



# Baltic Sea Region

Programme 2007–2013

## Newsletter June 2009

### Highlights

- Five transport projects approved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> call
- The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – a common vision for development
- State aid & extension stage
- Strategic project: Bioenergy promotion

### Five transport projects approved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> call

The Monitoring Committee of the Programme approved five transport projects in Priority 2 “Internal and external accessibility” at its meeting in Vilnius on 8-9 June 2009. In total 22.8 million Euro (out of requested 51 million Euro) or 46% of the total available EU/Norwegian programme co-financing for the Priority 2 were committed. Around 16.4 Million Euro from ERDF, 0.72 MEUR from Norwegian and 0.144 MEUR from ENPI funds were allocated. For the coming calls around 25 million Euro of Programme funding is still available in the Priority 2.

The approved transport projects involve around 97 project partners from the Baltic Sea area.

Project TransBaltic was selected as a strategic project of the Programme. In total 86 project applications were received in the 2<sup>nd</sup> call that was closed on 31 March 2009. More statistics and approved project summaries you will find at [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net).

Decisions on the 2<sup>nd</sup> call projects in Priorities 1, 3 and 4 will be taken in Oslo on 15-16 September 2009. Information about the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for applications will be published on [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net) in autumn 2009.

**Project consultations** for projects applying in the 3<sup>rd</sup> call are planned to be offered starting from November 2009. However you can receive written feedback



on your project idea from the JTS at any time. For more information check [eu.baltic.net/Feedback.2649.html](http://eu.baltic.net/Feedback.2649.html).

### Approved transport projects (Priority 2)

Project Acronym	Project title	Lead Partner country	Lead Partner institution	Approx. project total budget, million Euro
<b>Baltic Biogas Bus</b>	Increase the use of biogas buses in public transport to reduce the emissions in urban areas in the Baltic Sea Region	Sweden	Stockholm Public Transport Company	4.17
<b>SCANDRIA</b>	Scandinavian-Adriatic Corridor for Growth and Innovation	Germany	Joint State Planning Department repr. the capital region Berlin-Brandenburg	3.78
<b>TransBaltic</b>	Towards an integrated transport system in the Baltic Sea Region	Sweden	Region Skåne	5.49
<b>EWTC II</b>	East West Transport Corridor II – a green corridor concept within the Northern Transport Axis approach	Sweden	Region Blekinge	5.99
<b>C.A.S.H</b>	Connecting Authorities for Safer Heavy Goods Traffic in the Baltic Sea Region	Finland	Turku School of Economics	3.38



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**Review of the latest Programme events – Communication & Financial seminars**

**Financial seminar**

More than 50 financial managers and first level controllers representing twenty first call approved projects took part in the financial seminar in Rostock on 3 June. The participants discussed and shared experience on first level control, projects reporting system, available calculation tools, eligibility of expenditure and reimbursement and other issues. Presentations can be downloaded at [http://eu.baltic.net/Financial\\_seminar\\_in\\_Rostock\\_review.6540.html?](http://eu.baltic.net/Financial_seminar_in_Rostock_review.6540.html?)



*Communication seminar*



*Financial seminar*

**Communication seminar**

The communication seminar for the communication managers of the first 24 approved projects was held in Berlin on 26-27 May 2009. During the first day Programme communication requirements, project communication plans and examples were discussed. During the second day participants got training in writing skills, media relations,

organising events and internal communications. Presentations can be downloaded at [http://eu.baltic.net/Snapshots\\_from\\_the\\_Communication\\_seminar.5916.html?](http://eu.baltic.net/Snapshots_from_the_Communication_seminar.5916.html?)

**Reminder:** the final project communication plans have to be submitted to the JTS (to [communication@eu.baltic.net](mailto:communication@eu.baltic.net)) latest by 31 July 2009. •

**Project Idea Café and the BSSSC annual conference**



The Project Idea Café will offer the forum for those who want to present and discuss their project ideas, look for partners and want to learn more about the funding programmes in the Baltic Sea region. The Café will be facilitated by the Baltic Sea Region Programme and will be

open on 14 October 2009, back to back with the BSSSC annual conference in Ringsted, Denmark on 13-15 October 2009.

If you fill in the project idea form from the conference website and send it to [info@eu.baltic.net](mailto:info@eu.baltic.net) by 7 October, you will be given an opportunity to display your idea at the exhibition and present it to other participants of the Café. Project ideas from the whole region, irrespective

of the programme they are planning to apply to, are invited to the Café.

