with big names in the industry. Instead of trying to fit into the world of big names, they embrace their size as a strength and use it as a point of joint promotion: they offer a unique, personalized experience that many travelers will never get at a chain hotel.<sup>247</sup>

As the awareness of sustainable development has been on the rise, more and more people are interested in contributing to preserve the environment and ensuring the economic sustainability. People's attention and willingness to participate in sustainable causes and movement can serve as great assets for a sustainable tourism campaign to be scaled-up and successful.

Participation in this context, will incorporate local knowledge and preferences into the decision-making processes of governments, private providers, and donor agencies.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, participation becomes self-initiated action or empowerment that will lead to more effective service delivery of the SDG campaign<sup>249</sup> and thus amplify this sustainable tourism initiative.

While this campaign serves many purposes such as economy and cultural exchanges for small states, in turn, it will also strengthen the notion of Estonia as a champion in innovation amongst countries in the world, and a leader amongst small states. Eventually, as the initiative is built-up, consolidated and consistently delivered, it will unleash the power of digital innovation to bring social benefits for small states and also become a platform for the voices of small states to be heard and amplified.

248. Ghazala Mansuri and Vijayendra Rao, "Why Does Participation Matter?," Policy Research Report, Localizing Development: Does Participation Work? (Washington DC: World Bank, November 2012), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11859>.  
249. Ibid.



# 04. | Area of Economy 4.2.

## **E-INVESTMENT PLATFORM**

Long Term - Hard

### **Setting the Scene**

Investment is one of the most important tools to stimulate economic growth, regardless of whether it comes in the form of direct investment or mergers and acquisitions, to name a few.<sup>250</sup> Investment flows bring new input of capital, knowledge, management experience and exchange of information. Different investors focus on different stages of a company, and different investees require varying amounts and types of investment (debt/equity)<sup>251</sup> both of which are crucial for the success of an investment.

One of the most important benefits investments can bring is its stimulation of entrepreneurship and innovation,<sup>252</sup> although how widespread, and accordingly, how investments are in achieving such benefits has not been conclusively determined. Notwithstanding such inconclusive evidence, Estonia has nevertheless embarked on and created a suitable legal and investment environment to ignite entrepreneurial activities. In order to begin to understand the success of Estonia, it is necessary to first understand what drives investors in the innovation “space”. Early stage investors primarily focus on investing in startups to look for high returns in the future either through the success of the startup company, or through selling it to other buyers.<sup>253</sup> This encourages companies and individuals to innovate constantly to provide products that are demanded by the market.

Known as the “Northern European hub for knowledge and digital business”, Estonia has developed a set of policies to support investment in Estonia, including the [investinestonia.com](https://investinestonia.com), which provides investors with a comprehensive overlook of the business environment in Estonia. The Estonian technology, pharmaceutical and biotech sectors provide great opportunity for foreign investors, with the well-established E-residency program as the policy support.<sup>254</sup> Compared to other developed countries, Estonia is one of the most investor friendly countries in the world.<sup>255</sup>

250. Borensztein, E., De Gregorio, J., & Lee, J. W. (1998). How does foreign direct investment affect economic growth?. *Journal of international Economics*, 45(1), 115-135.

251. The stages of startup funding rounds usually include concept state, seed stage, early stage, growth stage, and exit stage. Details could be found at <https://fundingsage.com/startup-funding-rounds-and-the-funding-life-cycle/>.

252. Massell, B. F. (1962). Investment, innovation, and growth. *Econometric: Journal of the Econometric Society*, 239-252.

253. USA Angel Investment Network. "Early Stage Investors." Angel Investment Network, USA. Accessed April 15, 2019. <https://www.angelinvestmentnetwork.us/early-stage-investors>.

254. Invest in Estonia, <https://investinestonia.com>, retrieved in 2019.

255. Santander databank, <https://en.portal.santandertrade.com/establish-overseas/estonia/investing?>, retrieved in 2019.

## Challenge

In small countries, both investors and investees are confronted with a set of special challenges. Startup companies have limited access to early stage investment due to the limited types of investment funds in small countries, as well as the amount such funds are willing to invest in small countries. Some startup companies in health tech community, an Estonian startup incubator, died because of lack of early stage investment.<sup>256</sup> According to the Startup Investment Report for Estonia, lack of funding is one of the main challenges among Estonia startups.<sup>257</sup> Another challenge arises from the lack of human capital. Startups in small states find it hard to hire all of the necessary talent domestically.<sup>258</sup>

The challenge for investors in small countries is also considerable. Investment funds from small states encounter difficulty to source good projects within their own countries because the relatively small number of startups. Compared to the US and Israel where the startup communities are big, it is harder to select promising startups if the choices are too limited. Currently, significant amount of investment in small countries is getting into real estate and resource development, while other sectors are hardly known by these investment firms.<sup>259</sup> However investing in projects in large countries means head-on competing with international big funds with much higher investment capacity.

## Opportunity

There is a need to provide information about opportunities in small countries and connect investors with startups to facilitate investment in small countries. As a promising example, Estonia created the website Startup Estonia.<sup>260</sup> The website currently lists more than 500 startup companies, and introduces the startup community and investment opportunities for investors with basic information of these companies. It builds up a foundation for further collaborations with foreign investment funds in small countries, and the method to present these startup companies to investors.

## Recommendation

A platform to accommodate startup companies and investors in small countries could be beneficial for entrepreneurs and investors and, accordingly, small countries' economy, by matching investors and startup companies in the different small countries. It will help Estonia and other small countries to combat the challenge of limited capital and human resources within their country.

256. Piret Hirv (Director of Health Tech Community), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team at Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

257. Startup Investment Report for Estonia. Report. Funderbeam. 2017.

258. Pipedrive, Health Tech Community, interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team at Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.

259. Hanlon, Joseph. "Mozambique: Another Norfund Fiasco as Matanuska Goes Bust." AllAfrica.com. April 01, 2018. Accessed April 10, 2019. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201803260872.html>.

260. <https://www.startupestonia.ee>

On this platform, companies in small countries can present their products and services, as well as the type of investment they need and the type of resources they seek. Investors could register on this platform to source good companies to invest in and people can register to offer their expertise for these companies. This platform will be promoted by Estonian government, and through investing summits and fora in the startup and investors community.

The platform could in the long term become an investor, entrepreneur and talent community. It will provide basic and necessary information and tools for investors and entrepreneurs to encourage further innovation and technology advancement in small countries. It will also help a government to formulate better investment policies by analyzing and taking into account the information from these communities.

#### Short-term:

1. Building upon the “Startup Estonia” website, the new platform should focus on connecting and gathering startups in small countries which is not limited to Estonia. This entails building up connections with incubators and startup communities in each small country, and introducing the companies to the platform for investment funds.

2. The platform will also need to increase its visibility among small countries. Through startup conferences in small countries, high level government meetings and investor summits, the platform will advertise itself to bring in more startups and funds, and increase its awareness among the startup and investor communities in small countries.

#### Medium -term:

1. The platform will focus on connecting startups and investment funds by improving the matching mechanism, providing capacity building services for startups, and enlarging the network.

2. The key is to maintain the relationship with investment funds and effectively prepare the startups for investors who are interested in different sectors and different stage of maturity. Thus in this stage, the platform will focus on developing capacity building training for startups and investment guide for investors.

3. The platform will develop online training materials available for registered companies on the platform, holding workshops and camps for startup leaders to share best practices.

4. The platform will also issue annual reports on the investment environment in small countries, collecting data from the startups and investment funds, to form a databank further to support both the investors and the startup companies.

Long-term:

1. The entrepreneurship development and investment platform will provide investment opportunities for investors and bring funds to the companies in small countries. With a large volume of projects and strong connections with funds, the platform will be able to create a community within small countries to promote entrepreneurship culture.
2. Joined by universities, other innovation communities, and governments, the platform will eventually activate the technology sector in small countries, and further contribute to the economic growth through better innovation in the startup companies. It will exceed the limit of a regional or domestic investment platform by providing a bigger pool for funds and companies with more diversities but similar challenges. It also won't be dominated by large funds like in a regional investment platform.

**Rationale**

Estonia has the acclaimed e-residency program to encourage establishing companies in Estonia. Startups have explicitly noted the benefits of starting a company in a small country like Estonia: the lean bureaucracy makes the process of establishing a new company and hiring process faster and easier.<sup>261</sup>

E-Investment will essentially help to ease the constraints of the limited resources for startups in small states, including lack of investment, human capital, and information. It will optimize the funds in small countries to locate and source promising companies. It will help to attract talents to work in small countries by creating a vibrant entrepreneurship culture in small countries. It will also create an information sharing system for funds and companies in small countries to eliminate the information asymmetry.

E-Investment will eventually help to promote the circulation of knowledge, and strengthen the bond among small countries in order to make them more economically independent. The connections created through investing can help the investors and startup companies to work together to combat the entry barrier in large countries, to better serve the economy among the small states through the sharing of information, resources, and human capital.

261. Pipedrive, Health Tech Community, interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team at Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019.



# 04.

## Area of Economy 4.3.

### FORESTI

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Long Term - Hard

#### Setting the Scene

Forests are one of the most important renewable resources and living environments in Estonia.: the country has an abundance of natural assets, with plentiful clean water, and forests covering half of the territory, making Estonia Europe’s fourth-most forested country. 40% of these forests are certified as organic.<sup>262</sup> Forests are important because they stabilize climate, regulate the water cycle, and provides habitat to thousands of life forms.<sup>263</sup>

Similarly, forests and the natural environment hold a similar significance for many other small countries, including Suriname and Gabon, 90% of whose territory is covered in tropical rainforests.<sup>264</sup> These countries’ economy, society, identity, and well-being depend on this vital resource. They thus have a key interest in maintaining and nurturing their “green gold”. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implicitly and explicitly recognize the importance of forests for development in SDG 2 on eliminating hunger, SDG 3 on global health, SDG 1 on eradicating poverty, SDG 15 on protecting biodiversity, and SDG 13 on climate action, among others.<sup>265</sup>

#### Challenge

At the same time, in spite of the high importance of forests, global forest loss has remained alarmingly high during the last decades.<sup>266</sup> The UN Forum on Forests noted in 2018 that forests and their “hidden harvest” of products, ecosystems and services — critical to the survival of the planet and its people — remained woefully underfunded and undervalued, even as States forged ahead to meet other environmental and climate goals.<sup>267</sup>

Forest and environmental management hinges largely on implementing sustainable practices and

262. "Estonia – Country of Organic Forests - Estonia." Estonia.ee. May 22, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2019. <https://estonia.ee/estonia-the-worlds-first-organic-country/>.

263. "Rivers in the Sky: How Deforestation Is Affecting Global Water Cycles." Yale E360. Accessed March 31, 2019.

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-deforestation-affecting-global-water-cycles-climate-change>.

264. "REDD Suriname." REDD Suriname | REDD. Accessed April 2, 2019. <https://www.surinameredd.org/en/reddplus-suriname/>.

