

# EUROREGION



# BALTIC

## Development Programme for Euroregion Baltic

Draft II of mid March 2005 for submission to the  
ERB member regions for comments until May 10

### *Executive Summary*



The Seagull project is co-financed by the European Union  
Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B programme

## Reading guidelines and recommendations

This paper contains the **Executive Summary** of the second draft of the JTDP for ERB. The full text of the draft is on over 100 pages, containing facts and figures about ERB, a SWOT analysis, an analysis of the ERB surrounding world, the draft vision and strategy for the ERB development and more extensive descriptions of the totally 14 actions/activities that are put forward for comments and considerations by the decision bodies in the ERB member regions.

### What is the draft JTDP proposal about? And what kind of comments do we want from the ERB member regions' decision bodies

The second draft Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) for ERB contains the structure and most of the text parts of the planned final JTDP – a document that is the main planned output of the Seagull project.

The draft proposals now presented are the result of the work process of the Seagull project in the different work packages – in a close dialogue with ERB partner representatives in the ERB board and Council and with appointed experts in seminars and analyse groups. The draft JTDP consists of two main parts – the strategy defining priority areas for action, presented and confirmed by the ERB board and council to be the basis of the proposals of concrete activities – which is the second part of this JTDP. The strategy and draft proposals to be included in the JTDP were the subject of a separate conference in Gdansk in December 2004. The draft JTDP now presented is worked out on the basis of the conclusions of the Gdansk conference

The Seagull Steering Committee discussed the priority activities at its meeting in the end of January this year and decided to put forward a proposal to the ERB Board of deciding to send out the second JTDP draft for comments to the member regions. Such a decision was taken by the ERB Board at its meeting in Klaipeda on February 26.

The primary aim of this hearing is to ask for the ERB partner regions opinion on the proposals of concrete activities presented in the executive summary (and in detail in chapter 8 in the fully draft). It is important to underline that this hearing on the draft JTDP will give substance for the final draft to be presented for the ERB partners and political management the upcoming autumn in the finalization of the Seagull project.

**Deadline for comments from the member regions is May 10 this spring.** The comments should be sent to the Seagull project management, e-mail: [rolf.a.karlson@telia.com](mailto:rolf.a.karlson@telia.com), with a copy for information to the ERB secretariat in Elblag, Poland, e-mail: [ips@eurobalt.org.pl](mailto:ips@eurobalt.org.pl).

The JTDP is supposed to cover measures that are in line with the draft strategy for ERB and add values to the ERB member regions. Measures that could be solved as good or better at national or regional level as at ERB level should not be dealt with in the JTDP.

Priority discussions are very essential in this “hearing” as resources for action implementation are limited in the member regions. The final prioritised actions must therefore be realistic for implementation during the next coming years. They should probably be less than 10 all together.

We are now asking the member bodies of ERB to comment this second draft JTDP. We hope that you will analyse and discuss the proposals in relation to your own development plans.

Most helpful for us would be discussions about priorities between the proposals. We would like you to indicate e.g. the seven most important actions out of those now proposed. If a totally new action proposal is put forward, it is essential that this is accompanied by exhaustive motivations of the added value of involving ERB in the realisation of the activity.

It is also essential to underline that each member of ERB is free to decide how to handle this opportunity of commenting the draft JTDP. If, for example, a member region would like to ask the region's local authorities, universities, NGOs or representatives of the private sector for comments, it is very welcomed. The broader the involvement in this process is, the better for the anchoring of the JTDP and the ERB cooperation within the member regions.

The second JTDP draft has been put together as a basis for "early" comments from the ERB member regions. The draft will be developed in an iterative process of presentations-discussions-amendments-new presentations-etc. during all spring and summer 2005. A final JTDP draft is planned to be sent for comments and hopefully approval by the ERB member regions in the end of August. Final approvals by the ERB Board and Council are planned to October 2005.

