

Highlights:

- NEXT CALL TO BE OPEN IN JULY
- 17 PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE SEVENTH CALL
- UNCERTAINTY ABOUT FUTURE TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

NEXT CALL TO BE OPEN IN JULY

Measure/Priority	ERDF funds left (million EUR)
1.1.	1.2
2.1.	2.3
2.2.	7.2
2.3.	2.7
3.1. and 3.2	4

Eighth call for project applications will be open on 25 July and will be closed on 23 September 2005. Applicant's Pack will be available for download at www.bsrinterreg.net/toapply.html on the launch of the call. The Steering Committee will make approval decisions in December 2005.

There is EUR 17.5 million ERDF funds available. Measures 1.2. and 1.3. will be closed for applying projects for the rest of the programme period. All funds in these measures are already committed.

The remaining Norwegian national funds were committed during seventh call. There are no Norwegian funds left for the next calls.

A detailed guidance note for the projects applying in the eighth call is prepared and annexed to this Newsletter. The note covers i.a. following topics:

- individual project consultations
- project extension stage to implement transnational investments
- Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation
- eligibility of Russian and Belarusian partners
- opening of measure 3.2.



UNCERTAINTY ABOUT FUTURE TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

The non-agreement on the financial perspective 2007-2013 at the EU Summit on 16-17 June means that basic preconditions for future transnational cooperation under the Territorial Cooperation objective will remain uncertain for at least half a year, maybe longer. The almost fivefold increase in financing proposed by the Commission has already been cut down to the current level, ca 1,4 bn EUR,

17 PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE SEVENTH CALL

The seventh call for applications was closed on 7 March 2005. The approval decision was taken by the Steering Committee on 2-3 June 2005 in Oslo. The Steering Committee approved 17 out of 46 projects applying in the seventh call. Most of the projects are approved under conditions and will have to make clarifications and changes to their setup before signing their subsidy contracts. In total approved projects plan to spend around EUR 21.9 million ERDF. Altogether there are now 100 projects approved in the BSR INTERREG programme with more than 2300 institutions participating •

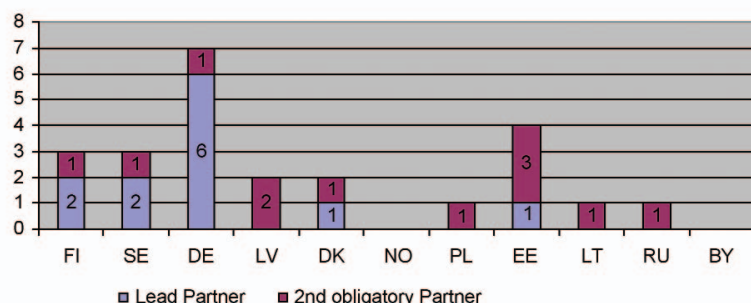
and will probably not be increased when negotiations are resumed. This may entail some rethinking on the Commission's part concerning the proposed strong focus on four priority themes and bigger "structuring" projects. Despite these uncertainties, steps have been taken to start preparation of a new transnational programme for the Baltic Sea Region in early autumn. •



Mr Harry Ekestam
Ministry of the Interior, Finland

12 SEED MONEY PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE LAST CALL

7th round Seed Money approved projects, spring 2005 applications by measure

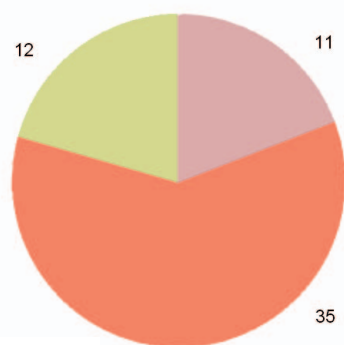


On behalf of the BSR INTERREG III B Steering Committee, the Joint Secretariat approved 12 seed money projects. The approval decision was taken on 25 April 2005. The seventh call for Seed Money applications was closed on 14 March 2005. Applicants submitted 58 project proposals to the Joint

Secretariat. The applications have been checked against eligibility criteria and a quality assessment has been performed.

At www.bsrinterreg.net/projects/app_projects.html seventh you can find seed money report for the seventh round with descriptions of

7th Seed Money application round, spring 2005 assessment result



- did not pass eligibility check
- did not pass quality assessment
- approved

the 12 approved seed money project. There you will find also short statistical summary for the round.