265. "Forests and SDGs: Taking a Second Look." Forests and SDGs: Taking a Second Look | World Resources Institute. Accessed March 20, 2019.

<https://www.wri.org/blog/2017/09/forests-and-sdgs-taking-second-look>.

266. Heino, M., Kummu, M., Makkonen, M., Mulligan, M., Verburg, P. H., Jalava, M., & Räsänen, T. A. (2015). Forest Loss in Protected Areas and Intact Forest Landscapes: A Global Analysis. *PLoS one*, 10(10), e0138918

267. Despite Role for Planet, Humankind, Forests Undervalued, Inadequately Funded, Speakers Say, As Forum Concludes Second Day of Session | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations. Accessed April 2, 2019. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/envdev1849.doc.htm>.

enforcing existing legislation, while combating corruption and illicit activity in the sector. The efficient and sustainable management of such complex forest ecosystems is difficult and requires a solid and comprehensive information basis to support well informed management decisions. Gathering the necessary information can be an onerous task for small countries, whose resources are already strained.<sup>268</sup>

The efficient and sustainable management of complex and diverse forest ecosystems requires large amounts of high-quality forestry data. Big Data and technology such as drones are making it easier to gather and analyze data of global significance. Tropical deforestation is a global concern, a major source of carbon emissions and biodiversity loss and an issue related in complex ways to rural poverty.

Yet until recently, data on tropical deforestation were spotty, inconsistent among countries, and woefully outdated. Remote sensing can track program impacts on agriculture, water use, deforestation reduction, or air pollution. Ground sensors can track the sustainability of infrastructure in remote and conflict-affected areas. These systems offer rich, representative, actionable real-time information.<sup>269</sup>

### **Recommendation**

The example of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) has shown how powerful collective lobbying by small countries on specific issues as complex as climate change can be. Small states could lead on environmental policy innovation with fresh perspectives. As a small state, Estonia is ideally positioned to advance technology-enhanced protection of the natural environment and forests in particular: the country combines a unique mix of a strong relationship with its forests and organic way of life, while at the same time being a smart IT-country with e-state, e-Residency and start-up culture. These two sides — natural and innovative — are a powerful match that could be employed in a highly effective way to create a global network of small states to support each other and provide expertise in better managing forest resources.

Estonia should therefore, as part of FORTIS, establish an “applied working group” ForESTI, i.e. a group focused on implementation and practical cooperation, that collaborate to develop and apply technology to protect their forest resources, lobby effectively on international fora for greater implementation of forest-related SDGs and promote climate awareness among its population in collaboration with local startups and civil society groups. ForESTI should adhere to the key principles of e-Estonia, i.e. decentralization, interconnectivity, open platform, open source, and

268. Haas, Arend De, African Conservation Foundation, and Institute of Biodiversity. “Technology and Big Data Are Helping Cameroonians Protect Their Forests.” The Conversation. September 18, 2018. Accessed April 2, 2019. <https://theconversation.com/technology-and-big-data-are-helping-cameroonians-protect-their-forests-75234>.

269. “World Bank Group. 2016. World Development Report 2016 : Digital Dividends. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23347> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.”

open-ended process. The latter means that it is a continuous project to keep growing and improving organically.

### Short-term

1. Analyze and identify a group of like-minded states that a) have similar environmental/forest assets as Estonia and for which protection of forests and environment is a strategic priority, b) already have established a working relationship with Estonia through other platforms, and c) include both global North and South countries
2. Use UNGA to convene a first meeting of this core group to identify priorities and strategize on structure, timeframes and partnerships
3. In Estonia, establish a Working Group between the relevant (local and national) government entities, environmental civil society organizations and start-ups to develop actions plans for greater cooperation between like-minded entities in partner countries, technology development and further establishing Tallinn as a think hub for Greentech.

### Medium-term

1. Coordinate to lobby international fora on environmental issues, both UN and non-UN for greater implementation of forest-related SDGs
2. Use different ECOSOC expert groups and meetings to liaise with other small countries on implementation of specific SDGs, and liaise with civil society groups across countries

### Long-term

1. Use side events to international environment-related conferences to distribute knowledge and experiences gathered from collaboration between small states.

## **Rationale**

Estonia has experience using technology, remote sensing, and satellite data to support the management of its forests and agriculture. Farmers in Estonia have said that e-services have helped them to save a lot of time, made communication with the government more accessible and easier and have reduced possible errors.<sup>270</sup>

Among those, Geographical Information Applications, via GIS systems, are an example that is easily transferable to other areas such as forest management. Estonia's X-Road makes all systems

270. Kalvet T, Tiits M, Hinsberg H. *E-teenuste kasutamise tulemuslikkus ja mõju*. Tallinn: Balti Uuringute Instituut ja Poliitikauuringute Keskus Praxis (2013). Available from: [http://www.praxis.ee/fileadmin/tarmo/Projektid/Valitsemine\\_ja\\_kodanike%C3%BChiskond/E-teenuste\\_kasutamise\\_tulemuslikkus\\_ja\\_moju.pdf](http://www.praxis.ee/fileadmin/tarmo/Projektid/Valitsemine_ja_kodanike%C3%BChiskond/E-teenuste_kasutamise_tulemuslikkus_ja_moju.pdf)

interconnectable and easily combinable via application programming interface (APIs). For example, as the databases of Estonian Land Board, E-Land Register, and Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board are interconnected, it is easy to find lots of information about any location in Estonian mainland, such as register number, intended land use, protected area restrictions, land owner, land user, etc. These data are open and accessible to the public, as the trust and security is assured by access with e-ID.

Additionally, the GPS technology enables to track the location and movement of mobile machinery, so it is possible to gain full information about activities that are allowed and carried out in this location<sup>271</sup> – an important insight for forest management, detection of illegal logging and protection of wildlife. Estonia has moreover proven its commitment to increasing environmental awareness and protection by chairing the UN Environmental Protection Agency (UNEP) 2018.

Nevertheless, the main question is, how to implement digital technologies, and use information produced in the forest management in a most efficient way. Paradoxically, while there are more and more data available, there are fewer and fewer resources (including management and workforce) to process these data, often because of tense economic resources. Solution could be provided by proper guidance and advisory services, but also by using DSS (decision support systems), which would liberate those in charge of protecting forests from resource consuming data processing.

Moreover, where Estonia lacks expertise, it could partner with organizations such as Global Forest Watch (GFW), an online platform that provides data and tools for monitoring forests, to fill data gaps. By harnessing cutting-edge technology, GFW allows anyone to access near real-time information about where and how forests are changing around the world.<sup>272</sup>

Estonia can also effectively collaborate with its innovative and resourceful start-up community. Tallinn is already considered a center for CleanTech/eco-innovation.<sup>273</sup> According to the assessment of the European Commission, the area of eco-innovation has also developed rapidly in Estonia. This area includes a strong start-up company culture and support structures offering start-up assistance. In addition, universities, the public sector, and enterprises are cooperating much more efficiently in the area of eco-innovation. Start-ups huge source of economic activity Estonia: there are currently

271. Kärner, and Ene. "The Future of Agriculture Is Digital: Showcasing E-Estonia." *Frontiers*. August 30, 2017. Accessed April 10, 2019.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2017.00151/full#B2>.

272. Institute, World Resources. "Global Forest Watch." Oops, Your Browser Isn't Supported. Accessed March 30, 2019. <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/about>.

273. "GreenEST Summit 2018: Future for Buildings." SA Tallinna Teaduspark Tehnopol. Accessed April 2, 2019.

<https://www.tehnopol.ee/en/event/greenest-summit-2018-future-for-buildings/>.

274. "Estonia." ClimateLaunchpad. Accessed April 5, 2019. <https://climatlanchpad.org/countries/estonia/>.

275. "Home." Cities. Accessed April 5, 2019. <https://climathon.climate-kic.org/en/tallinn>.

276. European Commission 2018, s. above



around 550 startups in Estonia from a variety of sectors ranging from Fintech to Greentech and beyond. Estonia has also hosted the world's largest green business ideas competition, ClimateLaunchpad,<sup>274</sup> as well as the Climathon.<sup>275</sup>

All of this helps build communities, not only locally within each city, but a global movement of change agents. These groupings learn from each other, share ideas, and work together to come up with innovative solutions to climate challenges.

Climate awareness and Greentech are areas, which will take center stage in both the short- and medium term: as noted by the European Commission, eco-innovation will be one of the hottest topics in the next few years and not just in Estonia. In order to raise the quality of life of our people and the environment, current dogmas and habits must be turned upside down and new ideas planted.<sup>276</sup>

Estonia's advantage is that as a small country it does things differently – in a caring and sustainable manner. The right kind of decisions on the national and individual level will help maintain the valuable things in Estonia which have disappeared in many countries or which countries are really struggling to restore.



Where bright ideas meet a can-do spirit.





Education, as recognized under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, plays a foundational role in the Agenda 2030 and is a prerequisite for many other SDGs to be achieved.<sup>277</sup> In addition to serving as the focus for SDG 4, education directly contributes to the goals addressing poverty reduction and reduced inequalities, health and nutrition, economic growth and labor market opportunities, as well as peacebuilding and the promotion of democratic institutions.<sup>278</sup>

Education systems are a necessary building-block of well-functioning, healthy and peaceful societies. Through a forward-looking education system, Estonia has been able to lay the ground for an entire society to harness the digital age. Specifically, Estonia focused on providing students with computers already in the late 1990s, which has been equipping Estonian students with the hard skills necessary to advance in the digital age.<sup>279</sup> This bold investment ran counter to common educational practices of the time. Still, many communities in small states lag in basic education. Now, through intelligent design, education systems can be tailored at both lower costs and increase knowledge-transfer in relevant areas.

Although technological advances have created new methods of knowledge-transfer from the early computer systems that were first employed in the Estonian education system, Estonia remains an early adopter of many initiatives as well as an innovator in the area. These successes provide hope to other small states that are looking to overcome development and resource inequality. Small states with aspirations of digital education can benefit from the lessons learned by Estonian leaders and the systems that they utilize.

277 Education - United Nations Sustainable Development, "United Nations, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>.

278 Ibid.

279 Kristina Reinsalu, "The Estonian Tiger Leap from Post-Communism to the Information Society: From Policy to Practice," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, accessed April 11, 2019, [https://www.academia.edu/4494686/The\\_Estonian\\_Tiger\\_Leap\\_from\\_Post-Communism\\_to\\_the\\_Information\\_Society\\_From\\_Policy\\_to\\_Practice](https://www.academia.edu/4494686/The_Estonian_Tiger_Leap_from_Post-Communism_to_the_Information_Society_From_Policy_to_Practice).<sup>280</sup> Global Digital Report, "Digital in 2019," We Are Social, n.d., 2019. Web. <https://wearesocial.com/global-digital-report-2019>.

