

Highlights:

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NORWAY TAKES OVER CHAIRMANSHIP IN THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The chairmanship of the BSR INTERREG III B NP Steering Committee has been transferred from Germany to Norway. Mr Wilfried Görmar, the Steering Committee chairman for

2004, and Mr Arve Skjerpen, the newly started chairman for 2005, had a joint meeting with the Joint Secretariat on the 18th of January 2005 in Rostock. Tasks and strategies of the Steering Committee foreseen in this year were discussed in the meeting.

The co-chairmanship for the year 2005 is held by Russia. The period of the chairmanship is one year. •

SEVENTH CALL FOR PROJECT APPLICATIONS TO BE OPENED

The seventh call for main project applications will be open as from 1 February 2005 and will be closed on 7 March 2005. The Applicant's Pack (application form, co-financing statements and other accompanying documents) will be available for download at www.bsrinterreg.net/toapply.html. The approval decisions on seventh round projects will be made during the Steering Committee meeting in Oslo, Norway on 2-3 June 2005. •

SEVENTH CALL FOR SEED MONEY APPLICATIONS TO BE OPENED

The seventh call for applications for the Seed Money facility will be launched on 14 February 2005 and closed on 14 March 2005. The anticipated date for funding decision by the Joint Secretariat, on behalf of the Steering Committee, is 25 April 2005. This Seed Money call



From left: Leena Anttila (JS), Odd Godal (NO), Thomas Weber (JS), Wilfried Görmar (DE), Wiktor Szydarowski (JS), Arve Skjerpen (NO), Susanne Scherrer (JS), Ann-Irene Sæternes (NO), Roman Kozlowski (JS), Marta Plichta (JS).

is open for all measures of the programme. It is designed as an opportunity for project promoters to advance their ideas in an initial stage in order to prepare applications for the forthcoming eighth main call for the BSR INTERREG III B NP projects in autumn 2005. •

BSR INTERREG III B NP AND VASAB 2010 OFFICIALS MEET PROFESSOR DANUTA HÜBNER, THE NEW COMMISSIONER FOR REGIONAL POLICY

On the 20 of December 2004 representatives of the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme and of the VASAB 2010 political co-operation had an opportunity to meet the new Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms Danuta Hübner. The visit to Brussels was dedicated to briefing Ms Hübner on the

achievements of the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme implementation and of the political co-operation in transnational spatial planning development.

The meeting was held in an informal and interactive atmosphere, with discussion

raised over the issues highlighted in the presentation. These included experiences of transnational co-operation from both INTERREG II C and III B funding periods, success stories of individual projects and durable outcomes of their activities as well as lessons learned and obstacles encountered in

advancing joint actions in spatial planning and regional development.

Ms Hübner was especially interested in the Baltic Sea co-operation model, in which the programme and project activities are strongly backed by political processes such as VASAB 2010, Baltic 21 and others. The strategic collaboration of ministers responsible for spatial planning and development for instance sets a vision for the Baltic Sea Region that later on – translated to actions within the INTERREG III B Programme – feeds and enhances the new vision. The Commission also acknowledged the Baltic Sea Region as a successful ‘EU Enlargement Laboratory’, in which old and new Member States as well as the neighbours to the European Union (Belarus, Russia and Norway) create sustainable networks



From right: Elisabeth Helander (EC), Klaus Rave (MA), Preben Gregersen (MC), Zbigniew Rykowski (VASAB), Wiktor Szydarowski (JS), Danuta Hübner (EC), Wilfried Görmar (SC), Jacek Zaucha (VASAB), Thomas Weber (JS)

of organisations in territorial co-operation and policy-making at various levels of governance.

Several references were also made to the experience of the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein – a public bank acting as the Managing and Paying Authority of the Programme since 1997. The Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein also hosts the Joint

Secretariat, with offices in Rostock, Karlskrona and Riga.

Ms Hübner thanked for the valuable observations contributing to the substance of the transnational co-operation scheme within the new funding period and announced further contacts with the BSR INTERREG III B NP and VASAB 2010 authorities in order to make use of the aggregated experience. •

LEAD PARTNERS OF PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE SIXTH CALL HAVE MET IN ROSTOCK FOR THE INFORMATION SEMINAR

The Lead Partner information seminar for the 15 approved projects of the sixth call took place in Rostock on the 13 of January 2005. Altogether 30 persons took part in the seminar representing all the



new projects. The aim of the seminar was to give practical information concerning the implementation and reporting of the BSR INTERREG III B NP projects. It also served as a contact forum, which may lead to further co-operation between projects. For presentations and agenda go to download section on www.bsrinterreg.net/toimplement.html.