The BSSSC annual conference will concentrate on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Climate Change. If you want to participate in the Café and/or the conference, you are welcome to register at the conference website [www.regionsjaelland.dk/BSSSC](http://www.regionsjaelland.dk/BSSSC).



## The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – a common vision for development

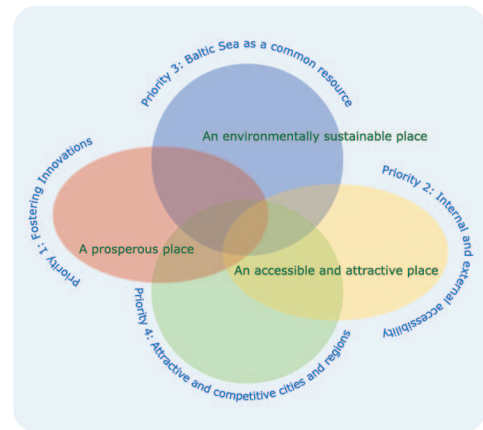
"The European Union's Baltic Sea Strategy is a new way of working together", stated Dirk Ahner, Director General of the European Commission's DG Regional Policy in his opening message. About 200 representatives of managing authorities and joint technical secretariats as well as ministerial delegates from the Baltic Sea region had come together to discuss the practical implications of implementing the Strategy at a conference in Visby, on the Swedish island of Gotland, on 11 and 12 June 2009.

Mr Ahner had more to say. "A new way of working together requires openness, participation and wide partnership, including friendship" he said. As there was neither new funding nor new EU legislation provided for the Strategy, it would only work if partners agreed, he added. Partners are understood to be all those institutions and organisations taking responsibility for actively implementing the four objectives of the Strategy, its 15 priority areas and its numerous flagship projects. "The Strategy is an integrated framework", Mr Ahner added. It was designed to overcome specialisation – or segregation of work of line ministries or organisations dealing with only one particular priority topic such as transport. He also suggested the Strategy to be a guidance document for policy makers in the region. Can the EU Strategy become the common "vision" of development in the Baltic Sea region?

Not all participants were ready to follow what General Director Ahner and other speakers from DG Regio said. It turned out that in particular national pro-

grammes including their implementing bodies are little informed about the Strategy, and do not yet feel concerned at all. Almost all programmes started implementation along their priorities and found it difficult to change direction towards the specific actions of the Strategy at this stage. Many were confused about the way current "flagship projects" of the Strategy were selected. Some found the Strategy too general. They were afraid that "anything goes" would devalue the Strategy and its actions. "The Strategy should fly but it must not fly away!" recalled Krista Kampus of the Estonian Ministry of Interior. Others said that as long as the architecture for implementing the Strategy was not clear it was difficult to see the role of different actors and the "who does what". However it was also pointed out that having these discussions have already made a difference. There was no clear map among the EU Member States of what is already going on, e. g. regarding environment protection activities. So instead of duplicating efforts there was a need to exchange views and coordinate activities, in particular in times of scarce public finances, and in particular across national borders. This would make available means more efficient.

The Baltic Sea Region Programme had started to pick up ideas from the Strategy right from the beginning. The Monitoring Committee (MC) debated possible implications on our programme already in early 2009. The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) prepared a project brochure pointing out the link between our projects and the priority actions of the Strategy. This brochure



*Interface between the Baltic Sea Region Programme priorities and the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.*

was distributed at the Commission's official press conference in all capital cities of the Baltic Sea region as well as in Brussels on 10 June 2009 when announcing the launching of the Strategy. Applications of the 2<sup>nd</sup> call were screened in relation to the Strategy, and put to the MC for consideration. The JTS will ask projects to prepare a "roadmap" for future investments, and will initiate cooperation with international financing institutions such as the European Investment Bank.

Vivid discussions showed that the Visby conference marked a milestone in the development of the Strategy. All involved, including the Commission, the managing bodies of EU financed programmes as well as the national coordinators understood that there was a great need to first of all, come to a joint understanding of the Strategy in order to make people feel involved, and motivated to be active. Ten years from now we should be able to explain very clearly the difference the Strategy has made to our region. •



*More info about the Strategy at [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/cooperation/baltic/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/index_en.htm)*



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## State aid

Free movement of goods, services and people is one of the basic principles of the European Union. Therefore the EU generally prohibits public grants that distort free competition and trade among the Member States. Such distortive grants are referred to as "state aid".

The Baltic Sea Region Programme does not co-finance state aid relevant activities. By this it should be avoided that organisations receiving Programme funding obtain an unfair advantage over their competitors.