281 Ibid.

282 Bruno L  t   and Peter Chase, "Shaping Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace," The German Marshall Fund of the United States and Microsoft, 2018. <https://nato-engages.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Shaping-Responsible-State-Behavior-in-Cyberspace.pdf>



# 05. | Area of Education 5.1.

## CYBER HYGIENE FOR SMALL STATES

Short Term - Easy

### Setting the Scene

The Global Digital 2019 report reveals that Internet usage is growing by an average of over one million new users added to the global community on a daily basis.<sup>280</sup> According to the report, 45% of the world's population are now social media users—and, needless to add, in the global digital age of Internet 2.0, the 3.5 billion users are no longer constrained to big and developed countries, but increasingly accessing the World Wide Web from small and developing states.<sup>281</sup> However, while both small and developing states are embracing the Internet and the wealth of information that the medium has to offer, privacy issues, hacking and other negative aspects linked with a lack of responsible cyber hygiene continue to permeate the cyberspace.<sup>282</sup>

The national and economic security of small states depends on the reliable functioning of critical infrastructure in both the private and public sectors and their increased cyber resiliency.<sup>283</sup> One of the fundamentals of cyber and information security is then cyber hygiene. Cyber hygiene as a concept is comprised of practices and actual steps that users of the Internet of Things must follow in order to successfully maintain system safety and health, all the while improving online security against common threats and vulnerabilities.<sup>284</sup>

In 2017, the Information System Authority of the Republic of Estonia (RIA) launched a new cyber hygiene training platform specifically targeting the Estonian civil servants to test and improve their understanding of current and emerging cyber threats in the digital age. The former Director General of RIA and current Secretary of State of Estonia, Taimar Peterkop, notes that “The biggest threat in the cyberspace is the user behavior, [and therefore,] a person in front of the screen should understand risks related to negligent actions.”<sup>285</sup> Bearing in mind the escalating and intensifying attacks in cyberspace, Secretary of State Peterkop emphasizes that “it is imperative that we improve cyber hygiene awareness of Estonian public officials.”<sup>286</sup> This is not only relevant for Estonian civil servants but also public officials and critical infrastructure companies globally, including in other small states.<sup>287</sup>

283 Burton, Joe. "Small States and Cyber Security." *Political Science* 65, no. 2 (2013): 216-38. 284 Core Principles of Cyber Hygiene in a World of Cloud and Mobility, VMware, August 2017. <https://www.vmware.com/content/dam/digitalmarketing/vmware/en/pdf/products/vmware-core-principles-cyber-hygiene-whitepaper.pdf>.

284 Core Principles of Cyber Hygiene in a World of Cloud and Mobility, VMware, August 2017.

285 Taimar Peterkop (former Director General of RIA and current Secretary of State of Estonia), interviewed by Columbia University Capstone Team in Tallinn, Estonia, March 2019; "Estonia

Implements CybExer Hygiene e-Learning Course to All Civil Servants, CybExer, May 18, 2017. <https://cybexer.com/online-training-increases-awareness-of-public-officials-regarding-cyber-hygiene/>.

286 Ibid.

287 Joe Burton, "Small states and cyber security: The case of New Zealand," *Political Science Journal*, vol. 65, no. 2 (May 2017): 216-238. 288 Niels Nagelhus Schia, "The Cyber Frontier and Digital Pitfalls in the Global South," *Third World Quarterly* 39:5 (2018): pp. 821-837; Ullia Gjeset Schjolberg, "Poor countries are more vulnerable to cyber attacks," *ScienceNordic*, January 30, 2018. Web. <http://sciencenordic.com/poor-countries-are-more-vulnerable-cyber-attacks>.

## Challenge

In the digital age, small states are among the most susceptible targets for cyber criminals. Many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals rest upon pillars linked to digital technology, and the rapid digitalization of many developing countries has, in many aspects, proven to have a positive impact, most notably, on their economic development.

However, according to Niels Nagelhus Schia, Senior Research Fellow at NUPI in Oslo, Norway, who specializes in organizational culture within international organizations and peace building, “technological developments are taking place at high speed, whereas the political processes for building resources, developing legislation and establishing standards on the cyber-field take time.”<sup>288</sup>

Schia therefore argues that the end result is a “hollow digitalization” that fails to take into account the possible negative aspects, such as increased vulnerabilities, accompanying technological advancement.<sup>289</sup> The majority of users in small countries remain unaware of cyber related risks and seemingly harmless acts, such as clicking on a link on which they shouldn’t be accessing and thus potentially infecting the device with malware, which continues to be one of the most widespread risk vectors that online criminals use in cyber-related attacks.<sup>290</sup>

## Recommendation

While predicting cyber attacks and other threats in the domain is challenging, preventing them is all the more feasible with consistent and sound cyber hygiene practices that ultimately become part of the “cyber culture” of a nation. Estonia, a European thought leader in digitalization, has successfully used its digital prowess not only for commercial purposes but also for the public good. Cultivating cyber health at the grassroots level and making it an organic part of the modern Estonian culture is just one of the ways that this small state has been able to showcase its strength and advancement in the digital arena.

Since its inception in 2017, CybExer Technologies, an Estonian company with international acclaim, has been conducting cyber-hygiene trainings based on micro-learning techniques, adaptive learning methods, cultural aspects, among others, and offering courses, which have now been translated into eleven languages.

289 “Cybersecurity: Security Risks and Solutions in the Digital Transformation Age.” I. Accessed May 02, 2019. <https://www.i-scoop.eu/cyber-security-cyber-risks-dx/>.

290 “Cyber Hygiene Behavior Needs Development and Better Advising, Research in Estonia, November 29, 2018. Web. <http://researchinestonia.eu/2018/11/29/cyber-hygiene-behaviour-needs-development-and-better-advising/>.

The courses are aimed at changing overall user attitude and mindset, and thus impacting human risk behavior in the digital domain. To this end, the company works with both private and government sectors. By joining forces with RIA, CybExer has since been offering a popular Cyber Hygiene e-Learning Course—an interactive program that consists of a training module and two separate test modules specifically targeting human risk behavior in cyberspace, addressing specific concerns and threats associated with three categories of staff members, including managers, specialists and regular users.

That same year, in collaboration with CybExer Technologies and another Estonian-based BHC Laboratory, the Estonian Business School (EBS) added “cyber hygiene” to its curriculum for the MBA in Digital Society, educating future managers and leaders of tomorrow.<sup>291</sup>

A similar approach could be replicated as an exemplary model with Estonia’s guidance and leadership in other small states and small state institutions through the creation and inclusion of a “cyber hygiene” course as part of other MBA curricula at universities in small states.

As cybersecurity awareness and data protection in the cyberspace are increasingly important goals in the digital era, small states should focus on raising awareness and calling for responsible behavior in the domain through a variety of educational campaigns and initiatives training future leaders of small countries.

Estonia has demonstrated that one of the keys to a successful e-revolution is cooperation and mutual reciprocity. Therefore, a modest financial support for developing training programs for both public and private sectors can serve as a unique public-private partnership (PPP) program for small states led by Estonia.

As a small state leader in the digital domain, Estonia can further cultivate and strengthen its “digital pioneer” status and reputation among small countries by identifying and supporting a select group of small countries through PPP programs or alternatively through the Global Trust Fund<sup>292</sup> by organizing training sessions on cybersecurity for small state civil servants in partnership with CybExer and other local cybersecurity companies, and thus continue to promote cyber hygiene not only locally but also globally.

<sup>291</sup> “How Estonia uses cyber hygiene as the cornerstone of cyber security,” *Invest in Estonia*, June 2018. Web. <https://investinestonia.com/how-estonia-uses-cyber-hygiene-as-the-cornerstone-of-cyber-security/>.

<sup>292</sup> In 2018, the Estonia contributed EUR 20,000 through the Global Trust Fund to help government officials from developing countries gain a better understanding of WTO agreements, as well as improve their negotiating skills. For more, please see: “Estonia donates EUR 20,000 to help developing countries fully participate in global trade,” *World Trade Organization*, February 8, 2018. Web. [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/pres18\\_e/pr817\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres18_e/pr817_e.htm).

Short-term:

1. Cultivate funding opportunities through private-public partnerships and via the Global Trust Fund for Digital Development.

Medium-term::

1. Create and include a “cyber hygiene” course as part of small state high schools and MBA curricula.
2. Organize training sessions on cybersecurity for small state civil servants in partnership with CybExer and other local Estonian cybersecurity companies, and promote cyber hygiene not only locally but also globally.

**Rationale**

Small states are increasingly vulnerable and frequently prone to cyber attacks. However, prescribing a “one size fits all” solution to address cyber threats for every small country that otherwise possesses a distinct culture and political or socio-economic reality is simply unfeasible.

Due to a small size of population, limited domestic technological capability, human resource capacity, and so on, funding cybersecurity and cyber training programs at the grassroots level with very limited financial resources and no cyber culture to speak of is extremely challenging for many small and developing states.

This is an area where Estonia has not only demonstrated its leadership following the 2007 cyber attacks<sup>293</sup> conducted by its Eastern neighbor, but what is more, it has also managed to integrate cyber hygiene into the Estonian digital culture as a cornerstone of its cybersecurity.<sup>294</sup>

293 Emily Tamkin, “10 Years After the Landmark Attack on Estonia, Is the World Better Prepared for Cyber Threats?” *Foreign Policy*, April 27, 2017. Web. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/27/10-years-after-the-landmark-attack-on-estonia-is-the-world-better-prepared-for-cyber-threats/>.

294 Damien McGuinness, “How a cyber attack transformed Estonia,” *BBC*, April 27, 2017. Web. <https://www.bbc.com/news/39655415>.



# 05. | Area of Education 5.2.

## E-EDUCATION

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Medium Term - Somewhat Hard

### Setting the Scene

Development Program (UNDP) has included education among the SDGs, aimed at “building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.”<sup>295</sup> For example, girls are the most at-risk group of children worldwide of under-education. Many remote regions of the world require specific skills to survive on day-to-day basis.<sup>296</sup> In these environments, women bear a larger share of the burden in taking care of the home and the sick.<sup>297</sup>

Beginning in the 1990s, Estonia focused its resources on providing students access to information via the Internet at school and programming skills through Tiigrihüpe or Tiger Leap.<sup>298</sup> This Estonian program evolved from a youth-focused education program to include life-learning methodology for adults.

These new tools provide the platform for Estonians to navigate the evolving Estonian economy and emerging issues. Transitioning from youth education to youth and adult learning grants Estonia a vibrant and dynamic future.<sup>299</sup>

Today, a number of major academic institutions around the world are offering online courses for free to educate the workforce of the future. The value of these courses does not solely lie in the knowledge attained by the students. Crucially, online programs offer real value for the institutions that conduct the courses: institutions learn about specific subjects and maximize teaching techniques through the massive amount of data created in these courses by the students.<sup>300</sup>

Thus the value of this type of education platform becomes a two-way process for those learning and for those organizing the platform which, in turn, continues to drive economic progress for all stakeholders.

295" Goal 4: Quality Education," *UNDP*, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-4-quality-education.html#targets>.

296 Sean Coughlan, "10 Toughest Places for Girls to Go to School," *BBC News*, October 11, 2017, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-41558486>.