### **The role of ERB decision bodies in relation to the member regions' decision bodies and to other stakeholders in the regions**

When reading this JTDP draft it is essential to bear in mind that the ERB governing bodies (the Board and the Council) are composed by mainly elected representatives of the regional decision bodies of the ERB member regions.

The ERB cooperation is based on a joint political will and conviction that the cooperation will bring added values to each member region. ERB has no legal status in relation to its members, and its competence is entirely connected to the acceptance of ERB proposals of the decision bodies in the member regions.

Furthermore, some of the proposals are of the kind that demands involvement of e.g. the private sector or the higher education institutions in the regions. Therefore, implementation of the measures of the development programme for ERB will entirely be dependant on sufficient resource allocations in each member region and by different stakeholders.

It is essential to bear this distribution of competencies in mind when evaluating and prioritising the proposals that will be put forward in the final JTDP for ERB.

### **What about translation into your own language of this document?**

We recommend that you translate this Executive Summary into your own language. Concerning translation of other parts of the fully draft JTDP, see the reading guidelines of that document.

## Executive summary

In this second draft of the Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) for Euroregion Baltic, we propose one general and 13 different actions/activities within the five focus areas of the long term strategy for the ERB development.

A joint ERB strategy has earlier been anchored in the Board and Council of ERB and in a majority of the member regions as a basis for the political priorities and initiatives presented here. The strategy defines five focus areas of activities by which the ERB can provide with value added to the member regions development strategies and activities:

The five focus areas are

- to create a competitive business environment within ERB,
- to develop labour market cooperation within the region,
- to make ERB being a front-runner in implementation of EU environment and energy policies,
- to offer special support for sustainable development in the Kaliningrad Region, and
- to develop exchange of best practises and bench-marking between the member regions within the strategic areas for actions.

The proposals are also based on considerations made by the Seagull Steering Committee and conclusions from the ERB-Seagull conference in Gdansk in the beginning of December 2004 which was arranged with the aim to evaluate the draft proposals.

This is the background of the activities now proposed to be included in the JTDP. One of the main objectives of the JTDP is to establish a coherent framework defining common values and priorities for joint development activities. The strategy presented here as a basis for concrete activities should be seen as one important ingredient in such a framework. Based on this a number of activities are proposed that have the common denominator of providing sufficient preconditions for the implementation of activities that will directly influence on sustainable growth in the ERB. In addition the draft JTDP includes proposals which in this respect also have direct impact on ERB development.

Due to the fact that ERB lacks own resources and can only act if the member regions so wish, it is crucial to focus the ERB activities on issues really felt important by the members. Accordingly the main objective with this hearing is to collect the member regions' views not only on the proposals as such but also on the priorities to be made between them.

The proposed prioritised actions/activities are the following.

### **General to strengthen the ERB cooperation and development (not a focus area):**

***Special efforts should be made to get ERB recognized as an "Interreg III A-like area" for EU support.***

- To get ERB recognized as an Interreg IIIA-like area for EU support should be adopted as a first class priority target for ERB and member regions' activities to influence on the EU and BSR politics.
- The Council and Board should before the end of 2005 secure a commission from the member regions to influence on the national and EU decision processes regarding in this matter

- In order to get in a position to make a fast impact on the issue, the ERB member regions should also make available resources for a qualified analysis of the arguments for an Interreg IIIA status and of the practicalities which will accomplish this.

### **In order to support a competitive business environment in the region:**

**1. *An ERB platform for innovation and SME development should be established as an ERB wide public-private partnership with universities and industry concerning innovative clusters and networks (triple helix concept).***

- As a basis for the triple helix concept a study analysing the research institutions and business resources in the ERB should be carried out.
- A web based tool-box should be developed for offering models and examples, and be a contact point for organisations and persons involved in questions related to innovative centres and clusters.
- At least one so-called Learning Centre should be established before the end of 2007 in each of the member regions in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia.

