

RNSC

KEY POINTS FOR THE DISCUSSION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME ON THE STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSED BY RNSC

1. As we were informed by representatives of European Commission (in Brussels and St Petersburg Liaison Office, EC Delegation to Russia) the allocations of funds in amount of 7,5 million EURO for Baltic Sea Regional Neighbourhood Programme have been assigned only indicatively. In case if **required amendments in existing INTERREG III B programme in according with Guidance Note of NNP** (priorities, management structures and procedures, project pipeline elaborated in consultation with all the partners) will be not introduced, this funding will be cut off or reallocated.

In this connection we would also like to refer to the Letter to Managing Authority of BSR INTERREG IIIB NP from the European Commission (January 1st, 2004):

As is already noted in the received draft further amendments due to the BSR INTERREG IIIB Programme becoming a Neighbourhood Programme should be expected.

The previous correspondence with Joint Secretariat that Interreg IIIB Programme remains unchanging is not acceptable.

Letter from Marta Plichta: Regarding BSR INTERREG IIIB there will be not new priorities, or different eligible areas etc. BSR programme structure and objectives will remain the same. As in BSR programme when programme was developed, all 11 countries were involved in preparation of the programme and all 11 countries have the same voting rights in MC, SC, therefore it is not planned to change it. The difference regarding implementation of Neighborhood programme will be that nominated representatives by Russia will represent all N-W Russia regions and once taken decision will approve also funds from Tacis fro Russian region.

2. As you know within previous implementation of Interreg III B programme and projects the basic problem for Russia was connected with **insufficient coordination between Tacis and Interreg**. It was really very strange to find that Draft amended BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme Complement is still indicated Tacis Small and Micro (which are closing now) as the financial instrument for Russia:

7.2 Financing instruments for non-EU project partners

7.2.2 Tacis Belarus and Russian project partners may be eligible to apply for co-financing from the Tacis programme. In particular these are the Tacis CBC Small Project Facility and the Tacis CBC Micro Facility, which are directed to regional and local authorities seems appropriate to co-finance participation in the INTERREG III B programme.

3. We would also like to mention that BSR Interreg IIIB **programme priorities differ** from priorities designated in New Neighbourhood Program.

While BSR Interreg IIIB programme aims

Promotion of spatial development approaches and actions for specific territories and sectors, Promotion of territorial structures supporting sustainable BSR development and Transnational promotion of institution building, strengthening the capacity for spatial development activities,

New Neighbourhood Program identifies the following objectives:

Promoting sustainable economic and social development in the border areas; Working together to address common challenges, in fields such as environment, public health, and the prevention of and fight against organised crime; Ensuring efficient and secure borders; Promoting local, “people-to-people” type actions.

How the issue of BSR IR IIIB priorities meeting NNP priorities to be resolved?

We believe there should be a discussion on reallocation of funds between Interreg IIIB priorities in order to include priorities for e.g, environmental protection, health, social affairs etc. (people-to people)

4. Also the **geographical focuses and priorities** is becoming great issue taking into consideration that **only this Baltic Sea NP among existing NP Programmes for Russia is having transnational character**. The rest five are only for cross border regions and countries. It means that such countries as Sweden, Denmark and Germany are outsiders for these resources. Moreover all regions in Finland and New members states without land border with Russia are also becoming outsiders. So the Baltic Sea NP is becoming only source to support cooperation projects and the pressure on it will be very strong.

We insist on discussing possible amendments within Interreg IIIB priorities, e.g. reserved for institutional cooperation, to foster and further develop cooperation of the Russian regions and Swedish, Danish, German, Polish local/regional authorities/organisations. Scope of priorities may be the same as in the existing CBC SPF. Further to these multi-regional projects involving e.g. Karelia and St Petersburg are also possible only under the BSR NP.

5. We really need to undertake very clear joint actions in order **to organise right programming process** for the Baltic Sea NP and clarify:

1. How the priorities of the NP will be integrated into Interreg III B

2. How the consultation process with partners, including Russia will be organized

3. What is the composition of the Task Force and how Russia will be presented in it

We suggest participation of the National Coordinating Unit; National sub-committee and the chairing regions as members and possible participation of other regions as observers.

4. As you are probably aware that under the NPs are foreseen projects that have clear CBC impact however are implemented only in one country. We should consider if such projects are possible within the BSR NP and many other questions, concerning management structures, project pipeline etc which we need to clarify during the first half of this year.

6. So on behalf of the participating Russian regions we are coming with Initiative **to set up the specific Task Force for elaborating of the genuine NP with full Russian participation** based on the experience and RNSC network. The BSR Interreg IIIB Russian National Sub-Committee is willing to take active part in this consultation process.