297 American Psychological Association, , accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.apa.org/international/pi/2009/07/un-gender>.

298 Kristina Reinsalu, "The Estonian Tiger Leap from Post-Communism to the Information Society: From Policy to Practice," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, accessed April 11, 2019, [https://www.academia.edu/4494686/The\\_Estonian\\_Tiger\\_Leap\\_from\\_Post-Communism\\_to\\_the\\_Information\\_Society\\_From\\_Policy\\_to\\_Practice](https://www.academia.edu/4494686/The_Estonian_Tiger_Leap_from_Post-Communism_to_the_Information_Society_From_Policy_to_Practice).

299 Ibid.

300 Tamar Lewin, "Harvard and M.I.T. Offer Free Online Courses," *New York Times*, May 2, 2012, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/03/education/harvard-and-mit-team-up-to-offer-free-online-courses.html>.

Part of the focus on education is providing people with the means to meet current employment goals. Estonia is in need of thousands of software developer jobs.<sup>301</sup> The Estonian government is focused on helping provide tech companies with the human capital necessary to drive their continued innovation by focusing on coding and other tech related skills in schools.

Programs that speed up or render the process of applying for and receiving a visa for future employees simpler, as well as providing offsets to financial cost associated with moving to Estonia are just some of the efforts that the Estonian government currently participates in. This creates goodwill with both the companies and the employees that are hired through the quality experience that these employees share with their networks throughout the world.

## **Challenge**

Due to isolated cultural and geographic circumstances, Estonia and other small states face educational challenges that are unique and at the same time connected to the broader global digital revolution.

Developing regions' struggle with equipping their youth with globally relevant skills while maintaining regionally specific skills that are essential to adapt to day-to-day necessities in the current economic situations.<sup>302</sup> Even with solid youth education programs in place, the pace of innovation necessitates that people will have to continue to update their skills and knowledge throughout their lives to stay a productive member of society.

## **Recommendation**

Estonia emphasizes SDG #4 of the UNDP on digitalization processes that will allow knowledge transfer to the most remote regions of small states, offering them the same ability to leapfrog technological advances in education.

301 Kalev Aasmae, "More Students, Overseas Skills Can't Solve Our Coding Crisis: So Here's Estonia's Fix," *ZDNet*, October 20, 2016, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.zdnet.com/article/more-students-overseas-workers-cant-solve-our-coding-crisis-so-heres-estonias-solution/>.

302 PhineasJFR, "10 Barriers to Education Around the World." *Global Citizen*. Accessed May 4, 2019. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-barriers-to-education-around-the-world-2/>.

### Short-term:

1. Propose to expand the UNDP initiative from a focus on physical spaces to to include digitalization. Upgrade education facilities with computer systems and digital learning platforms to enable every child, including those with disabilities, gender-sensitives with a safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environment irrespective of their physical location or ability to attend daily classes.

### Medium-term:

1. Identify a portion of tax resources raised by foreign employees in Estonia and allocate funds to target small state education systems providing computers and Internet to the future coders of Estonia that currently live in small states.
2. Allow start-ups to co-sponsor these schools like companies sponsor airport terminals in Tallinn to develop future developers with this seed money from the government. Focus on small states with the human capital capable of tech-development work for Estonian companies in the next 3-5 years.

### Long term:

1. Develop a small state life-learning online education system that co-ops the lessons of online course providers like EdX.<sup>303</sup> While focusing on regional issues within the online education system, this will harness the power of every student in the FORTIS network to solve regional concerns, unleashing the imaginations of every child as well as the wisdom of the elderly. Focus online education platform for small states on girls and regional issues from health to economic development.
2. Provide STEAM-focused curricula that intertwine regional education focuses with tech skills that will offer a path out of poverty. Providing education that will dramatically affect students in the near and long term.

## **Rationale**

By focusing on digital education, Estonia can illuminate the path forward for other small states that are faced with the same problems that Estonia was able to overcome. The advantage small states possess is their people by harnessing every student in the educational pipeline to solve current issues and future issues.

303 "Edx", Edx, Last modified 2019, <https://www.edx.org/>.

Small states can create effective two-way communication platforms that advance the states from within. Not only could states glean innovative solutions from students, but states could also understand how the general population feels about certain issues through their children and life-learners.

Structuring the education on current issues through essays and other problem-solving methods could provide substantial data into how students view problems and their solutions.

Estonia currently relies on the human capital of many other states. By redirecting a small portion of the tax revenue generated by those foreign tech workers towards education programs for designated small states with the possibility of providing future human capital to Estonia, markets of goodwill would be established seeding the next generations of foreign developers that will drive the Estonian economy into the 2020s and 2030s.

This will also create buzz about Estonia with parents who may be developers as well as the future developers in the schools who will move to Estonia and keep the digital revolution alive.





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# PILLAR C.

## MESSAGING: BRANDING

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In today's world, where the market has become an area that is constantly contested, it is critical for an organization to stand apart. To position and differentiate FORTIS amidst other multilateral organizations, it needs to present its unique value proposition to gain recognition and influence from the international community, and thus bring greater benefits to its members,<sup>304</sup> for instance by building a good reputation and attracting companies, trade, export, investment and tourism.<sup>305</sup> A robust branding strategy, in which the organization is identified and marketed, plays therefore a key role to achieve this.<sup>306</sup>

For small states, nation branding is one way to get the countries to be "involved in the global conversation,"<sup>370</sup> because it highlights their strengths and competitive advantages.<sup>308</sup> The rise of new media and new technology provides them with more creative ways to broadcast their strengths.<sup>309</sup>

Collaborative branding campaigns or co-branding <sup>310</sup> of small states through FORTIS can serve as a stage to shape their global image and influence the international community's perception of their countries, which, in turn, can be converted into economic opportunities.<sup>311</sup>

The members of FORTIS will need to develop consensus on the key messages of this cooperation and ensure that they represent what they view as their "the common purpose."<sup>312</sup> In so doing, FORTIS competencies and characteristics as well as how the countries would like to be perceived in terms of personality and image will be considered.<sup>313</sup>

There are two key questions that determine FORTIS' brand objective: what do small states want the FORTIS brand to do for them? And what do they want the international community to know and say about the platform?

304 "Why Nation Branding Is Important for Tourism? | Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union," accessed April 15, 2019, <http://www.aalep.eu/why-na>

305 "Why Countries Need to Sell Themselves," US News & World Report, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2016-01-20/why-countries-need-to-sell-themselves>.

306 "What Is Branding? - Define Branding," Brick Marketing - SEO Marketing Solutions Company, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.brickmarketing.com/define-branding.htm>.

308 Ibid. on Branding Explained," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/nation-branding-explained>.

309 Ibid.

310 Will Kenton. "Co-Branding." Investopedia. accessed April 18, 2019, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/cobranding.asp>.

311 "Why Countries Need to Sell Themselves."

312 "Nation Branding Explained."

313. Laura Lake, "How to Define Objectives and Audience for an Effective Brand Strategy," The Balance Small Business, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/determining-your-brand-s-objectives-2294839>

Ultimately, the impression FORTIS makes and the words its members, other countries, people and companies use to describe it, constitute the fundamental framework of its brand.<sup>314</sup>

Therefore, to build credibility with a strong brand and have more influence in the international sphere, FORTIS needs to place itself at the core of the international community's mind.<sup>315</sup> using three strategies: segmentation, differentiation, and positioning.

## Objective

Based on our in-depth analysis through desk and field research, as well as interviews with some Permanent Representatives of small states to the UN, we are confident to conclude that there is a need and demand for the platform to effectively amplify the voices of small states.

In support of this mission, this report recommends FORTIS to pursue the following objectives to enhance its brand:

- Improve small states' engagement in the international community
- Increase the exposure of small states through the website, mobile apps, and other online platforms
- Earn international acknowledgment

through involvements in multilateral organizations.

## Target Audience and Segmentation

Based on FORTIS' objectives as set out above, this report considers the following audience segmentation as conducive to building FORTIS' brand:

### Internal Audience:

Small states, both members and non-members of FORTIS

Citizens of small states

Small state digital start-ups and companies

Small state NGOs and civil society

### External Audience:

Multilateral organizations

Other small states alliances, such as FOSS or AOSIS

International digital startups and companies

Governments of non-small states

International NGOs and civil society

## Differentiation and Offered Values

Differentiation in the context of FORTIS means devising strategies how FORTIS can establish a unique identity that ensure that its mission and objective are immediately associated with its

<sup>314</sup> Lake.  
<sup>315</sup> Lake.

name.<sup>316</sup> FORTIS has a unique set of strengths and value propositions that distinguish the organization in the international realm:

- Flexibility and agility to overcome constraints
- Implementation-focused collaboration
- Diversity and vibrant cultures offered by small states
- The inclusiveness that embraces all of the small states' unique values and transcends interests and differences of all nations

### Positioning Statement

A strong and memorable positioning statement will help FORTIS influence its audience so that they know and remember FORTIS.<sup>317</sup> In line with the values discussed above, FORTIS can consider to position itself as **small state kinship that is agile towards challenges and whose voice is valuable and important for the international community.**

### Content of Branding

Short term: identify unique points in small countries in FORTIS

The success of FORTIS hinges on the ability of the platform to successfully amplify the voices of its member states, using its branding. To this end, each policy area has been formulated based on the interests of those small states that have a strong connection with. By identifying

the unique strengths in each small country, FORTIS can better connect the small countries with similar appeal and assets to make them a single and strong voice in the international community.

Small states have rich assets to brand themselves with their unique selling points, and FORTIS will become a platform to consolidate these selling points. For example, Estonia has its traditional song festival since 1869. Pacific Ocean countries have rich marine sceneries and African small countries have tremendous wildlife resources, to mention but a few.

Some of the small countries have successfully branded their unique assets. Austria is famous for its well-known classical music and their composers, and Vienna, its capital, has been ranked as "The World's Most Livable City".<sup>319</sup>

By successfully identifying their unique assets and features, some small countries can group together and make themselves different from larger or other more well known countries, and send a strong message around this core and unique asset.

Medium term: build up a cohesive story to brand FORTIS

A story with a strong theme is more effective in terms of marketing.<sup>320</sup> It gives the audience a clear message on what the story is about,

<sup>316</sup> Bengt Anderson, "Positioning: The Art of Being First" (The Tomorrow Group Ltd, 2003).

<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> The 12th Estonian youth song and dance celebration Archived 6 July 2017 at the Wayback Machine. Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation.

<sup>319</sup> Ebeling, Paul. "Vienna, Austria: The World's Most Livable City." Live Trading News. March 31, 2019. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://www.livetradingnews.com/vienna-austria-the-worlds-most-livable-city-129764.html#.XLU6KC-ZPVo>.