For more information please contact Ms Kirsi Laitio (kl@bsrinterreg.net). •

SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND AUDITING – 29 APRIL IN ROSTOCK

A seminar for Financial Managers and Auditors of projects approved in the sixth call of the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme will take place on 29 April 2005 in Rostock. The purpose of the seminar is to disseminate general information and initiate exchange of first-hand experience in financial management and auditing.

For more information please contact Mr Matthias Heinicke (Tel: +49 381 45484 5286, mh@bsrinterreg.net). •

A REPORT FROM THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON TRANSPORT AND ICT ISSUES, 8 DECEMBER IN LÜBECK

A thematic workshop on transport and ICT issues in the Baltic Sea Region was held in Lübeck on 8 December 2004. The event was organised together by the BSR INTERREG III B Joint Secretariat and the VASAB 2010 Secretariat, with support from the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein.

The aim of the workshop was to provide advice to stakeholders interested in submitting applications to measure 2.2. of the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme, on the missing themes and quality requirements, which should be met according to the Programme's official documents.

Summary of the workshop:

- thematic workshop combined elements of both partner search forum and quality workshop
- major aim was to investigate the absorption capacity in measure 2.2. for the upcoming round
- 59 participants were present and 15 project ideas were presented
- three project development sessions were held: (1) transport corridors and their impact on regional development, (2) freight flows, intermodality and motorways of the sea, (3) transport hazards, safety and policy-making

- presentations at the workshop helped to identify 4-6 mature project proposals capable of bidding upon the seventh call, with declared consumption potential of EUR 5-6 million ERDF
- open options for further actions – by means of initial project ideas
- collaboration of the public and private sector was addressed and it is likely to be achieved at least in two project proposals (by the Baltic Development Forum and Baltic Sea Commission of CPMR)
- Council of the Baltic Sea States offered a political platform for INTERREG projects •

SPATIAL PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (3)

By adopting the European Spatial Development perspective (ESDP), the Member States and the European Commission reached agreement on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the EU territory. The BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme shall contribute to the implementation of the ESDP and the Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea Region 2010 (VASAB 2010), which describe the goals for spatial development in the BSR, strategies how to achieve these, and first common actions for implementation. The Programme has to contribute also to the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, Baltic 21 and HELCOM recommendations. By applying a transnational approach in spatial planning, reflected in

joint solutions for joint problems that go beyond national frameworks, a better spatial cohesion of Baltic Sea region can be achieved.

Sustainable development can be achieved by employing spatial planning instruments such as regional development concepts, plans (e.g. land use) or sector strategies (e.g. transport) that define the future vision for a given territory – settlement, town, city, region or nation. It requires answers to 'where?'-questions, as for example: 'Where is untapped development? Where are new transport connections needed? Which towns, cities, regions, nations can work together in innovative ways, learning how to shape a joint future?' as well as to 'what'- questions: 'What are spatial relations/linkages bet-

ween different areas; or and to 'how'-questions: How can these areas complement each other and become more competitive?; How to find a consensus between a need for economic and social development and preservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage of a particular area?

Sustainable development means to find a compromise between short-term economic development demands and long-term management of resources. The methods to estimate effects are e.g. the „Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)", and the "Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)".

Spatial planning for sustainable development is by nature an initiative across sectors, intending to promote

economic and social development and at the same time ensuring protection, use and conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage. This makes coordination of all sector policies necessary that are relevant to the territory. The impact of different sectors on spatial structures should equally be addressed in the INTERREG III B projects, including economic, transport, cultural and social policies etc. by taking into consideration the interdependencies between sector policies. Better balanced and more coherent effects on the territory can be achieved, ensuring the implementation of the overall visions and plans of the BSR (VASAB 2010, HELCOM, Baltic 21, Northern Dimension Action Plan). This approach is reflected in the term proposed by spatial planners: **sustainable spatial development**.

