

Highlights:

- **WHY DO WE TALK ABOUT COMMUNICATION?**
- **PREPARATION OF NEXT PROGRAMME GOES ON**
- **ANNOUNCEMENT: BALTIC SEA REGION PROGRAMME 2007-2013 CONFERENCE**
- **FINALISED PROJECTS: BARENTS 2010**

EDITOTIAL – WHY DO WE TALK ABOUT COMMUNICATION?

We all communicate every day with our families, colleagues, strangers on the train and other drivers on the motorway. We communicate because we want to be heard, to share and to understand. Communication is a basic human activity. So, why does one make such a fuss about it now?

INTERREG programmes and projects have been criticised for low visibility. Some claim that apart from those involved in projects, not many have heard about our work and results. Can we change that? Yes, by improving our communication! Communication does not happen on its own, we have to work towards it. We are redefining the role of information and communication activities in the projects and programme. It's becoming as important as project co-ordination and financial management. Our challenge is to make communication one of our strengths.

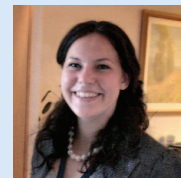
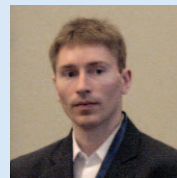
Future projects will plan more resources for communication activities, appoint communication managers and will prepare communication plans.

A network of communication staff (from projects and secretariat) will organise trainings and will be a forum for exchange of practices and ideas. Communication is a tool that will contribute to the success of the project.

Is there anything special about communication in the INTERREG world? We have yet to learn to use language that others can understand, speak about issues that are important for ordinary citizens and communicate through channels that reach our target audiences. And all that in an international framework! This is necessary to convince decision-makers that money spent on INTERREG projects brings results that are of value for taxpayers.

Many of these issues will be addressed at the Communication and Media seminar on 14-15 March in Berlin. Project staff responsible for communication will meet professionals and work together on improving writing, presentation, planning and media relation skills. Projects will also present good practices in communication.

Step by step our communication and visibility will improve. Maybe, after all, it will make us feel happier in our work?•



Darijus Valiucko
& Liga Abika
Information
Managers

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME: HALF-WAY THROUGH

Almost half of the 129 projects approved in our programme are already finalised. Several "good practice" examples have been developed that will prove to be useful for regions. Yet marketing and disseminating results of transnational cooperation remains a challenging task. The Joint Secretariat will closely follow the 66 ongoing projects – final reports and final conferences are still to come. A quality workshop addressing reporting of project results will be organised in autumn 2007. Also the seminar on "Communication and Media", organised by the Joint Secretariat 14-15 March, Berlin, should help improve marketing activities.•

THE PREPARATION OF THE NEW BALTIC SEA PROGRAMME 2007-2013 GOES ON

The Joint Programming Committee (JPC) of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 met in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 25-26 January 2007, to discuss the final draft of the new cooperation programme.

The programme will focus on four priorities:

1. Fostering of innovations
2. External and internal accessibility
3. Baltic Sea as a common resource
4. Attractive and competitive cities and regions.

The programme will be the first and the only cooperation programme in the European Union that integrates three funding sources: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and Norwegian funding together. This means that partners from the EU Member States and Norway will work together with partners from Russia and Belarus in the same project with common rules.

There are still several steps ahead before the new programme will be ready. One of the main challenges is to design a joint implementation system for ERDF funds for EU project partners, and for ENPI funds for Russian and Belarusian partners. After final amendments are done the new programme will be approved by each of the

11 participating states. The submission to the European Commission is expected for May 2007. The approval procedure, to be carried out by different General Directorates will take at least four months. After the new programme is approved, a new Monitoring

Committee will be set up. The first call of applications is planned to be opened at earliest in December 2007. Potential applicants should use the time in-between to get acquainted with the opportunities the new programme will offer. •

NINE TACIS PROJECTS APPROVED IN THE NINTH CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Project	Measure	Lead Partner country
SPb InnoReg	3.1	FI
EastWest Window	3.1	LV
BEN-EAST	3.1	RU
MATRUSCHKA	3.1	FI
DaGoRus	3.1	FI
Matryoshka	3.2	LV
EastWind	3.2	DE
MunEM	3.2	DE
JOCCOW	3.2	SE

Applicants submitted 33 project applications in the ninth call that was closed on 16 October 2006. The applying projects focused mainly on the partner countries Russia and Belarus. Most of the applying project partners came from Russia – in total 119. Also Belarusian partners were active with 14 project partners in the received applications. The Steering Committee approved nine projects.

In addition, two projects were placed on the reserve list.