<sup>320</sup> Woodside, Arch G., Suresh Sood, and Kenneth E. Miller. "When consumers and brands talk: Storytelling theory and research in psychology and marketing." *Psychology & Marketing* 25, no. 2 (2008): 97-145.



making the effect of the message more powerful. If the logic and emotional elements of the story are simple, concise and cohesive, they will have a longer lasting impact on the receivers compared to a story that tries to incorporate too much information.<sup>321</sup>

FORTIS has a natural advantage to tell a cohesive story. Each individual country already has a number of stories to tell. As an organization, they can choose those stories that best tell their story as a collective based on their common assets or interests.

AOSIS, as will be seen below, has developed a memorable story to tell about the environmental issue they care about. In their story, they only focus on three elements: the severe impact of global warming, the at stake marine resources in their countries, and the action to call for changes.<sup>322</sup>

For FORTIS to advertise themselves, the story has to be straightforward, emotionally engaging, and related to a collective image. Under each policy area, the story has to strongly connect the countries involved in. For example, global e-governance can develop a story based on a citizen and how her life would be impacted in different scenarios with the development of e-governance globally.

This story could give a straightforward idea about the benefits of e-governance by using a specific example, and by setting the background in different countries it helps to demonstrate the importance of cooperation between countries.

#### Long term: exploit the strong national identity and pride in small countries

Small countries are usually more culturally homogeneous compared to big countries.<sup>323</sup> This helps small states to form a strong national identity.<sup>324</sup> This strong identity and pride enable small countries to have institutional advantages, which would help small countries to coordinate policies for “cooperation, flexible maneuvering, and concerted state action in the national interest.”

By using the strong national identity and pride in small countries, countries can brand themselves more effectively with their concerted campaign. Finland successfully advertised their country through the campaign “rent a Finn”.<sup>326</sup> This program provides a free summer vacation for winning contests to come to Finland and live with the “happy Finns”.

The strong pride of being the “happiest people” in the world as Finns becomes a good way to call for the Finns to participate the branding process, but also the pride itself becomes the

321. Pulizzi, Joe. "The rise of storytelling as the new marketing." *Publishing research quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2012): 116-123.

322. A lot of videos produced by Oceanian countries use stories with these three elements, and have produced a very moving and effective impact. See <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/sinking-civilisations-a-documentary-film#/> as one of a good example.

323. Katzenstein, Peter J., ed. *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*. Columbia University Press, 1996.

324. Gellner, Ernest, and John Breuilly. *Nations and nationalism*. Vol. 1. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983.

325. This theory is well explained in Campbell, John L., and John A. Hall. "National identity and the political economy of small states." *Review of international political economy* 16, no. 4 (2009): 547-572.

326. Pereira, Alyssa. "The 'happiest Country in the World,' Finland, Is Offering a Handful of Free Summer Vacations." *Houston Chronicle*. March 28, 2019. Accessed April 16, 2019. <https://www.chron.com/travel/article/finland-travel-guide-free-trips-contest-flights-13721595.php>.

theme of the branding content to strengthen the national image.

### **Channel of Branding**

Short term: develop FORTIS' own channel to amplify its voice

FORTIS can effectively brand small countries. Because the participants on the platform will all be small countries, they understand better the challenges shared within these countries, and the barrier set by the large countries outside. The platforms can focus on different issues to have conversations among small countries to exchange information and opinion, and find the common ground and form unified action when coming to the international stage.

FORTIS can also use the internet to call for actions. Given the low cost and tremendous number of users on the internet, FORTIS can use internet effectively to share the updates about their work, bring up potential policy cooperation plans, and generate an international branding network.

FORTIS could set up an online media center to coordinate media publication related to each policy area and thus reach more people. FORTIS can regularly publish relevant articles and

reports on its website, and update the progress of ongoing discussions through news conference. By developing its own media and publication department, FORTIS can become an opinion leader in the international community and sets its authority in each policy area.

Medium term: make the best use of the current international platforms

Small states have been using international organizations and fora as one of the most important channels to communicate and advocate. The UN General Assembly, as one of the most influential and inclusive platforms, has been a place for small states to push forward their agenda.<sup>327</sup> Small states have been actively participating in other regional organizations as well. The African Union and Association of Southeast Asian Nations accommodate several small states to brand their countries. The Davos Forum has not only amplified the voice of Switzerland, but also brought in ideas from other small countries.<sup>328</sup>

However, because these platforms are usually dominated by large countries, small states need to work together to form a unified voice in these organizations. For example, under FOSS, small countries in the UN can exchange information on different issues before the official discussion

<sup>327</sup>. FOSS, as introduced in previous sections, has been an active informal group for small countries in UNGA.

<sup>328</sup>. There are 55 states in the African Union and more than there are more than 20 small states. Four out of ten member countries in ASEAN are small countries. Participants in Davos come from different small countries including Scandinavian countries, Oceanian countries, etc.

starts, and it has helped small states to come together to talk with one voice.

Thus FORTIS should remain active to participate in these international platforms by sharing information, communicating policy interests and forming cooperation in FORTIS. The output from FORTIS could help small states to more effectively pursue their interests in other international platforms by using a unified voice.

With FORTIS, small states can lead some of the most urgent and frontier issues in other international platforms. For example, Oceania countries have been leading the climate change issues in the climate change summits and conferences.<sup>329</sup> Estonia has been actively advocated for cyber security in the UN as one of the leading countries.<sup>330</sup> These urgent issues may not be the top priority for big countries in these major international platforms, but it concerns the small countries, and they can lead and push forward their agenda on these topics.

#### Long term: develop ambassadors and negotiators for each policy area and program

FORTIS can effectively use brand ambassadors to amplify its voice. Ambassadors can use their

personal influence to promote the small countries. The ambassadors can be leaders, expert with industry influence, or celebrities in small countries. Ambassadors serve as a main spokesperson for the small states agenda. For example, Estonia's president has been an ambassador of its e-governance program and has successfully promoted the program in her visits in Africa.

An ambassador has to be familiar with the issue she is branding for. Thus when attending relevant events, ambassadors can introduce the current development of their home country, make connections between their home country and potential resources, and reasonably advocate for her agenda.

FORTIS can also have experts and experienced negotiators under each policy area. By delegating experienced negotiators, small states can have better advocates for their own priorities, defend their interests, and call for actions. The negotiators can help small states to negotiate for better terms in international conferences when confronting larger countries.

The small island states successfully lobbied and negotiated to enter into force of the Paris Agreement. The negotiator also helped to

329. "Building Pacific Resilience to Climate Change Across 15 Countries - World." ReliefWeb. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/building-pacific-resilience-climate-change-across-15-countries-0>

330. "President: Estonia Can Raise Issue of Cyber Security on UN Security Council." ERR. August 12, 2018. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://news.err.ee/853264/president-estonia-can-raise-issue-of-cyber-security-on-un-security-council>

secure a goal of limiting global warming to below 1.5 °C in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

### **Best Practice: the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is an intergovernmental organization of low-lying coastal and small island countries formed to consolidate the voices of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to address global warming.<sup>331</sup>

These countries are highly vulnerable towards climate change, which has led to a sea level change in the past decades.<sup>332</sup> AOSIS members have effectively argued and proven that climate change poses an existential threat to them in the complicated negotiation process of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.<sup>333</sup>

AOSIS sets their mission clearly, as to combat the challenge of global warming and protect the rights of the small island states. Based on their mission, SIDS identified its target audience: major industrialized nations that have caused the climate change and sea level rise.<sup>334</sup>

They have positioned themselves with a strong value in the climate change issues to amplify the voice of the small island states, and to overcome the constraints as they have limited resources.<sup>335</sup>

The AOSIS members states frame climate change as “a matter of life or death” to present the seriousness of the climate change issue.<sup>336</sup> These concerns have been advocated through different channels. For instance, they have been very successful in raising awareness within the United Nations system, alerting the world to the danger of their disappearance due to accelerating sea level rise.

A well-known example is the underwater cabinet meeting held by the government of Maldives a few weeks prior to the Copenhagen conference to highlight the threat of climate change for low-lying nations.<sup>337</sup>

They have also managed to speak with one voice, and defend their group’s position by “using entrepreneurial, intellectual, and environmental leadership strategies and manage to secure most of their position in

331. "Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)." Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Accessed May 05, 2019. <http://aosis.org/>.

332. Mimura, Nobuo. "Vulnerability of island countries in the South Pacific to sea level rise and climate change." *Climate research* 12, no. 2-3 (1999): 137-143.

333. Bodansky, Daniel. "The history of the global climate change regime." *International relations and global climate change* 23, no. 23 (2001): 505.

334. Rosenthal, Max J. "Small Island Nations, Threatened by Rising Seas, Want Stronger Action at the Climate-change Summit in Poland." *The Washington Post*. December 13, 2018. Accessed April 16, 2019.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/12/12/small-island-nations-threatened-by-rising-seas-want-stronger-action-climate-change-summit-poland/?utm\\_term=.385301285d8f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/energy-environment/2018/12/12/small-island-nations-threatened-by-rising-seas-want-stronger-action-climate-change-summit-poland/?utm_term=.385301285d8f).

335. Shareef, Riaz, and Suhejla Hoti. "Small island tourism economies and country risk ratings." *Mathematics and Computers in Simulation* 68, no. 5-6 (2005): 553-566.

336. This slogan was originally advocated by Head of State Hilda Heine of the Republic of Marshall Islands in September 2016, but AOSIS has been using it for a long time. See Letman, Jon, and Jon Letman. "Climate Change Is A 'Matter Of Life And Death' For The Marshall..." *Honolulu Civil Beat*. November 04, 2016. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2016/11/climate-change-is-a-matter-of-life-and-death-for-the-marshall-islands/>.

337. "In a Broadcast 124m below Sea Level, Seychelles President Calls for Better Protection of Oceans." *Mercopress*. Accessed April 16, 2019.

<https://en.mercopress.com/2019/04/15/in-a-broadcast-124m-below-sea-level-seyelles-president-calls-for-better-protection-of-oceans>.



the final negotiating texts, building on coalitions with parties and non-state stakeholders.”<sup>338</sup>

Their experienced negotiator helped the group to fully realize their interests in the Paris conference, and several member states successfully became members of climate change cooperation framework.<sup>339</sup>

The successful story of AOSIS shows the possibility of how small states can work together to amplify their voices.

A clear branding strategy is set for the group to pursue their common interests, and the right content and channel selection helped to build up relationship and increasing awareness, ultimately realize their original goal to limited climate change and call for actions from major industrialized countries.

338. Ourbak, Timothée, and Alexandre K. Magnan. "The Paris Agreement and climate change negotiations: Small Islands, big players." *Regional environmental change* 18, no. 8 (2018): 2201-2207.

339. The Republic of Marshall Islands was the first country to ratify the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer on the 28 February 2017. Fiji had the presidency of the Oceans Conference related to the Sustainable Development Goal number 14 in June 2017. Oceans and climate change are closely linked and Fiji has



**PART C.**

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**RECOMMEN**

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# POLICY RECOMMENDATION

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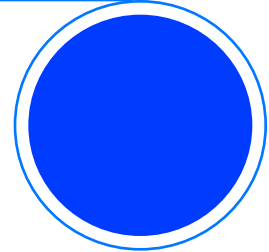
The purpose of these recommendations is to provide the Government of Estonia with concrete action points and a time line of implementation that will help policy makers adopt strategic approaches guide their decision-making with regard to the setup of the small state platform FORTIS. The different sectors of the government in charge of each thematic area will find these recommendations relevant to establish effective coordination mechanisms, stronger capacities and framework conditions to effectively collaborate with other small states to build this platform.

