EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

ACTION PLAN

Agreed by the NC Group

July 6, 2020

Executive summary

The Baltic Sea region has a long tradition of cooperation, as evidenced by the multiple networks and organisations in the region. Based on this tradition, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) provides a unique platform for cooperation and coordination with open and transparent participation, inclusiveness and multi-level governance for its eight EU Member States, neighbouring non-EU countries and the numerous international and regional cooperation formats in the region. The Strategy contributes to a better division of labour among existing networks and organisations. This reduces overlaps and strengthens synergies.

The EUSBSR focuses on challenges and opportunities which are more efficiently addressed when working in a coordinated manner across countries within the region. The multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model of the Strategy has been successful in engaging a wide range of stakeholders to network, cooperate and contribute to policy shaping and development in the region.

Whereas the current revision of the Action Plan accompanying the EUSBSR takes into account emerging global challenges (i.e. climate change, pandemics, demographic changes and migration), the EU´s new strategic frameworks and 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework as well as the governance challenges of the EUSBSR, the main objectives of the Strategy - Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity - are not modified.

The revised Action Plan streamlines Policy Areas and places them in a strategic context, assesses their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and provides links to "embed" the Strategy into EU policies and funding programmes. Furthermore, it empowers stakeholders and increases their ownership by providing clear roles and responsibilities, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation. Clear links to policy-making at the national level serves to increase the engagement of line ministries and to solidify political support and implementation in the EUSBSR Member States.

The revised Action Plan is more focused, 14 Policy Areas cover 44 Actions. The formats of the activities implemented under each Action are decided by the Policy Areas to best suit the needs of the Action.

Due to their cross-cutting nature and increased importance, climate change aspects and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries are mainstreamed as essential elements into all 14 Policy Areas. Integrating these elements into the Policy Areas ensures that they are properly taken into account. It also allows the Policy Areas to tailor-make the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries in ways that are the most efficient for each Policy Area.

The important functions of communication and capacity building are consolidated with support from the Baltic Sea Strategy Point, which also provides administrative and technical support for EUSBSR management, development and implementation.

Contents

Executive summary 1
1. The scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan 4
1.1. Background 4
1.2. Strategic context 5
1.3. Objectives, Sub-Objectives and Policy Areas 6
1.4. Actors and modes of operation 7
1.4.1. Actors 7
1.4.2. Modes of operation 7
1.5. Funding 8
1.6. Monitoring & Evaluation 8
2. EUSBSR Governance 9
2.1. The purpose of EUSBSR governance 9
2.2. Governance structure 10
2.3. National Coordinators and National Coordinators Group 11
2.3.1. Tasks of National Coordinators Group 11
2.3.2. Presidency of the National Coordinators Group 12
2.3.3. National Coordinators´ functions at the national level 12
2.4. Policy Areas 12
2.4.1. Steering Groups 12
2.4.2. Steering Group members´ functions at the national level 13
2.4.3. Policy Area Coordinators 14
2.5. EUSBSR Annual Forum 15
2.6. European Commission 15
2.7. Baltic Sea Strategy Point 16
2.8. High Level Group 16
3. The Actions 16
3.1. Policy Area Nutri 19
3.2. Policy Area Hazards 24
3.3. Policy Area Bio-economy 27
3.4. Policy Area Safe 33
3.5. Policy Area Ship 38
3.6. Policy Area Transport 42

3.7. Policy Area Energy 46
3.8. Policy Area Spatial Planning 52
3.9. Policy Area Secure 55
3.10. Policy Area Tourism 58
3.11. Policy Area Culture 63
3.12. Policy Area Innovation 66
3.13. Policy Area Health 71
3.14. Policy Area Education 75
References 81
ANNEX 1.International and regional cooperation formats of the EUSBSR 82

1. The scope of the EUSBSR Action Plan

1.1. Background

The Baltic Sea region has a long tradition of cooperation, as evidenced by multiple networks and organisations in the region. Based on that tradition, in 2009 the EU Member States in the region decided to start a new type of transnational cooperation. The EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the eldest of the four EU macro-regional strategies[1].

The EUSBSR provides a unique platform for cooperation and coordination between eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden), involving also the neighbouring non-EU countries in the region (Belarus, Iceland, Norway and Russia). It focuses on challenges and opportunities which are more efficiently addressed when working in a coordinated manner within the region.

During the past decade, the experimental multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model of the EUSBSR has been successful in engaging a wide range of stakeholders to network and cooperate. It has strengthened their ownership and raised their engagement to tackle common challenges and seize common opportunities. The cooperation model itself creates added value by connecting people, creating networks, improving coordination and enhancing synergies. In 2019 the Commission reported that the EUSBSR has successfully generated projects, networks and platforms. The Council has underlined the importance of continued use of macro-regional strategies as a strategic framework promoting more coherent and synergic implementation of EU policies, programmes and funds[2].

The EUSBSR is accompanied by an Action Plan, a rolling document to be regularly revised as necessary. The current revision takes into account emerging global challenges (i.e. climate change, pandemics, demographic changes and migration), the EU´s new strategic frameworks and 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework as well as the governance challenges of the Strategy.

The revised Action Plan streamlines Policy Areas and places them in a strategic context, assesses their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and provides links to "embed" the EUSBSR into EU policies and funding programmes. Furthermore, it empowers stakeholders and increases their ownership by providing clarified roles and responsibilities, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation.

The revised Action Plan is also more focused. It comprises 14 Policy Areas (previously 13 Policy Areas and 4 Horizontal Actions) and the total number of Actions is reduced from 73 to 44.

The revision of the Action Plan does not modify the main objectives of the Strategy, nor the multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model.

[1] Four EU macro-regional strategies have been adopted so far: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR; 2009), EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR; 2010), EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR; 2014), EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP; 2015).

[2] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/council_conclusions_17052019.pdf

1.2. Strategic context

The most essential framework for the EUSBSR and this Action Plan is the European policy context. The EU Strategic Agenda 2019-2024[3] focuses on four priorities:

- Protecting citizens and freedoms
- Developing a strong and vibrant economic base
- Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe
- Promoting European interests and values on a global stage

This Action Plan aligns to these priorities whenever the EUSBSR can make a contribution. Furthermore, gender equality[4] as a core principle of the European Union is to be implemented in the actions. Alignment with the European Green Deal[5] and the objective of making the EU climate-neutral by 2050[6] requires that action to address climate change and promote sustainable development are integrated into the Strategy as a whole. Therefore, all Policy Areas shall give due regard to EU climate policy objectives. Strengthening the efforts on climate-proofing, resilience building, prevention and preparedness is crucial, and the work on climate adaptation should continue to influence public and private investments. This approach is consistent with the strong political commitment to climate action confirmed by the European Council[7].

While the EUSBSR is a strategy of the European Union, it is clear that its Objectives can only be successfully pursued through constructive cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries. The EEA Member States Iceland and Norway as well as the neighbouring countries Russia and Belarus are inextricably linked to the Baltic Sea Region through historical, political, economic, environmental, cultural and people-to-people ties. Therefore, the participation of these countries should be promoted, where relevant and appropriate, across the activities within all Policy Areas.

Furthermore, the numerous international and regional cooperation formats (organisations, networks, initiatives etc.) within the Baltic Sea Region constitute an essential part of the EUSBSR operative environment. The Strategy can provide these formats with a wider strategic and institutional framework, while benefiting from their experience and expertise. It contributes to a better division of labour among the various formats, which helps avoid overlaps and strengthens synergies. The macro-regional cooperation is without prejudice to the decision-making mechanisms of these bodies. A non-exhaustive list of these cooperation formats is presented in Annex 1.

[3] see https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/eu-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

[6] Cf. Proposal for a regulation establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) - Brussels, 4.3.2020 - COM(2020) 80 final

[7] 12 December 2019 (EUCO 29/19)https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41768/12-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf

1.3. Objectives, Sub-Objectives and Policy Areas

The three Objectives of the Strategy - Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity – remain valid and in force[8]. Each of them covers a wide range of policies and has impact on the other objectives – they are interlinked and interdependent.

The Objectives are complemented by Sub-Objectives, which have been modified over time due to changes in circumstances and challenges. Most Sub-Objectives relate to more than one Objective and also they are interlinked and interdependent. The current Sub-Objectives are:

- Clear water in the sea
- Rich and healthy wildlife
- Clean and safe shipping
- Reliable energy markets
- Good transport conditions
- Connecting people in the region
- Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region
- Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

Detailed descriptions of the Objectives and Sub-Objectives can be found in Commission Staff Working document SWD (2017) 118[9].

The work within the EUSBSR is thematically divided into Policy Areas (PAs), each of which develops 2-4 Actions. The 14 PAs are: PA Nutri, PA Hazards, PA Bio-economy, PA Ship, PA Safe, PA Transport, PA Energy, PA Spatial Planning, PA Secure, PA Tourism, PA Culture, PA Innovation, PA Health and PA Education.

As the Strategy has evolved, PAs have become more interlinked and interdependent. Their Actions are often cross-sectoral and their scope can serve several EUSBSR Objectives and Sub-Objectives. These interlinkages are strongly encouraged by the EUSBSR.

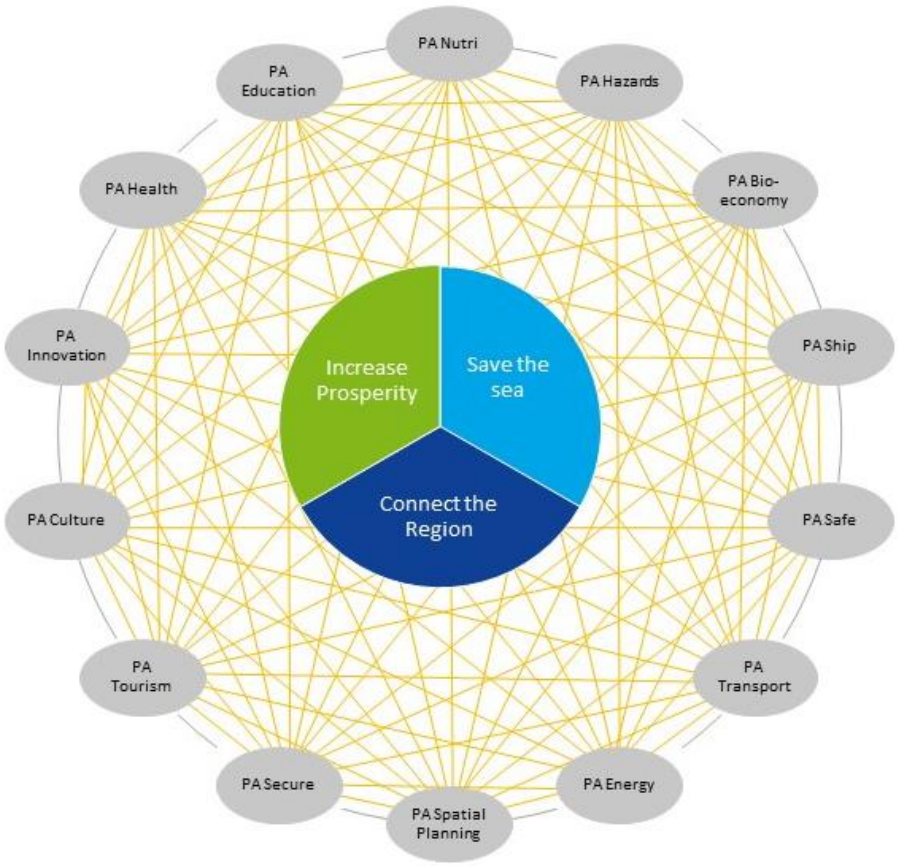
Due to their cross-cutting nature and increased importance, the former Horizontal Actions climate change and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries are mainstreamed as essential elements into all 14 PAs. Integrating them into the PAs ensures that they are properly taken into account. It also allows the PAs to tailor-make the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries in ways that are the most efficient for each PA.

Given the importance of communication and capacity building, the functions of the Interreg-funded project "Let's Communicate!" and the former Horizontal Action capacity are consolidated. Communication, information and publicity about the EUSBSR and targeted capacity building for stakeholders are ensured by the National Coordinators Group supported by the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.

[8] 23.3.2012 COM(2012) 128 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

[9] https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/action-plan/17-action-plan-2015/viewdocument/17

Picture 1: Objectives and Policy Areas of the EUSBSR



1.4. Actors and modes of operation

1.4.1. Actors

The Strategy is based on open and transparent participation, inclusiveness and multi-level governance. The wide thematic coverage of the PAs provides opportunities for different kinds of stakeholders to participate and propose various kinds of activities. While the Strategy promotes the building-up of longer-term networks and platforms, new stakeholders as well as novel ideas and initiatives are welcome.

Among the established stakeholders are national, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies, universities and research organisations. However, there is a need to increase the involvement of NGOs, civil society, youth organisations and the business community.

1.4.2. Modes of operation

Each PA develops Actions which contribute to achieving the EUSBSR Objectives. The proposed activities under each Action are to be evaluated on the basis of their merits and expected added value.

The format of the activities implemented under each Action are decided by the PA to best suit the needs of the Action. Activities under an Action can be – but are not limited to - projects (single or grouped in clusters), processes, networks or platforms. Activities can either be linked to existing capacities or break new ground. Building on existing capacities is important and PAs may continue to use the flagship concept. However, it is important that the Strategy remains open also for activities outside of established structures.

The National Coordinators Group ensures the development of the modes of operation and that the implementation rules in force, including the operational framework and detailed guidance about the modes of operation, are published on the EUSBSR website[10].

1.5. Funding

As the EUSBSR does not have specifically allocated financial resources, funding for operations under the Strategy is intended to come from existing financial instruments. In the period 2021-2027, the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Transnational Programme continues to support the implementation of the Strategy, especially as regards its governance. However, the limited programme budget cannot cover all the needs of the EUSBSR.

Therefore, it is important to mobilize and use also EU 'mainstream' national and regional programmes, cross-border cooperation programmes and other EU funding sources. These include i.a. European Regional Development Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, European Social Fund+, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, Horizon Europe, TEN-T, Erasmus+, LIFE and the Connecting Europe Facility.

In general, funds from the European Investment Bank and other international financial institutions, as well as private sector financing should be used more under the EUSBSR. Beyond EU funding, national and regional financial instruments also co-finance projects and, which shows the commitment of actors.

All funding sources have their own eligibility rules, selection criteria and implementation modalities. The Managing Authorities of EU funding programmes play an important role by ensuring the embedding of the Actions of the Action Plan into their respective programmes and financial instruments. Close cooperation with the Managing Authorities and their networks is of essence for all stakeholders of the Strategy. National Coordinators and members of Steering Groups cooperate with Managing Authorities at the national level, NCs on strategic level and SG members on operational level. Policy Area Coordinators have the main responsibility on the operational level for such cooperation regarding their respective Policy Areas.

1.6. Monitoring & Evaluation

The EC monitors the overall added value and development of all the MRS, including EUSBSR. It provides a bi-annual report to the other EU institutions on progress made in implementing the Strategies and the results achieved.

The NCG endorses the overall monitoring and evaluation framework within the EUSBSR and ensures that it is published on the EUSBSR website.

PACs monitor their PAs and Actions and prepare annual substantial reports on PA achievements, which they present to their respective SGs. SGs evaluate and endorse these annual reports and submit them to NCG for information [11]. The NCG reviews the annual reports and shares them with the EC.

The Managing Authorities report on their programmes' contributions to the implementation of the Strategy.

[10] https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

[11] In order that this important accountability and learning process can take place without placing undue administrative burden, PACs and SGs are encouraged to seek synergies with financial reporting required by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region transnational Programme as well as to make use of appropriate external data sources, e.g. the European and Macro-regional Territorial Monitoring Tool developed by ESPON.

2. EUSBSR Governance

2.1. The purpose of EUSBSR governance

The governance structure provides clear roles and responsibilities of the various actors, strengthened management capacity at the strategic level, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation.

Furthermore, it empowers relevant stakeholders, increases their ownership and encourages them to network, cooperate and participate in the implementation and development of the Strategy.

Clear links to policy-making at the national and regional levels serve to increase the engagement of line ministries and other public authorities and to solidify political support and implementation in the EUSBSR Member States.

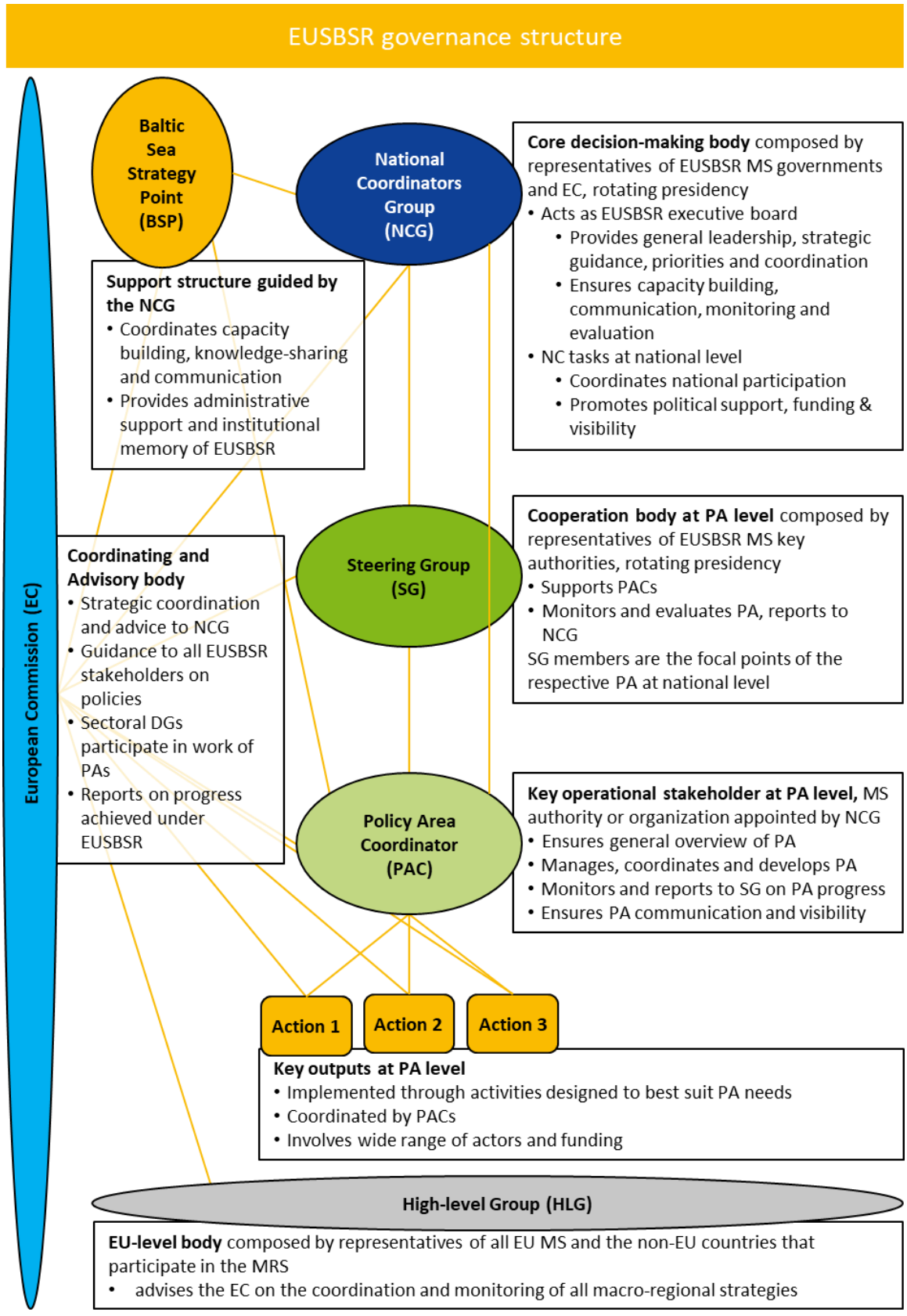
The governance of the EUSBSR is consolidated with the creation of the Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP). The BSP coordinates capacity building, knowledge-sharing and communication.

