

BSR INTERREG III B NP NEWSLETTER NO 20 • 04.2005

Highlights:

- 46 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN THE SEVENTH CALL
- 58 SEED MONEY APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED
- FUNDS FOR BELARUS WERE MADE AVAILABLE



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The Baltic Sea Region is still being advertised as one of the most innovative and economically most promising region in Europe. It does not harm to paint such a colourful picture of the area to the outside world. However, insiders do no longer believe in these words as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

BSR stakeholders and actors are well aware of the still existing disparities and even growing differences within the area as well as of the challenges requiring reforms and sometimes painful policy measures. Does the Baltic Sea Region have a coherent vision for its future as a competitive, innovative region including its specific ambition to strive for highest employment and environmental standards? Will the grand Nordic values of ranking quality of life for all higher than maximising profits for only a few survive in global competition?

Transnational cooperation, sponsored by INTERREG III B, is certainly just a small drop in the ocean (the Baltic Sea) compared to the am-

ount of efforts and funds needed to make the area fighting fit for scoring high in the future. Still, this drop is sparkling. There are already 83 projects going on, each of them sharing a common task, and contributing to better knowing, understanding and finally, trusting partners from other corners of the same region. Another pile of 46 applications is on the table submitted by local, regional, national and even Pan-Baltic institutions requesting support from the BSR INTERREG III B programme to implementing joint ideas. More than 50 seed money projects are in the pipeline asking for access to the programme.

Transnational cooperation is not only popular. It also helps cover the Baltic Sea Region with a densely woven web of good relations and it widely spreads innovative ideas. All people involved in this programme including the Joint Secretariat would like to see Russian and Belarusian regions being able to participate in the transnational network on equal terms now.

For INTERREGs, this is one prerequisite for the Baltic Sea Region, again and correctly, being advertised as (one of the)..... see above. •

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46 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN THE SEVENTH CALL
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The seventh call for applications was closed on 7 March 2005. The Joint Secretariat has received 46 projects applications. In total projects applied for EUR 62.5 million ERDF.

The submitted applications will go through an eligibility check and a quality assessment. The approval decision will be taken by the Steering Committee on 2-3 June 2005 in Oslo. •



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FUNDS FOR BELARUS WERE MADE AVAILABLE
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At the end of January the Belarusian government signed the Financial Agreement (budget 2004). It allows Belarusian partners to apply for external funds (Takis) in the framework of joint projects

applying in the joint calls for proposals in the Neighbourhood Programmes. Belarusian partners can apply for funds, in a joint BSR

INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme application, as from the eighth call for proposals in autumn 2005. •

A STRATEGY FOR THE REMAINING PROGRAMME PERIOD ON THE WAY

The Steering Committee's Task Force for Programme Development had its first meeting since the start of the Norwegian chairmanship. The meeting took place in Oslo at the premises of the Royal Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development on 16th February.

The main theme of the meeting was the implementation strategy for the remaining programming period. The Task Force concentrated especially on the promotion of the still missing programme themes and discussed the possibility of an extension stage for the successful ongoing projects. The future implementation strategy highly depends on the results of the seventh application round and the amount of funds left after that. The decision on the approval of the seventh round projects will be made in June 2005. More specific proposals on the future strategy will be presented in the next Task Force meeting taking place on 29th April in Helsinki. •

SUMMARY FROM INDIVIDUAL PROJECT CONSULTATIONS

| Measure | Number of consulted projects |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 1.1. | 1 |
| 1.2. | 6 |
| 1.3. | 5 |
| 2.1. | 7 |
| 2.2. | 6 |
| 2.3. | 8 |
| 3.1. | 15 |

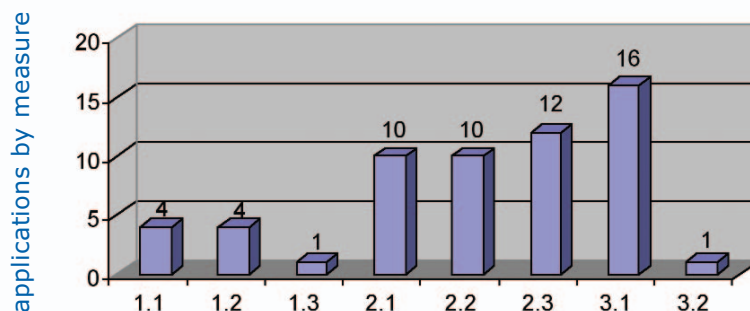
Altogether 48 projects participated in Individual Project Consultations during nine consultation days (January - February 2005) organised by the Joint Secretariat in Riga, Karlskrona and Rostock. Consultations covered issues related to the development of the project rationale and the various work-packages as well as budgetary and financial matters. The interest from the projects' promoters was very high.

All programme's priorities were covered by projects participating in consultations (apart from measure 3.2. which was excluded from the seventh call). The table gives an overview of the projects by measure. Seven projects are follow-up initiatives originating from running projects which are about to finish this year. Among all consulted projects 14 were running Seed Money projects approved in the sixth round (of 15 in total). •

58 SEED MONEY APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

The seventh call for Seed Money applications was closed on 14 March 2005. Applicants submitted 58 project proposals to the Joint Secretariat. The applications will be checked against eligibility criteria and will undergo a quality assessment. The approval decision will be taken until 25 April 2005. •

7th Seed Money Application Round, Spring 2005



NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The Neighbourhood Programme application form is in a process of approval by the EC Delegation to Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Projects that applied for funds in the seventh call for proposals and which will be approved by the Steering Committee in June 2005 will have possibility to apply retrospectively for Tacis funds for activities in Belarus

in autumn 2005 (by submitting the new NP application form).