The following recommendations will support the initial process of set up and creation of FORTIS:



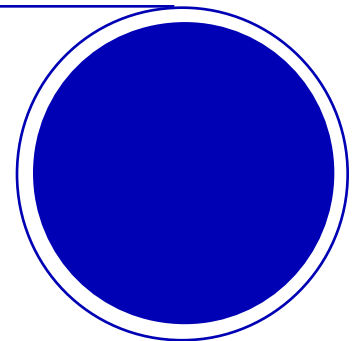
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### Short-term (1-2 years)



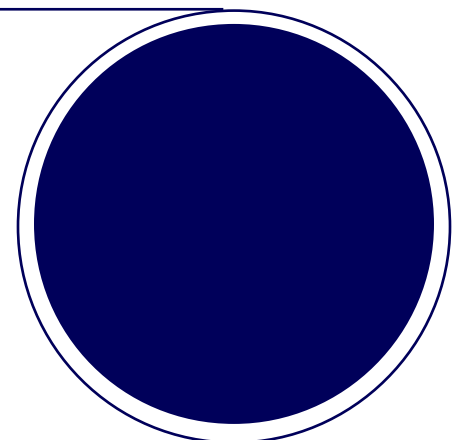
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### Medium-term (2-5 years)



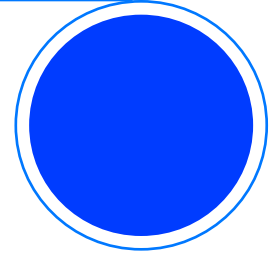
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### Long-term (5-10 years and on)



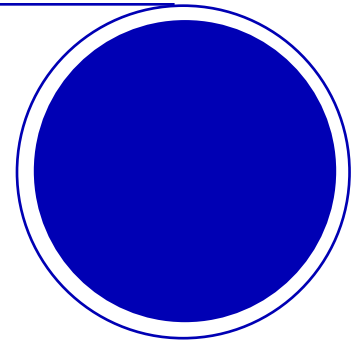
1. Identify and reach out to potential partners among small states, especially those with existing cultural exhibition infrastructure.
2. Establish a culture-focused branch within the Small States Institute.
3. Organize an online e-museum platform for small states with digital galleries and exhibitions.
- 4.

### Short-term (1-2 years)



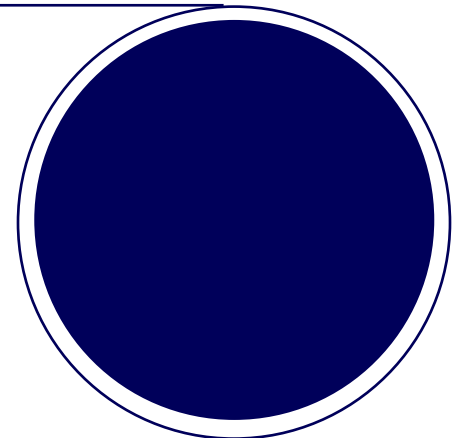
1. Facilitate the institutionalization of the small state cultural exhibition system with academic guidance of the Small States Institute.
2. Ensure national museums have the resources and capacity to host cultural exhibitions.
3. Collaborate with Eesti Rahva Muuseum in order to share digital strategies and best practices.

### Medium-term (2-5 years)



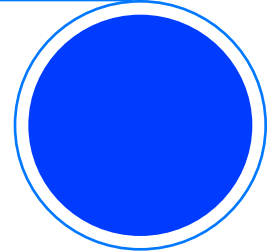
1. Commence small state cultural exhibition network operations and rotate exhibitions biannually

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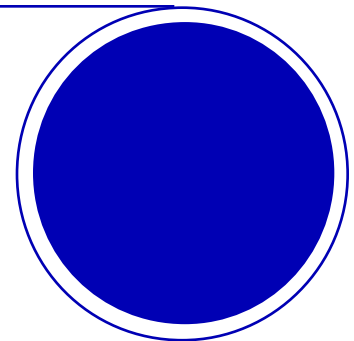
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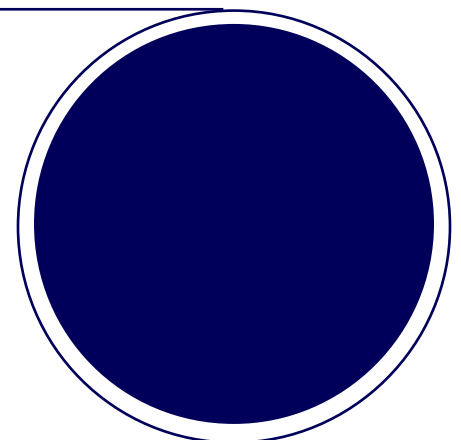
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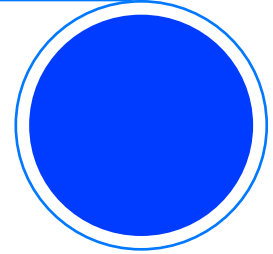
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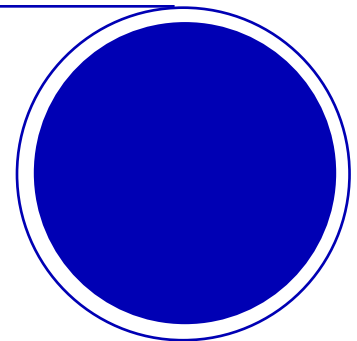
1. Estonia can start by having interested FORTIS members participate in initial programming development by offering to house the initial headquarters and provide appropriate digital infrastructure in Tallinn.
2. The initial members could appoint representatives to a planning committee to determine funding structures, intellectual property rights, employment systems, and journalistic standards.

### Short-term (1-2 years)



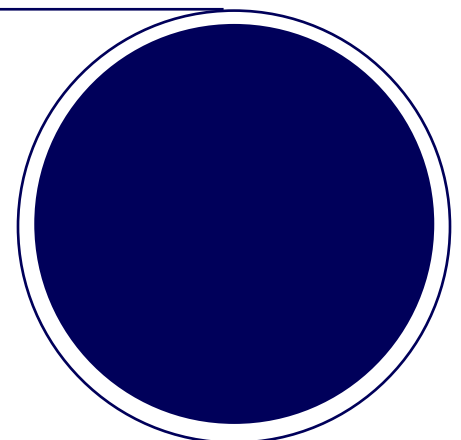
1. Once the planning board decides on the basic structure, it could launch FS as a startup and begin the fund raising process (advertisers, governments, donors), hiring personnel, and building a studio(s).
2. The launch date should be decided, as well as the goal numbers for viewers and revenue.

