



EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

MARCH 2013

News

CONTENT

Updated Action Plan

“Think Baltic, think together”

In focus - Priority Area on
Maritime Safety and Security



INTERact



The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first macro-regional strategy in Europe. It aims at reinforcing cooperation within this large region in order to face common challenges by working together as well as promoting a more balanced development in the area.

www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

The EUSBSR newsletter is coordinated by INTERACT Point Turku with the support of the European Commission, DG Regional Policy. INTERACT Point Turku is funded by INTERACT which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



The EUSBSR newsletter has been made available for download in pdf format at www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

Publisher: INTERACT Point Turku, on behalf of the INTERACT Programme.

Editorial team: Gabriel Alvarez, Baiba Liepa, Ulf Wikström, Konrad Danieluk and Joanna Kiryllo.

Contributors to this issue: Raul Mälk, Mikko Lohikoski, Helinä Yli-Knuutila, Bjarke Wiehe Bøtcher, Sanna Sonninen, Marjukka Syväterä, Magnus Sundström, Juha Korhonen, Anna-Karin Johansson.

Original layout template: Södra tornet kommunikation

Cover photo: Peter Dam

Print: KMG Printworks | March 2013

Contact:

INTERACT Point Turku
Box 236 | Ratapihankatu 36
20101 Turku, Finland

ip.turku@interact-eu.net

EDITORIAL

The seed money is an important step forward

The beginning of 2013 is a busy period for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In January 2013, the High Level Group endorsed in general the revised Action Plan. Stakeholders in the capitals answered questionnaires for the forthcoming review of macro-regional strategies. During the current active programming phase, efforts are made to meet the paramount task of alignment of funds with the EU multiannual financial framework which was agreed during the February 2013 European Council.

The reviewed Action Plan is better focused and the list of projects is more solid. An important step forward is the activation of the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility. Projects connected with the EU INTERREG finances are in good shape. How to better use other EU financial instruments is still a challenge that can be met by deeper involvement of other DGs of the European Commission besides DG Regio.

During the next months, several meetings will allow us to discuss the current state of activities including the 4th Working Meeting on the Strategy in Helsinki in April. During such a decisive period, frequent meetings are really needed. Both the Member States and the European Commission are challenged to prove the effectiveness of the Strategy.

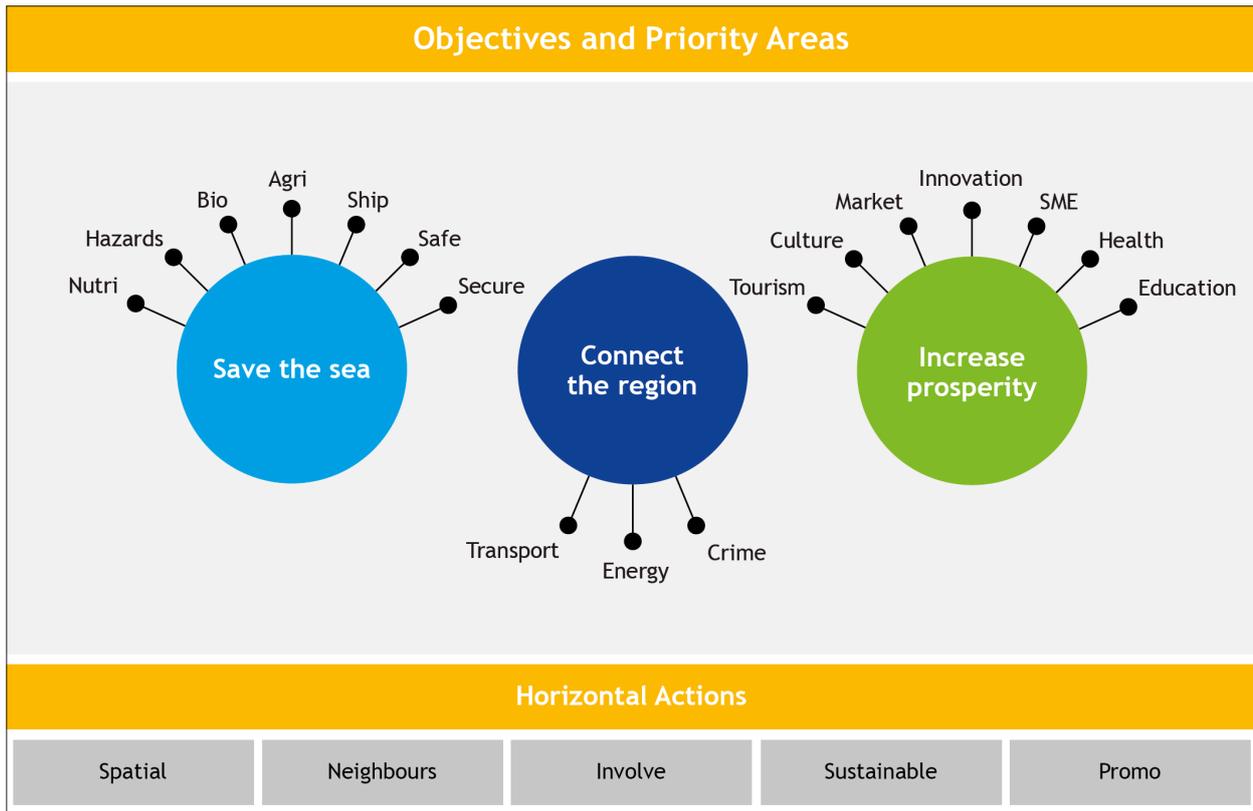
There are several cooperation formats around the Baltic Sea. They may play a supportive role in implementation of the Strategy. Estonia prepares to take over the Presidency of the Baltic Council of Ministers and coordinating role in Nordic-Baltic 8 from the beginning of 2014. From July next year, Estonia will also start CBSS presidency. When we add here the presidencies in HELCOM and VASAB, it is clear that for Estonia 2014 is really a year of Baltic Sea cooperation.