References:

- ESDP: europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/som_en.htm
- VASAB 2010: www.vasab.org.pl
- Northern Dimension Action Plan: www.riso.ee/en/nordic
- Baltic 21: www.baltic21.org
- HELCOM recommendations: www.helcom.fi/helcom.html.

COMMITTED AND REMAINING FUNDS

Out of total EUR 122.7 million ERDF available for projects in III B priorities, 66% are already committed to 83 projects in 6 application calls. There remain EUR 41.2 million ERDF and EUR 0.4 million Norwegian national funds for the next three calls, that are planned for 2005 and 2006.

NEWS FROM ONGOING PROJECTS

The project Bioenergy Technology Transfer Network (BTN) was approved in the second call for proposals under measure 1.2., which focuses on the promotion of sustainable development of specific sectors. The project was established for applying the newest research results and know-how to practical problems encountered in the bioenergy field. The project also promotes sustainable spatial development of bioenergy sector by transnational actions.

The aims of BTN are supported by some actions taken by the European Union as the rural and sustainable development forms one of the biggest challenges of the EU. To tackle this the EU is now aiming at duplicating the exploitation of renewable energy sources by the year 2010. The target for the increase of bioenergy is even more ambitious. The policies and legislation mostly support the use of bioenergy and the present R&D has resulted in reliable technologies. However, new technologies are not implemented widely enough and efficient services for the end users are missing. Only few strategic measures have been developed to promote sustainable use of the bioenergy potential through spatial planning processes. These are the challenges BTN is facing.

The main objectives of the project are to create integrated strategies for the sustainable production and use of bioenergy; to develop training methods and materials to enable efficient dissemination of latest technological and environmental knowledge; to

develop infrastructure to fulfil the requirements of the training and development; to clear bottlenecks in the chain of bioenergy use; and to help companies to clear market barriers. With these actions and in co-operation with regional and local interest groups BTN aims to lay foundation for a regional bioenergy development centre (BDC) in each partner territory.



Turnip rape is a raw material of biodiesel

BTN has already been able to achieve several concrete outputs. The Regional Bioenergy Development Centre (BDC Finland) in Saarijärvi was opened in May 2003. It is today a hub of bioenergy training, applied R&D and dissemination of information in the Central-Finland. In Norway the Energy Farm as a Bioenergy Demonstration Center (BDC Norway) has been improved with more demonstration activities and further theoretical training programmes. The project has been able to increase the understanding of the spatial planning processes in partner territories related to the support of sustainable development by organising a Workshop on Bioenergy in Spatial Planning. It has also developed an innovative multiple use portable dryer for wood and agro fuels utilising passive solar energy. In addition, BTN has developed international

bioenergy training programme packages.

Even some results of the project activities are already seen: the pilot and development actions have resulted in more efficient fuel and heat production methods and technology, e.g. in the Energy Farm approximately 80% of the direct energy used for heating, drying and transportation purposes is based on bioenergy. Also the development of the BDCs and exchange of training materials have improved the learning results of the training services. In addition to these, some other regions in Europe have expressed their interest in adopting the same approach. Contacts have already been established.

BTN is a co-operation of Finnish, German, Norwegian, Estonian and Swedish partners. The Lead Partner of BTN is the Institute of Natural

Resources of the Jyväskylä Polytechnic in Finland. More information about the project can be obtained from www.bdc-network.jypoly.fi. •

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“HOW TO APPLY” SECTION ON WWW.BSRINTERREG.NET

How to apply section is designed to serve those who decided to apply for funds from the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme (main or seed money projects).

In the Applicant’s pack subsection you will find an application form and some of the most important documents necessary for preparing the application for the main project.



Seed money subsection guides to the seed money application and provides information on the approved seed money projects.

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BSR INTERREG III B NP EVENTS

	Date	Place
Seventh call for project proposals	1 February – 7 March 2005	Rostock, Germany
Seventh call for Seed Money projects	14 February - 14 March 2005	Karlskrona, Sweden
The INTERACT Neighbourhood Programmes seminar	27 – 28 January 2005	Warszawa, Poland
Seminar on financial management and auditing (for projects approved in sixth call)	29 April 2005	Rostock, Germany
Partner Search Forum	May 2005	Vilnius, Lithuania

For **FURTHER INFORMATION** please go to www.bsrinterreg.net or feel free to contact the BSR INTERREG III B Joint Secretariat.

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