### Medium-term (2-5 years)



1. After the launch, FS should monitor the progress and adjust its strategy or model as necessary.

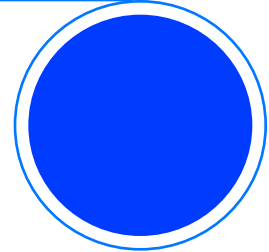
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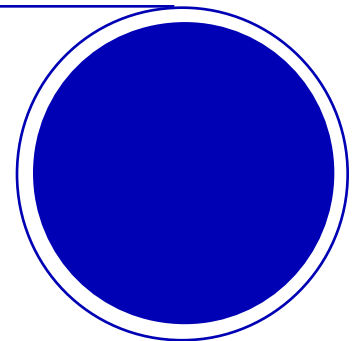
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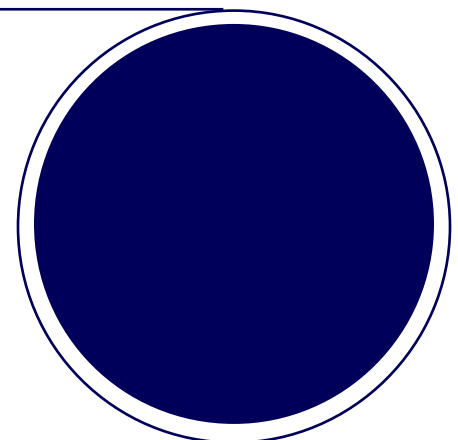
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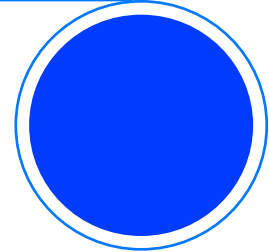
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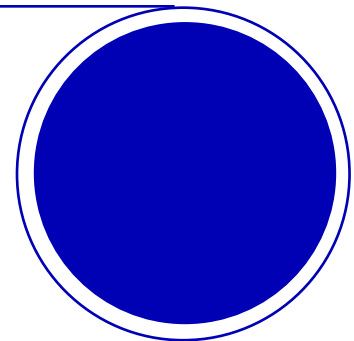
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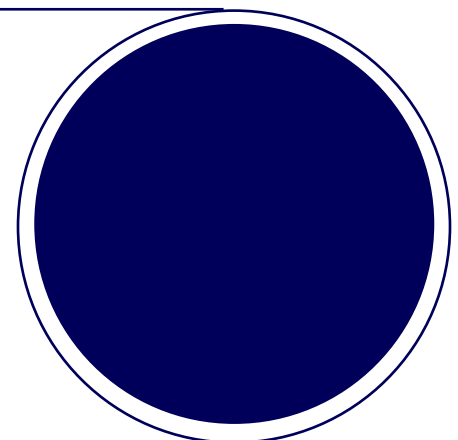
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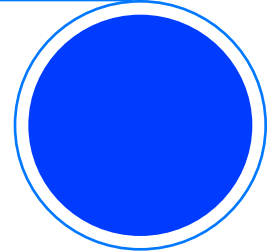
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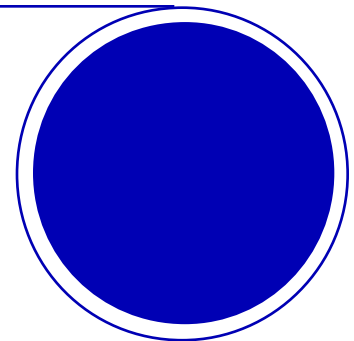
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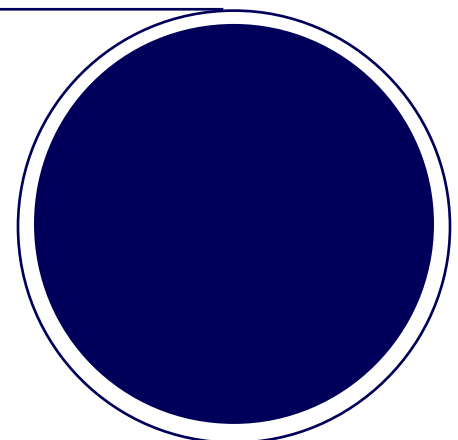
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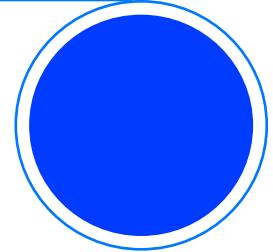
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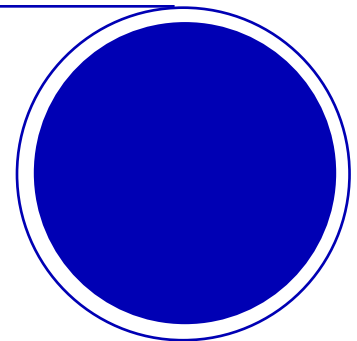
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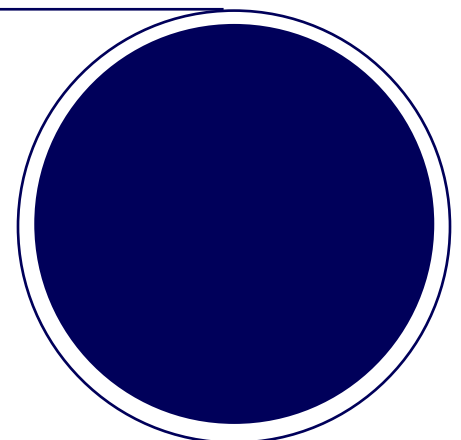
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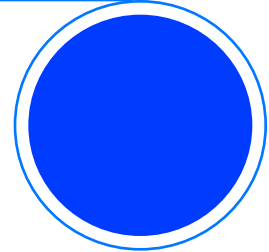
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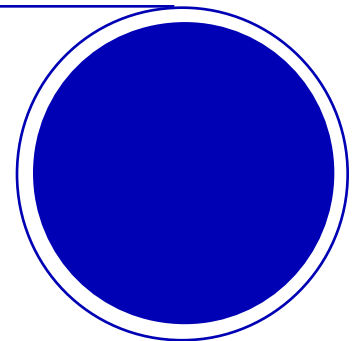
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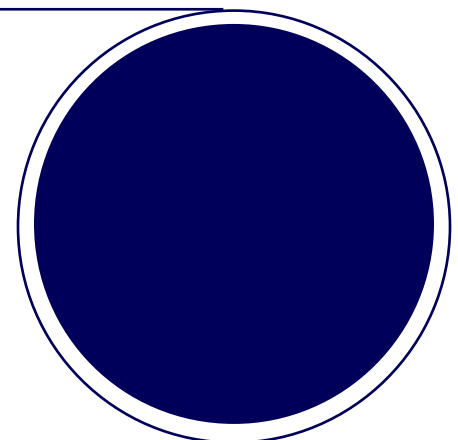
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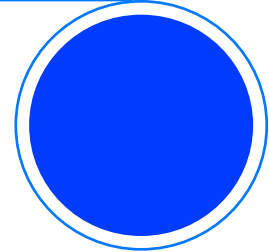
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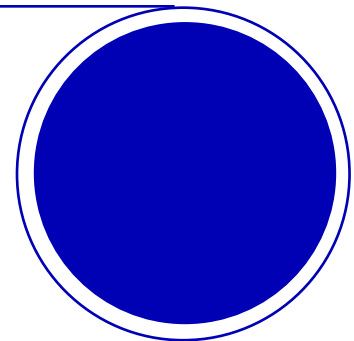
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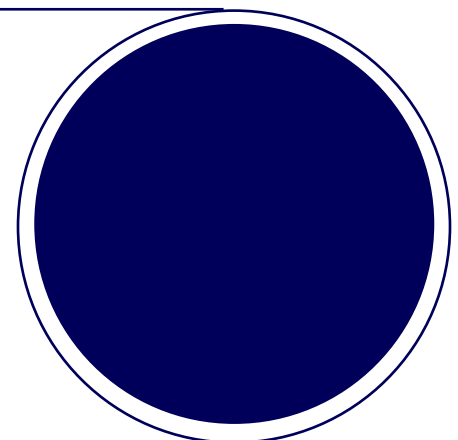
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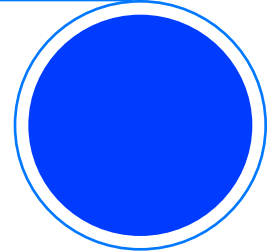
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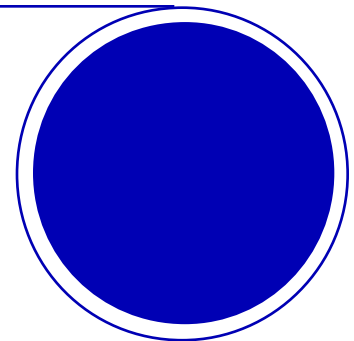
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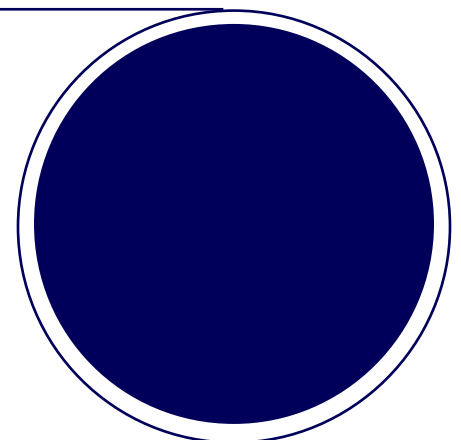
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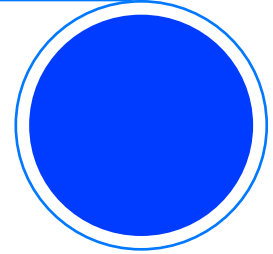
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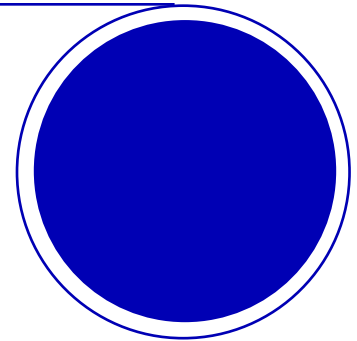
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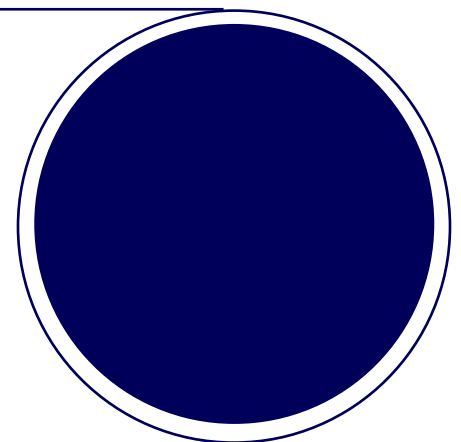
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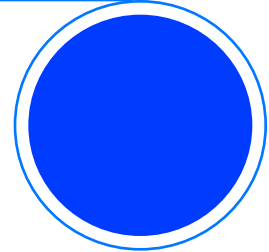
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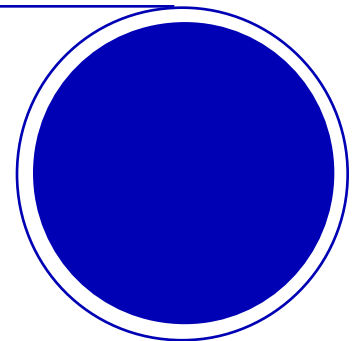
1. Designate a group within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will guide and oversee the set-up of FORTIS
2. Gather a group of five founding Members, who agree to establish FORTIS, refine and sign the Charter and begin to collaborate on areas of consensus.
3. Aim to reach 25 member states (ideally 5 from each region) by its fifth year, to gradually expand its membership and solidify its impact.
4. Organize and hold the first two annual Summits as a test-run consisting of informal sessions and working groups at ministerial levels prior to further expansion. It is recommended that Estonia holds the initial Presidency for two to three years.

### Short-term (1-2 years)



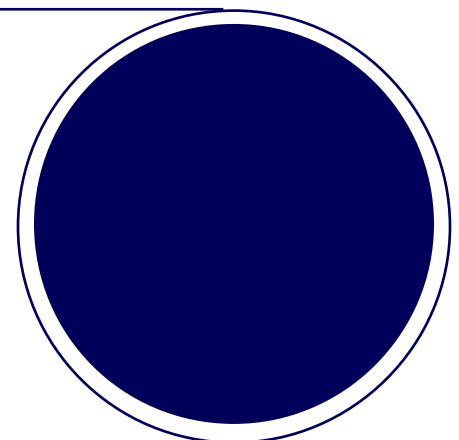
1. Aim to have at least 50 members (10 from each region) by its 10th anniversary.
2. Solidify the formal structure of FORTIS based on lessons from the test runs, including presidential term rotations, annual meeting schedules, and outputs from the meetings.
3. Designate a certain department or appoint an official as the primary FORTIS point of contact in respective countries.
4. Begin setting annual FORTIS themes to guide their meeting agendas at all occasions and levels.

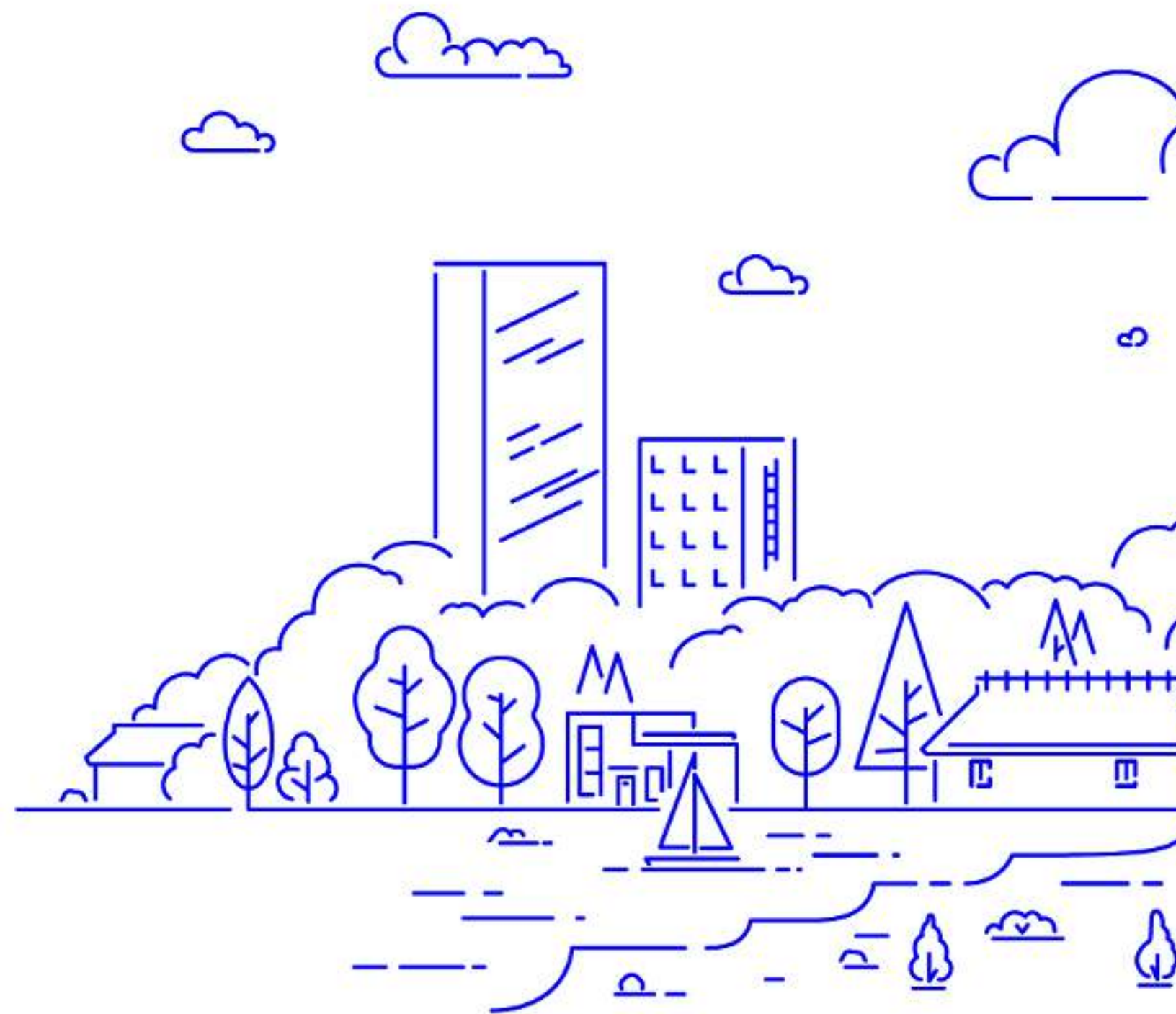
### Medium-term (2-5 years)