The Info activities in Belarus will start in April 2005 and will be financed from Tacis Technical Assistance budget. As soon as the Tacis funds will be available for Russian partners the info activities will be launched also for Russia. •

NEWS FROM ONGOING PROJECTS

The project **'Advantage Hardwood – tools for integrated regional and business development'** has its origin in problems and challenges shared by the BSR countries. These are the need for converting agriculture and forestry to fit the enlarged European Union; the increasing need for joint environmental actions to achieve sustainable development; the lack of efficient market strategies for the BSR hardwood industry; and the need for efficient competence exchange and co-operation on regional level between old and new member states.

ts concerning for example biodiversity and outdoor life, are taken into account. The project also intends to increase the amount of hardwood timber available, which is essential for the hardwood business. The promotion of hardwood business, especially in SMEs, will benefit the rural development. The hardwood issues are also used as an example to visualize the regional planning aspects that will give both the planners and the industry good arguments for co-operation, thus also a better outcome for the regions involved. In addition, the Advantage Hardwood will increase problem-solving capacity and service level at the organisations involved and competitiveness in hardwood business in comparison with non-European producers.

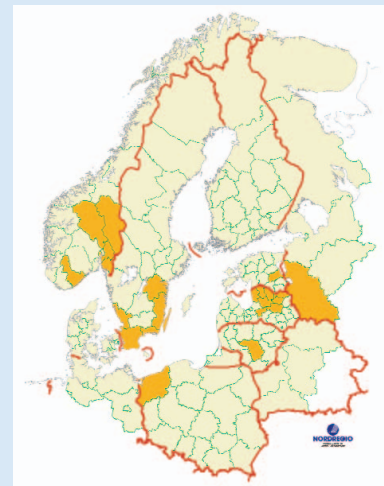
So far the project has studied and discussed key project themes in several transnational seminars and workshops. These cover e.g. the items of sustainable forest management and hardwood resources, hardwood marketing and business issues, European spatial development perspec-

FAQ: SHARING OF THE COSTS AMONG THE PROJECT PARTNERS

Costs arising from activities, goods and services performed for the benefit of all project partners (e.g. project coordination) can be shared between all participating project partners. It means that activities are implemented by one project partner (implementing partner) but partly financed by the partnership. •



tives, and use of hardwood in architecture and building construction. The seminars and workshops resulted in widened knowledge among partners and other stakeholders.



Interreg III B BSR
Location of project activities

The project has developed different pilot projects, e.g. Oak woodland model programme, Quality issues in deciduous forestry and hardwood business, and European spatial development perspective in practice. The Pilot projects in transnational and regional contexts will give further experience on the cross-sector planning model to be developed and result in ideas for research projects.

As Advantage Hardwood is characterized by learning from practice, the project has also established forest paths, which will serve as educational tools for generations of teachers and pupils. The already performed



The main aim of the project is to contribute to sustainable growth and regional development in the partner regions and surrounding areas by using deciduous forestry and hardwood as a common asset and tool to achieve the project objectives. The Advantage Hardwood project promotes the use of hardwood species, i.e. birch, oak, alder, beech etc., in forestry. Thus the environmental aspect

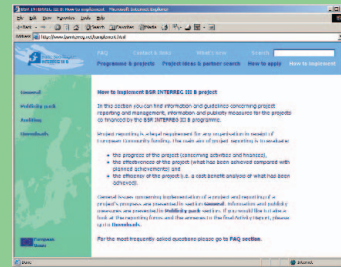
training of trainers and teachers will provide the participating regions with training opportunities even after the project period.

The Lead Partner of Advantage Hardwood is the County Administrative Board of Östergötland in Sweden. The other project partners are regional authorities and forest enterprises in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. Further information is available at www.advantagehardwood.org.

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

"How to implement" section is targeted at projects co-financed by the BSR INTERREG III B programme. This section gives information and guidelines concerning:

- project reporting and management,
- auditing,
- information and publicity measures.



In sub-section "Downloads" you will find presentations

from Lead Partner information seminars and many useful guidelines and information papers.

BSR INTERREG III B NP EVENTS

| | Date | Place |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Seminar on financial management and auditing (for projects approved in sixth call) | 29 April 2005 | Rostock, Germany |
| Steering Committee Task Force meeting | 29 April 2005 | Helsinki, Finland |
| Meeting of the national Sub-Committees | 23 May 2005 | Vilnius, Lithuania |
| Partner Search Forum | 23-24 May 2005 | Vilnius, Lithuania |
| Steering Committee meeting (III B priorities) | 2-3 June 2005 | Oslo, Norway |
| Monitoring Committee meeting | 13-14 June 2005 | Helsinki, Finland |
| Lead Partner information seminar (projects approved in 7 th call) | 21 June 2005 | Rostock, Germany |

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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