



Concept Paper

Support to the Implementation of

European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

October 2009 | INTERACT Point Turku

1. BACKGROUND

The European Commission has been working since 2007 on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) that is being approved by the European Council and adopted by the respective Member States by the end of 2009, and is at the same time preparing a detailed Action Plan for the implementation of this Strategy. This macroregional Strategy is beginning its implementation under a precondition that additional budgetary funds are not available within the EU budget for the period 2007-2013 and implementation may therefore require redirecting of available investment funding in Convergence and Competitiveness Objectives. The funding for the Activities should be drawn from all cohesion policy funding sources including Territorial Cooperation Objective programmes operative in this region.

In order to support the Cross Border Cooperation programmes as well as the other programmes in identifying their Strategy implementer roles and operational responsibilities, their management challenges and potentials within the appropriate networks, INTERACT Programme established the Baltic Sea Strategy Laboratory Group in January 2009. The Laboratory Group is coordinated by INTERACT Point Turku. The Baltic Sea Strategy Laboratory Group is an informal working group working in close cooperation with the Unit for Territorial Cooperation at Directorate General for Regional Policy and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The task of this group is to support the overall coordination aim of the strategy work and to define the implications the strategy has on programmes that have already been adopted and have been operating for about two years before the adoption of the strategy by the end of 2009. The group is set up to seek operative solutions to identified points that will imply consequences on practical programme management.

The Laboratory Group represents operational programmes in the region

Preamble

- ⇒ support the overall coordination aim of the strategy
- ⇒ define the implications on programmes already adopted
- ⇒ seek operative solutions to identified points
- ⇒ identify consequences on programme management

- Continuous briefing on the development by DG Regional Policy
- 5 meetings from 5 February to 7 October 2009:
 - Written responses to 4 key questions
 - Workshops to analyse and suggest an approach
- 16 members representing:
 - ETC programmes (CBC and Transnational)
 - Convergence and Competitiveness Objective programmes
 - ENPI programme representation
 - EU/DG Regional Policy
 - Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth
 - International Financing Institutions

The Laboratory Group established itself a joint overview of the working structure of the Strategy implementation. Bearing in mind the precondition that no additional funding will be allocated for the Strategy, it was understood that implementation is possible only by a very extensive and open networking between all levels and all parties representing existing cohesion policy funding in the region of the Strategy.



The Laboratory Group has adopted an approach that tries to include all foreseen management challenges different types of programmes will be facing during the first years of implementation, until the end of current programming period. At the same time the Group will try to highlight the key points that require further elaboration while preparing for the new period beyond 2014.

The foreseen structure for future work with the Strategy



The Laboratory Group has already been working for nine months since January 2009 addressing following key questions:

- How does the Baltic Sea Strategy affect your respective programmes?
- How could programme work be organised to facilitate the implementation of the strategy?
- What necessary steps need to be taken concerning application procedures etc?
- How could cooperation with other financial instruments be organised in order to implement actions mentioned in the strategy?

The Group presented the outcomes of the work in a major stakeholder conference „Regions and Cohesion Policy in Action“ in Visby on 11-12 June 2009. The work received a lot of positive response in the audience and supportive comments concerning the continuation of its activities. The outcomes are summarised below in the graph that displays the the key to INTERACT programme role in the context of EUSBSR: „How to Facilitate“. INTERACT should both provide answers when asking about the methods „How to facilitate“ and provide services for the facilitation.

The Laboratory Group will continue its work during the autumn 2009 in form of the meetings, to discuss the second set of key questions. The Group will continue to address the initial questions above, but also will address the following themes:

- How are the programmes aiming at implementing the Strategy - what are you going to do/suggesting to do?
- Is there a need for joint indicators for programmes or a joint approach towards indicators?
- How can ETC programme work together with Convergence and Competitiveness programmes?
- How can an expert group with IFIs work and be organized in order to support the Programmes (and projects)?