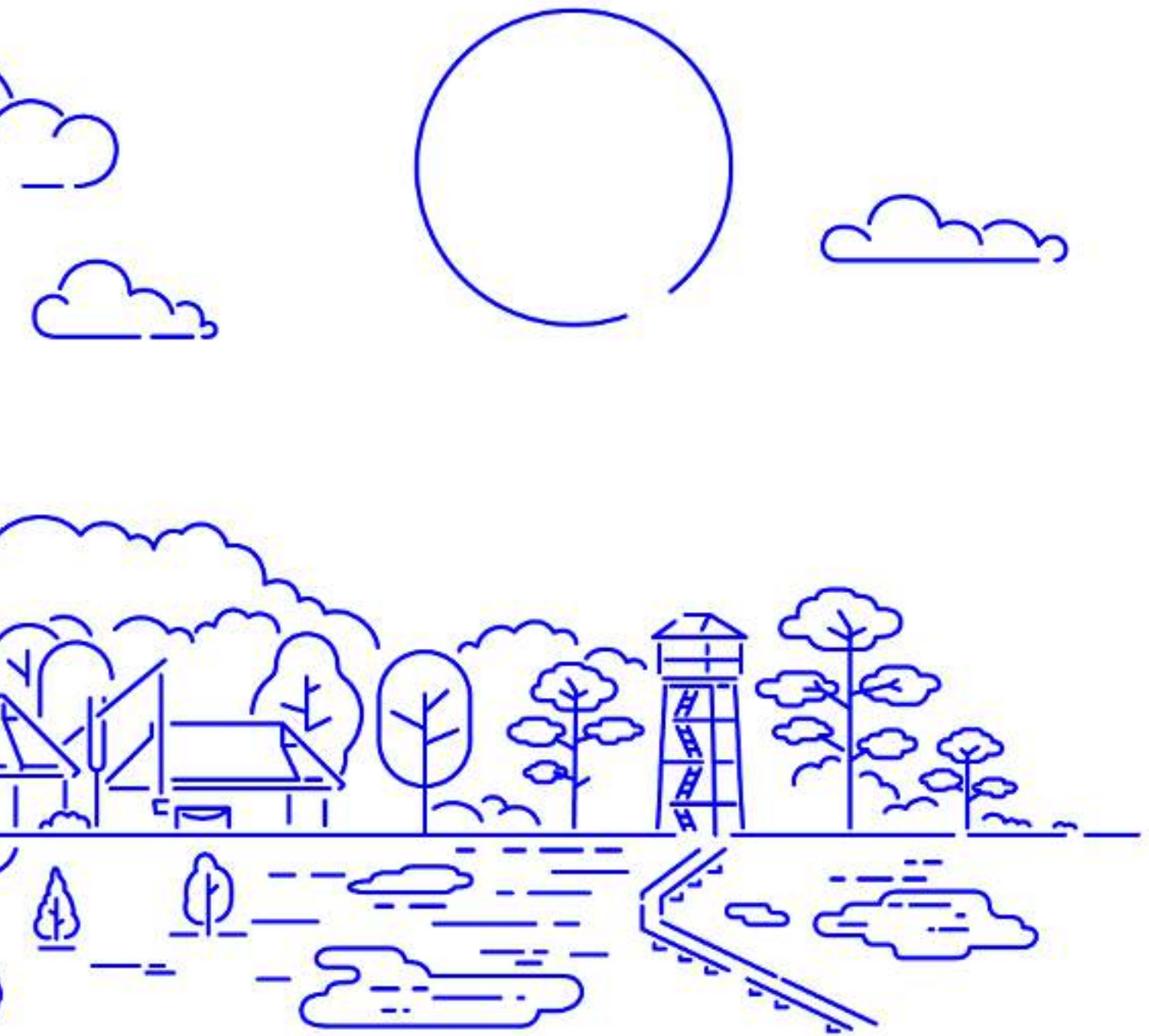


1. Continue expanding its membership without compromising on its founding vision and mission.
2. Ensure that every region has been represented in the presidential term rotation.
3. Establish a membership contribution system for each party to allocate a proportionate amount of resources to help with the planning and execution of agendas.

### Long-term (5-10 years and on)







# CONCLUSION

Against the backdrop of an international system that has come under threat on multiple fronts, this report argues that Estonia and other small states to increase their role in defending the rules-based order. Small states cannot and do seek hegemony and, as no small state can be a self-contained economy, small states cannot have myopic interests. A consequence is that small states have demonstrated their legitimacy by advocating for pragmatic solutions and mutual benefits. A number of small states have set examples in effective governance, sustainable development, and productive diplomacy. Small states can harness their unique experience to maintain and further a rules-based order.

As this report has shown, the challenge for small states in shaping international politics is to create and secure networks with other actors at state and non-state levels and to project attractive and credible images/narratives to the target audiences globally. Small states can effectively amplify their voices (or even have their voices be heard), share lessons and experience in policy-making, and participate more actively on the international stage, by creating a platform to formalize cooperation between small states around the world, that is underpinned by mutual trust, common needs and shared aspirations. FORTIS, as a common platform and collaborative network, can draw on the diverse strengths of over 100 small states to create innovative and flexible solutions in the areas of digitalization, education, economy, culture, and diplomacy that take account of the uniqueness of small states. Small states should no longer have to look to larger neighbors or distant powers for inspiration, let alone answers. FORTIS can elevate small states the creativity and voices of their citizens and again bring to life the historic words of the acclaimed English Prime Minister Lloyd George: All the world owes much to the little “five feet high” nations..<sup>340</sup>

340. George, David Lloyd. *Honour and Dishonour*. London: Methuen &, 1914.



Estonia is naturally positioned to be the founding member and leader of FORTIS. Estonia's sources of legitimacy stem from having built the world's most digitally advanced, most futuristic, society, which is centered around the public interest and the of championing multilateral cooperation as the means to protect and further the interests of small states. Estonia should take the opportunity to leverage its legitimacy and recognition to actively convene small states from across the globe and shape common principles for FORTIS.

Estonia has surprised the world by punching above its weight and becoming a model of the future for others. Estonia, which is smaller than fables cities of the world, whether New York, London, Berlin, Beijing, Tokyo or Sydney, stands as a symbol of what is possible, of what can be achieved by a state which values all of its citizens. The next step for Estonia is to advance its digital leadership, and its e-governance wisdom, into being a digital Acropolis, a global thought leader for the 21st century.

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# ANNEX

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## Founding of a Center for Small Nations Research <sup>341</sup>

Currently, there is no dedicated center for small states collaboration and research. Similar efforts are numerous, but tend to be fragmented and narrowed into subsets of small nations or topics. For example, the Small Island States Resilience Initiative has the goal “to support Small Island States in reducing climate and disaster risks to their populations, assets, ecosystems and economies.”<sup>342</sup> The University of Iceland has the Center for Small State Studies, of which Tallinn University of Technology is a partner, focusing on the challenges small EU states face and how they have thrived under the EU system.<sup>343</sup>

Estonia is one of the natural leaders of small nations because the country has achieved milestones that many small nations aspire to achieve including higher standards of living; a creative, educated, and technically savvy population; effective government institutions, especially with regard to the rule of law; convenient administrative services; and recognition in the international arena with companies like Skype and well-regarded e-Governance services.

The establishment of a center for small countries research that focuses on addressing the common challenges for small nations and the possible solutions will have several benefits for Estonia:

- More visible leadership role in the UN and internationally
- More allies that guarantee Estonia’s long-term sovereignty
- Promotion of Estonia’s capacity and expertise as well as increased recognition of Estonia
- Leveraging other countries’ expertise to solve common challenges
- Increase the likelihood of trade and business partnerships with these countries
- The opportunity to give back, a desire that many Estonians have after their occupied history

341. Estonia Capstone Team 2018, “The Aspirational Imperative: How Estonia Can Punch Above Its Weight and Enhance Its International Recognition, Economic Opportunity, and Security,” Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, May 2018.

342. Partnership for the SDGs, “Small Island States Resilience Initiative (SISRI),” <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=12222>.

343. University of Iceland, Institute of International Affairs, “Small States Summer School,” <http://ams.hi.is/en/research-institutes/csss/small-states-summer-school/>.

Unlike University of Iceland's Center for Small State Studies, it is not recommended for the center to be a subsidiary of a university, but an independent think tank that works in close partnership with universities and governments of small nations. The center, based in Tallinn, should start by leveraging Estonia's e-Governance and cybersecurity expertise as proposed solutions for better governance and online security. From there it should move to other areas identified as common challenges for small nations and bring experts from those nations to collectively address these challenges.

The purpose of the center is to:

1. Develop a common platform and to define the challenges and opportunities of small states by including all stakeholders
2. Strengthen the voice of small states in the international arena
3. Defeat the limited resources challenge by using a pooled resource approach
4. Create new partnerships and collaboration among small states
5. Ignite the exchange of ideas among small nations via visiting scholars and researchers
6. Motivate the exchange of cultures

As with the e-Governance Academy, the center could start with the support from the Government of Estonia, multilateral organizations, and foundations. The center should also host a small nations annual conference.

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Parem Eesti

**Parum FORTIS**

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