How does the Programme ensure this? In general terms, if state aid relevant activities are found in a project proposal these have to be excluded in case the project is approved. Approved projects will get no cost reimbursement of state aid relevant activities. In practical terms the Secretariat follows two step approach to ensure that all lead partners and project partners comply with the State aid law:

### STEP 1. Assessment of project activities:

1. Does a partner or end user of the project carry out economic activities?
2. Does the Programme funding provide a partner or end user of the project with an unfair advantage over their competitors?
3. Does the Programme funding affect trade between the Member States?

Activities are only recognized as state aid relevant if they fulfill all criteria.

### STEP 2. Check of the compliance with the following conditions:

- Public procurement rules have been observed, which should guarantee that services are provided at market conditions;
- Other competitors in the relevant market can use the project output in the same way and under the same conditions as the project, e.g. open-source software.
- Business operators involved in the project activities (e.g. pilot projects, trainings) and results are selected in a non-discriminatory and transparent way.
- All project results are made available to the public e.g. secure public access to the project results.
- The project costs are paid by an eligible project partner and proved by delivery of works, services or supplies (principle of real costs).

During the quality assessment and project implementation these conditions are closely monitored by the Secretariat. As the experience shows, products with high potential for state aid risks are mainly ICT tools, software, investments, training/education, etc. Risk areas are mostly is vaguely described project activities and complex projects.

What other tools are there to follow up on state aid? Through the signature of the Partner declaration and later of the Grant Contract and the Partnership agreement the lead partner and all project partners declare that they comply with the State aid law and the conditions of the Programme. More information about the state aid in the Programme will be soon available (autumn 2009) in the Programme Manual version no. 3. •

The basis of EU State aid policy is Article 87 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, which defines state aid. Based on this article the EU developed a complex State aid law. Hundreds of rules and regulations exist. These are expended by even more decisions on state aid cases taken by the Commission and the European Court of Justice.

More information is available under: [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/overview/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview/index_en.html)





**DEEP – Database for Efficient European Programmes**



We are proud to present the official name and logo of **DEEP – Database for Efficient European Programme** – the software tool that helps us to manage projects. You could learn more about this project management database in the previous issue of the newsletter. The DEEP is used in the Secretariat's daily work, as well as by other programmes across Europe.

**DEEP – Database for Efficient European Programmes** is the tool for efficient handling of the approved projects and project applications.

**DEEP** serves to process a wide range of data, as

- project applications,
- documents of the quality assessment,
- information on funding decisions and grant contracts,
- progress reports and their annexes, and
- information on payments to the projects.

**DEEP** supports the programme bodies in

- administrating and assessing applications,
- the monitoring of project and programme level,
- communicating with projects,
- the financial management and handling payment requests,
- administrating requests for changes, and
- data and indicator analysis.

**DEEP** will be used by all important programme bodies, such as the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS), the Certifying Authority (CA), the Managing Authority (MA) the Audit Authority (AA), and the members of the Monitoring Committee.

For more information about DEEP please contact Robert Schulz-Brückner, Information Coordinator ([rsb@eu.baltic.net](mailto:rsb@eu.baltic.net), Phone +49 381 45484 5279).

**Extension stage for projects**

At its meeting in Vilnius on 8-9 June the Monitoring Committee confirmed that the possibility for an extension stage should be offered to all approved projects as planned in the Programme.

The extension stage means that approved projects can receive funding for max. additional 24 months for the realisation of specific follow up activities i.a. implementation of transnational investments. The activities in the extension stage should be a result of a joint planning process that was realised during the project implementation. The applicants will follow a simplified procedure and regular programme funds will be used. A project can apply not earlier than one year after they have started their activities and not later than 6 months before the end of original project activities.

Although the first applications for an extension stage could already be submitted in the first half of 2010, several applications are expected only in 2-3 years from now. At the moment the JTS is preparing procedures and the necessary documents for the extension stage. It is planned that the Application Package will be ready and the instrument will be operational in early 2010.



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**Strategic project:**  
"Bioenergy Promotion" – The Baltic Sea Region Bioenergy Promotion Project



Bioenergy Promotion

*Creating a critical mass for competitiveness and technology innovation in the bioenergy market*

In Europe and in the rest of the world, energy consumption is growing. Yet, huge biomaterial resources are not utilised to the extent possible. The interest in these resources is increasing. Therefore, it is necessary to balance the competition between the usage of biomaterial resources for food, fibre and fuel.