This Action Plan only specifies the main elements of EUSBSR governance. More details are provided in the Rules of Procedure of the National Coordinators Group and those of the various PA Steering Groups. The National Coordinators Group may decide on further specifications as needed. The group ensures that all documents and other essential information related to EUSBSR governance, are published on the EUSBSR website[12].

[12] https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

2.2. Governance structure

Picture 2: Simplified version of the EUSBSR governance structure



2.3. National Coordinators and National Coordinators Group

Each EUSBSR Member State nominates a National Coordinator (NC) and one or more deputies. They need to keep the National Coordinators Group (NCG) Presidency and the European Commission (EC) updated as soon as changes occur.

EUSBSR National Coordinators have two kinds of tasks. On the one hand, they represent their governments in the NCG, and, on the other hand, they perform their tasks at the national level in their own capacity.

The NCG consists of representatives of all eight EUSBSR Member States. The EC participates regularly in the meetings of the group.

Representatives of other countries, organisations and cooperation formats can be invited by the NCG Presidency to participate in NCG meetings on an ad-hoc basis, but cannot participate in the decision-making.

The NCG meets at least four times per year. A joint meeting between NCs and PACs is held at least once a year.

NCG meetings are organised and chaired by the Member State holding the NCG Presidency, in cooperation with the EC and with support of the BSP which also take part in the meetings.

The NCG adopts its own Rules of Procedure.

2.3.1. Tasks of National Coordinators Group

The NCG is the core decision-making body within the governance structure of the EUSBSR, acting as its executive board.

The NCG functions include i.a.:

- General leadership, coordination and development of the Strategy, including providing strategic guidance and establishing priorities;
- Acting as interface and link between the EUSBSR and the political level;
- Ensuring targeted capacity building for stakeholders, in general via the BSP;
- Ensuring communication, information and publicity about the Strategy, in general via the BSP;
- Ensuring a monitoring and evaluation framework;
- Appointing PACs and Lead PACs and providing a common structure for the SG Rules of Procedure;
- Directing and monitoring the work of the BSP, taking into account specific requirements due to fact that the BSP is implemented as a project;
- Serving as guardian of the proper functioning of the governance of the EUSBSR. Any non-compliance with the Action Plan that affects the proper functioning of the Strategy shall be addressed by the NCG;
- Representing the EUSBSR in its overall relations, e.g. with the EC, other EU institutions, other EU macro-regional strategies, Managing Authorities incl. Interreg Baltic Sea Transnational Programme, Interact and other cooperation formats in the region;
- Initiating revisions of the Strategy and/or the Action Plan;
- Deciding on revisions of the Action Plan after having consulted the PAs and other relevant stakeholders[13]. The NCG can decide on revisions of the Action Plan as long as these do not modify the Strategy itself, which can only be altered by a decision of the Council.

[13] The NC Group conveys the Action Plan proposal to the EC. After completion of the Commission internal procedure, the Action Plan is eventually published as a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD), which is the legal status of the Action Plan.

2.3.2. Presidency of the National Coordinators Group

The NCG Presidency rotates annually among the EUSBSR Member States (beginning of July – end of June), in accordance with a rotation schedule agreed by the NCG and included in its Rules of Procedure.

The Presidency proactively performs the coordination among NCs and PACs, supported by the BSP and in cooperation with the EC, and strives to facilitate decision-making and cooperation.

In order to promote coherency and continuity of work across NCG Presidency cycles, regular information exchange takes place between the NCG Presidency and the previous and incoming Presidencies. This Presidency Trio (TRIO) has a supportive role vis-à-vis the incumbent Presidency, as described in the NCG Rules of Procedure. The EC and the BSP are invited to participate in TRIO meetings.

2.3.3. National Coordinators´ functions at the national level

In addition to their responsibilities as members of the NCG, the NCs have tasks at the national level. The NC functions in the national administration include:

- Promoting political support and commitment to the Strategy;
- Ensuring overall coordination and overview of, as well as guidance and support for, active participation by different national stakeholders in the implementation of the Strategy;
- Promoting appropriate funding for the Strategy implementation, including by encouraging cooperation with relevant Managing Authorities;
- Acting as interface and link between the operational level of the EUSBSR and the political level;
- Promoting the visibility and raising awareness of the Strategy, its actions and results.

2.4. Policy Areas

Policy Areas (PAs) represent the expertise in their respective areas of activity and ensure the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. Having an overview of the relevant sectors, PAs hold policy discussions and identify key ways to achieve the EUSBSR Objectives through different means of actions and determine how to best implement the required solutions.

PAs are managed operationally by PA Coordinators (PACs), supported and guided strategically by their respective Steering Groups (SGs).

2.4.1. Steering Groups

Each PA has a Steering Group (SG). SG members are representatives of the national or regional governments of EUSBSR Member States. The SG may be an existing cooperation body within the PAC organisation, if appropriate and approved by the NCG.

SG members have two kinds of tasks. On the one hand, they represent their governments in their respective SG. On the other hand, they perform their tasks as focal points at the national level.

The objective is that all SGs include members from all EUSBSR Member States. However, a Member State can choose not to participate in a specific SG. A Member State can also appoint more than one representative to an SG, if this is necessary due to the structure of the Member State or other similar reasoning. In this case, one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative and act as one.

SG members should come from key ministries or authorities in the relevant field. They should have sufficient capability, mandate and resources to fulfil their tasks as required by the EUSBSR.

An SG may also invite representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations to join the group as members or observers, upon a decision taken by consensus by the EUSBSR Member States representatives in the group. However, before such a decision is implemented, it has to be endorsed by the NCG. Such representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations cannot block decisions of the EUSBSR Member States, but they may choose to opt out of specific decisions taken by the SG. This has to be appropriately reflected in the SG Rules of Procedure.

PACs have to keep the SG Presidency and the BSP updated as soon as changes in the composition of SG membership occur.

SGs should convene at least twice a year. Online meetings are encouraged. The meetings are prepared and organized by the SG Presidency, in close cooperation with the respective PAC/PACs. The SG Presidency should rotate among the SG Members, normally on an annual basis.

SGs make decisions by consensus. They adopt their own Rules of Procedure, in accordance with the Action Plan and the common structure for the SG Rules of Procedure provided by the NCG while taking into account the specific requirements of their PA.

SGs are cooperation bodies at PA level. Their main task consists of:

- Supporting the respective PAC/PACs in fulfilling their tasks include i.a.
  - Guiding the development of the PA in general by policy discussions and by endorsing new objectives, developments and operation formats, including flagships
  - Endorsing proposals to update targets, references etc. that do not change the Action Plan substantially, in close dialogue with the EC[14]
  - Ensuring linkages to relevant national and regional policy-making
- Monitoring and evaluating the PA include i.a.
  - Endorsing the Work Plans and annual substantial reports on achievements for the PA, drafted by the PAC/PACs, and submitting these documents to the NCG for information

2.4.2. Steering Group members´ functions at the national level

In addition to their responsibilities within their group, SG members representing national or regional governments serve as focal points in their respective administrations. These functions include i.a.

- Acting as liaison between their PA and the respective administration, ensuring linkages between macro-regional and national or regional policy processes
- Raising awareness and ownership of the Objectives, means and achievements of the EUSBSR within their respective administrations and by other relevant stakeholders
- Cooperating with relevant Managing Authorities in their respective home countries, regarding the operational level;
- Supporting the National Coordinator in promoting political commitment to the Strategy as well as in raising national awareness and promoting visibility of the EUSBSR

[14] Decisions on substantial changes to the Action Plan remain the sole competence of the National Coordinators Group.

2.4.3. Policy Area Coordinators

Each PA is managed by one or several Policy Area Coordinators (PACs). PACs are appointed and recalled by the NCG, following a proposal by the respective SG. If a PA has more than one PAC, the NCG decides which one of them is the leading PAC, following a proposal by the respective SG.

A PAC organisation representing an EUSBSR Member State can be a ministry or other official authority of the national or regional government. A PAC can also be an organisation or an intergovernmental or non-governmental body, which can ensure the operationalisation of a PA. A PAC cannot hand over the coordinator role or tasks to another authority, organisation or body. A PAC organisation has to keep the corresponding NC, the SG Presidency, BSP and the EC updated as soon as relevant personnel changes occur.

The PAC organisations work in close cooperation with each other and divide their tasks in their Work Plans to best suit the needs of the PA. The lead PAC is responsible for coordination among the PACs and for the administration of the PA.

PACs are the key operational stakeholders of the EUSBSR at the PA level, ensuring the implementation of the Strategy with support and guidance of their respective SGs. They facilitate and serve as a strong liaison between their PA groups of actors by offering a platform for exchanging and coordinating initiatives, stakeholders, policy processes and information.

The tasks of a PAC can be divided into four groups:

- Ensuring a general overview of the PA, including various types of developments and modes of operation
- Managing, coordinating and developing the PA, including i.a.
    - Facilitating the implementation- of Actions defined in the Action Plan, while ensuring that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the PA;
    - Facilitating the funding of the Actions, incl. via cooperation with the Managing Authorities
    - Facilitating the involvement and cooperation of and relevant policy discussions among stakeholders;
    - Identifying and facilitating cooperation activities, including networks, platforms and processes
    - Liaising and cooperating with other PAs, the BSP and other stakeholders to ensure coherence and synergies and to avoid duplication;
    - contributing, as appropriate, to the targeted capacity building for stakeholders coordinated by the BSP
- Monitoring and reporting on progress within the PA, including i.a.
    - Drafting a PA Work Plan, based on the Action Plan, and an annual substantial report on PA achievements, to be endorsed by the respective SG and submitted to the NCG for information;
    - Reporting to the SG on relevant developments within the PA, incl. possible needs to revise the Action Plan.
- Ensuring communication and visibility of the PA, including i.a.
    - Maintaining and updating the website and other suitable communication channels for the PA, included in or linked to the EUSBSR website[15], with the support of the BSP;

[15] https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

- Providing information and suitable material within the scope of the PA to the BSP for communication and visibility purposes.

2.5. EUSBSR Annual Forum

Since 2010 a yearly forum has been organised to support the EUSBSR. The purposes of the EUSBSR Annual Forum are to communicate the work of the Strategy, its Objectives and achievements to stakeholders, policymakers and a wider audience, to stimulate policy discussions, to disseminate results and to provide stakeholders with a networking occasion.

The Annual Forum takes place in one of the EUSBSR Member States and aims to attract key stakeholders and active partners of the EUSBSR from local, regional, national and EU level. The hosting of the Annual Fora is based on a sequence of EUSBSR Member States agreed by the NCG and included in its Rules of Procedure.

2.6. European Commission

The European Commission (EC) plays a key role within the EUSBSR. DG REGIO provides strategic coordination and advise to the NCG regarding the management and development of the Strategy and gives guidance to EUSBSR actors regarding the prioritization of strategic frameworks and policies. It also strives to ensure that the EUSBSR is duly taken into account in the design and implementation of all relevant EU policies and financial instruments.

DG REGIO promotes interlinkages and alignment between the EUSBSR and relevant EU-funded programmes during their programming and implementation (EU, national, regional and centrally managed funding instruments), including transnational and cross-border cooperation programmes. It promotes the embedding of the EUSBSR at both strategic document level and at operational level, i.a. by promoting continuous dialogue between EC actors (desk officers in DG REGIO and sectoral Directorates-General) and programme bodies (e.g. Monitoring Committees, Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats, intermediate bodies).

DG REGIO promotes and facilitates the dialogue and involvement of stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region within the EU and across EU macro-regional strategies.

DG REGIO supports participation of EC sectoral Directorates-General in the work of PAs, as appropriate.

The EC reports regularly to other EU institutions on the progress made in implementing the EUSBSR and on the results achieved. It also promotes coherence and mutual learning between the EUSBSR and other EU macro-regional strategies. For this purpose, every two years, the EC presents a report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

DG REGIO regularly participates in NCG meetings, and, as far as possible, in meetings of SGs and PACs.

2.7. Baltic Sea Strategy Point

The Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) is a function providing administrative and technical support for EUSBSR management, development and communication.

Its main tasks are:

- Coordinating targeted capacity building for EUSBSR stakeholders, including those in neighbouring non-EU countries
- Coordinating the sharing of knowledge and best practices between PAs as regards integration of essential elements, such as addressing climate change and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries
- Coordinating the overall communication activities of the EUSBSR
- Coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the EUSBSR
- Serving as the institutional memory of the EUSBSR
- Ensuring technical support to the NCG and, where possible, also to PACs
- Supporting the planning and organisation of the EUSBSR Annual Fora

The BSP is guided by and accountable to the NCG, which decides on its Terms of Reference and its detailed tasks. The day-to-day work of the BSP is conducted in close contact with the NCG Presidency.

2.8. High Level Group

The High Level Group (HLG) on macro-regional strategies (MRS) is an EU-level body, advising the EC on the coordination and monitoring of all macro-regional strategies. It is made up of official representatives of all EU Member States and the non-EU countries that participate in the MRS.

The HLG ensures coordination and monitoring of the MRS, assesses progress made in their implementation and may provide policy orientation and strategic guidance. It is the forum where the approaches and practices of each MRS are compared, in order to maximise the leverage and impact of the strategies. The annual HLG meetings provide overall strategic guidance also for the individual strategies, including EUSBSR.

3. The Actions

Actions are developed to translate the EUSBSR Objectives into results. Actions are implemented through activities.

An Action is an important issue requiring intervention to achieve the objectives of a PA. It can for example be the development of a policy recommendation, a new approach, an increased coordination in policy making, support to a process already engaged or a networking initiative. The PAs ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the Actions.

The Actions included in this Action Plan are based on the input provided by the PACs and endorsed by the NCG. They also reflect the inputs provided by EC sectoral Directorates-General (DGs).

This Action Plan only includes a short strategic outline of each Action. More detailed descriptions of Actions are provided in the detailed PA Work Plans endorsed by the respective SGs. Further information is available on the website of the EUSBSR[16] as well as on those of the individual PAs.

[16] https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

PA Nutri	Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea
PA Hazards	Action 1: Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances Action 2: Mitigate and remediate contamination
PA Bio-economy	Action 1: Strengthen the role and importance of bio-economy for achieving increased sustainability, productivity and adaption to climate change as well as resilience, including climate resilience in ecosystems Action 2: Improving agricultural practices for sustainability and adaptation (e.g. to climate change) in a sustainable and resilient growing bioeconomy Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy
PA Safe	Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues
PA Ship	Action 1: Support measures reducing emissions from shipping including digitalization. Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea. Action 3: Support development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for alternative fuels
PA Transport	Action 1: Improve connectivity of the regions and cooperation with third countries Action 2: Development of measures towards climate-neutral transport Action 3: Facilitate innovative technologies & solutions in the BSR

PA Nutri	Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea
PA Energy	Action 1: Streamlining efforts on energy efficiency in the region by deepening regional cooperation Action 2: Further regional gas and electricity market integration including climate-proof infrastructure development Action 3: Baltic Synchronization Action 4: Increasing the share of renewable energy
PA Spatial Planning	Action 1: Strengthening territorial cohesion in the BSR through land-based spatial planning Action 2: Ensuring coherent maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea
PA Secure	Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management. Action 2: Strengthening mechanisms for joint strategic and operational actions protecting human beings and societies form criminal threats. Action 3: A common societal security culture in the BSR
PA Tourism	Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas Action 2: Investing in people, skills and technology in the tourism industry Action 3: Protection and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage and natural resources in tourism destinations
PA Culture	Action 1: Promoting the BSR cultural and creative industries, encouraging creative entrepreneurship Action 2: Promoting BSR culture and European values, using culture for sustainable development Action 3: Preserving the BSR's cultural heritage, strengthening regional identity
PA Innovation	Action 1: Challenge-driven innovation Action 2: Digital innovation and transformation Action 3: Co-creative innovation

PA Nutri	Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea
PA Health	Action 1: Promoting active and healthy ageing to address the challenges of demographic change Action 2: Promoting a Health in All Policies approach with focus on the impact of environmental factors, and especially climate change on human health Action 3: Increasing stakeholder and institutional capacity to tackle regional health challenges.
PA Education	Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work Action 2: International excellence and wider participation in science and research Action 3: A labour market for all, using resources of longer lives Action 4: Recognising potential – easing the way for migrants

3.1. Policy Area Nutri

Policy Area Coordinator: Finland (Ministry of the Environment); Poland (Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

Policy area 'Nutri' contributes to the 'Save the Sea' objective and is connected to two sub-objectives:

- 'Clear water in the sea': One of the most serious and difficult environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea is the continuing problem of eutrophication arising from excessive nutrient loads of nitrogen and phosphorus. According to HELCOM State of the Baltic Sea report (2018), 97 % of the Baltic Sea is eutrophied. PA Nutri aims to reduce nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea to acceptable levels to mitigate eutrophication and to achieve the good environmental status.
- 'Rich and healthy wildlife' Eutrophication increases the primary production of the sea, leading to toxic algae blooms and excessive growth of filamentous algae. It also causes oxygen depletion, reduced water clarity and other harmful effects that can lead to changes in the whole ecosystem. Climate change is foreseen to amplify the eutrophication symptoms. Further, eutrophication affects the use of marine resources and recreational activities.

PA Nutri serves as a cross-border and cross-sectoral policy tool for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The actions are designed to reduce nutrient losses and manage nutrients more efficiently to mitigate eutrophication and to mitigate climate changes. PA Nutri will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Nutri is contributing to SDGs 14 and 6.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Nutri supports the implementation of European Union directives and the Helsinki Convention and promotes development of strategic flagship projects and opportunities for their financing. PA Nutri is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan
- HELCOM Baltic Sea Regional Strategy for Nutrient Recycling (in preparation)
- EU Water legislation
- EU Nitrates Directive
- EU Resource efficiency roadmap
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- EU Circular Economy Strategy
- Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea area (HELCOM)
- EU Common Agricultural Policy

This policy area can also build on some elements of the New Green Deal, principally: the zero pollution strategy, the biodiversity strategy by 2030, the Farm to fork strategy and the New Circular Action Plan.