Raul Mälk
Ambassador-at-Large for Baltic Sea region
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia

On the front cover page

The image on the front cover page is from the tight vessel traffic in the Drogden channel in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden. This picture is connected to the sections 'Success stories' and 'Priority Area in focus'. In this respect, two Flagship Projects from the Priority Area Maritime Safety and Security are presented. Additionally, the coordinators for this priority area offer their views on the synergies between the maritime sector and territorial cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.



This graphic shows the new setting for priority areas and horizontal actions under the EUSBSR objectives. Even if all the priority areas have a cross-cutting approach, they primarily contribute to a specific objective.

17 priority areas, 5 horizontal actions

The review process of the Action Plan has finalised and presents a more focused approach

The updated EUSBSR Action Plan reflects the new objectives, indicators and targets that are fully in line with and contributes to the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy. It also clarifies roles and responsibilities of the main implementing stakeholders of the EUSBSR.

The revised Action Plan includes: (1) the three EUSBSR objectives and sub-objectives in contrast with the four pillars from the previous setting; (2) targets and indicators at Strategy level, at priority area level and at horizontal action level; (3) the roles and responsibilities of the main implementing stakeholders; (4) a clarification on the flagship project concept; (5) a chapter on communicating results; (6) a rearrangement of priority areas and horizontal actions.

The Action Plan comprises now 17 priority areas and 5 horizontal

actions, which represent the main areas where the EUSBSR can contribute to improvements, either by tackling the main challenges or by seizing key opportunities on the macro-regional level.

The priority areas and horizontal actions are organised according to the three objectives of the Strategy. Each priority area and each horizontal action directly contributes to one of the EUSBSR objectives. Due to their cross-cutting nature, they are also indirectly contributing to the other objectives of the Strategy.

PRIORITY AREAS

The number of priority areas has increased in the reviewed EUSBSR Action Plan from 15 to 17. ‘Culture’ has been included as a new priority area. The former sub-priority areas ‘Education’, ‘Tourism’ and

‘Health’ have gained an individual status as fully-fledged priority areas of the EUSBSR. On the other hand, ‘Sustainable’ (formerly ‘Climate change’) has switched to horizontal action considering its widely recognised cross-cutting approach.

HORIZONTAL ACTIONS

The horizontal actions have been slimmed down from 13 to 5. From the previous setting, only ‘Spatial planning’, ‘Involve’ (formerly ‘Multi-level governance’) and ‘Promo’ (formerly ‘Building a regional identity’) stay put. As before mentioned, ‘Sustainable’ (formerly ‘Climate change’) has been moved from priority area to horizontal action. Lastly, ‘Neighbours’, which addresses cooperation with EU neighbouring countries, arises as a new horizontal action in the new scheme. •

“Think Baltic, think together”

Charlina Vitcheva, Director of Directorate H in the European Commission’s DG Regio, urges European Structural and Investment Fund programmes to prioritise macro-regional actions.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is pioneering the embedding of macro-regional strategy into the future European Structural and Investment Funds. This calls for a joint and pro-active approach of Member States. This statement was given by Charlina Vitcheva, Director in the European Commission’s DG Regio, in the joint meeting on the Partnership Agreements and the EUSBSR which took place on 11 January 2013 in Arlanda, Sweden.

COOPERATION IS THE KEY WORD

Charlina Vitcheva presented the position of the European Commission’s DG Regio on how the EUSBSR could be embedded into national and regional programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds in 2014-2020. She stated that coordination of all five Common Strategic Framework (CSF) funds plays an important role to reinforce cooperation.

Coordination, cooperation and macro-regional context is well reflected in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR). However, it should be noted that the legislative package for CSF funding for 2014-2020 is not finalised thus it might be subject to change.

Charlina Vitcheva listed the following CPR Articles which support aligning of macro-regional strategies into the future CSF funding programmes:

- Article 11 on CSF;
- Article 14 on Partnership Agreements;
- Article 87 (2c, vi) on Operational Programmes.