**2. *The ERB Council should take political actions in order to highlight the unsatisfactory situation that all ERB member regions have poor access to the main TEN transport corridors now prioritised on EU and national levels. The aim should be to mobilise support for a long term concrete investment plan to improve the situation, based on suggestions put forward in transport corridor projects with implications for the South East BSR.***

- The Council should assign the task to a transport Infrastructure Committee composed by one politician from each ERB member region. Creating such a committee could be useful combined to an expert group with members from public and private sector in the regions involved.
- The task of the committee should be to adopt and carry out a common ERB strategy for joint action regarding trans-national BSR transport infrastructure planning and investments with bearing on the ERB members.
- As a basis for this the committee should early in 2006 establish a dialogue with the private sector and the national authorities concerned regarding the need of future infrastructure investments with bearing for the ERB member regions and a closer integration between them.
- A thoroughly investigated analysis should be made and presented in a report about the present situation and future prospects of transport infrastructure in the south-east Baltic Sea area. The report should be presented to the Council latest during spring 2006. The ERB transport infrastructure strategy concerning the need of future investments of common interest for the ERB partners should be presented for ERB council adoption before the end of 2006.

**3. *An Academy for Rural Development should be established within ERB with the overall aim of improving the preconditions for a sustainable rural development in order to improve the living conditions in the ERB member regions.***

- The Academy should found its activities and results on good governance, gender equality and sustainable development. It should accumulate the different know-how, best practices and experiences from the Seagull project but also from other relevant sources in the topic.

- The Academy could possibly be an experiment arena for developing EU concepts concerning implementation of new methods, policies, etc. in rural development, based on the uniqueness of ERB.
- The establishment of the Academy is proposed to take place in cooperation with appropriate universities and other institutions/stakeholders in the member regions.

**4. The ERB should execute inventories of potential trans-national infrastructure projects of concern for ERB members from a multilateral environmental perspective. The latter should focus on bio-energy and wind-power.**

***A review of industrial clusters in the environment and energy technique sectors within ERB should also be executed***

- Trans-national ERB projects should be developed with the objective to lay ground for environment friendly infrastructure investments with the support of EU, EIB and other financial institutions.
- The EIB should be approached for discussions of possibilities of developing preconditions for financial support based on the inventories.
- A dialogue with EIF should be initiated in order to improve the VenCap situation for the firms in the environment and energy sectors.

**5. ERB should prioritize the member regions' contribution to a stronger and systematic cooperation in the tourism sector that is one of the growing sectors in the Baltic Sea Countries.**

- The cooperation should be initiated by establishment of a Tourism Development Working Group (TDWG). The interaction between the regions of ERB should create a synergy effect on the development of tourism in the individual regions as well as in the whole Baltic Sea region. Openness, networking, exchange of knowledge and experience should be the main target activities for the TDWG.
- The first steps have already been taken. A pilot project for establishing a TDWG has started and will show its results by the end of the year 2005.
- It is assumed that by the end of the year 2007, the TDWG will have elaborated an ERB's common tourism development strategy and frameworks for a destination development plan.

**In order to enhance the labour market cooperation:**

**6. A report should be compiled about the ERB labour market for dissemination activities.**

- The report should present a diagnose of the situation on the labour market within ERB and be considered as a first step to long-term cooperation on labour market issues. Concrete proposals for political conclusions are expected as a result of the report.

***An education programme based on the report should be worked out and implemented during two years.***

- The constant improvement of education is an unquestionable need and goal in the context of sustainable development and competitiveness. Establishing a flexible education programme, based on the labour market situation, is a challenge for ERB.

**In order to be a front runner in implementation of EU environment and energy policies:**

**7. The ERB Council should initiate the creation of an ERB Water Forum with the objective to establish ERB as a pilot area for trans-national and cross-border cooperation and implementation of modern methods for water management and the EU WFD for the benefit of the environment and a sustainable development of the region.**

The content of an ERB Water Forum has to be discussed more in detail among the ERB partners and other actors, but important parts might be:

- A yearly conference to connect practice, science, policy and decision making about water within the ERB area and discuss common questions, priorities, etc.
- Permanent expert competence with the main target to gather and refine the experiences from implemented actions among the ERB partners, promote the regional competences, mediate contacts and increase cooperation between public administration, science and industry.
- External expert panel to secure the quality of the performed activities.
- Special focus on establishment of river basin water management cooperation for cross-border basins and Water User Partnerships with great extent of private, public and academic participation (Triple Helix).