Other relevant frameworks include: Convention on Biological Diversity (also in the context of the revisioned CBD), Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy, Environment Action Programme to 2020 and EU strategy on adaptation to climate change.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

At implementation level and thematic focal areas: mainly through projects and in longer processes: National ministries & agencies, cities & municipalities, NGOs, publicly owned entities (like waste water treatment plants), farmers organisations, research organisations and foundations.

5. Key PA achievement so far

The nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea have decreased during the last decade. Under Policy Area Nutri, flagship projects (Phosphates in detergents, Baltic Deal, Identifying priority projects in Belarus, PRESTO, NutriTrade, Baltic Blue Growth, IWAMA, CONSUME, BEST, DESIRE and BigRivers4Baltic) have been carried out in various ways such as demonstration farms, investments in wastewater treatment plants, capacity building and sharing good practices in the region. However, to save the Baltic Sea, further and continued action is necessary.

The EUSBSR PA Nutri, PA Hazards and HELCOM have established functioning cooperation, where HELCOM sets the policy targets in the region and EUSBSR supports member states in reaching those targets. Nutri also brings results, policy recommendations and new emerging issues from flagship projects to the HELCOM discussion. PA Nutri and its platform projects (BSR Water and SuMaNu) have supported the initiation of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient recycling strategy.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources

Objective: Action 1 aims to limit nutrient emissions from diffuse sources and reduce their pressure on the Baltic ecosystem. The action also strengthens European action to fight against climate change. Several measures are foreseen.

Description: Actively encourage the sectors (from agriculture, aquaculture and forestry) generating nutrient leakage from diffuse sources to mitigate their influence to eutrophication by showing economically and/or timely attractive measures and/or practices reducing nutrient pressure. Promote cost-efficient and innovative measures to prevent and reduce nutrient leakage from agriculture and forestry e.g. agrotechnic methods to prevent over fertilization, application of gypsum or structural lime, establishing wetlands, buffer zones or other nutrient trapping structures/methods. Improve monitoring and the knowledge base of nutrient flows and loads, taking climate change into account.

Raise awareness of best practices to prevent and reduce nutrient discharges and increase knowledge of linkages between climate change and eutrophication. The best practices will inter alia come from the flagships promoted by the PA.

Timing:

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Practical activities focusing on preventing or reducing of nutrients leakage	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships
Regional policy messages	Number of online publications of policy messages	1/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships & platforms

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Ongoing: DESIRE flagship, SuMaNu platform

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

* Support implementation of the updated HELCOM BSAP

* Communication of achievements, needs and results in EUSBSR channels and in BS countries

* Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

INTERREG, Swedish Institute, LIFE, HORIZON EUROPE, ESIF

Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources

Objective: Action 2 aims to reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources. A number of measures are foreseen.

Description: Support to cross-sectoral activities and measures that reduce discharges to the Sea from point sources, taking climate change into account. Develop innovative and nature based solutions to urban water management and scattered sources to reduce nutrient discharges. Improve monitoring and the knowledge base

Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources

of nutrient flows and loads. Raise awareness and influence consumer behaviour. Since key player in this action are local administrations, the established partnerships of the projects/processes/platforms shall include relevant type of partners. Results to be shared i.a. in platform.

Timing:

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on reduction of nutrient emissions	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri
Regional policy messages	Number of online publications of policy messages	0/2020	2/2025	PA Nutri, flagships, platforms

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Ongoing: BEST flagship

BSR WATER platform

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

* Support implementation of the updated HELCOM BSAP

* Communication of achievements, needs and results in EUSBSR channels

* Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

INTERREG, Swedish Institute, LIFE, HORIZON EUROPE, ESIF

Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling

Objective: Action 3 aims to propose measures to strengthen and promote safe and sustainable use of nutrients in a circular economy.

Description: Action 3, in relation to the New Circular Economy Action Plan of the Green Deal, propose measures to strengthen and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling as part of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy. Promote and develop environmentally safe and economically viable solutions to recover and reuse nutrients from agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and municipalities. Encourage new business models and symbioses with cross-sectoral cooperation. Promote knowledge exchange, influence consumption patterns, raise awareness and carry on policy dialogue.

Timing:

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on recycling of nutrients	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships, platforms

Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Ongoing BSR Water and SuMaNu platforms

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

* Support promotion and implementation of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy

* Communication of achievements, needs and results to the BS countries

* Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary (for e.g. Workshop in Feb 2020 with HELCOM as part of the elaboration of the Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy)

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

INTERREG, Swedish Institute, LIFE, HORIZON EUROPE, ESIF

Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea

Objective: Action 4 aims to address the consequences of nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea, in particular with a sectoral focus to reduce the environmental and climatic impact of nutrients on ecosystems.

Description: Develop ecologically and economically sustainable ways and partnerships to reduce nutrients from the sea e.g. management fishing, mussel farming, or collecting algae/nutrient rich biomass from the sea. Improve the knowledge base and undertake pilot actions of sea-based measures addressing internal nutrient reserves considering and evaluating their risks to ecosystem and human health as well as the long-term sustainability of their effects in line with the HELCOM work on the regional principles and risk assessment framework for internal nutrient reserves management.

Timing:

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on reducing of nutrients accumulated in the BS	Number of actions/projects/pilots	0/2020	2/2025	PA Nutri, flagships

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action* Support development of activities in line with the HELCOM work on regional principles and risk assessment framework for management of internal nutrient reserves

* Communication of the needs and methods to the BS countries

* Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

INTERREG, Swedish Institute, LIFE, HORIZON EUROPE, ESIF

3.2. Policy Area Hazards

Policy Area Coordinator: Sweden (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

The Policy Area is contributing to the overall objective **Save the Sea** and the following existing sub-objectives:

- *Clear Waters*
- *Rich and Healthy wildlife*

Indicators[17]

- *Concentration of Hazardous substances close to natural levels*
- *Healthy wildlife*
- *All fish safe to eat*

The PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

Added value of PA Hazards:

PA Hazards supports and promotes macro-regional responses to global challenges related to chemicals management, sound chemical management and the better linkage to international policy agendas (such as climate change, biodiversity, agriculture, production and consumption). The PA works for the prevention of pollution and the reduction of use of hazardous substances as well as for mitigation and remediation of historic pollution in the Baltic Sea environment. The policy area 'Hazards' assists stakeholders in the development of projects or other initiatives for development of measures and solutions in the field. Results are brought back to relevant policy forums on EU, regional and national level.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Hazards is contributing to SDGs 3, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

3. EU or other policy frameworks[18]

The policy area Hazards is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)
- EU Marine strategy framework directive (MSFD)
- EU Water framework directive (WFD)
- REACH regulation
- Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)

This policy area can also build on some elements of the Green Deal, principally: the zero pollution ambition, the circular economy action plan the chemicals strategy for sustainability and the Farm to Fork strategy.

[17] HELCOM core indicators according to BSAP 2013. The central objectives of the BSAP and MSFD are to **achieve** or **maintain** 'good environmental status' (GES). Please note that the HELCOM BSAP is currently under update and revision.

[18] In addition to those listed below the PA is also following: 8th Environmental Framework programme, EU Circular Economy strategy and action plan (current 2015 & 2.0)

4. Involvement of stakeholders

On the implementation level, in flagships, single projects and actions the PA cooperates with relevant actor on all levels of governance: national, regional and local authorities, Pan Baltic organisations, NGOs and research organisations.

We seek closer cooperation with the private companies and branch organisations.

The PA collaborates closely with PA Nutri, Bioeconomy and Health,

The PA establishes reference groups when developing new thematic focus areas in the PA, consisting of SG members and other relevant actors like regional, local, academia, NGOs and private sector representatives.

5. Key PA achievement so far (from 2015)

- Establishment of macro-regional BSR-Pharma platform on Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PIE) with respective awareness raising and contribution to the establishment of Correspondence Group (CG) Pharma under HELCOM.
- Establishment of macro-regional network on highly fluorinated substances (PFAS) with respective awareness raising and an inventory study on awareness, action and strategies related to PFAS in the Baltic Sea Region
- The flagship NonHazCity has developed chemical action plans for several BSR cities, regions and municipalities, paving the way to a more sustainable management of chemicals in the region.
- Study on the 'Effectiveness of measures applied in the EU Water framework directive programmes in the EU BSR countries; informing the revision of HELCOMBSAP post 2021

6. Actions for the PA

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Action 1: Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Objective: Action 1 aims to develop and implement (non)-regulatory measures and Baltic Sea region wide policies to reduce the use and prevent emissions of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea environment.

The policy area supports the development of suitable measures, practical solutions and policy recommendations for reduction of hazardous substances, from both diffuse and point sources on land. The topic is linked to the HELCOM expert group on reduction of pressures from the Baltic catchments area (PRESSURE) and the HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances. The action focuses on mainly two issues:

Human and veterinary pharmaceuticals: Through the BSR Pharma platform PA Hazards offers knowledge transfer & capacity building through trainings and workshops, testing of solutions and practical measures through cooperation in projects and policy impact through recommendations from lessons learnt in the cooperation processes to relevant policy makers and other stakeholders.

Per-and poly fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) To tackle the issue on a macro-regional level. We enable knowledge transfer from countries that have come further in the process of developing national actions, capacity building, development of harmonized policy approaches through cooperation in the regional platform PFASeOUT.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Timing: 2015 – 2025</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator title</td><td>Value</td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target/deadline</td><td>Data source</td></tr>
</table>

Action 1: Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances				
Develop BSR PFAS expert platform	Number of platforms	0/ 2019	1, existing by 2020	PFAS in the Baltic Sea Region, 2017[19]
Development of Policy recommendations/strategies on PFAS	Number of policy recommendations	0/ 2019	5/2025	PFAS in the Baltic Sea Region, 2017
Development of Policy recommendations/strategies on PIE	Number of Policy recommendations	2/ 2019	10/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Engagement of relevant stakeholder at all levels of governance	Number of stakeholders engaged	100/ 2019	200 in all BSR-countries/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Flagship processes	Number of flagships	1/ 2019	2/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Flagships process • BSR Pharma Platform • PFAS(e)Out – highly fluorinated substances in the Baltic Sea Region environment (planned) **Other Flagships (ongoing)** • NonHazCity 2 • HazBref				
Ongoing other actions and projects: • Micropollutants in wastewater, storm water and sludge (ongoing) • Baltic Leadership Programme on highly fluorinated substances in the Baltic Sea Region				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities • INTERREG, BONUS/ BANOS programme, Swedish Institute, CBSS PSF, LIFE, HORIZON EUROPE				

Action 2: Mitigate new and remediate historic contamination
***Objectives*:** Action 2 aspire to **mitigate new and remediate historic contamination, causing negative effects in the Baltic ecosystem.** The circular economy approach offers the possibility to develop measures and practical solutions to both getting rid of chemicals and other harmful pollution, recycling nutrients and other (raw)materials to be (re)used in production streams as well as generating new data for better marine spatial planning to prevent and mitigate new sources of pollution. Historic contamination with hazardous substances include industrial emissions accumulated in soil and sediments, and hazardous substances in marine wrecks, as well as in items deliberately dumped to the Sea, such

[19] http://www.swedishepa.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/internationellt-miljoarbete/multilateralt/ostersjoregionen/PFAS-BSR-October-2017-FINAL.pdf

Action 2: Mitigate new and remediate historic contamination

as munitions which contribute to contamination of sediments in the Baltic Sea region. They need to be dealt with depending on their category by tailor-made approaches based on precautionary principle and risk assessment for prioritization. A macro-regional stakeholder platform will bring together different kinds of relevant stakeholders from different policy levels to jointly develop, action plans, strategies, policy recommendations, 'best & worst practice' briefs and product cases. Innovative projects and initiatives addressing these issues are encouraged.

The topic is linked to the HELCOM expert group on environmental risks of hazardous submerged objects and the HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances.

Timing: 2015 – 2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Develop platform for contaminated sediments, marine spatial planning and blue growth	Number of platforms developed	0/2019	1/2022	DAIMON & DAIMON 2 projects
Action plan on remediation of contaminated sediments, incl. fiber bank and CWAs	Number of action plans developed	0/2019	1/2023	DAIMON & DAIMON 2 projects
Flagship processes	Number of flagships	0/ 2019	1/ 2022	PA Hazards own internal analysis, 2019
Engagement of relevant stakeholder	Number of stakeholders engaged	20/ 2019	100, 2025	PA Hazards own internal analysis, 2019

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

- Daimon 2
- CONTAMINATE: Clustering knowledge, expertise and data from on-going projects, platforms and networks on contaminated sediments (planned)

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities As under Action 1

3.3. Policy Area Bioeconomy

Policy Area Coordinator: Nordic Council of Ministers; Finland (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry); Sweden (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Swedish Board of Agriculture), Lithuania (Ministry of Agriculture)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

The PA delivers primarily on the EUSBSR objective “Save the Sea” and the sub-objectives of “Clear Water” and “Rich and healthy wildlife”, which includes promoting a sustainable use of marine, agricultural and forest resources as well as development of rural areas. Additionally, on the objective “Increase prosperity” and the sub-objectives “contributing to the implementation of Europe 2020 (2030) Strategy; Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region; Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.” The added value lies in transnational cooperation on issues that one member-state cannot solve alone (e.g. the state of the Baltic Sea). In addition, learning from each other, also across the borders, would speed up spreading of new sustainable practices and productions in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture in the BSR. The PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighboring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Primarily goal 14 and 15 but also contributing to SDG’s 2, 7, 11, 12 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Bioeconomy is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- the Common Agricultural Policy
- the Common Fisheries Policy.
- the EU forest strategy (currently being updated, revised strategy to be applied from 2021)
- the EU Bioeconomy Strategy for sustainable Europe
- Communication from the Commission on the European Green Deal
- Communication from the Commission: A Farm to Fork Strategy
- Agenda 2030
- HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan
- HELCOM Strategy for Nutrient Recycling (in preparation)
- Nordic Bioeconomy Strategy.

This policy area can also build on some elements of the Green Deal, principally: the zero pollution strategy, the biodiversity strategy by 2030, the Farm to fork strategy, the New Action Plan for circular economy, the Sustainable European Investment Plan, the New Industrial Strategy, the new EU Strategy of Adaptation to Climate Change.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Bioeconomy shall serve as a body where local, regional, macro regional and international organisations (private and public) become involved, to horizontally improve and widen the impact of different strategic frameworks (listed above). Moreover, it is planned to invite youth participants and participation from Norway and Russia. Representatives within the actions, from projects and activities etc., are another important stakeholder group. PA Bioeconomy aims to provide a structure that can facilitate development of activities which can feed into the strategic frameworks and are supported by the PA Bioeonomy action plan - specifically connected to our three actions of priority.

5. Key PA achievement so far

- Development of sustainability criteria and a trend analysis for bioeconomy in the BSR.
- Outreach in form of workshops, Youtube-videos and podcasts.
- Establishment of a networks for the Managing Authorities in the EMFF and in the EAFRD.
- Implementation of three Baltic Leadership Programs (BLP) and following up with the BeUBio project.
- Several forestry related flagship projects.
- Several transnational seminars and workshops on nutrient recycling in agriculture.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Strengthen the role and importance of bioeconomy for achieving increased sustainability, productivity and adaption to climate change as well as resilience, including climate resilience in ecosystems.

Sustainable use of natural resources must be considered in all decision-making processes, where often a holistic point of view helps capture opportunities. The bioeconomy in combination with the principles of circular economy represents an opportunity for productivity, economic benefits and environmental improvement, often referred to as circular bioeconomy. It is evident that current resource outtake is not at a sustainable level, which triggers BSR youth to act. Circular bioeconomy can in this context become an enabler for sustainability which draws young people's interest towards bioeconomy sector. The BSR are already a bioeconomy hotspot and is the home of strong bioeconomy industries, perhaps most notably in the forestry and food sectors. The Baltic sea region with abundant natural resources, such as 30% of Europe's forests, and its long tradition for sustainable management has demonstrated how the bioeconomy can benefit the climate and provide various ecosystem services as well as being the backbone of the circular economy in the region. This includes development of new food and other products and services from land, sea, lakes and the forest in line with the Farm to Fork strategy which contributes to sustainability of other sectors such as tourism. This action will function as an umbrella for many cross-cutting bioeconomy activities such as sustainable forestry; increased use of wood; sustainable food systems; identifying and developing use of alternative proteins and digitalization while mainly focusing on the blue and green bioeconomy potential. This activity includes a bioeconomy trend analysis in the BSR, identifying the most relevant macro trends for bioeconomy in the region. The results of the analysis will be used to support policy dialog within the national and regional stakeholders of EUSBSR and raise awareness about the development of bioeconomy and the potential of a more circular bioeconomy in the BSR.

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Policy impact Public impact Develop the circular economy	Policy recommendations Number of communication activities New circular initiatives	0 0 0	1 pr. year 5 pr. year Identify 3-5 new cases for	Own database based on publications and workshops. www.BSRBioeconomy.net google analytics, twitter analytics

Action 1: Strengthen the role and importance of bioeconomy for achieving increased sustainability, productivity and adaption to climate change as well as resilience, including climate resilience in ecosystems.				
Umbrella flagship	Umbrella flagship gathering activities of joint value for the macro region – action 1 focus	0	industrial symbiosis in BSR 1 umbrella flagship	www.BSRBioeconomy.net and individual flagship websites.
Flagship on-going or planned within this action RDI2CluB – Smart and sustainable bioeconomy; Blue Growth (new flagship process); Retrout – Sustainable costal fishing tourism; Bonus Bluewebs – Blue growth and environmental benefits; WAMBAF Tool Box; Wood in Construction and 2-3 other new flagships or flagship processes				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action Seminars and workshops; Deliver a report describing the macro trends in the region; communication activities such as podcasts and short videos; new flagship process on blue growth; initiating new cooperation projects for sustainable use of biomass, new pilot project on biodiversity in the BSR				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA/HA activities Interreg, Nordic Council of Ministers; EAFRD Programmes, ERDF Programmes, when appropriate EUSBSR MA-networks (ERDF and EAFRD) and Horizon EuropeInterreg, Nordic Council of Ministers; EAFRD Programmes, Horizon2030.				