She underlined that the Articles mentioned above provide a number of anchors through which the EUSBSR should be embedded in the programming process. She also stated that the European Structural and Investment Fund programmes should prioritise

macro-regional actions, which could be implemented through specific implementation mechanisms e.g. specific calls for proposals or preferential selection criteria.

EUSBSR IS PART OF EU 2020

Charlina Vitcheva emphasised that macro-regional strategies should be seen as a part of the strategic framework for future funding (see graphic on the right).

The EUSBSR is not a separate policy level in the strategic programming, it is strongly linked to the EU 2020 Strategy. Cooperation possibilities within the CSF funding differ between the Member States in the Baltic Sea region due to the various range of eligible actions and financial amounts per country as well as priorities of the regions. However, common areas of cooperation should be searched for. **“You need to think Baltic, think together as cooperation is the key in the process”**, she stated.

THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES ON THE MEMBER STATES

According to Vitcheva, the Partnership Agreement coordinators and Operational Programme drafters need:

(1) to build up cooperation process by identifying joint cooperation areas that have an added value for particular Member States or regions (content-based embedding is needed). This means that national needs and interests have to be identified through a macro-regional approach.

(2) to define mechanisms or methods for cooperation (e.g. alignment of policies, coordination of funding or joint programming) which could lead, in an ideal case, to joint programming.

(3) to embed the EUSBSR into



Charlina Vitcheva. | ULF WIKSTRÖM



Macro-regional strategies should be seen as a part of the strategic framework for future funding.

the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes by making reference to the objectives of the EUSBSR or defining particular Flagship Projects that would be supported under the programmes.

(4) to focus on achievable and measurable results is seen as the fourth step to success.

The nationalisation of the EUSBSR Action Plan’s targets and indicators is crucial, as well as adjusting them to the EU 2020 Strategy. •

Cooperation model across external borders

The Turku Process is a collaboration initiative, inspired by the EUSBSR, aiming at strengthening cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, particularly with Russian partners.

Key initiatives

The key initiatives of the Turku Process include innovative enterprise (green housing technologies), environment (water treatment and agriculture) and labour market cooperation.

Europe is facing an interesting time of evaluating existing and building-up new macro-regions. Many of the challenges facing Europe and particular macro-regions can be addressed efficiently only in close and constructive cooperation among EU Member States and involving EU neighboring countries.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is calling for strong cooperation between eight EU Member States and our neighboring countries, especially Russia and Norway. Involving of EU neighboring countries in the implementation of the EUSBSR is important to contribute to the objectives of the Strategy. The EUSBSR is built upon a number of areas and activities of mutual interest and benefit of EU Member States and neighbouring countries that are important strategic partners in the Baltic Sea region.

There are several parallel actions taken by the partners trying actively to cooperate within the common priorities of the macro-region. This is evident when comparing, for example, the priorities of the EUSBSR and the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the North-West Federal District of Russia. Both settings strive for an improvement of the environmental, economic and accessible conditions of the Region.

CITY LEVEL INITIATIVE

The Turku Process is a city level initiative, which broadens the scope of local authority cooperation into implementation of the EUSBSR. The Turku Process is a welcomed initiative that thereby increases the multi-level involvement and governance of



Turku has been the venue of many key international events. Last August, a statue was unveiled in Turku near the place where the Russian Czar Alexander I and the Swedish Crown Prince Charled XIV Johan agreed on the future of Northern Europe in 1812. | ARTO TAKALA

the EUSBSR. The Turku Process was initiated by the City of Turku and the Regional Council of Southwest Finland in 2010.

In this respect, the initiative was based on continued cooperation between the City of Turku and City of St. Petersburg and inspired by the launch of the EUSBSR, the work of HELCOM and other institutions and programmes present in the macro-region. This cooperation model aims at bringing together stakeholders 'across the borders' in the Baltic Sea region, with special emphasis on cooperation with regional partners.

The Turku Process is fostering a dialogue among partners on cooperation and builds concrete cross-border actions. The Turku Process utilises local authority expertise and knowledge to answer regional challenges as identified by the EUSBSR. Currently, the key initiatives of the Turku Process are in the field of innovative enterprise,

environment and labour market cooperation.