There will be no more seed money calls in this Programme.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE PARTNER SEARCH FORUM IN VILNIUS

On 23-24 May 2005 Vilnius in Lithuania was the venue for the fourth Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B Partner Search Forum for

bringing together prospective project ideas and professionals in the field of spatial and regional development. The Forum was organized together by the BSR INTERREG III B Joint Secretariat and Ministry of Interior of Lithuania.

RUSSIA SIGNED FINANCIAL AGREEMENT FOR TACIS 2004

The funds for Russian partners in the applying projects can now be released. The bodies managing Tacis and ERDF funds have to agree on procedures to be followed. Russian partners will be eligible for funding in the coming (eighth) call. For the first time measure 3.2. is open for the applicants. For more information please refer to the annexed guidance note.

The main purpose of the Forum was to foster and support preparation of joint projects in themes that are of high relevance of the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme at the current stage of implementation. Therefore the thematic focus of the Forum was on the Programme's priorities 2 and 3.



Two days Partner Search Forum attracted more than 100 participants and was divided into three sessions:

- plenary with presentations in relation to the conference foci,
- workshops session and
- individual project consultations.

About 30 project ideas were presented at the Forum and collected in the Project Idea catalogue, prepared for the participants. The presentations of the Forum are available at the programme's website at www.bsrinterreg.net/projects.html.

For more information please contact Ms Vineta Griekere (vg@bsrinterreg.net).



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SUMMARY FROM THE SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & AUDITING

It has become a good tradition to assist the newly approved projects with detailed information around the issues of financial management and auditing. The programme authorities put much emphasis on them by offering focused seminars to the newcomers.

On 29 April the seminar on Financial Management & Auditing took place in Rostock. It was addressed to the projects approved in the sixth application round. 13 projects were represented by their project coordinators, financial managers or auditors. "We see this seminar as an anchor point in the starting phase of the projects. What we can do

is give them a solid general idea of what the financial side of an INTERREG project is all about. The more detailed questions will surely come up in the next few weeks", Matthias Heinicke, Financial Programme Manager within the JS, summarised the nature of the workshop.

The speakers covered issues like the money and info flow, the legal framework, the requirements imposed on a project auditor, the eligibility of costs, the required reporting documents, as well as common mistakes and shortcomings.

Reflecting the increased involvement of partners from the new Member States the day's agenda included the introduction of the financial control systems in these countries. The national central auditors presented the established set-up in Poland, Latvia and Estonia. To some of the guests the last agenda point was the highlight of the event. Two guest speakers from experienced running projects gave advice based on their first-hand experience.

"This was what we hoped for: an event with very practical information, surely useful for our daily work in the project," Lithuanian guests rendered their impressions at the end of the workshop. "The closer the cooperation the more efficient the work becomes on both sides" said Rostislav Zatloukal, Financial Project Advisor, summing up the seminar.

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From FAQ: Eligibility of expenses for project partners from non-EU countries in BSR INTERREG III B programme

Travel and subsistence expenses of partners or participants from countries outside the EU can be eligible costs for a project when the meeting or seminar takes place in the EU/Norway and is part of an approved project. Hence it is not possible to co-finance costs for travel and accommodation for those partners or participants if the meeting is organised on non-EU/Norwegian territory.

The travel and subsistence expenses for partners and participants from EU Member States/Norway on parts of projects that take place in a third country (on non EU/Norwegian territory) and are vital for the success of the project as a whole are also

eligible for ERDF assistance (BSR INTERREG III B co-financing).

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GUIDANCE NOTE ON SHARING OF PROJECT COSTS AND AUDIT GUIDELINES

The note gives definition of the cost sharing, suggests reporting method and inform about obligations of project partners. It is prepared by the Joint Secretariat. You can download the note at www.bsrinterreg.net/toimplement.html in "Downloads" section.

In the same section you will also find the revised audit guidelines for the BSR INTERREG III B projects.

NEWS FROM FINALISED PROJECTS

The partner regions of the Sustainable Regional Development - High Quality Tourism 2 project - Östergötland in Sweden, Cesis in Latvia, Mecklenburg Lake District in Germany and Suwalki in Poland – are making every effort to become better known on the national and international tourism market. They are aware of the developing new trends and forms of tourism. The strengthening of high quality tourism in the rural areas and in the cities was the overall aim of HQT 2 project.