Action 2: Improving agricultural practices for sustainability and adaptation (e.g. to climate change) in a sustainable and resilient growing bioeconomy
Eutrophication is still one of the major threats to the Baltic Sea environment. This is caused by oversupply of nutrients (N and P) mainly released from the agricultural sector and waste water. The global phosphorus resources are limited and often situated in geopolitically delicate areas. At the same time, valuable nutrients, e.g. in manure, are wasted instead of being used for plant nutrition. New solutions such as digital tools, organic fertilizer products and biochar must be developed and implemented to facilitate the transition towards a circular bioeconomy, as well as better adaptation to the different aspects of climate change. The Action is closely coordinated with the activities of PA-Nutri and will partly be continuation to the current Action: Recycling of nutrients in agriculture. This new action shall, when so is appropriate and beneficial, include aquaculture and forestry management into the concepts. For example, farmers are often forest owners, with the forest in connection with their agricultural land. Therefore, considering an area's various natural resources can be an appropriate strategy to meet eutrophication challenges. There is still much to do to improve efficiency and sustainability of the use of natural resources. In addition, the new action will include new activities that can improve the sustainability and adaptation of agriculture to climate change, such as improved management of water and waterways in agriculture, increased energy sustainability in farms and activities to improve the adaptation of peatlands, wetlands as well as for connected forestry lands and aquaculture. There will be focus

Action 2: Improving agricultural practices for sustainability and adaptation (e.g. to climate change) in a sustainable and resilient growing bioeconomy

on new digital solutions for achieving the objective: Knowledge exchange, especially peer-to-peer learning has proven to be the most efficient method in adopting new tools or methods; development of communication channels and learning platforms.

Timing: 2020-2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Development of knowledge exchange tools/material	Number of stakeholders using the tools or taking part in the knowledge exchange events	0	1000 stakeholders by the end of 2030	Participants in the organized events and users of the development tools

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

On-going flagship projects: Manure Standards and SuMaNu.

Planned new flagship projects in accordance with the actions mentioned below

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Improved water management in agriculture and forestry, for better adaptation in the increasing floods and droughts

- Activities to improve adaptation of peat lands in the Baltic Sea Region
- Energy self-sustainability of farms
- Continuation of the current and earlier nutrient recycling projects. There is a need for further actions in recycling of nutrients contributing to a cleaner Baltic Sea. The activities will be implemented in cooperation and consistence with the new HELCOM Strategy for nutrient recycling that is currently under preparation.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA/HA activities :

<u>For Action: Nutrient recycling in agriculture:</u>

Interreg Baltic Sea Region and Central Baltic; Other Interreg programmes in the BSR, EAFRD Programmes, Horizon2030

Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy

Bioeconomy cuts across sectors, connects land and aquatic ecosystems and comprises both economic, social and biological aspects. It includes primary production sectors that use and produce biological resources (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) as well as sectors using biological resources and processes (e.g. food, bio-based products, energy and services). This action will address the importance of multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches to accelerate the deployment of a sustainable

Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy

bioeconomy and its contribution to climate change adaptation in the Baltic Sea region. Results will contribute to the implementation of the EU strategy for a sustainable bioeconomy and could be used as practical means of approaching multiple use of resources in planning of land, forest and aquatic ecosystems. Activities will support knowledge sharing and approaches that link actors, sectors, territories and value chains. This could include to visualize methods and models to extract more value out of limited resources, identify cross-sectorial industrial symbiosis that increase use of bio-based products, asses cross-cutting challenges and opportunities, asses impact and importance of policy instruments and alignment of funding sources, visualize potential to provide sources of income diversification and visualize values of non-market benefits, eco-system services and social values such as recreation.

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Activities focusing on challenges, limitations and opportunities regarding multiple use of biological resources	Number of actions/projects/pilots	0/2020	3/2025	PA Bioeconomy
Methods identified or created to visualize non-market benefits	Number of methods	0/2020	5/2025	PA/Bioeconomy
Identify god examples of bio-industrial symbiosis	Number of identified examples	0/2020	10/2025	PA Bioeconomy
Policy papers promoting valorisation of multiple use benefits	Number of policy papers	0/2020	3/2025	PA Bioeconomy

Flagship on-going or planned within this action: New initiatives and projects should be developed

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

- Support implementation of the European strategy for a sustainable bioeconomy

Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy
– Identify methods and models to extract more value out of limited resources – Identify challenges, limitations and opportunities to increase multiple use of resources – Visualize the potential of different sectors and actors to enhance multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectorial approaches – Support knowledge sharing and increase awareness of non-market benefits and added value of multiple use of resources – Identify importance of policy instruments and alignment of funding sources – Develop management strategies and plans using geographic information system and digital tools
Current and planned funding sources for the PA/HA activities Interreg programmes in the BSR, EAFRD Programmes, Horizon2030, Swedish institute, EMFF programmes

3.4. Policy Area Safe

Policy Area Coordinator: Denmark (Danish Maritime Authority); Finland (Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

The Policy Area on Maritime Safety and Security provides a sound platform for reinforcing maritime safety and security in the Baltic Sea area. PA Safe contributes to the objective "Save the sea" and its sub-objective "Clean and safe shipping". PA Safe will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Safe is contributing to SDGs : 8, 9, 13 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Safe is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- High-level Action Plan of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- Integrated Maritime Policy including blue growth and other maritime policies of the European Union;
- Baltic Sea Action Plan (adopted in 2007) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)
- White Paper on Transport (2011)
- NAIADES II European Action Plan for the promotion of inland waterway transport (2018)
- TEN-T network and regulation
- EU Water legislation
- Habitats Directive in connection with the Birds Directive
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive
- SEQE-UE regulation

- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD)
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
- EU Single Use Plastic Directive
- IMO Conventions such as MARPOL and SOLAS Conventions

This policy area can also build on some new elements of the Green Deal, principally: the zero pollution ambition including the chemicals strategy, the biodiversity strategy by 2030, the Sustainable European Investment Plan, the New Industrial Strategy.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

The international Steering Committee meetings, The PA Safe events and the Flagships brings together policy makers, scientists and people working in different fields of the maritime industry.

5. Key PA achievement so far

A wide range of Flagships has been established the results of which include but are not limited to:

- real world tests for e-Navigation services in the area of the Baltic Sea;
- resurveying the major shipping routes and ports in the Baltic Sea area to provide more accurate sea charts; and
- enhancements for emergency preparedness and situational awareness in navigation (including winter conditions).

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea

Objectives ; The aim of Action 1 is to improve navigation safety in the Baltic Sea by providing more accurate bathymetry data, which can be used to create state-of-the-art nautical charts for E-navigation. In the future, this action will also focus on developing innovations based on such data as well as on training of the maritime personnel to use ECDIS equipment. Furthermore, this action will continue with development work of the backup systems for Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).

Timing: Ongoing

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New innovations based on more accurate bathymetry data	Number of innovations	0	2/2023	PA safe reports
Coverage of accurate hydrographic survey areas (percentage of the target)	Area covered	Year 2019	2023-2025	Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission will set the target in 3/2020

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

The Flagship "Speed up re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports" aims to ensure reliable bathymetry data for major shipping routes and ports of the Baltic Sea. This project is supported by another project, namely

Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea

"Finalising Surveys for the Baltic Motorways of the Sea (FAMOS)". Moreover, tThe Flagship "R-mode Baltic" focuses on testing of GNSS independent PNT systems. Furthermore, a new Flagship called FASTMOS continuing the work of FAMOS and STM Validation is under preparation.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

The new Flagships can include: i) developing new innovations based on more accurate bathymetry data, ii) training of maritime personnel to use ECDIS equipment and promoting the utilization of more accurate bathymetry data in such equipment, iii) resurveys in shallow waters to provide more accurate data for leisure crafts and fairway planning. iii) facilitation of enriching electronic navigational charts with dynamic data and building a digital model of physical transport infrastructure as well as facilitation of adoption of interfaces developed in the STM project, as well as iv developing and utilization of Baltic Sea as a test bed in transport system level automation pilots.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF-Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon.

Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges

Objectives: Action 2 aims to improve the safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability of winter navigation through enhanced cooperation between relevant authorities, transport operators and research institutes.

Timing: Ongoing

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developing and implementing risk assessment and management tools for winter navigation	Number of tools	0	2/2025	PA Safe report
Solution for improved integration of winter navigation to maritime data sharing	Number of solutions	0	1/2025	PA Safe report

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

The completed Flagship Winmos and the ongoing Flagship Winmos 2 are developing maritime winter navigation systems and icebreaking resources for the EU's northernmost waters. A continuation for Winmos is also under preparation. Furthermore, a new Flagship focusing on risk management of winter navigation is under preparation.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges
The future Flagships can include: i) developing intelligent transport systems (ITS) solutions for winter navigation, ii) further development of training both for merchant vessels and icebreaker operators, and iii) developing more advanced ship simulators and training courses for winter navigation.
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF-Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon,

Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation				
Objectives: Action 3 aims to focus on developing reliable and sound systems for maritime traffic management, including digitalization and autonomous shipping. What is more, the action aims to develop maritime training and education in order to meet the future challenges.				
Timing: Ongoing				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
New and improved services for e-navigation	Number of services	0	4/2025	PA Safe reports
Developed training courses for the use of new digital technologies	Number of services	0	2/2025	PA Safe reports
Flagship on-going or planned within this action The Flagship "STM BALT SAFE (2019-2021)" aims to increase safety of navigation in the Baltic Sea by providing Sea Traffic Management (STM) systems for oil transportations. This project is based on the methods, results and the maritime service infrastructure, which were developed in previous Flagship projects, including EfficienSea II, MONALISA 2.0 and Sea Traffic Management Validation. Furthermore, a new Flagship called FASTMOS continuing the work of FAMOS and STM Validation is under preparation.				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action The actions can include: i) reinforcement of fundamental functions of vessels, ii) enhancement of communication between vessels as well as vessels and shore facilities iii) new and improved services that enhance operations both on-board ships and for shore based facilities iv) development of maritime education curricula to meet future requirements, v) better training of personnel regarding to use of new digital technologies, vi) improved understanding of interaction between human and automatic/autonomous system in different conditions, vii) developing robust risk management measures to mitigate cyber threats,				

Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation
viii) establishing a test area to the Baltic Sea for autonomous shipping.
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF-Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon.

Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues

Objectives : Efficient search-and-rescue (SAR) and pollution preparedness and response (PPR) are essential functions to prevent loss of life or environmental damages. Therefore, Action 4 aims to reinforce these activities through improved cross-sectoral and cross border cooperation, including allocation of resources and transfer of knowledge between countries.

Timing: Ongoing

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Further developed and deployment of SOPs for preparedness and response of maritime accidents	Number of solutions	0	4/2023	PA Safe other
Developed risk assessment and management measures for security and cyber risks	Number of tools	0	2/2025	PA Safe reports

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

The “ResQU2” is a project platform funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, which aims to increase preparedness and coordination of rescue operations.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

The actions can include:

i) improve coordination of crisis management capacities and resources,

ii) improved co-operation and sharing of real-time information in order to increase Maritime Situational Awareness among authorities and other stakeholders in order to make SAR-operations more efficient,

iii) improved safety of the search and rescue authorities and services,

iv) improved availability of ships´ cargo information related to oil, HSN and IMDG cargoes on-board,

v) advancing the implementation of safety management systems and good safety culture in shipping companies for accident prevention

Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues
vi) developing robust risk management measures against security risks
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF-Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon

3.5. Policy Area Ship

Policy Area Coordinator: Denmark (Danish Maritime Authority)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

The objective of PA SHIP is to help facilitate the transition to sustainable shipping industry and to make it a positive business opportunity[20]. The region can function as a test-bed for new and innovative products, services, methods and practices addressing global challenges, such as environmental degradation and climate change, creating prosperous opportunities for blue growth in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Overall, the vision is that the BSR should become *a model region for sustainable shipping*[21].

The high level of competences in clean shipping technologies in the BSR contributes to reaching the overall objectives of the Strategy, but in particular 'Save the Sea'. As such, PA Ship also contributes to the sub-objectives, such as: 'Clear water in the sea' and 'Clean and safe shipping'. Finally, PA Ship will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

The strength of PA Ship in the midst of other regional cooperation forums is its strong ability to support transnational cooperation, its focus on a project-based policy dialogue and its ability to help align EU funding with the agreed policy objectives.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Ship is contributing to SDGs 9, 13, 14.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Ship is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- High-level Action Plan of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- Integrated Maritime Policy including blue growth and other maritime policies of the European Union; and
- Baltic Sea Action Plan (adopted in 2007) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM) under revision, the updated version to be adopted by the Ministerial meeting in 2021
- White Paper on Transport (2011)
- NAIADES II European Action Plan for the promotion of inland waterway transport (2018)
- TEN-T network, especially TEN-T regulation 1315(2013)
- EU water legislation, especially Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

[20] European Commission, Report "Towards an implementation strategy for the sustainable blue growth agenda for the Baltic Sea region", Brussels, 2017.06.09

[21] Full working paper on PA Ship in the EUSBSR. https://www.dma.dk/Vaekst/EU/EUOestersoestrategi/Sider/default.aspx

- Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in connection with the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive and its update (ongoing)
- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD)
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
- MARPOL Convention
- IMO´s Ballast Water Management Convention (2014)
- IMO´s AFS Convention and EU regulation
- IMO's Initial Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions (2018) and measures developed thereunder.

This policy area can also build on some new elements of the European Green Deal, principally: the zero ambition and chemicals pollution strategy (e.g. including availability of shore power), the biodiversity strategy by 2030, the Sustainable European Investment Plan, the New Industrial Strategy.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

The international Steering Committee meetings and other dissemination activities organised by PA Ship brings together a broad set of stakeholders related to the maritime industry as well as local authorities.

5. Key PA achievement so far

Completed results and ongoing work includes:

- Four Flagships on development of infrastructure and value chain of LNG in the BSR, with the objective to reduce air pollutant emissions from ships. The Flagships built on each other's results and gradually moved closer to concrete infrastructure investments;
- Three Flagships working on policy impact and concrete solutions for sewage and waste in the ports;
- Six Flagships focusing on emissions from shipping in the BSR and on economic incentives to reduce emissions;
- Project platform focusing on the environmental effects of shipping and the business potential of clean shipping;
- Creation of a regional project-based policy dialogue among maritime stakeholders.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Support measures including digitalization in reducing emissions from shipping.				
Objectives In order to establish the Baltic Sea region as a model region for clean shipping to Action 1 will support a broad range of clean shipping measures involving relevant stakeholders. Thus, focus of PA Ship has to be on more research and development of solutions regarding alternative marine fuels and sources of energy, taking a holistic approach and giving preference to solutions that reduce both air pollutant and greenhouse gad emissions on a well-to wake basis e.g. evaluating batteries, electricity, LNG, biofuels, hydrogen, ammonia, hybrid solutions, methanol and others for use in the Baltic Sea area. This action contributes to the achievement of the European Green Deal's climate-neutral objectives.				
Timing: On-going				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**

Action 1: Support measures including digitalization in reducing emissions from shipping.				
Development of research and policy measures aimings at reducing emissions of ships.	Number of initiatives	Year 2019	3/2023-2025	HELCOM annual statistics and Programme database.
Flagship on-going or planned within this action ECOPRODIGI (Ongoing); CSHIPP (Ongoing)				
Project (s) and other activities (s) are planned within this action Strategic priorities in this action include: 1) actions to develop or improve technical installations on board ships to clean harmful emissions from ships; 2) issues of enforcement of environmental regulation for ships operating in the Baltic Sea; 3) improve monitoring of ship emissions (better target actions and regulations); 4) improving energy efficiency; 5) actions to deploy propulsion systems and bunkering infrastructure for (carbon-neutran, clean maritime fuels); 6) development economic incentive schemes to reduce the environmental impact; /)improve capacity and competences to address climate neutral and clean shipping				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF, Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon,				

Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea.				
Objectives: Action 2, in connection with the European Green Deal objectives, aims to qualify the impact of the shipping on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea Area. **Description:** In order to address these issues adequately, research would be of high importance. Firstly, there is a need to adequately research all potential impacts and consequences on the environment and the wildlife. Subsequently, there is a need for research based development of measures on how to address these issues is the most optimal manner in order to preserve a healthy marine environment.				
Timing: On-going				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Research on impact of shipping on the marine environment.	Number of research papers	0/2019	3/2023-2025	HELCOM annual statistics and Programme database.
Flagship on-going or planned within this action COMPLETE (Ongoing)				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action Strategic priorities in this action include: 1) actions to identify the impact of shipping on the environment in the Baltic Sea; 2) Research & development of technical installations on board ships to ensure a less harmful impact on environment and wildlife; 3) development of efficient policy recommendations to address emerging				

Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea.

challenges related to shipping; 4) increase scientific knowledge and support research; 5) address and possibly reduce pollution by hazardous substances, invasive alien species (IAS) and plastics from maritime activities

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF, Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon,

Action 3: Support development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for climate-neutral and clean fuels

Description:

Renewable electric power generation for vessels as a key part of reducing the pollution and the greenhouse gas emissions from shipping and to reach the EU climate objectives. Further, access to climate-neutral and clean marine fuels through land based infrastructure and shore-side facilities could accelerate the reduction of both air pollutant and GHG emissions from shipping. Further, the ability to receive and treat the different types of ship-generated waste in a responsible manner is key to achieving cleaner shipping. Building upgraded reception facilities for sewage in BSR is a challenge and hence an important objective for the EUSBSR.

Timing: Planned

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for alternative fuels.	Number of development projects	0/2019	3/2023-2025	Project database.

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

None

Project (s) and other activities (s) are planned within this action

Strategic priorities in this action include: 1) contribute to the development of a regional infrastructure related to shore-side and climate-neutral and clean fuels; 2) develop reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and cross border infrastructure; 3) upgrade infrastructure in passenger - and industrial ports and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, 4) with increased resource efficiency; 5) greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes; 6) Improve port reception facilities and their ability to treat and separate waste from ships and marine litter brought to land; and 7) support the improvement of waste separation and handling on board ships.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, CEF, Motorways of Seas, BONUS, Framework/Horizon.

3.6. Policy Area Transport

Policy Area Coordinator: Sweden (Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport Markets Division); Lithuania (Competence Centre of Transport and Logistics (CCTL) of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

Increased prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has a strong dependence on efficient, affordable and sustainable cross-border connections within the BSR and beyond, including third countries. This will enable improved foreign trade and international exchange of knowledge and services in a longer perspective this will improve global competitiveness and the region's prosperity. Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Transport is contributing to SDGs 7, 9, 11 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Transport is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- PA TRANSPORT contribute to the implementation of EU and international agendas. These include i.e.: WHITE PAPER Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM (2011) 144 and following strategies & documents on future transport,
- Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the TEN-T (2013),
- Eastern Partnership: new Indicative TEN-T Investment Action Plan for stronger connectivity (15.01.2019),
- An agenda for a socially fair transition towards clean, competitive and connected mobility for all – COM (2017) 283,
- A European strategy on Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems, a milestone towards cooperative, connected and automated mobility 30.11.2016 COM (2016) 766,
- The European Green Deal, COM (2019) 640 final,
- EU Strategy for Sustainable and Smart transport.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

Lead Partners from project and platforms supported by Policy Area Transport are involved on PA Transport Coordination Group level. On Policy Area implementation level primarily all stakeholders participating in projects and platforms supported by Policy Area Transport are involved. Currently within the PA Transport is planned to strengthen governance by implementing Flagship processes for broader competence and improved endurance and continuity. The Lead Partner of a Flagship process will be expected to constitute a supportive part of the PA Transport governance.