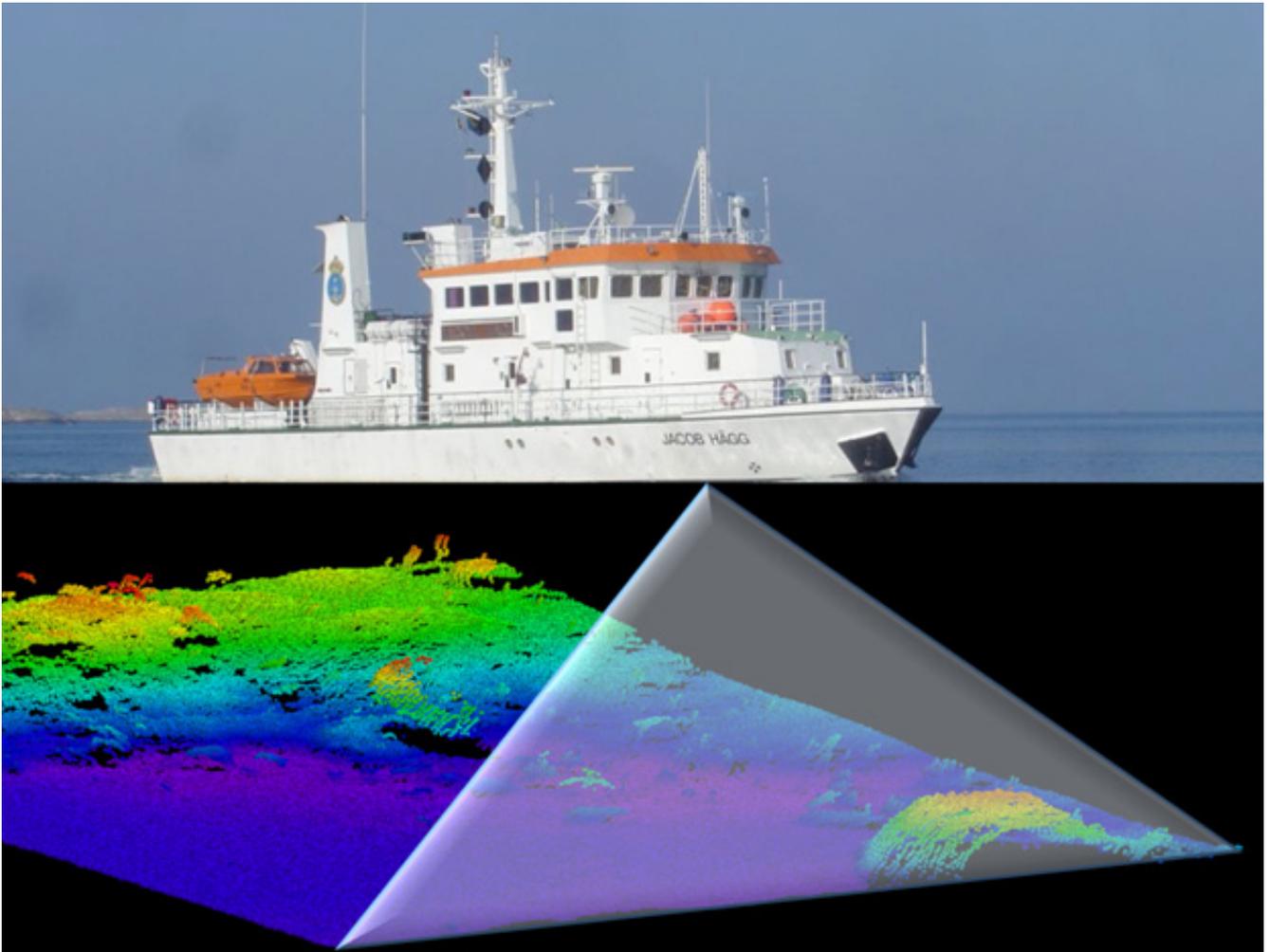
TRIPARTITE COORDINATION

The Turku Process is planned and led by a tripartite coordination group, consisting of City of St. Petersburg, City of Hamburg and City of Turku/Region of Southwest Finland, with the last party serving as the coordinator. Together with the CBSS Secretariat, the Turku Process has become leaders of the Horizontal Action "Neighbours" in the reviewed EUSBSR Action Plan.

What can be learned from the Turku Process? Every region has its own particular features, so copying experiences is not really possible. The Baltic Sea region can demonstrate that having the agreed framework for action helps to energise regional cooperation and thereby increase regional knowledge and development facing actual challenges of the regions and the whole macro-region. •

Maritime goes digital

Two Flagship Projects of the Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security – ‘MONALISA’ and ‘Speed up re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports’ – use modern technology to ensure reliable information for safe navigation at sea and more efficient route planning.



The survey vessel 'Jacob Hägg', of the Swedish Maritime Administration, explores the seabed with modern technology to optimise shipping routes.

‘MONALISA’

‘MONALISA’ is a Motorways of the Sea project which aims at making a tangible contribution to efficient, safe and environmentally friendly maritime transport. The project obtained Flagship Project status in the EUSBSR in 2012.

The aim of the ‘MONALISA’ project is to speed-up hydrographic re-surveys for the major navigational areas in Swedish and Finnish waters in the Baltic Sea, develop a functional system for exchange of maritime data, demonstrate a new model for

route planning and concept model automatic verification system.

The European Commission has highlighted the importance of creating safer navigation routes and the ‘MONALISA’ project, led by the Swedish Maritime Administration and including partners in Denmark and Finland, is a regional response to this.