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

The services for supporting the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region can be seen as facilitation for the operational management processes. The graph below describes the facilitation needs identified by the Laboratory Group.

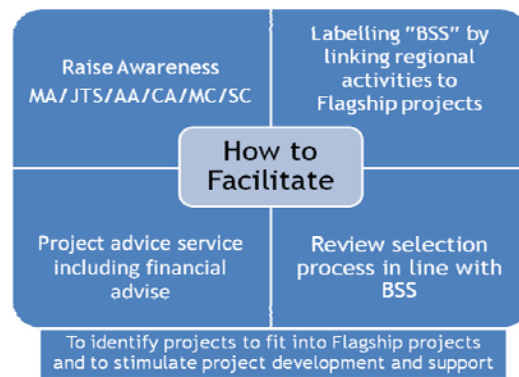
While the EU Commission services will take care of the general information needs further support is necessary for covering programme specific information in order to support programme management bodies adopting the strategy. Linking regional activities to Actions and Flagships and inclusion of EUSBSR dimension



in project selection process represent the types of operational management tasks that are new and need support in defining the best practices for carrying out such tasks.

The fourth category is advice and services to programme management bodies and to projects. While including all aspects of such advise, including best practice exchange, advice on financing sources and leverage is central as is support for flagship projects.

The support services would be: information services, learning events, conferences, advisory services and as already ongoing, the Laboratory Group for supporting the overall coordination aim and for seeking operational solutions.



2.1. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the services facilitating the implementation of EUSBSR is to share the expertise in managing multicountry cooperation in extensive macroregional multi-level network formats. This sharing of expertise will be done by using the means and methods of INTERACT. The new element for the services is the Cross-Objective Cooperation that these services will and must include.

The aim is to enhance the long term cross Programme and cross Objective cooperation, particularly by providing the other coordinating and management bodies with the exchange of experience already gained within cross-border-cooperation and transnational cooperation in management of multicountry project pipelines.

The overall objective can be broken into categories of needs that can be described from the points of view of the programmes, projects, stakeholders in general/potential partnerships and from the point of joint needs that all categories share.



More detailed plans for addressing these needs will be discussed in the Laboratory Group during the autumn 2009. The services to be provided are planned according to the requests and proposals from the Laboratory Group. They will be further planned and delivered in cooperation with all relevant parties.



2.2. METHODOLOGY

The services for supporting the implementation of the EUSBSR will be delivered as:

Information activities:

- Dissemination and information exchange on opportunities and potentials in connection to Flagship projects and partnerships
 - From late 2009 onwards provision of information on INTERACT website
 - Links to KEEP and utilisation of KEEP possibilities in providing information for capitalisation of results achieved
- Descriptions for managing multi-layer Flagship structures in multi-country implementation
 - Late 2009 - early 2010 a survey on Flagship participation and management structures including an assessment of management bottlenecks and recommendations
 - Update of survey results in 2012

Events addressing programme management bodies:

- 2 Joint workshops in 2010 for CBC and other relevant programmes implementing the Strategy via Flagships managed by other programmes
- 1 Annual Forum in 2010/annually for all national coordinators, Flagship leaders and management bodies to follow up on the development in management methods

Laboratory Group meetings:

- 2 meetings in autumn 2009; addressing the questions of support and of IFI cooperation
- 4 meetings in 2010; addressing the questions of cross Programme and cross Objective cooperation, proactive support, progress reporting, management structures, requirements for linked financing

Meetings with International Financing Institutions:

- 2 Workshop format meetings in 2010 with pilot programme/s and/or Flagships

Development of the joint tool for partnerships:

- In 2010 one workshop with pilot programmes to conceptualise the tool, inventory of existing tools and feasibility study on applicable solutions, identification on the host and hosting requirements
- In 2010 one testing session with selected Flagship partnership
- From late 2010 onwards ongoing service for all Flagship partnerships and interested parties





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