5. Key PA achievement so far

Completed results and ongoing work includes:

- The first joint project launched was the Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 study which was an important step towards a shared view on the common transport system in the BSR;
- Four Flagship projects have been successfully carried out focusing on the implementation of the complementary governance activities facilitating development of TEN-T transport corridors;
- In recent years, around 25 projects have been completed with the support from PA Transport. One example from the excellence category is a project named Real Time Ferries. The project has succeeded to develop cooperation between involved partners to deliver real-time information for the benefit of travel planning systems that cover different modes of modes of transport;
- The established East -West transport corridor Association (EWTCA) served as innovative instrument (platform) to facilitate development transport links of the BSR with EU Eastern Partnership countries, as well as with Asian economies.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Improve connectivity of the regions and cooperation with third countries

Description:

The prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has a strong dependence on cross-border cooperation (incl. third countries), foreign trade and international exchange of knowledge and services. The TEN-T core network corridors (CNC), their connection with third countries and Motorways of the Sea (MoS) play an important role. It is still a key importance to ensure effective physical and functional access of the urban nodes and farther located rural & peripheral regions to the three core network corridors crossing the BSR

Timing: 2020-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Capitalise on the TEN-T core network corridors for better connectivity, accessibility and cohesion	No. of thematic events organized in cooperation with European Coordinators	0	Once a year	Minutes from the arranged thematic events
	No. of core network corridors in the Baltic Sea Region covered with networking projects for more sustainable growth, better accessibility and territorial cohesion	0	3	Programme databases
	Implementation of one (or possibly two) Flagship process(es) covering the Action	0	1-2/ latest 2022	Programme databases

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Currently active: BSR Access, COMBINE, EMMA Extension and MARA.

Planned flagship processes: BSR Access (probably under new name), “Optimize port calls” (notional name).

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Strategic priorities in this action are: 1) to identify and contribute to eliminating missing links and bottlenecks in secondary and tertiary transport networks for seamless flows to/ from the CNC; 2) to integrate long –distance

Action 1: Improve connectivity of the regions and cooperation with third countries

transport in urban mobility planning as precondition for smooth last mile transport (freight and passenger); 3) to enhance synergies for transport development resulting from the linkage of TEN-T CNCs, crossing the BSR, and the cross-border links to third countries, including EU Eastern Partnership countries (EaP); 4) to develop flagship processes aiming to promote complementary national and regional activities along the core network corridors, addressing de-carbonization of transport, intermodal logistics, integration of urban nodes, intelligent transport systems and etc.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Currently only INTERREG BSRP funding. In the future, having implemented Flagship process, more funding sources, e.g. CEF, could be used.

Action 2: Development of measures towards climate-neutral transport

Description:

Transport is responsible for a substantial part of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second-biggest emitting sector after energy. Significant reductions in the emissions from the transport and logistics sector are needed when the EU is to achieve its long-term climate goals. The EU has recently adopted policies that will help the EU stay on track with its climate commitments (e.g. EU Transport White paper, clean power for transport package, Green Deal). Focus will be done on transformation towards a fossil –free society. The BSR is ideally placed to be a pioneer in the greening of the transport sector in Europe (e.g. through coupling of sectors.

Timing: 2021-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities towards climate neutral transport in the BSR	No. of flagship projects promoting climate neutral transport in the BSR	0	5	Programme databases
	Implementation of one (or possibly two) Flagship process(es) covering the Action	0	1/ latest 2022	Programme databases

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

On-going: EMMA Extension, COMBINE. De-carbonization (notional name) is discussed/planned.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Strategic priorities in this action include: 1) development of sustainable supply chain strategies as a multi-fuel approach in the BSR (considering alternative fuel such as LNG, CNG and H2); 2) developing and enabling modal shift actions from road to rail and inland waterway transport that also considers city logistics ; 3) steps towards climate neutral operations of terminals (harbors, dry ports, inland ports) ; 4) enabling and promoting a smooth integration of High Capacity Vehicles and Platoons in existing intermodal networks;5) development of regulatory framework for sustainable transport actions, considering border –crossing transport as well maritime and land

Action 2: Development of measures towards climate-neutral transport

–based transport; 5) developing and enabling of harmonized platforms to facilitate digital data exchange between public and private organisations.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Currently only IINTERREG BSRP funding. In the future, having implemented Flagship process, more funding sources, e.g. CEF, H2020, could be used.

Action 3: Facilitate innovative technologies & solutions in the BSR

Description:

The action will aim at facilitation (creation of added value) of a sustainable and efficient transport system in the BSR requiring - along with infrastructural investments - also innovative measures dwelling on new technologies. The digitalization, automation, 5G technology, Blockchain technology and synchromodal transport solutions are key instruments to reduce bottlenecks, transport externalities and improve the utilization of payload capacities along the supply chain. This should be achieved by regional stakeholders mobilizing resources which aim to optimize knowledge flows and spread the benefits on innovations to the entire macro regional (BSR) economy. Realization of Smart Specialization (S3) policies is a great tool for the achievement of the above-mentioned goals. A preliminary survey of S3 in the BSR (performed in 2019) revealed the necessity, first of all, to cooperate in creating innovative transport corridor management models and the autonomous controlled vehicles including their interconnection (internet of things) and connections with road infrastructure on the entire BSR level.

Timing: 2021-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Development innovative technologies and solutions for passenger and freight transport in the BSR	No. of thematic events and initiatives	0	Once a year	Minutes from the arranged thematic events
	No of research papers	0	1/ latest 2024	Programme databases

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

MARA (on- going), Smart specialization (discussed / planned)

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Strategic priorities in this action include: 1) to contribute to the research and building an integrated transport system spanning all modes of transport where people and businesses are provided with innovative and safe door to door mobility services; 2) to increase the knowledge generated by the applied science.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Currently –the BSR INTERREG funding. In the future – also CEF, H2020 (FP) funding.

3.7. Policy Area Energy

Policy Area Coordinator: Latvia (Ministry of Economics); Lithuania (Ministry of Energy); European Commission, Directorate General for Energy.

(Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) Action Plan for Competitive, Secure and Sustainable Energy)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

Objective: Save the sea and Connect the Region (to improve the access to, and the efficiency and security of energy markets), Sub-objective: Reliable energy markets.

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Energy is contributing SDGs: 7, 11 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

The policy area Energy is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- The action plan of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) High-Level Group (2020)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 17 June 2009 by the President of the European Commission and the political leaders of eight participating Member States
- The 4th Union list of Projects of Common Interest
- The integrated National Energy and Climate Plans, in the context of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action

4. Involvement of stakeholders

In addition to the work with the BEMIP High-level group and European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy. PA Spatial Planning work is closely linked with the energy grid development and other energy market related issues.

PA Energy has a stimulating cooperation with other Baltic Sea region initiatives - Nordic Council of Ministers, Interreg programmes, HORIZON and other financial institutions and initiatives), universities, municipalities, associations and industry representatives etc.

As energy is a topic important for everyone, it is preferred to work on various levels, across-sectors therefore tackling issues from different perspectives. As a result, the involved stakeholder spectrum varies using different approaches and working techniques from specific working groups on specific common issues or big informative campaigns.

5. Key PA achievement so far

Thanks to a coordinated approach through a comprehensive set of measures, the BEMIP Action Plan contributed to integrating the energy infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region and thus effectively ending the energy isolation of the Baltic States and connecting them with the rest of Europe, helped increase the integration of renewables into the grid and the security of supply in the region.

6. Actions for the PA

The list below contains an example of four actions chosen from the full ***PA Energy – Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) Action Plan for competitive, secure and sustainable energy,*** *which can be consulted on the website of the Directorate-General for Energy*[22]*.*

[22] *https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en*

Action 1: *Streamlining efforts on energy efficiency in the region by deepening regional cooperation*

Description: Ensuring the full implementation of the existing legislation by sharing best practices and putting in place processes to facilitate application of the "energy efficiency first" principle in policy planning and investment decisions, and facilitate the implementation of the NECPs, and of the long-term renovation strategies[23] to decarbonize the national building stock by 2050.

Timing: 2019 -2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Level of energy consumption		2019	2030	Eurostat

Flagship on-going or planned within this action:

On-going: EFFECT4building, Act Now

Planned: Flagship process on strengthening cooperation on energy efficiency.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action *Baltic Leadership Programme, best practices exchange, regular meetings and reporting, the development of pilot projects. Further collaboration (cluster, workshops etc.) based on the programme`s results.* More information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Current - Interreg Baltic Sea Region; Planned - Swedish Institute Seed Money, Horizon, Life, ERDF etc.

Action 2: *Further regional gas and electricity market integration including climate-proof infrastructure development*

Description:

Gas market integration between LT and FI-EE-LV (common market zone) to be developed by 2022

The Regional Gas Market integration process started as a political process in which the Baltic States' Prime Ministers endorsed, in December 2015 in Riga, the Regional Gas Market Development Action Plan and invited Finland to take part in this process. The objective is to establish a competitive regional gas market in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, encompassing all four Member States, to improve market liquidity, integration and competitiveness ensuring affordable gas prices and high quality service, thus being attractive for existing and new market participants. Market integration is an opportunity for the Baltic States and Finland to best use the existing and future infrastructure like the gas storage facilities, the LNG terminals, the Balticconnector and the GIPL pipeline between Lithuania and Poland. It is also a chance to increase competition to the benefit of the end-consumers in the region and attract suppliers which otherwise would not come as the separate markets are relatively small. This is the general political will, expressed by all parties (TSOs, NRAs and Ministries) of all

[23] *https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/long-term-renovation-strategies_en#national-long-term-renovation-strategies-2020*

Action 2: *Further regional gas and electricity market integration including climate-proof infrastructure development*

four countries. In order to achieve timely implementation of market merger, a clear roadmap/action plan towards a final agreement involving all four Member States is necessary early 2020. This roadmap should ensure that the design of the common regional market is: (i) subject to clear and non-discriminatory rules that effectively facilitate competition, in-line with the EU legislation, in particular the network codes and (ii) based on the regional Cost Benefit Analysis agreed by all parties. Such a roadmap would serve as guidelines for the final design of the gas market integration (common market zone) by 2022. The first steps towards the creation of a regional gas market have been initiated by Latvia, Estonia and Finland.

Electricity market integration

The Baltic region electricity market integration and the role of consumers should be increased in particular by the integration of the regional balancing markets within the European balancing platforms according to the Electricity Balancing Guideline (EBGL).

Infrastructure

Since 2014, the implementation of the Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E) policy and Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) have allowed the implementation of the necessary infrastructure in the region, substantially increasing the interconnection level and effectively ending the isolation of the Baltic States both in electricity and gas . The higher interconnection level in gas and electricity has ended the state of isolation, helped the diversification of gas supplies and increased energy security of the region. The gas PCIs that are to be developed until 2025, at the latest, should bring about further diversification of gas supply in the region and, also, pave the way for the coal to gas switch and allow the move towards decarbonised or renewable gas. This will bring about the sustainable development of the economies of the BEMIP Member States. Despite progress in increasing the electricity interconnection level between the Nordic countries and with the Baltic States, transmission capacity is still needed to ensure a well-functioning electricity market in the whole region. Existing projects, such as the third interconnection between Finland and Sweden and internal lines reinforcing the Nordic grid are expected to be implemented by 2025 and achieve this objective.

The remaining objective is to ensure that the current PCIs delivering these benefits are being implemented without delays as well as the timely development of all future project identified as necessary for renewable energy development in the Baltic Sea.

Timing: 2025

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Increase market integration		2019	2025	

Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Dedicated BEMIP working groups on infrastructure, markets, gas and electricity and security of supply

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities:

Action 3: *Baltic Synchronization*

Description: *The synchronization of the three Baltic States with the European continental grid*

The three Baltic States remain synchronously connected to the Russian/Belarussian IPS/UPS system hampering their full integration in the European electricity market and grid. Flagship project of the Energy Union and political priority of the Commission, the synchronisation of the Baltic States with the continental European network by the target date 2025 is key to ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the Eastern Baltic Sea region, in line with EU's energy policy objectives, particularly regarding the well-functioning of the EU internal electricity market and energy security.

On 28 June 2018, the Heads of State and Government of the three Baltic States, Poland and the President of the European Commission agreed on a Political Roadmap that defined the process and put forward a concrete solution for synchronising the Baltic States' electricity system with the continental European network by the target date of 2025. The Heads of State and Government agreed on a scenario and a process for the synchronisation through the existing interconnector between Lithuania and Poland (known as "LitPol Link"), complemented by a new high-voltage cable between Lithuania and Poland (known as "Harmony Link") and additional optimisation measures (synchronous condensers). A follow-up Political Implementing Roadmap, signed in June 2019, sets an ambitious timetable and specific milestones in order to achieve the timely completion of the project by 2025. Due to the complexity of the synchronisation, the infrastructure investments have been split in phases and their implementation is well underway. The first phase of the synchronisation regards the necessary reinforcements in the three Baltic States and has received financial support under the Connecting Europe Facility that amounts to EUR 323 million.

The transmission system operators form three Baltic States and Poland are working on preparing the second phase of the synchronisation. The investments of the second phase include the update and strengthening of the Polish and Baltic States' electricity transmission systems and the control systems required for synchronisation. The key to the success of the second phase of Synchronisation is to obtain funding from CEF instrument.

Timing: 2025

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Grid synchronisation		2019	2025	ENTSO-E

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Dedicated BEMIP working groups on security of supply and synchronisation

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities:

Action 4: *Increasing the share of renewable energy*

Description:

- Commit to continue and intensify cooperation towards the achievement of the binding national and the EU's 20% renewable targets for 2020, and to ensure the delivery of the national contributions to, and the collective achievement of the binding 2030 EU target of at least 32% (or higher as may be revised), as provided for in the Renewable Energy Directive (2008/28/EC) and the recast Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU).
- Intend to strengthen cooperation to explore and facilitate the modalities of energy transition with a view of carbon neutral economy and to help Europe achieve climate neutrality by 2050.
- Commit to implement fully the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) and the recast Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU).
- Engage in enhanced best practice sharing on renewable energy communities and renewable self-consumption, the integration of renewables in the building, industry, district heating and cooling sectors, the promotion of advanced biofuels and electrification in transport, as well as sector integration and sector coupling that can help decarbonising the heating, cooling and transport sectors.
- Explore options and funding possibilities to engage in joint projects.
- Continue work on the integration of renewable electricity in the power system and explore possibilities of cooperation on concrete areas, such as the development of the region's offshore wind potential, investment in and management of the electricity grid, including as regards system services, the use of storage and sector integration or coupling.
- Discuss possibilities and modalities to use cooperation mechanisms, such as cross-border and joint support schemes, joint projects, statistical transfers and the renewable development platform established under the recast Renewable Energy Directive to facilitate delivering the national targets and contributions and to move towards full decarbonisation by 2050.
- Work together in the area of research and development on renewable energy technologies in electricity, heating and cooling and transport, and solutions for sector integration and sector coupling, with the aim of a fuller and more cost-effective use of the region's R&D capacity and innovation potential, and a more effective use of EU funding possibilities, including those designed for territorial cooperation.

Timing: 2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
RES share		2019	2030	Eurostat

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Cross-border renewable energy and grid development

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action:

Baltic Innovation in Offshore Wind

Baltic Leadership Programme in collaboration with the Swedish Institute

BEMIP working groups on renewable energy

BEMIP Offshore Wind Cooperation

More information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: Interreg, Life, Horizon, CEF, ERDF

3.8. Policy Area Spatial Planning

Policy Area Coordinator: Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea, VASAB; The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission HELCOM)

- VASAB (for land-based spatial planning issues)
- HELCOM & VASAB (for maritime spatial planning issues)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

The overall goal of PA 'Spatial Planning' is to increase **territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea region**. In 2030, the Region shall be a better-integrated and more coherent macro-region, with reduced socio-economic development divides between its individual parts and global challenges that have been turned into assets. To achieve this, PA is encouraging the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning as well as integrated/ territorial approach to development policies in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation.

Spatial planning is an integrative process to influence the future spatial distribution of human activities. It aims to ensure functional integration across multiple scales (macro-regional, national, regional, local levels) and different sectors of public policy in order to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, to reduce the vulnerability of spatial development and spatial structures to adverse climate change impacts and to achieve social and economic objectives. Spatial planning is therefore an important tool for promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This PA is contributing to SDGs 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework:

PA Spatial Planning is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- Territorial Agenda 2030 of the European Union: A future for all places. (Draft December 2019, adoption foreseen at an informal ministerial meeting on Dec. 1st 2020);
- Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning;
- A European Green Deal for the European Union that is the Commission's commitment from 2019 to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges with a goal of making the EU climate neutral in 2050;
- VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the BSR and Tallinn Declaration 2014;
- HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan;
- Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020 and the new Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2021-2027.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

At steering group: National ministries and/or agencies responsible for spatial planning and development, maritime spatial planning and environment issues. Steering group can convene in two different formats based on the questions on the agenda: one for Maritime Spatial Planning (HELCOM-VASAB) and other one for land-based (VASAB)

At implementation level: In addition to the steering group members, also national/regional ministries and/or agencies from related sectors (e.g., transport, energy), regional and local municipalities, research institutions – through application of PA policy recommendations and using PA reports, as well as participation in Flagships and other cooperation projects.

5. Key PA achievement so far

PA is represented by two well-established macro-regional networks involving both EU and non-EU countries:

- VASAB prepares policy options for the territorial development of the BSR and provides forum for exchange know-how on spatial planning and development among the BSR countries;
- HELCOM is an environmental policy maker for the Baltic Sea area and it develops common management solutions and actions to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation.

Land-based spatial planning is carried out by all BSR countries at national and/or regional and local level. PA ensures a joint framework to follow up territorial development trends and challenges, to build a territorial cohesion perspective for the BSR in the 2030, as well as to propose concrete actions to stimulate territorial development potentials to overcome existing gaps.