One part of the ‘MONALISA’ project is to develop, test and demonstrate a new concept of dynamic and proactive route planning. The concept is designed to provide shipping operators with information that enables to

operate their business in the safest, environmentally friendliest and most efficient manner possible. The route plans are also exchanged to other vessels and to traffic centers ashore.

“The project has attracted a considerable international interest, which confirms that we are on the right track”, said Magnus Sundström, Project Manager for ‘MONALISA’.

The ‘MONALISA’ project is co-financed by the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and will run until 2013. More information at: www.monalisaproject.eu •

SUCCESS STORIES

RE-SURVEYING OF SHIPPING ROUTES AND PORTS

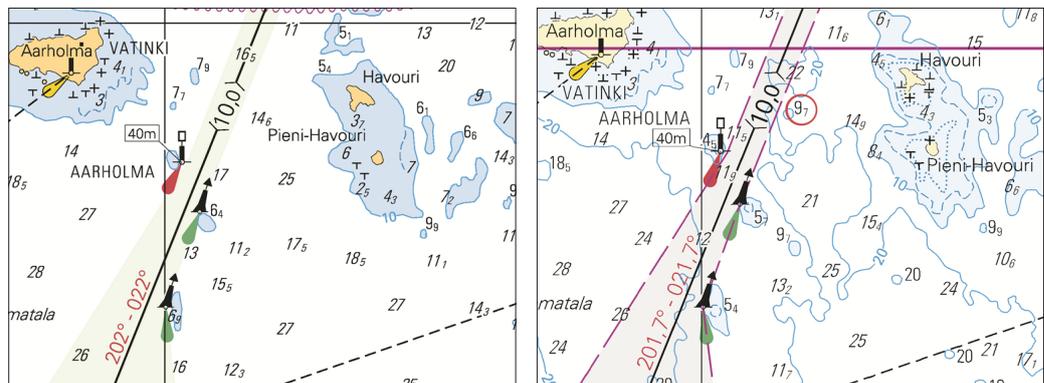
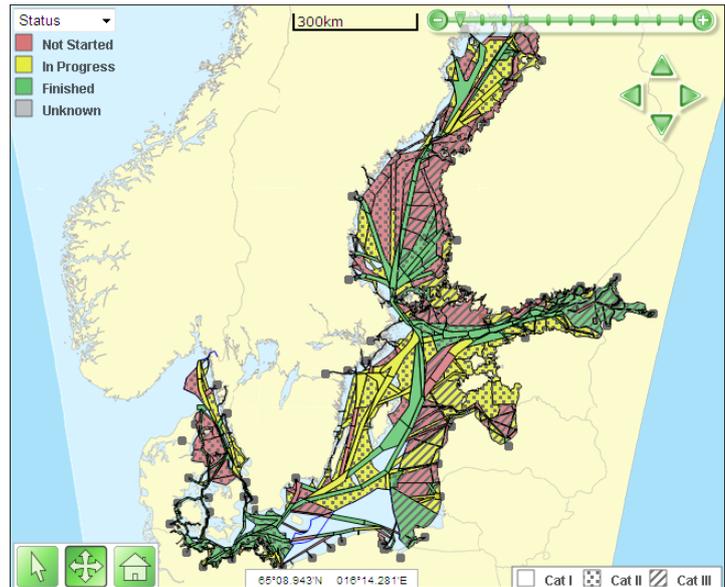
One of the Flagship Projects of this priority area concerns the re-surveying of shipping routes and ports in the Baltic Sea region. Electronic charts (ECDIS) will be soon a mandatory navigation tool. However, no matter how precisely a position is indicated by GPS, the information is not useful without reliable and exact charts. Also the increasing size and speed of ships set new requirements to the chart information. For exceptional cases (e.g. ice condition or accidents) and environmental protection there are needs for accurate depth information also outside routes. As many of today's nautical charts are based on somewhat inaccurate surveys up to 100 years old, there is a need for re-surveying with modern technology.

In the early 2000's it was clearly recognised that the status of hydrographic surveys on the Baltic Sea is not satisfactory. In 2001 the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) agreed at ministerial level to request the Baltic Sea

countries to develop a scheme for systematic re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports in order "to ensure that safety of navigation is not endangered by inadequate source information". In 2002 the Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission (BSHC) of the International Hydrographic Organisation approved the first version of Harmonised Hydrographic Re-Survey. The HELCOM 2010 Ministerial Declaration agreed to extent the re-survey scheme to cover the whole Baltic Sea area and requested the Baltic Sea countries to present their national re-survey plans by 2013 including time schedule estimations and sufficient funding for re-surveys of areas used for shipping.

The efforts to speed up these re-surveys obtained the label of Flagship

The status of re-surveys is kept in a dedicated re-survey database. The current status can be seen here.



Nautical Chart before and after re-surveys. After re-surveys more detailed depth contours can be seen on the chart and a critical shallow 9.7 m found very near to a fairway of 10.0 m draft.

Project in the EUSBSR in order to underline the importance of the work, and has helped to increase the commitment of all Baltic Sea countries and raise the awareness of the re-surveys.