The unique landscape formation and its Ice Age origin were picked as a central theme for development of new tourism facilities, thematic tourist routes in the project regions. Ice Age Routes were developed in Mecklenburg Lake District, in Östergötland and in Cesis District. A 666 km long biking path forms the route in Mecklenburg Lake District. In Östergötland the route consists of nine ice age objects with local walking trials. In Cesis the Ice Age Route was prepared as a hiking trial.

Cesis Region learned from these Swedish experiences. In both regions 43 participants were qualified as tourism guides. Marketing concept and activities for a monastery museum and monastery areas in Östergötland is a further example of new tourism products based on cultural and natural heritage. In addition Green Markets have had a successful start in Mecklenburg Lake District as structures for direct marketing of regional products. A regional direct-marketing cooperative was founded for the continuing co-ordination of the Markets. The regional sign “naturally! Mecklenburg Lake District” was presented and is getting more and more popular in marketing of the regional products.



The systems of protected areas in the partner countries were compared. Furthermore in a “Convention of Mjölby” the role of large protected areas in regional development were agreed among the partners. As a pilot project a management plan for the Nature Park “Mecklenburgische Schweiz and Kummerow See” was prepared. A net of regional and transnational Welcome Centres as “entrance gates” was planned and existing ones were further developed in the project as well. For example in Mecklenburg Lake District an information-kiosk-system was developed and implemented. In Östergötland an existing tourist information point was strengthened among other things through a new IT based booking system.

The lead partner of the HQT 2 project was the Regionaler Planungsverband Mecklenburgische Seenplatte, Germany. More information on the Ice Age Routes can be found on the pages www.eiszeitroute.com and www.e.lst.se/istid/index_eng.html. More information about the project you will find at www.baltic-area.net.



Östergötland showed how to offer and practice a successful training course for guides (dramatised guiding).

Baltic Sea Region High Quality Tourism



The project made use of an additional “think tank” – the University of Hamburg, Department of Geography – as a further partner on board. The research-input on profiling and destination branding as a framework for theme-oriented tourism was very useful for the practical work of HQT 2 in all four partner-regions. It helped the regions to find their own specific way of tourism development.

MONITORING COMMITTEE PREPARED THE FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS

The Monitoring Committee of the BSR INTERREG III B NP held its latest meeting on 13-14 June 2005 in Tammi-saari/Ekenäs, Finland. This was the first MC meeting after EU enlargement and introduction of the III A cross-border priorities North and South into the main programme. The MC approved the Annual Report 2004 and prediscussed forthcoming amendments in the Programme and Program-

me Complement to be decided in a written procedure later in the summer. The amendments include small changes in the composition of the programme financing as well as possibility to extend activities of the on-going projects with investments or participation in the Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation. The MC meeting was chaired by Mr. Pekka Järviö from the Finnish Ministry of Interior. •

NEXT CALL FOR EXPERTS TO ASSESS PROJECT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED FOR THE EIGHTH APPLICATION ROUND WILL SOON BE LAUNCHED!

The BSR INTERREG III B Joint Secretariat will soon be looking for six independent professional experts in the field of spatial planning and regional development with a profound transnational project management and financial experience who will support the assessment of project proposals in October 2005.

Because of the fact, that the 8th call will be launched fully in the framework of the Neighbourhood Programme, the in-depth knowledge of the TACIS programme will pose a considerable advantage. The terms of reference for this task are currently being developed and will be published on the programmes website in July. •

“Contact & links” SECTION ON WWW.BSRINTERREG.NET



Here you will find contact info for e.g. approved projects, Monitoring and Steering Committees' members, national sub-committees and Joint Secretariat.

A number of useful links to the EU sites and Pan-Baltic organisations is available.

BSR INTERREG III B NP EVENTS

	Date	Place
Eighth call for project applications	25 July – 23 September 2005	Rostock, Germany (applications)
Individual project consultations (for projects applying in the eighth call)	22 – 24 August 2005 29 – 31 August 2005 5 – 7 September 2005	Riga, Latvia Karlskrona, Sweden Rostock, Germany
Lead Partner seminar seminar for auditors and financial managers	22 October 2005	Rostock, Germany
Steering Committee meeting (III B priorities)	8 – 9 December 2005	Norway

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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