Widely recognized BSR collaboration on maritime spatial planning (MSP) within the joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group has turned the Baltic Sea region a global forerunner in regional cooperation and governance on MSP applying ecosystem-based approach.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: *Strengthening territorial cohesion in the BSR through land-based spatial planning*				
Description: VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region (LTP) sets the main framework for PA. In order to implement LTP within the EUSBSR and achieve coherent development of the Baltic Sea region, PA aims to: 1. contribute to better adaptation of strategies to different types of areas and propose specific approaches for a diverse urban pattern by ensuring pan-Baltic dialogue; 2. underline the need to apply place-based approaches to territorial development policies as well as effective use of functional area's concept and territorial impact assessment tools by acting as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices, thereby contributing to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda for the EU from 2021 on; 3. observe the territorial development processes in the Region by using and advancing territorial development monitoring solutions, inter alia developed within projects of the ESPON programme; 4. encourage transnational actions improving accessibility and connectivity of the Region using potential of TEN-T for regional development and observe regional effects of the European transport infrastructure development. 5. Contribute to adaptation, mitigation and resilience to climate change in land-based spatial planning process.				
Timing: ongoing				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**

Action 1: *Strengthening territorial cohesion in the BSR through land-based spatial planning*				
Increased the knowledge on land-based spatial planning in the BSR	*Number* of workshops, thematic monitoring reports and possibly policy statements (*according to the chairmanship priorities)*	*By 2019 at least one thematic seminar has been organized per year, two thematic monitoring reports have been elaborated*	*Continuous*	*VASAB CSPD/BSR, national ministries, ESPON, project reports of European Territorial Cooperation programmes*
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: **MARA** – Mobility and Accessibility in Rural Areas" (flagship of PA) **SUMBA** – Sustainable Urban Mobility and Commuting in the Baltic Cities" (Flagship of HA Climate)				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: VASAB currently is discussing a possible update of the **Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region** (process has been initiated in January 2019). This process might suggest new priorities / actions/ tasks for PA.				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: Interreg BSR programme, Interreg Central and South Baltic programmes, ESPON programme, VASAB`s own budget				

Action 2: *Ensuring coherent maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea*				
Description: The Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020, along with VASAB LTP and HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan sets the framework for MSP cooperation and defines the necessary steps to achieve the goal to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans throughout the BSR which are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem-based approach to contribute to reaching jointly agreed environmental and climate goals. Transboundary coherency of maritime spatial plans implies strengthening of cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations.				
Timing: ongoing				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem-based approach.	*Elaborated and applied maritime spatial plans throughout the BSR.*	*In 2019 all EU countries in the BSR are engaged into MSP.* *Maritime spatial plans covering whole national marine waters in the Baltic Sea are adopted in 3 countries.*	*Maritime spatial plans elaborated and applied throughout the Baltic Sea in 2020/2021.*	*EC DG MARE, national ministries, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, European Territorial Cooperation programmes' reports.*
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Capacity4MSP (2019-2021)				

Action 2: *Ensuring coherent maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea*
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: Current **Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020** includes an agreed goal: "to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 which are coherent across borders and apply ecosystem-based approach". According to the Work plan 2020-2021 of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group, the elaboration of new Roadmap for 2020+ will be carried out by 2021. In the period after 2020 focus of the activities on MSP will move from preparation of the plans to their implementation and to follow up of effectiveness. There will be important updates for the overall policy frameworks. An update of the **HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan** is going on and a new Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap is under development. Both documents are expected to be adopted by the end of 2021. Also, an update of the **VASAB LTP** has started . **BSR MSP Data group** works on establishing the joint BSR MSP webmap where adopted maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea will be available. **Capacity4MSP** project platform (ongoing till September 2021, funded by Interreg BSR Programme)
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: EU Commission's DG MARE, Interreg BSR Programme, joint Baltic Sea research and development Programme (BONUS), Interreg Central Baltic Programme, VASAB`s and HELCOM`s own budget.

3.9. Policy Area Secure

Policy Area Coordinator: Sweden **(**Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency); Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat (CBSS)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

PA Secure contributes to all 3 objectives of the EUSBSR and to the sub-objectives: "Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management"; "Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime" and "Connecting people in the region". PA Secure offers a platform for cross-border, cross-sectoral and multi-level cooperation to strengthen societal security, and allows for better coordination of activities dealing with prevention and preparedness related to both natural and man-made threats and developing methods for responding to security risks posed by climate change. PA Secure helps aligning national priorities with EU and global strategies, action plans and funding opportunities.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Secure directly contributes to SGDs 1 - 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17 (see mapping here).

3. EU or other policy framework

Several policy frameworks constitute the base for the PA Secure strategic actions, the most important are: the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Decision No. 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Secure covers a wide spectrum of societal security challenges and has broad participation from different sectors and levels. PA Secure works closely with relevant PAs/HAs such as Climate, Spatial Planning, Capacity, Neighbors, Safe, Hazards, Health and Culture, and strives for increased cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing challenges in the BSR. The contact with the other EU macro-regional strategies (EU MRSs) is

also important. PA Secure strives for greater exchange between the EU MRSs to build better capacity in Europe for cooperation on societal security challenges.

5. Key PA achievement so far

1. Establishing a pan-Baltic mechanism for civil protection cooperation by adopting the strategic document "Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area" (2017) that streamlined the cooperation efforts, focusing on the most important actions to strengthen resilience and preparedness for various types of common risks and threats.
2. Institutionalisation of the Baltic Leadership/Excellence Programme in Civil Security (BLP / BEP) which has, to date, brought together 120 experts in key leadership positions from civil protection and law enforcement agencies from all 11 countries in the BSR. The BLP has been organized with support from the Swedish Institute and a sustainable platform has been developed.
3. From 2012 – 2019, a series of projects have contributed to improving the quality of risk and capability assessment methods. Project 14.3 developed six disaster scenarios for the BSR; From Gaps to Caps explored the countries' capabilities to deal with them. The results directly informed national risk assessment strategies and improved national legislation. The latest project CASCADE focuses on prevention of risks posed by climate change.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management

Description: The strategic action has a holistic, multi-level and all-hazard approach with a focus on capacity building related to the whole civil protection cycle: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The aim is to build resilient societies and developing and strengthening integrated approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Key action 1.1: a) Ensure that the MSs maximize the added value from participating in global and European policy frameworks and cooperation mechanisms, such as UN Sendai Framework for DRR and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism; b) Support continuous joint capacity building processes linking professionals across the region, and; c) Promote common situational awareness and increased understanding between countries and sectors.

Key action 1.2: a) Improve the methodologies and capacities to assess various relevant risks in the risk and capability assessments at all levels of governance; b) Facilitate cooperation with regard to the use of climate change data and projections from Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and its Climate Data Store (CDS); c) To this end, increase the cooperation and exchange of knowledge between civil protection professionals and climate change experts.

Key action 1.3: Increase societal resilience through focusing on strengthening the prevention and preparedness capacities for different groups.

Timing: 2020 – 2024

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
PA's activities strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders to work with prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency.	The stakeholder organisations express that their capacities have been strengthened through participation in PA Secure activities.			Stakeholders survey - Monitoring&Evaluation toolkit.

Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Baltic Leadership/Excellence Programme (BLP/BEP) in Civil Security (activities every year), CASCADE (2019 – 2020), and ResQU2 Project Platform (2018 – 2020).

Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management

Project(s) and other action(s) planned within this action: BLP/BEP seminars or courses will be organized annually. Cooperation between higher education institutions and practitioners will address gaps in education related to capacities in the civil protection cycle. The policy dialogue on the Sendai Framework will continue in the PA Secure SG. New initiatives will explore how to increase societal resilience through focusing on various groups.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: Interreg BSR, UCPM, ISF, Erasmus+, H2020 and Swedish Institute.

Action 2: Strengthening mechanisms for joint strategic and operational actions protecting human beings and societies from criminal threats

Description: To protect human beings and societies from criminal threats effectively, the relevant authorities need to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach, increase their cooperation across various policy fields as well as the cross-border coordination.

Key action 2.1: Facilitate the development of an agreement on an international coordination platform for law enforcement agencies focusing on external funding when appropriate and connecting the EU EMPACT priorities with the needs of the MSs.

Key action 2.2: a) Develop a cooperation agreement for cross-border comprehensive assistance and/or transfer of identified trafficked persons; b) Strengthen the capacities of relevant authorities in investigating labor exploitation; c) Strengthen the role of mass media in preventing THB.

Key action 2.3: Establishing a cross-border network for multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses of violence to promote harmonization and consolidation of practice according to International and European law and the European quality standards for Barnahus.

Timing: 2020 – 2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
PA's activities contribute to strengthening the cross-border cooperation to fight criminal threats.	Revised agreements or mechanisms developed. Revised strategy of BSTF (Baltic Sea Task Force on organized Crime)	2019	2030	M&E quantitative and qualitative analysis of secondary sources

Flagship on-going or planned within this action: TF-THB Strategy 2018 – 2020, TF-THB Strategy 2021 – 2023 and Comprehensive and sustainable child protection (ongoing).

Project(s) and other action(s) planned within this action: Develop an agreement on a multi-lateral platform consisting of representatives of the police authorities focusing on cooperation on external funding. Awareness raising of human trafficking through strengthened media actions. Upcoming project TALOS (protection of victims of trafficking). PROMISE 3 will support countries in Europe to adopt the Barnahus model as a standard practice.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: DG JUST, H2020, ISF, Swedish Gender Equality Agency and Swedish institute.

Action 3: a common societal security culture in the Baltic Sea Region

Description: Promote a common societal security culture by developing reliable standards and sharing best practices in prevention of increased risks.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Key action 3.1: a) Strengthen the analytical capacities of relevant agencies and developing common standards for data collection; b) Develop common standards related to emergencies and accidents; c) Support the diagnosis of key obstacles for inter-departmental and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Key action 3.2: Strengthen the relevance of education and research through increasing cooperation between researchers and higher education institutions in the societal security discipline and practitioners and experts from the field.

Key action 3.3: a) Encourage increased involvement of NGOs and volunteers in the field of civil protection and emergency management; b) Strengthen the role of children and youth in promoting a common societal security culture in the BSR, and their role as contributors to building resilient societies.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Timing: 2020 – 2024</td></tr>
<tr><td>Indicator title</td><td>Value</td><td>Baseline</td><td>Target/deadline</td><td>Data source</td></tr>
<tr><td>PA’s activities contribute to the development of common standard practices, guidelines or regulations.</td><td>Regulations, standards, guidelines for practice or education developed.</td><td></td><td></td><td>M&E quantitative and qualitative analysis of secondary sources.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Flagship on-going or planned within this action: BLP/BEP in Civil Security, FIRE-IN, ResQU2. Planned flagship: BALTPREP.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Project(s) and other action(s) planned within this action: Planned project NEEDS: Needs-based education and studies in societal security. Planned pre-study on strengthening the role of children and youth in building resilient societies.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: Interreg BSR, Erasmus+, UCPM, H2020 and Swedish Institute.</td></tr>
</table>

3.10. Policy Area Tourism

Policy Area Coordinator: Germany (Ministry of Economics, Employment and Health Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

PA Tourism contributes to the following objectives, sub-objectives and indicators:

Connecting the region

- Connecting people in the region -> Participation in cultural / educational / scientific cooperation
- Good transport conditions -> Sustainable connectivity / accessibility / mobility
- Fostering the digital transformation of tourism -> Data-driven Decisions / In-Depth Analysis
- **Increase Prosperity**
- Improve long-term competitiveness of the BSR
- Collaborate internationally to ensure that policies and decisions are regionally sustainable
- Welcome business intelligence
- Invest in the customer experience (reputation)

Save the Environment

- Sustainable tourism, environmental protection, natural resources -> Status of ecosystem
- Better cooperation among tourism actors -> Mitigation of environmental footprint
- Foster changes in policies, business practices and consumer behavior in tourism

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighboring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

Added value of PA Tourism:

PA Tourism provides a strong platform to reinforce sustainable tourism development in the BSR; creates networks and strengthens the dialogue with stakeholders of the tourism industry and tourism education institutions to ensure competence development in the tourism sector across the BSR. It develops synergies by linking projects, initiatives and organisations with tourism activities; facilitates and strengthens the cooperation in the area to find solutions for common challenges; and enhances the profile, visibility and attractiveness of the BSR as a preferred partner for tourism cooperation within the BSR.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The four most relevant SDGs for PA Tourism are goal 8, 11, 12 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework (Background)

- Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism
- Blue growth agenda
- 2030 Agenda for sustainable development
- Tourism and transport: Commission's guidance on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's tourism in 2020 and beyond (May 2020)
- New European Agenda for Culture of the EC (May 2018)
- European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage – Cultural Heritage for an Inclusive Europe (December 2018)
- Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, November 2018)

The EIT (European Institute for Innovation and Technology) will launch two new KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities); one of them with focus on the cultural and creative industries (CCI) planned to start in 2022. Policy Area Tourism is also closely connected with the European Green Deal.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Spring 2020 and its economic consequences in the BSR underline also the need for EUSBSR level preparation of coordinated macro-regional recovery policies and actions on tourism, which ensuring health and safety standards based on science and epidemiological situation, not just in the aftermath of the current crisis, but also in the longer term.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Tourism maintains, inter alia, collaborations with PA Education and PA Culture. PA Tourism is planning to create stronger synergies with other PAs in the course of creating new flagships (e.g. with PA Bio Economy, PA Transport, PA Innovation, PA Education, PA Culture, PA Spatial Planning and PA Health). PA Tourism has been engaged in a process of inter-macro regional strategy cooperation and coordination and is aiming at increasing these interregional bonds in the future.

New emerging flagships and projects will seek to involve Stakeholders from national and regional tourist boards /organisations/agencies, national/regional/local public authorities, municipalities, business support organisations, higher education and research, education and training/schools, Euro-Regions, SMEs, sanitary

and epidemiological services, partner countries, International organisations (ETC, UNWTO, etc.) and other interest groups/actors (including NGOs) and the civil society.

5. Key PA achievement so far

The Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) is a leading center for improved communication and cooperation within the BSR. With focus on the Core Competences Partnerships, Insights and Skills, the BSTC aims at becoming the central contact point for tourism stakeholders in the BSR, providing services in the fields of Tourism Policies, Market Research, Training Offerings and Sustainable Tourism.

- ✓ The BSTC launched the "State of the tourism Industry" report and the "trend report" within the field of Market Research. The reports offer tourism stakeholders trans-regional industry data for strategic decisions on BSR tourism development as well as on tourism trends in the BSR.
- ✓ The BSTC devised a series of four "consecutive product development workshops" that equip not just tourism stakeholders with the necessary knowledge on how to develop and launch new offers by means of targeted innovation management, efficient methods, and creativity. The result is a handbook "Co-development toolkit - a shortcut to expanding your business".
- ✓ THE BSTC developed a "Business Plan" and a "Convention Paper", which form the basis for the future acquisition process of the BSTC within the framework of an EGTC. In addition the BSTC set up a "Position Paper on sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea region post 2020" to better position and lobby the BSR tourism sector on EU level.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas

Description: Sustainable Tourism development in remote areas (including outermost regions, disconnected cities, archipelagos and islands), taking into account the protection of the environment and eco-systems, not only helps to spread the benefits of tourism in terms of expenditure by tourists, it also helps to create employment, a well-functioning infrastructure, a good living environment, and other local support services as a result, which can help to slow down rural-urban migration in the BSR. This can help to create more resilient and sustainable communities, both in remote/rural areas and urban cities.

Supported fields of action:

- ✓ Improving the accessibility, connectivity, visibility and the attractiveness of remote areas
- ✓ Mitigating seasonal fluctuations and diminishing peaks and troughs in tourism demand by promoting all year round offers and more tailored products and services
- ✓ Promoting sustainable consumption (referring to tourists and private consumption of tourism products and services, including travel/soft mobility)
- ✓ Fostering sustainable production, including resource-efficiency (referring to tourism companies and establishments, green products and services)
- ✓ Protecting biodiversity and developing visitor management

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods 1) to improve accessibility and connectivity in remote areas, 2) to mitigate seasonal fluctuations, 3) to promote sustainable consumption and production and to act in accordance with health standards	Monitoring by PA

Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas

			based on science and epidemiological situation that limit epidemics // 2025	
New trans-national networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new transnational networks // 2023	Monitoring by PA

Flagship on-going or planned within this action Flagship planned to start in 2021

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

- Implementation of seminars and workshops;
- Publication of policy briefings and reports;
- Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with PA Bio Economy, PA Transport and PA Health

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg BSR, mainstream programmes

Action 2: Investing in people, skills and technology in the tourism industry

Description: Training, modern labor markets, digital skills, technological innovation are not only key drivers for socio-economic development and sustainable growth but also more equitable and inclusive societies and for the well-being and personal fulfilment of its citizens. In order to work towards a sustainable future in the travel and tourism industry, the Baltic Sea Region needs to be prepared to enable new technologies and further invest in people's skills, competences, and quality.

Supported fields of action:

- ✓ Facing the challenges of the labor market
- ✓ Improving relevant skills and competences in the BSR for employability, entrepreneurship and innovation
- ✓ Promoting closer cooperations with educational, training, labor and research institutions in particular on a transnational, regional and bilateral level
- ✓ Developing market research and trend studies as a basis for strategic decision making
- ✓ Fostering the digital transformation of tourism SMEs and new technologies, which will enable the leap to new business models

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods to foster digital transformation, skills and competences // 2025	Monitoring by PA
New international networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new international networks //2023	Monitoring by PA

Flagship on-going or planned within this action Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) on-going

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

- Development of future scenarios for Tourism in the BSR 2030;
- Implementation of yearly fora, exchange meetings, workshops and trainings;
- Publication of position papers and reports;

Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas

- Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with with PA Education, PA Innovation and PA Health

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg BSR, mainstream programmes

Action 3: Protection and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage and natural resources in tourism destinations

Description: Tourism has a unique reason to be concerned about the sustainability of the cultural and natural environment and thus the responsibility for its protection, owing to its dependency on the appeal of unspoilt landscapes and accessible local heritage. The idea of Action 3 is to encourage a green/authentic/sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism and to promote a kind of tourism that is respectful of local identities, host communities and cultural heritage in the BSR.

The development of specific "green/sustainable" touristic offers and products, and greater investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport facilities, reduced air pollution, reduction of water, energy and waste, recycling of natural resources, conservation of heritage sites and open spaces, etc.) should result in smarter and greener places, from which residents and tourists, can benefit all year round.

Supported fields of action:

- ✓ Improving the touristic infrastructure with regard to climate protection and sustainable mobility, accessibility and connectivity in an ecological way
- ✓ Fostering sustainable destination management approaches
- ✓ Controlling and monitoring tourism flows using digital tools to reduce negative impacts on nature, culture and local communities, taking active measures to protect the environment and combat climate change and looking for new opportunities which climate change might offer for the BSR
- ✓ Respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributing to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods for green/sustainable tourism and destination management // 2025	Monitoring by PA
New international networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new international networks // 2023	Monitoring by PA

Flagship on-going or planned within this action Flagship planned to start in 2021

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

- Implementation of seminars and workshops;
- Publication of discussion papers and reports;
- Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with PA Culture

Action 3: Protection and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage and natural resources in tourism destinations
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Interreg BSR, mainstream programmes

3.11. Policy Area Culture

Policy Area Coordinators: Germany (Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein): Poland (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

PA Culture contributes to the EUSBSR objective: ***Increase prosperity - Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region.*** PA Culture is especially active in promoting the BSR cultural and creative sectors, encouraging creative entrepreneurship.
PA Culture contributes to EUSBSR objective: ***Connect the region – Connecting people in the region.*** Culture has the power to integrate; culture builds bridges across borders and across social and political differences.