All Baltic Sea countries are now committed to this re-survey scheme. There is a clear goal to complete re-surveys of areas used for shipping by 2030. Hydrographic surveys are a long term activity and are mainly funded by national budgets. External EU TEN-T funding is used by Finland and Sweden during 2011-2013 in the 'MONALISA' project. These re-surveys have been carried out by private companies and they have speeded up the completion of excessive areas on the Gulf of Finland. The BSHC has recommended its members to apply

for external funding from EU TEN-T in the financial perspective 2014-2020.

The re-surveys have already proved most useful: new shallows or shallower areas previously unknown have been found on critical areas. The efficiency of re-survey work has increased by systematic planning and by close co-operation within neighbouring countries. In some cases the neighbouring countries have agreed to allow re-surveys on the other's areas of responsibility in order to increase efficiency. Some Traffic Separation Schemes have been modified based on the new information from re-surveys.

This work has good political support within the Baltic Sea countries and it has been recognised as a good example of regional cooperation within hydrography. •

“Our vision is to provide a regional contribution to the global level”

The Priority Area Coordinators for Maritime Safety and Security, Bjarke W. Bøtcher and Sanna Sonninen, state their opinion on the current state of play of regional cooperation in the Baltic Sea region as far as the maritime sector is concerned.

A lot of vessels sail the Baltic Sea every day and large accidents rarely occur. Why is regional cooperation on maritime safety and security needed?

Bjarke W. Bøtcher: The Baltic Sea is one of the World’s most heavily trafficked seas and more than 2,000 ships sail the Baltic at any point of time. As much as 7% of the world’s oil transport passes the Gulf of Finland. To enter or exit the Baltic, vessels have to pass through the narrow and shallow straits of Denmark. From an environmental point of view, the Baltic is vulnerable as a semi-closed sea with brackish water. At the same time, maritime traffic is growing as is also the size and draught of ships. Statistically, this may lead to accidents. Fortunately, the level of competence and the standard of vessels is generally high. But we wouldn’t like to postpone increased safety until the surface of our common sea is one day covered with oil, wouldn’t we?

Shipping is by definition global, and the maritime sector strongly prefers global regulation rather than European or regional rules in order to ensure equal competition. What is the added value of regional cooperation on the top of existing cooperation in the International Maritime Organization or under the European Maritime Safety Agency, to name but a few?

Sanna Sonninen: Shipping is indeed global and will remain so. Historically, the countries around the Baltic Sea have been leading players in shipping, and even today our countries have a strong influence globally. Vessels registered in Denmark e.g. take care



The Priority Area Coordinators for Maritime Safety and Security Bjarke W. Bøtcher, from the Danish Maritime Authority, and Marjukka Syväterä and Sanna Sonninen, from the Finnish Transport Safety Agency. | GABRIEL ALVAREZ

“We would not like to postpone increased safety until the surface of our sea is one day covered with oil”

of 10% of global trade, and the Baltic is one of the seas best connected with ferry routes. In Finland, some of the world’s largest and most modern cruise liners are being built. The region also has a lot of competent suppliers to the maritime sector. We have previously witnessed, that new technology and methodology developed in this region for the maritime sector has spread and become global standard. A good example is the Automatic Identification System (AIS) that allows vessels to see each other’s

course and speed, and allowing authorities to monitor real time vessel traffic from ashore. A common understanding and an innovative approach means that the region can easily serve as a laboratory and test-bed for new developments.

The objective of our work is to make the Baltic Sea a leading region in maritime safety and security and our vision is to use this position to provide a regional contribution to the global level. This, in turn, will also foster opportunities for the creation of jobs and growth in the blue sector of our region. The vision is, admittedly, ambitious, but hardly unrealistic. We already witness that the development of the future of navigation, so-called enhanced navigation with dynamic provision of data to the helmsman, is to a large extent

IN FOCUS - PRIORITY AREA ON MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY

developed in the countries of the Baltic Sea, while the results are followed carefully worldwide and may soon be used e.g. in the Arctic.

How is the priority area organised and how is the participation of all countries around the Baltic Sea facilitated?

Bjarke W. Bøtcher: The Priority Area is jointly coordinated by the Danish Maritime Authority and the Finnish Transport Safety Agency, which have established a close dialogue. Although coordination takes time, it improves the quality of decisions to discuss things with a partner in another country.

To ensure that activities are anchored all over the region, an international Steering Committee was set up in 2010. This Committee consist of representatives of maritime authorities and relevant regional organisations such as HELCOM, CBSS and NDPTL. All EU Member States of the Baltic Sea region attend, and the Committee welcomes participation of other Baltic Sea states. Contrary to most meetings in other international organisations, the Committee is quite heterogeneous and it provides interesting and more practical discussions when people from a range of different authorities meet.

What are the major achievements of the work of the Priority Area and its projects so far?