The projects will run for two years and will finalise their activities in the beginning

of 2009 – which is possible because activities will be fully financed from external (Tacis) funding governed by different rules. Projects address themes such as energy, transport, spatial planning, environmental protection and SME development. Half of the projects build on existing Baltic Sea INTERREG projects.

All funds (ERDF, Norwegian and Tacis) have been committed; therefore there will be no more calls for project applications in the present programme. Altogether 129 projects were approved in the Baltic Sea Region programme. •



FINALISED PROJECTS: BARENTS 2010 PROMOTES LONG-TERM CO-OPERATION IN THE NORTH



Actions in these programmes focus on business development including transport solutions, research and development, environmental protection, and education & training.

The triple helix approach – collaboration between public authorities, private sector and research – is an important element of the strategy. For example, the Forestry programme points out the importance of training courses on cultural differences, changing business environment and co-operation across borders.

Almost six million people live in the Barents region, which covers a surface three times larger than Spain. The region is characterised by a harsh climate and long distances. There are rich natural resources such as forests, oil and gas. Yet, young people are leaving the region.

Barents 2010 was launched in 2003. The main goal of the project was to create a long-term strategy for the co-operation in the Barents region. The project analysed challenges in specific sectors. Another important objective was promotion of cross-border cooperation projects. Project partners mainly represent regional development organisations and authorities.

The **Strategy and Action Plan for the Barents Region until 2010** was prepared by the project partners and adopted by the project Steering Committee in March 2006. The main goal of the strategy is to generate growth and development through a knowledge driven and sustainable exploitation of the natural resources in the Barents region. The strategy builds on already institutionalised regional co-operation within the framework of the Barents Regional Council. Concrete actions are to be implemented through specific sector programmes.

The following five sector programmes were defined:

- 1) Mining and Minerals
- 2) Forestry
- 3) Oil and Gas
- 4) Tourism
- 5) East-West logistics (Barents Link).

The tourism programme identified a three step approach. Firstly, a suitable mix of destinations and themes for tourists will be developed. Secondly, conflicting interests will be addressed, e.g., related to state borders or competition between companies. Finally, joint marketing efforts towards the European markets will be made. An action plan has been compiled and four regions are involved in developing product manuals, testing tours and other information and marketing actions.

Both "old" co-operation structures and networks established by the project are responsible for the implementation of the actions in the strategy. Industrial partnership meetings organised in Russia may play an important role here. www.barents2010.net •

CHECK OF THE PROGRAMME'S MANAGEMENT & CONTROL SYSTEMS STARTS 26 FEBRUARY

Not only are projects subject to financial control, also the programme bodies of the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B will be examined. Starting on 26 February 2007, the control body responsible for the programme called "BAFA" (German "Federal Office of Economics and Export Control") will do a thorough check of books and files at the offices of the Joint Secretariat in Rostock as well as at the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel, as Managing & Paying Authority. BAFA will examine if the implementing bodies of the programme have carried out all necessary financial and audit checks at project and

programme level, if the accounts of the programme are correct and if the technical assistance budget has been

used in compliance with the rules and regulations. The check will last at least two weeks. •

NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

In March 2007, Liga Abika will join the JS team as second Information Manager to support the start-up of the new programme. She graduated from University of Latvia in Economics and has a Master in International Business and Law from the University of Rostock. She has worked in public and non-governmental institutions and also has experience in event management. •



The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein as designated Managing Authority have the pleasure to announce the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 conference. We would be happy to meet you in Hamburg on 10-11 May 2007.

programme, which will come to a close at the end of 2008.

The conference will offer you the chance to learn about the opportunities in the coming programme and discuss how projects will address four new themes: fostering of innovations, accessibility, Baltic Sea as common resource and improving competitiveness of cities and regions. The event will build upon experiences and results achieved through transnational cooperation in Baltic Sea INTERREG III B

The conference will run in the framework of the German Presidency of the EU Council and the "European days" organised by Hamburg. More than 400 participants from running projects, programme stakeholders, pan-Baltic organisations, potential partners, the European Commission and the European Presidency will get together for a series of informative workshops and presentations from projects.

For more information about the event please go to www.conference.baltic.net We look forward to seeing you there! •





Second level auditors from the Baltic Sea and the North Sea Programmes discussed the harmonization of rules for auditing procedures in Copenhagen on 17th October 2006

The Audit Guidelines for the Baltic Sea INTERREG III B projects have been updated. Please visit the programme's website at www.bsrinterreg.net/toimplement.html for details.

EVENTS CALENDAR

	Date	Place
Communication and Media seminar	14-15 March 2007	Berlin, Germany
Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 conference	10-11 May 2007	Hamburg, 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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