The project "Bioenergy Promotion" aims at strengthening the sustainable use of bioenergy in the Baltic Sea Region. It will contribute to a common understanding of the opportunities and challenges. The project will serve as a major regional platform for cross-sectoral and transnational networking to facilitate coordinated policy development, design and application of instruments which promote bioenergy.

Bioenergy Promotion was approved as a strategic project of the Programme. It was also selected as a Baltic 21 Lighthouse project. The consortium includes national and regional authorities, research institutions, experts in the field of forestry and agriculture, and biomass companies.



Energy centre

The project will develop criteria for sustainable biomass supply, use and trade. These policy guidelines will contribute to the development and implementation of national and regional biomass action plans. The action plans and feasibility studies will facilitate bioenergy investments in the Baltic Sea Region. The project will also establish a virtual brokerage platform to meet the needs of all players of the biomass market by contributing to the fair trade options in the region. It will also provide a possibility to create networks, clusters and public-private partnerships in the bioenergy sector. •

**Partnership:** National and regional authorities, universities, environmental and forestry development centers, agencies for renewable resources from Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden

**Number of partners:** 34

**Lead partner:** Swedish Energy Agency, Sweden

**Approximate total budget:** EUR 5.1 million

**ERDF funding:** EUR 3.3 million

**Norwegian funding:** EUR 0.4 million

**ENPI funding:** EUR 0.1 million

**Duration:** 36 months (January 2009 – January 2012)

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Biomass

Website:  
[bioenergypromotion.net](http://bioenergypromotion.net)



Pellet in the hand



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**News from the JTS staff**

**Ronald Lieske**  
Project Officer



After several years of working for INTERREG IIIC and later IVC, Ronald re-joined the Programme team. He is involved in project development, assessment and monitoring. In addition, he is still responsible for the INTERREG IVC and South Baltic Info/Contact Points at the Rostock office.

**Secretariat's staff assists elections in Rostock.**



The Secretariat's project officer, Bartłomiej Wierzbicki, assisted in the 2009 European elections in Rostock on 7 June.

**Paolo Forno**  
Finance Officer

Paolo will leave the Secretariat at the end of June and will start a new assignment at his home area in Genoa, Italy. JTS team would like to thank Paolo for his excellent work and personal dedication during the last years.

**Vacancies.** Before the end of June, the JTS in Rostock will launch two calls for applications: a **Finance Officer** at the JTS, and a **Project Adviser** for the IVC North Info Point. Closing date for applications will be 4 September 2009. Please check the News section at: [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net).

**Event Calendar**

	Date	Place
Meeting of the Monitoring Committee	15-16 September 2009	Oslo, Norway
Project Idea Café at the BSSSC conference	14-15 October 2009	Ringsted, Denmark

For **Further Information** please go to [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net) or feel free to contact the Joint Secretariat.

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**News**

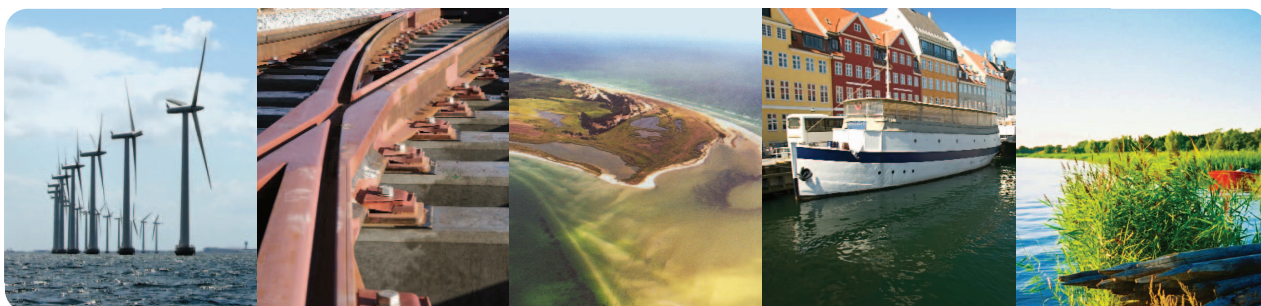
- New brochure "First 24 transnational cooperation projects and their contribution to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region".

This brochure provides an overview of the projects approved in the 1<sup>st</sup> call and demonstrates how concrete projects contribute to implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. E-version is available at [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net).

Hard copies can be requested from Ms Liga Bronowski ([lb@eu.baltic.net](mailto:lb@eu.baltic.net), +49 381 45484 5288).



- The JTS offices in Rostock and Riga will be open during summer vacation.



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