Bjarke W. Bøtcher: The successful establishment of a regional project-based dialogue on maritime safety and security in our Steering Committee can already be considered a result. The Committee has so far convened 8 times and e.g. commissioned a report with scenarios for the future development of maritime safety in the region. Naturally, the more concrete results can be found in these flagship projects that are already completed or have progressed so far that the results are materialising. In particular, it is worth mentioning the development and testing of infrastructure and services for e-Navigation

“The fact that the results of our Flagship Projects are already being used proofs their added value”

developed by the EfficienSea project and the methodology for improved exchange of maritime security data among authorities of the region developed and tested by Baltic Sea Maritime Functionalities and Maritime Surveillance North. The fact that the results of these projects are already being used and taken further by new projects proofs their added value.

Which new initiatives can be expected in the coming year?

Sanna Sonninen: The Coordinators are considering suggesting the appointment of a group of ‘wise men’ who should look into which future challenges the region can expect in the field of maritime safety and propose measures to meet those. Furthermore, this year several of the Priority Area’s Flagship Projects will be completed, and their results have to be conveyed to the policy level. This also implies, that new projects –in particular projects encompassing



A buoy tender checking that the aids to navigation are in place off the island of Langeland in the Great Belt, where the largest vessels are passing on their way to or from the Baltic Sea.

all or the majority of countries of the region— should be identified. The timing is quite good, as from 2014 the new EU financial perspective begins, which means new project funds. Thus, project makers are encouraged to prepare proposals for future projects to increase maritime safety and security in the Baltic Sea.

More: <http://pa13.dma.dk> •

Projects in the Priority Area on Maritime Safety and Security

Succesfully completed Flagship Projects

- Conduct a technical feasibility study on a Baltic Sea Coastguard Network (Baltic Sea Maritime Functionalities Network - BSMF)
- Become a pilot region for the integration of maritime surveillance systems (Maritime Surveillance in the Northern European Sea basins - MARSUNO)
- Become a pilot region for e-Navigation (Efficient, Safe and Sustainable Traffic at Sea - EfficienSea)

Current Flagship Projects

- Speed up re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports
- Develop a plan to reduce the number of accidents in fisheries
- Minimising the risk of transportation of dangerous goods by sea (MIMIC)
- Development of Shipping Routes and e-Navigation in the Baltic Sea (MONALISA)
- To create a centre for knowledge and innovation in the field of maritime safety and security (Baltic Sea Maritime Science Park)
- To ensure Safe and Efficient Winter Navigation in the Baltic Sea (WinMos)

The EUSBSR seed money facility is underway

A seed money facility has been made available to fund preparation of projects in line with the objectives of the EUSBSR. These projects have to be financed by different sources e.g. EU Structural Funds, national funding agencies or other funding programmes in 2014 and beyond.

The partnership for projects should be made up of at least three organisations representing at least three different Baltic Sea Region countries. The project should have one coordinating partner from a EU-Member State located in the Baltic Sea Region.

Applications for seed money projects can be submitted anytime as from mid-February 2013. A seed money 'Info day' took place in Berlin on 21 February 2013. In this respect, consultation days will take place in Riga (14-15 March 2013) and Rostock (on request).

A website for the seed money facility is found at <http://seed.eusbsr.eu> •

CBSS launches a call to initially support projects in the South Eastern Baltic

The CBSS has launched a support facility of one million euro on 1 March 2013, to be implemented over a period of three years, and will initially be used to facilitate development of projects connected to the new initiative South Eastern Baltic Area Modernisation Partnership (SEBA) which was recognised as a part of the newly defined EUSBSR Horizontal Action 'Neighbours'. Preliminary fields of interest include youth, sustainable development, tourism, public-private partnerships and university cooperation.

After the initial period, this facility will also cover general projects in regional cooperation. More information will be published at the following website: www.cbss.org •



About seed money

- Register for seed money information day
- What is seed money?
- Which topics can be addressed by the seed money projects?
- Who can apply?
- How to compose a partnership?
- What is the size of the seed money

Swedish Institute opens a call for applications on projects on sustainability and regional challenges

The Swedish Institute (SI) annually proclaims the availability of project funding for Thematic Partnerships in the Baltic Sea region. The projects are to be action-oriented and support cooperation between different sectors and participants.

The goal is for the thematic partnerships to stimulate the creation of new, broad networks as well as increased cooperation in the region. In 2013 project applications are welcome under the following themes: (1) an ecologically sustainable region, (2) sustainable growth for increased prosperity and (3) regional challenges.

A thematic partnership must include at least three countries eligible for funding (Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova) being Sweden one of them.

The electronic application system for thematic partnerships opens on 1 March 2013. The deadline for project proposals is 1 April 2013. You can read more about this call for applications at the following website: www.si.se/thematicpartnership •

A specific website for the seed money facility to support the implementation of EUSBSR projects is available at: <http://seed.eusbsr.eu>

Nordic Council of Ministers and NEFCO fund projects throughout 2013

The Nordic Council of Ministers funds projects and activities on a yearly basis. Project ideas can be submitted throughout the year. In addition, the Nordic Environment Finance Cooperation (NEFCO) makes available loans and capital investments for projects which may bring environmental benefits for the Baltic Sea region. •

Funding opportunities:

EUSBSR seed money

Submission of project proposals from mid-February 2013. Consultation days will take place in Riga (14-15 March 2013) and Rostock (on request).