PA Culture will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighboring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA culture is contributing to SDGs 8 and 11.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Culture is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- New European Agenda for Culture of the EC (May 2018)
- European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage – Cultural Heritage for an Inclusive Europe (December 2018)
- Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, November 2018)
- The EIT (European Institute for Innovation and Technology) will launch two new KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities); one of them with focus on the cultural and creative industries (CCI) planned to start in 2022.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

Within the BSR a wide range of inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies are addressing culture. First of all bodies, who are represented in the PA Culture Steering Group, thus contributing to coherence of BSR cultural cooperation. However, there is open space for cooperation with regional and local organisations, whom priorities are in line with the EUSBSR. SME entities and municipalities are also encouraged to contribute to quality of Baltic culture events and tangible results. Involvement of cultural actors takes place point by point when there is a need of dealing specific issue (e.g. Planning concept of Baltic Sea Cultural Cities, engagement of game industries in CCI sector).

5. Key PA achievement so far

Since the establishment of PA Culture, cultural actors from all political levels meet regularly to coordinate activities. Subsequently, visibility and awareness for cultural cooperation in the region have been improved. Moreover, cultural cooperation in the BSR gains political weight. Further achievements – PA Culture:

- started to regularly organize strategic project development workshops with success – such as project of Baltic Sea Cultural Cities, Baltic Sea Youth Camp,

- gave political impetus to a better funding framework for cultural projects (seed money field),
- encouraged youth involvement in BSR cultural cooperation by e.g. contributing to the success of the EUSBSR Baltic Sea Youth Camp,
- PA Culture succeeded in involving non-EU countries in PA Culture activities such as involvement of participants from Kaliningrad Oblast.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Promoting the BSR cultural and creative industries, encouraging creative entrepreneurship

Description:

Objective of the action is to strengthen the competitiveness of the CCS (cultural and creative sectors) of the region through macro-regional cooperation. The CCS are seen as one of the drivers of economy. They are gaining importance also for regional development. Many creative sectors are characterized by a large number of micro-sized enterprises and self-employment with all related problems. To facilitate practical support for CCS enterprises there is potential in existing flagships 'Creative Ports' and 'Baltic Game Industry'. It is in accordance with our aims: Institutional capacities of support structures for CCS, (other) framework conditions for CCS, development of entrepreneurial skills of CCS actors etc. Activity planned in this action could be: taking stock of the findings of the flagship projects, development of policy recommendations, e.g. as regards access to capital or marketing opportunities.

Cooperation among BSR countries' creative sectors will help to share the creative potential across the whole region and contribute to its faster and more coherent economic development. Pooling and complementing resources and joint marketing initiatives are suitable means to increase international visibility.

Timing: ongoing process

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
capacity building measures of CCS start-ups	Number of CCS supported	0	30	Flagship project, workshops, conferences

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Baltic Game Industry - ongoing; Creative Ports- ongoing

Project (s) and other activities (s) are planned within this action

Strategic project development workshops.

Analysis of the findings of terminated projects with especially improvement of framework conditions in mind

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, smaller funding sources like e.g. Swedish Institute seed funding, CBSS Project Support Facility, PA Culture budget

Action 2: Promoting BSR culture, cultural diversity and European values, promoting culture as a driver for sustainable development

Objectives: Main objective of the action 2 is to present the diversity, quality and attractiveness of BSR culture and arts in all its variety and complexity. By this, PA Culture strives to strengthen and support the European project and to promote European values. Another objective is to trigger innovation in economy and society by cultural interventions. Activities promoting culture as a driver for social innovation and sustainable living shall strengthen civil society and its institutions.

Description:

Fostering cultural exchange and cooperation shall serve the cultural sector in itself and help promoting the BSR as an attractive cultural region. An important instrument for these aims is addressing the citizens of BSR directly, with special focus on young generations. The nomination of a "Baltic Sea Cultural City" shall foster people-to-people contacts and exchange and cooperation on a level beside day-to-day topics. A rough concept was developed by the PA stakeholders and shall be refined continuously. As an obstacle for a more vivid cultural exchange the lack of accessible and low-threshold funding for small scale actions showed up. The further development of an instrument filling this gap will be pushed and promoted by the PA.

Timing: ongoing process

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developed tools and processes using culture as a trigger of innovation,	Number of projects, workshops, conferences Number of tools and processes	0		projects, workshops, conferences
Supporting measures for improving the image of BSR cities and regions	Number of measures developed	0	5	projects, workshops, conferences

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Urb Cultural Planning (ongoing); Baltic Sea Cultural Cities (seed money funded, ongoing), Umbrella funding for small scale and micro projects (planned)

Project (s) and other activities (s) are planned within this action

Umbrella project for cultural micro-funding activities in the Baltic Sea region

Strategic project development workshops

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, smaller funding sources like e.g. Swedish Institute seed funding, CBSS Project Support Facility, PA Culture budget

Action 3: Preserving the BSR's cultural heritage, strengthening regional identity

Description:

The action aims at increasing the societal and economic value of cultural heritage through innovative and visitor-friendly presentations of heritage sites and museums, thus also contributing to strengthen the regional identity.

Another objective of the action is to focus on the cultural and historic roots of the BSR, which are fundamental for mutual understanding, coexistence and cooperation. Overall objective of this action is to preserve the cultural heritage of the BSR on land and under water. The action aims at facilitating the management of the region's cultural heritage and promoting public interest in and access to these assets. The cultural heritage of the region has a high non-material and economic value for the overall attractiveness of the region for inhabitants and tourists. Transnational projects addressing the common cultural heritage, traditions and history of the region assist people in getting aware of regional cultural resources and provide essence for CCS products.

Timing: ongoing process

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developing measures for integrated cultural heritage manage-ment in the BSR	Number of measures	0	5	Project report

Flagship on-going or planned within this action

Baltic Sea History Project; BalticRIM – Baltic Sea Region Integrated Maritime Cultural Heritage Management

Project (s) and other activities (s) are planned within this action

Strategic project development workshops

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, Erasmus+, smaller funding sources like e.g. Swedish Institute seed funding, CBSS Project Support Facility, PA Culture budget

3.12. Policy Area Innovation

Policy Area Coordinator: The Baltic Institute of Finland; Estonia (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications); Poland (Ministry of Science and Higher Education)

1. EUSBSR Objectives

Increase prosperity: Baltic Sea region as a frontrunner for deepening and fulfilling the single market; Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region; Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; Connect the region: Connecting people in the region. (PA INNO contribution below)
Added value: Policy Area Innovation (PA INNO) promotes a globally competitive position within innovation for sustainable economic growth in the BSR, and provides a strong platform for an enhanced macroregional collaborative ecosystem for innovation, research, SMEs and digitalization. It enables shared learning through knowledge-transfer activities; creates and strengthens networks across the Baltic Sea region; aligns resources and regulations e.g. through co-ordination of funding sources; facilitates the joining up of forces in common programs and investments and in the development of solutions for

common challenges; and enhances BSR's profile, visibility and attractiveness as a partner of choice for international innovation cooperation within and beyond the BSR. Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA innovation is contributing to SDGs 8 and 9.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Innovation is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (COSME)
- Smart Specialisation Strategy
- Digitising European Industry, in particular the support to Digital Innovation Hubs that can support SMEs with their digital transformation
- Activities to support cultural and creative industries
- Digital Single Market
- EU Blue Bioeconomy Roadmap and Bioeconomy Strategy
- Policy goals of Horizon Europe
- A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe

The innovation AP is to be linked to the Green Deal, support for R&I being a cross-cutting element of the pact. It will also be directly linked to certain texts of the Green Deal: the new industrial strategy, the new circular economy action plan, the farm-to-fork strategy.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

In addition to institutions represented in the PA INNO SC, other national level government agencies and organisations (such as innovation agencies), universities and other research and knowledge institutions, large scale research infrastructures, business development, cluster and technology transfer organisations, incubators and co-creation platforms/ecosystems, industry associations and companies are strongly involved in PA INNO as action/flagship operators and stakeholders. Furthermore, PA INNO stakeholders include banks/financial institutions, investors and business angels, NGOs and citizen communities. PA INNO explores synergies with other PAs and HAs and supports them with best practices, learnings and other outcomes of PA INNO flagships, as well utilizes their knowledge and data on joint BSR challenges

5. Key PA achievement so far

PA INNO has helped versatile BSR innovation cooperation to evolve into strategic and complementary actions with stronger impact and more scalable results. In recent years, PA INNO activities have been centered around the implementation of the PA INNO Strategic Action Plan 2016-2020 focusing on increasing innovation capacity and supporting entrepreneurship, business development, and science within the three drivers of innovation: Market, Knowledge, and Challenges. PA INNO flagships such as BSR Stars, SUBMARINER Network, ScanBalt, Baltic Science Link and BSR Digi co-lab have produced numerous interesting and highly relevant results and new solutions e.g. in the fields of research collaboration, health, blue growth, bio/circular economy and digital economy. PA INNO experiences and results on transnational S3 are providing strong evidence and basis for the next wave of S3 in the next EU programming period. Related to this, a network of ERDF Managing Authorities (MA Network) has been established to develop proposals on transnational S3 collaboration. Pilot projects on clean technologies

and digital transformation have been created under the MA Network.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Challenge-driven innovation

Description: Macroregional challenge-driven innovation policies and actions aim at fostering disruptive, breakthrough and market-shaping innovations to respond to the 21st century social, environmental, and economic grand challenges in the BSR (e.g. climate change, resource efficiency, demographic change, pandemics, rapid urbanization, healthy living and aging, clean energy, inclusive societies, sustainable food and feed production and various environmental challenges of the Baltic Sea). Building on the strong background and experience on challenge-based innovation cooperation, and leveraging and scaling up the successes and best practices, stronger innovation ecosystems can be created and common BSR challenges tackled by developing shared solutions and related new pan-Baltic value chains. The aim is to turn challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth in BSR.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Spring 2020 and its economic consequences in BSR underline also the need for EUSBSR level preparation of coordinated macroregional recovery policies and actions on business and innovation, not just in the aftermath of the current crisis, but also in the longer term.

Smart specialization is a key policy framework for challenge-driven innovation. The 'next wave' of the EU's policy framework for Smart Specialisation is widely expected to focus on interregional collaboration through aligning regional S3 priorities and innovation investment efforts, and to help regions (and their industries) to draw on their collective strengths and common challenges to carve out new innovation focused value chain opportunities.

Timing: 2020-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Transnational value chains (especially in 4 key areas: circular and bio-economy, blue growth, digitalization and health)	Number of value chains	TBD	20/2027	Eurostat Regional Statistics indicators, Regional Innovation Monitor, Regional Ecosystem Scoreboard, KETs Observatory, EU Trade Tool

Flagship on-going or planned within this action:

On-going: Baltic Sea Region Smart Specialisation Ecosystem (Interreg BSR, platform project); **BSR Stars**: (sub-flaghips: LARS, Smart-Up BSR and BSR Stars S3 (Interreg BSR); **SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth** (sub-flaghips: Blue Platform, Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance and Smart Blue Regions (Interreg BSR), InnoAquaTech (Interreg South Baltic 2019); **ScanBalt** (sub-flagships: BFCC and BALTSE@NIOR (Interreg BSR, 2019)

Planned: BSR S3 Ecosystem Support Programme (based on the S3 platform project results especially on circular bioeconomy), Interregional innovation investments through the provision of acceleration services aimed towards commercialisation and scaling up of interregional innovation projects having the

Action 1: Challenge-driven innovation

potential to solve BSR challenges, to generate new business, and to encourage the development of BSR/European Value Chains.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Sector/S3 priority-specific S3 initiatives (e.g. on blue growth, circular economy, health, industry 4.0, smart cities); DNA - Digihealth Nordic Acceleration; BSR initiatives on public procurement for innovation; BSR leadership programmes and capacity building activities on Action 1 topics.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Horizon Europe, mainstream ERDF programmes, Interreg Central Baltic / Interreg South Baltic, European Urban Initiative, Interreg Europe, Nordic Innovation, national and regional innovation funds, Nordic Council of Ministries, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Action 2: Digital innovation and transformation

Description:

Digital transformation is a societal change. Emerging digital technologies such as AI, VR/AR, blockchain, robotics and Internet of Things (IoT) are key tools to tackle societal challenges, facilitate new businesses, innovations, services and more sustainable, usable and vital living environments and infrastructures, and develop BSR innovation (e.g. smart city initiatives) and startup ecosystems. 'Industry 4.0' relying on big data, IoT, AI and autonomous machines is a key challenge for SME's even in BSR. It can be tackled with transnational exchange of approaches and learnings. Developing common standards for interoperable public and private solutions (e.g. e-identity) and harmonizing of data will support transfer of solutions across BSR, new market opportunities and globally more competitive digital ecosystems. This will put BSR at the vanguard of digital territories in Europe and worldwide. PA INNO gives businesses and public service providers opportunities to analyze, evaluate, develop, co-create and test new ideas and services together. PA INNO also promotes knowledge sharing and institutional capacity building within digitalization to facilitate digital transformation and bridge digital divides in BSR.

Smart Specialisation is a relevant policy framework to support digital innovation and transformation related BSR cooperation. Smart Specialisation can generate scaled up innovation efforts (e.g. on Digital Innovation Hubs), accelerate cross-regional value chains (e.g. on digital transformation of bioeconomy /circular economy) and generate new market opportunities in digital economy.

Timing: 2020-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
BSR digital performance (improvement in %)	Average BSR ranking position	TBD	10/2027	The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)

Flagship on-going or planned within this action:

Action 2: Digital innovation and transformation

Ongoing: BSR Digi co-lab: (sub-flagships: **DIGINNO**: Digital Innovation Network; and **INNOCAPE**: Industry 4: transforming innovation ecosystem through better capacity of public enablers (Interreg BSR); **Internet of Business (IoB) based on Real Time Economy concept***;*

Planned: Real-Time Economy (with numerous sub-projects); Joint development, implementation and monitoring of Digital Innovation Hubs (BSR DIH Hub/research network); Industry 4.0 Programme for BSR SMEs; BSR Smart City Accelerator Programme; BSR AI Accelerator; Digital transformation of (blue) bioeconomy /circular economy in the BSR; incl. establishment of more efficient and effective data and information generation and provision based on new ICT solutions (Operational Pilots)

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Increasing digital trust and cybersecurity; Smart city initiatives e.g. on smart urban mobility, buildings and energy, health and wellbeing, safety and security; BSR open data initiative; DigiResBSR - Digital Innovation Research Community for the BSR; Regions 4 Future: enabling policy mix tool and training to expand 5G&AI for regional single market development;

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe Programme, mainstream ERDF programmes, Interreg Central Baltic / Interreg South Baltic, ETC Component 5, European Urban Initiative, Interreg Europe, Nordic Innovation, national and regional innovation funds, Nordic Council of Ministries within MR-Digital initiative, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Action 3: Co-creative innovation

Description:

Ecosystems and platforms are emerging as key frameworks for economic and innovation activity also in BSR. Transnational platforms and change agents are needed to connect BSR innovation ecosystems and having access to public, research, and business groups, to engage them in the collaborative process of co-creation to bridge the existing knowledge, skills and market access gaps for SMEs. Efficient transnational linkages and matching of end users, innovative firms and research partners for team co-creation, and access to other resources such as knowledge and prototyping is a critical success factor for co-creation scale-up and growth. Transnational linkages allow organisations to tap into a larger base of ideas and technology, find complementary expertise, and pool competencies in order to overcome barriers, such as lack of management resources and technological competencies. They can also open a broader geographic market for companies.

Objectives of this action: To scale up the use of co-creation among BSR SMEs through improving their capabilities and absorptive capacities to efficiently turn market demand driven ideas into innovations; To connect innovation ecosystems across BSR through developing and piloting systematic models and practices to engage BSR SMEs, researchers, test facilities and end users in co-creation activities; To enhance the adjustment of regional innovation voucher schemes to BSR-wide transnational co-creation activities; To facilitate the understanding and change of mindset among policy-makers and SMEs to scale up practical co-creation activities in BSR and; To promote transnational cooperation and SMEs access to

Action 3: Co-creative innovation

RDI infra, and transnational exchange and joint development between Innovation Infrastructure Organisations and incubators.

S3 serves as a suitable policy framework also for co-creative innovation in BSR by offering a fertile testing ground for its regions to develop new and reinforce existing industry-led collaboration efforts. Transnational S3 activities can include e.g. joint innovation investments aiming at widening the pool of resources and knowledge bases or at accessing complementary assets (e.g. through interregional voucher schemes). Regions can also develop and improve existing regional policy instruments such as ERDF to supporting the co-specialization approach to S3.

Timing: 2020-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
BSR innovation performance - Attractive research systems, Firm investments, Innovators, Linkages (improvement in %)	Average BSR ranking position	TBD	10/2027	European innovation scoreboard

Flagship on-going or planned within this action:

On-going: Baltic Science Link (sub-flagships: **CAROTS** and **Baltic Tram** (Interreg BSR); **SNOWMAN** (Interreg BSR); **INBETS BSR** (Interreg BSR); **ScanBalt** (sub-flagships: **ProVaHealth** and **BIC** (Interreg BSR); **BSR Stars**: (sub-flagships: **SmartUp Accelerator** and **IRIS** (Interreg BSR); SUBMARINER Network (sub-flagships: Baltic Blue Biotech Alliance+ (Interreg BSR) and Blue Platform (Interreg BSR)

Planned: Joint programmes and projects promoting e.g. interconnection of open innovation infrastructures and ecosystems, university-business co-creation, collaborative R&I, technology & knowledge transfer and joint public procurement for innovation (e.g. under EIC/Horizon initiative on Innovation Ecosystems)

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

Transnational utilisation of BSR R&D facilities through transnational voucher schemes; Distance LAB, BSR Startup Alliance; The Alliance Accelerator service offer of the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities

Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Horizon Europe, mainstream ERDF programmes, Interreg Central Baltic / Interreg South Baltic, ETC Component 5, European Urban Initiative, Interreg Europe, Nordic Innovation, national and regional innovation funds, Nordic Council of Ministries, Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

3.13. Policy Area Health

Policy Area Coordinator: Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS) Secretariat

1. EUSBSR Objectives

A healthy population in the Baltic Sea Region is a prerequisite for productivity, economic competitiveness and further development. By aiming to improve the health and well-being of people in the BSR, PA Health contributes to the objective of increasing prosperity in the region.

PA Health strives to raise awareness among other policy areas for the impact of their domain on health and for the need to implement a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach.

HiAP is an approach that improves accountability of policymakers for health impacts at all levels of policy-making including emphasis on the consequences of public policies on health systems and determinants of health and well-being. It also contributes to sustainable development.