**8. ERB should initiate a project aiming at decreasing the outflow of nutrients from small and diffuse sources, i.e. farms, farming land, smaller settlements and private households.**

The project is suggested to concentrate on

- a campaign to provide training and advice with the aim of encompassing the entire flow of nutrients from farms and promote environmental adapted farming through support of training activities – in cooperation with farmers' organisations, and others.
- waste water from rural areas – smaller settlements, farms and private households. Close and long-term cooperation between local authorities, clients and business partners concerning cost-effective, robust and sustainable solutions is crucial. Transfer of knowledge and technology between the ERB member regions is also essential.

**9. An ERB Energy Forum should be formed with the task to coordinate and take charge of energy issues from a broad perspective within the whole ERB region. The forum should consist of actors from the region representing different countries, municipalities, authorities, energy companies, universities and energy offices.**

The top priority issues should be:

- to create a regional energy policy and an energy plan for all parts of ERB in order to prepare and implement various energy goals,
- to arrange high level annual energy conferences within the ERB area,
- to compile and estimate energy statistics in the ERB region and its sub-regions,
- to build a platform for running business development projects within the energy area,
- to form an expert panel for estimating the different regional energy projects,
- to promote regional activities within the energy field both internally and externally for the ERB region, and

- to initiate the establishment of regional energy offices in cooperation with responsible EU bodies within the framework of the Save Programme.

**In order to make it possible for the Kaliningrad Region to fully participate in all ERB actions:**

**10. Establish a practical and economic base for integration of the Kaliningrad Region in all strategic areas for ERB cooperation.**

- A concrete programme well anchored with the Kaliningrad partners should be presented for adoption by the ERB Board and Council in early 2006.
- The base should include a strategic activity plan concerning preparatory and implementation activities to realize on regional and ERB level in the perspective of different degrees of eased border-crossing regime between Kaliningrad Region and EU. The activity plan should be put forward for adoption before 2007.
- The base should also include a strategy concerning the ERB as political lobbyist for enhanced EU and bilateral funding of development activities agreed upon by the Kaliningrad Region and the ERB Council. An agreement about the priorities should be in place by the end of 2006 and set into practice during 2007.

**11. A special programme should be worked out concerning ERB additional activities for diminished threat from the 2-3 most important environment hot spots.**

- The programme, worked out by the Russian ERB partner with support of experts from other ERB partners, should be presented for adoption by the ERB Board and Council before the end of 2006. The programme should be presenting proposals ready to implement in a process to attract EU and other international economic funding.

**In order to enhance exchange of best practises and bench-marking within the strategic areas for actions:**

**12. A three year ERB member programme for benchmarking and exchange of good practises should be developed and implemented.**

- The aim of the programme activities should be to support the ambitions within the earlier four strategic areas of the joint development programme by developing competencies and thus strengthen the preconditions to gain and follow up results.
- The programme should cover areas as good governance, gender equality, water quality, transport infrastructure, energy, business climate and trust issues, and employment and rural problems.
- A special pilot conference should be carried through for ERB municipalities, regions and NGOs active in twinning with another ERB partner. Conference themes should be youth participation and NGOs as fundamental prerequisites in democracies, challenges of public health, and actions to prevent organised trans-national crime.
- An exchange programme for regional and local officials and NGO representatives should be developed and implemented.

**13. A common database for sustainable development within ERB should be built containing basic statistics of the ERB member regions.**

- The main objective of building such a base is to create a tool for knowledge transfer and bench-marking between the member regions.

***A basic Geographical Information System (GIS) should also be built aiming at visualising different ERB conditions on maps and to be used for analyses.***