Swedish Institute

A call is now open for the following themes: (1) an ecologically sustainable region, (2) sustainable growth for increased prosperity and (3) regional challenges. The deadline for submitting project proposals is 1 April 2013.

CBSS

A call opened on 1 March 2013 to initially support projects in the South Eastern Baltic Area.

Nordic Council of Ministers

Project funding on a yearly basis. Project ideas can be submitted throughout the year.

NEFCO

Loans and capital investments for projects which may bring environmental benefits for the Baltic Sea region.



Photo. | SHUTTERSTOCK

4 March 2013

HELCOM-BONUS Stakeholder Conference

Helsinki, Finland

The Sixth HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan Stakeholder Conference and the Third BONUS Forum will address the future research needs of the Baltic Sea. Policy makers, funders, science community and others with a stake in the sustainable management action in the Baltic Sea region are welcomed to the Conference.

4 March 2013

HELCOM Stakeholder Conference: Baltic Sea - NECA

Helsinki, Finland

The aim of the event is to shed light on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Nitrogen Oxide Emission Control Area (NECA). The participants will represent ship owners and ports of the HELCOM member countries, manufacturers of related technology and other stakeholders.

5-6 March 2013

BSR Stars & StarDust High Level Group Meeting

Tallinn, Estonia

A High Level Group Meeting will gather representatives of the EUSBSR Flagship Project BSR Stars and the StarDust project. Both projects are part of the Priority Area on Innovation and Research.

10 April 2013

Seminar on maritime safety in the Baltic Sea region

Karlskrona, Sweden

Expertise about maritime safety will be shared by representatives from authorities, cargo owners, shipping companies and ports from the Baltic Sea region. Keynote speaker will be Karin Enström, Swedish Minister of Defence.

10-11 April 2013

4th Working Meeting on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Helsinki, Finland

Following the initiative started in 2010, INTERACT Point Turku, in close cooperation with Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission, is organising the 4th Working Meeting on the EUSBSR. The Meeting will be aiming at inviting key stakeholders of the EUSBSR and Member State representatives responsible for national strategic planning for Europe 2020 Strategy to identify concrete areas of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region for mutual benefit in 2014-2020.

The discussions will turn around the objectives of the EUSBSR and related topics that are of great relevance for the Member States in the macro-region, namely:

- i) 'Save the sea' and implementation of environmental measures of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (including energy efficiency and renewable energy);
- ii) 'Connect the region' and TEN-T transport corridors and smart energy grids;
- iii) 'Increase prosperity' and Smart Specialisation Strategies (R&D, innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness and education).

The registration opens at the beginning of March 2013.

29-30 May 2013

15th Annual Baltic Development Summit

Riga, Latvia

The topics for this year include the state of the Region, energy, investment promotion in the Region, the digital single market and smart specialisation, growth and competitiveness.

More information about events can be found at the EUSBSR website. Presentations, agendas and programmes, reports and pictures have been also made available for download. Please visit www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/pages/events



Jean-Marc Venineaux, from DG Regio - European Commission, presented the new opportunities that the updated Action Plan of the EUSBSR. | JOANNA WOJTKOWSKA

The added value of the EUSBSR

More than 50 participants attended the workshop on 'Added value of the EUSBSR' which was held on 23-24 January 2013 in Warsaw, Poland.

In the efforts of showing the achievements and benefits brought by the EUSBSR, the workshop aimed at demonstrating the added value of cooperation within the EUSBSR as well as presenting new opportunities and examples of good practices.

In this respect, the relevance of working in cooperation and how the EUSBSR can contribute to the development of the region were addressed.

The updated EUSBSR Action Plan was also one of the main topics. The

Content of the workshop on 'Added value of the EUSBSR'

- Added value of cooperation, particularly in the Baltic Sea region.
- The opportunities given by the updated EUSBSR Action Plan.
- A storytelling exercise.
- The added value on different EUSBSR Flagship Projects.
- INTERACT services to promote cooperation.

new setting gives new opportunities to stakeholders by reinforcing the alignment of the Strategy with the main priorities of Europe 2020 (smart,

sustainable and inclusive growth). In addition, the new concept establishes a more focused approach by concentrating on three EUSBSR objectives: to save the sea, to connect the region and to increase prosperity.

The added value of projects also had a prominent place in the workshop. A few EUSBSR Flagship Projects were presented and their added value displayed.

Additionally, a storytelling exercise took place in order to encourage and train stakeholders to spread information about EUSBSR-related achievements.

A series of workshops on the added value of the EUSBSR will take place throughout 2013 in different cities of the Baltic Sea region. •