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Health most directly contributes to SDG 3 "Good health and well-being". Several work areas of PA Health also contribute to other SDGs, such as 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

3. EU or other policy framework

The work of PA Health is strongly aligned with the NDPHS Strategy 2020, the WHO Europe Health 2020 Strategy, the European policy framework for health, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the principle of universal health coverage (UHC) as well as the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Health has an established structure of thematic experts and a network of stakeholders in the region. In addition to the NDPHS Partner Organisations, several stakeholders from civil society, academia, as well as national, regional and local authorities are involved in the implementation of PA Health activities and projects.

In the future, PA Health will work on further broadening its stakeholder outreach and engagement, in particular to NGOs working on health-related issues in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. A strategy on stakeholder relations will be part of the future increased communication activities of PA Health.

5. Key PA achievement so far

Previous activities of PA Health have focused on raising the profile of health on the regional agenda, which has been achieved through the organisation of events bringing together policy makers and experts. Furthermore, efforts have been made to highlight the connection between health and economic prosperity through the commissioning of reports and their dissemination to regional decision makers.

Several successful projects have been implemented in the framework of the PA Health. Among them the most recent flagship project "Northern Dimension Antibiotic Resistance Study (NoDARS)" provided valuable information on the penetration of antibiotic resistance in society and identified specific resistance determinants among the normal flora of healthy individuals.

The recent focus of PA Health has been increasing stakeholders' capacity in fund raising to initiate new potential flagship within the PA Health by organising training activities on project design and management in collaboration with HA Capacity.

6. Actions for the PA[24]

Action 1: Promoting active and healthy ageing[25] to address the challenges of demographic change				
Description: As in many other regions of the world, the population in the Baltic Sea Region is affected by demographic change. This presents great opportunities for the societies of the BSR, as well as challenges to adapt, in particular the health and care systems.				
Timing: 2019 - 2025				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Established strategic framework for action aimed at promoting healthy and active ageing in the BSR	# of national needs assessment reports # of joint cross-border initiatives	0	- Strategic framework launched by 2021 - Joint initiatives - 2 per year	PA Health reporting
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Active and healthy ageing in the BSR (AgeFLAG)				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action Roadmap to improve the health and well-being of the ageing population in the Baltic Sea Region – AgeFLAG Seed funding project (Large-scale project following the AgeFLAG seed project)				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Current: Swedish Institute Seed Funding for AgeFLAG Planned: ESIF, in particular Interreg funding; or applying for an ENI grant from EU				

Action 2: Promoting a Health in All Policies approach with focus on the impact of environmental factors, and especially climate change on human health
Description: Action 2 aims to integrate health in all EU policies and sectors with a focus on environmental and climate challenges on human health. Health is interconnected with many different policy areas and sectors. While health and well-being of the population impact the success of other sectors, e.g. labour and education, the policies of other areas can have a large impact on health, e.g. climate, environment and finance. It is therefore crucial to improve the awareness of policymakers from other sectors to understand and analyse the health impact of policies in their sector. In particular, PA Health seeks to explore the connection between antimicrobial resistance and the environment, including relating to food production and pharmaceutical use and manufacturing. PA Health strives to engage an increased amount of stakeholders across the BSR policy areas to promote the Health in All Policies approach.
Timing: 2020 - 2025

[24] A more elaborate version of the PA Health Action Plan is available from: https://www.ndphs.org/internalfiles/File/EUBSR/EUSBSR_Action_Plan_PA_Health.pdf

[25] https://www.who.int/ageing/healthy-ageing/en/

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Increased cooperation and synergies of activities in the BSR	# of new stakeholders # of common initiatives, events, communications	0	3 per year	PA Health reporting
Flagship on-going or planned within this action Planned: HiAP in the Baltic Sea Region				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action Small scale activities for cross-sectorial stakeholder involvement and sharing of information about health impacts. Continuing the work on circular economy and health				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Planned: ESIF, in particular Interreg funding; or applying for an ENI grant from EU				

Action 3: Increasing stakeholder and institutional capacity to tackle regional health challenges.				
Description: Enabling capacity building and shared learning through networking, knowledge-brokering and training activities. This action is designed to further enhance the skills and knowledge of regional stakeholders to develop and utilize strategic policy instruments that contribute to the health and social well-being of citizens in the Baltic Sea Region.				
Timing: 2020 - 2025				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Increased capacity of stakeholders to tackle regional health challenges	# of developed or utilized policy instruments (advocacy tools, policy briefs, policy forums etc.)	0	3 per year	PA Health reporting
Flagship on-going or planned within this action Capacity building activities under HiAP Flagship (Action 2)				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action Organisation of trainings, workshops etc. on developing and utilizing relevant policy instruments.				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities Planned: ESIF, in particular Interreg funding; or applying for an ENI grant from EU				

3.14. Policy Area Education

Policy Area Coordinator: Germany **(**Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training); Föreningen Norden (Norden Association)

1. EUSBSR Objectives
Increase prosperity

- Baltic Sea region as a frontrunner for deepening and fulfilling the single market
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region

Connect the region

- Connecting people in the region

The added value of PA EDU is the following;
PA EDU contribute to an increased prosperity that presupposes access to quality education and training for all, an effective and inclusive welfare system and a well-functioning labour market supporting geographical, professional and socio-economic mobility. In science and research, we face an increased global competitiveness where even though our macro region is performing well, we can do more by a closer collaboration, making best use of our resources together in the Baltic Sea Region.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
PA Education, Science and Social affairs is contributing to SDGs 4, 8, 9 and 10.

3. EU or other policy framework
The European Pillar of Social Rights is fully integrated in this Policy Area with its focus on how to sustain our standards of living, create more and better jobs, equip people with the right skills and create more unity within our society, considering tomorrow's society and world of work.

Furthermore, the Policy Area is contributing to the vision with a European Education Area where time spent abroad to study and learn should become the norm. Knowing two languages in addition to one's mother tongue should be standard. Everyone should be able to access high-quality education, irrespective of their socio-economic background. People should have a strong sense of their identity as a European, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

The Policy Area is also contributing to the realization of the European Research Area (ERA) as a "unified research area open to the world, based on the internal market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely. Through ERA, the Union and its Member States will strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges"[26]**.**

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA EDU engage a wide range of stakeholders in its activities or more strategic in the 5 flagships. PA EDU keep a database with more than 1 000 stakeholders from all 8 Member States, Norway and Russia. Among activities are the stakeholder seminars the most common way to get in contact with PA EDU. These seminars are held in the Member States, often once per year and organized by PAFP. Participants are national, regional and local actors, public, academia and civil society. A few companies or business organisations participate as well.

[26] *Ref. The European Commission's 2012 policy Communication on the European Research Area (ERA)*

5. Key PA achievement so far

The main achievement in PA EDU is the flagship concept with currently 5 flagships. Flagships are to be understood as long term development processes gathering multilevel stakeholders transnationally and cross-sectorial. They are based on membership, sustainable structures with just limited dependence on project funding for their maintenance. They have all five committed flagship leaders, institutions able to sustain and develop the flagships. Two of the flagships are partly funded by ESF projects based on transnational cooperation between projects from three to four member states, one is partly funded by Interreg BSR with cooperation partners from 7 member states and Russia.

Contributing to the success of PA EDU is also the commitment from members of the coordinating group including DG EMPL. The support from the ESF MA-network is also contributing to the achievements.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work

Description:

Early school leaving often results in alienation and the young persons facing a NEET situation (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

Well-skilled teachers are a prerequisite for effectively tackle these societal challenges. The competence supply needs also to be secured making the profession as teacher more attractive.

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea Region recommendations:
Investment needs have been identified in various BSR countries[27] to promote measures to prevent early school leaving and improve transitions from school to work for youth in general and youth with migrant background as well as at-risk groups. Integrated support and services to unemployed and inactive, including young people as well as targeted outreach and individualised support can help to improve access to employment.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools as well as remote office set-ups reveal the urgent response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This Action focuses on;

- preventing early school leaving, and
- re-integrating young people in NEET situations into education or labour market with
- vocational education and training as an important vehicle to achieve the above.

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Preventing early school leaving (ESL)	Strategy for ESL Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 20 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100 members/2023 10 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA

[27] Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Sweden

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work				
Re-integrating young people in NEET situations	NEET Agenda [28] Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 40 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100 members/2023 10 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: School to Work (S2W) – ongoing				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: 2 thematic platforms; (1) Early School Leaving (ESL), (2) not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: ESF+, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, INTERREG national and regional sources.				
Action 2: International excellence and wider participation in science and research				

Description:

The covid-19-pandemia has shown again the upmost importance of science and research for the resilience of our societies to the 21st century social, environmental and economic grand challenges, including the preparedness to pandemics and responses to outbreaks. There is an urgent need for a more effective coordination of research policies and an intensified transnational use of the research facilities aiming at a common region for research and innovation. By realizing the European Research Area (ERA), the Union and its Member States will strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges**.**

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea Region recommendations:
High investment priorities have been identified to enhance and better coordinated the research and innovation capacities of the BSR-member countries, where appropriate across borders[29]. The universities and research institutions should also improve the commercial viability and markets relevance of their research projects[30] and intensify the support of collaborative research. A better cooperation on promoting mobility of researchers across borders can help to fully utilise the available human capital in the macro-region.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools as well as remote office set-ups reveal the urgent response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This Action focuses on:

- facilitating the cooperation of science and research policies in the Baltic Sea Region aiming at a common research and innovation area,
- widening participation among the Baltic Sea Region member states in Horizon Europe,
- enhancing the transnational cooperation in the development and utilisation of existing and new research infrastructures, and
- promote mobility among researchers.

Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
A common research and innovation area	Agenda for a common research and innovation area Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 31 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100/2023 2 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA

[28] *An Agenda is a co-created framework for policy and practice. It provides a roadmap for actors on all levels.*

[29] *Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden; Germany*

[30] *Estonia, Finland, Lithuania*

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work

Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Baltic Science Network (BSN) – ongoing and Baltic University Programme (BUP) – ongoing.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: BSN powerhouse (Interreg BSR – on-going) with LaunchPad: RI Connectors and Baltic Science Network Mobility Programme for Research Internships (BARI). Yearly conferences (BSN/BUP), workshops, courses, produces position papers, sailing etc.

Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: INTERREG, ESF+, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, ERDF, national and regional sources.

Action 3: A labour market for all, using resources of longer lives

Description:

Lifelong learning will soon be a reality - during the working life, one will regularly upgrade skills, adjusting to the needs of the labour market, or because of the need to find a less physically demanding job, or simply because one would like to do something else, including starting an own company. The educational systems need to be adjusted to these new demands to offer lifelong learning. This include also upgrade teachers' skills on educating and training adults and elderly.

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea Region recommendations for all 8 BSR countries:

Lifelong learning should be promoted, notably flexible upskilling and reskilling, considering digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility.

Lifelong learning strategies and flexible learning pathways throughout the lifecycle should be developed in cooperation with social partners, civil society and other stakeholders.
Basic skills of adults, including migrants, should be upgraded and new opportunities for low-skilled adults should be created.

Active and healthy ageing with preservation of the work ability of the workforce should be supported. An especially important field of lifelong learning support is identified for the long-term care, healthcare and social care workforce in various BSR countries[31].This includes building up skilled health workforce planning and forecasting and supporting upskilling and reskilling of personnel.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools as well as remote office set-ups reveal the urgent response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This Action focuses on;

- making lifelong learning a reality, offering competence development and resources for face-to-face guidance throughout the whole life,
- supporting dialogue between social partners, relevant authorities and education providers on a society of longer lives and a sustainable working life,
- active ageing and solidarity between the age groups.

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Support to Making lifelong learning a reality	Life-Long-Learning Agenda Engaged members Absorbed funding	 0 35 3 M EUR	 MS informed/2023 100/2023 6 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA

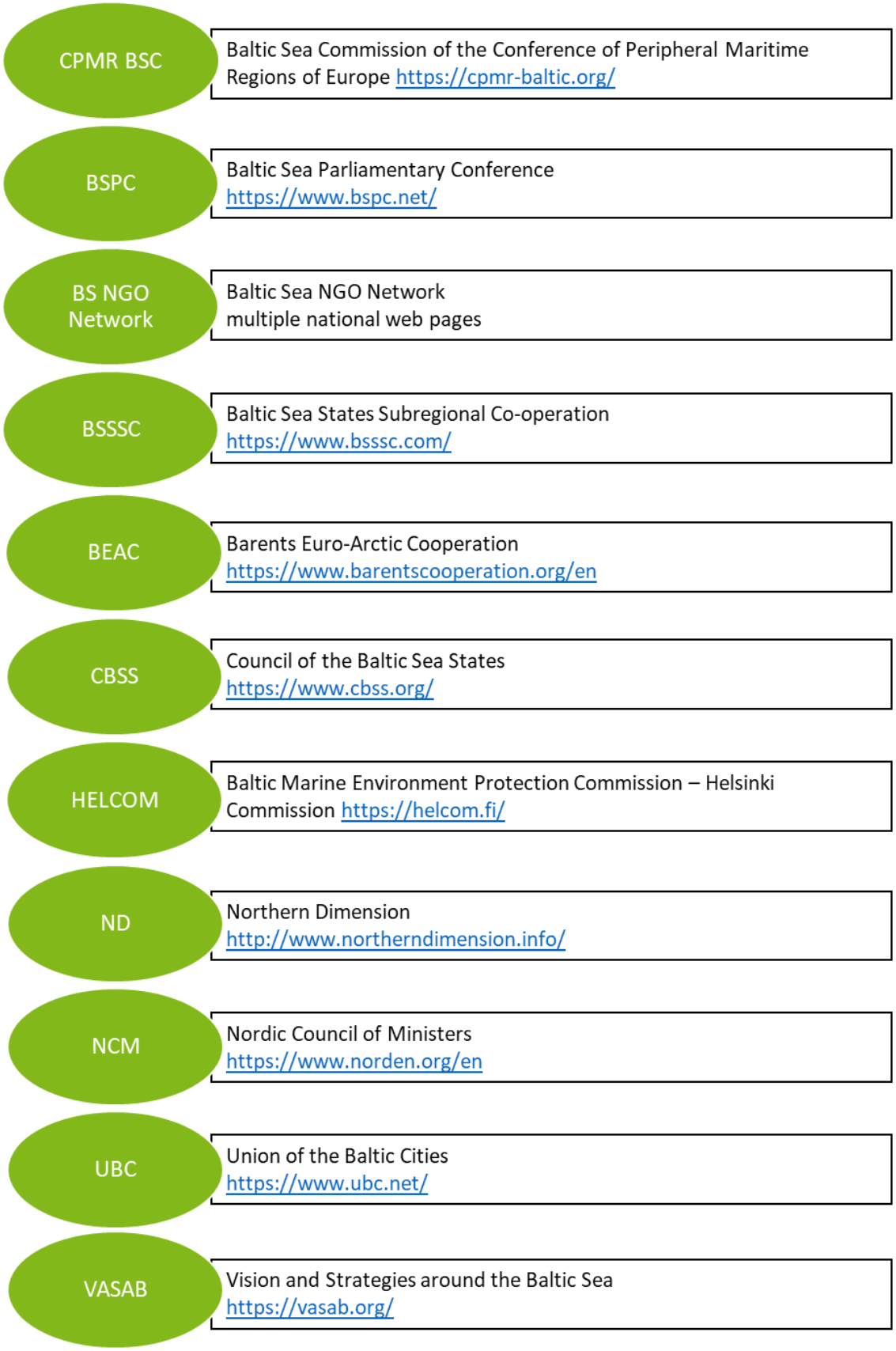
[31] *Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland*

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work				
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) – ongoing				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: BSLF – Sustainable Working Life (ESF, on-going). Yearly conference, study visits, thematic working groups, policy briefings etc.				
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: ESF+, INTERREG, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, national and regional sources.				
Action 4: Recognising potential – easing the way for migrants				
Description: The increased number of refugees constitutes a challenge to those Member States where refugees choose to seek asylum. At the same time, many Member States struggle with demographic changes with an ageing population which within a decade will lead to a deficit of skilled workers – academic and non-academic - in for e.g. industry, health care and other sectors. This underlines the need for an effective integration of refugees and migrants for them to contribute to the building of inclusive, cohesive and prosperous societies which is of common interest to all Member States. 2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea Region recommendations for various BSR countries[32]: Socio-economic integration of third country nationals should be promoted including inclusive and qualitative education and training plus individual support. Basic skills of adult migrants should be upgraded and new opportunities for low-skilled adults created. An effective move from activation measures towards employment should be ensured. Integration of migrants could be a chance for those member states who are facing serious problems with a shrinking working-age population and emigration which leads to growing skills and labour shortages. Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools as well as remote office set-ups reveal the urgent response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before. This Action focuses on: • early recognizing potential, offering tailor-made vocational educations (including language) and in-company trainings for a smooth and fast integration on the labour market, • involving the society at large in the integration.				
Indicator title	**Value**	**Baseline**	**Target/deadline**	**Data source**
Support early recognizing potential including offering tailor-made VET	Integration Agenda Engaged member Absorbed funding	0 200 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 400/2023 5 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagship on-going or planned within this action: Not yet. Planned to start 2020.				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action: Not yet.				

[32] *Denmark, Finland, Poland, Sweden*

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work
Current and planned funding sources for the PA activities: ESF+, AMIF, INTERREG, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, national and regional sources.

References

COM 2009	Commission Staff Working Document European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan {COM (2009) 248}, SWD(2017)118 final
2012	Council conclusions on the completion of the review of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 3180th General Affairs Council meeting Luxembourg, 26 June 2012
COM 2014	Report concerning the Governance of macro-regional strategies. Brussels, 20.05.2014 - COM(2014)284 final.
COM 2016	Report on the Implementation of EU macro-regional strategies. Brussels, 16.12.2016 – COM(2016)805 final. Accompanying Staff Working Document - SWD(2016)443 final.
COM 2019	[Second] Report on the Implementation of EU macro-regional strategies. Brussels, 29.01.2019 – COM(2019)21 final. Accompanying Staff Working Document - SWD(2019)6 final.
EUSBSR 2018	EUSBSR after 2020: Governance remastered? Final report
EUSBSR 2016	Looking towards 2030: Preparing the Baltic Sea Region for the future
COWI 2017	Macro-regional strategies and their links with cohesion policy. COWI, November 2017. Published online: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/mrs_links_cohesion_policy.pdf
COM 2019	Commission Staff Working Document. Accompanying the Document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee Of The Regions. Brussels, On The Implementation Of Eu Macro-Regional Strategies {Com(2019) 21 Final} 29.1.2019. Swd(2019) 6 Final
2019	Review of the EUSBSR (input papers on governance and thematic orientation) 2019
COM 2019	Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee, and The Committee of The Regions: The European Green Deal: COM (2019) 640 final

ANNEX 1.International and regional cooperation formats of the EUSBSR