



REVISION OF THE EUSBSR ACTION PLAN

Approved by the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly, 11 June 2019, Gdansk (PL)

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission supports a strong EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) targeting the joint challenges in the macro-region. The EUSBSR has proven to be a successful policy framework for a joint regional vision for stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region.

The future development of the success of the EUSBSR depends to a large extent on constructive contributions to the formulation of objectives and successful implementation. Regional Authorities should be given a larger mandate, both in relation to setting goals and carrying out implementation.

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission would like to highlight the following aspects in the on-going revision process of the EUSBSR Action Plan:

Objectives and thematic focus

The vulnerability of the Baltic Sea should remain the main focus area of our common efforts, which demands a holistic approach of sustainable territorial development.

Challenge-based innovation, digitalisation and digital transformation are key requirements to boost competitiveness in the macro-region and for all of the EU.

Territorial Cohesion is a growing challenge that we need to address jointly, both within the countries and in our cooperation. Increasing urbanisation and disconnected rural areas pose great challenges.

Transport and energy require sustainable and decentralised policy solutions and investments, complementary to the Trans-European Network approaches.

From the regional perspective, the following Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions in the current EUSBSR Action Plan relate closely to regional development strategies:

- Innovation
- Bio-economy
- Transport
- Tourism
- Energy
- Education
- Climate
- Culture

Result-oriented targets

The target and indicators of the Action Plan must be result oriented and developed to enable more cooperation. In some areas there is great need to build capacity for cooperation, and in some areas, there is need to focus more on tangible results. A way forward would be to relate the indicators of the Action Plan to the indicators of the European Structural Funds.

Governance and implementation

A more conscious approach with regard to multi-level governance of the implementation process of the strategy is needed. Effective working structures with a concrete and strategic involvement also of the regional level are necessary, Regional Authorities should be supported to create hubs for EUSBSR Policy Areas, Horizontal Actions and Flagships, based on regional needs and conditions.

A common implementation framework for the EUSBSR needs to earmark funds for a longer-term, enabling cooperation processes instead of traditional project cycles, in order to fully seize the potential of Flagships as laid down in the EUSBSR Action Plan. Capacity building programmes for local and regional stakeholders should be developed to improve networks, build know-how on capitalising project results, promote best practises, and to cooperate on the preparation of next generation Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Better alignment of funds

All Policy Areas and Horizontal Actions should either be eligible for funding through European Territorial Cooperation and European Structural and Investment funds, or by means allocated by the Member State levels, in order to ensure cooperation and coordination from all parts of the Baltic Sea Region.

The successful implementation of the objectives set in the EUSBSR demands sufficient resources. The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission supports proposals to stronger align the transnational INTERREG Programmes with their corresponding macro regional strategies. As the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme still plays a decisive role in the implementation of the EUSBSR, a closer cooperation with the coordination level of the EUSBSR is highly recommended.

The CPMR Baltic Sea Commission as a pan-Baltic Organisation commits itself to be a partner and facilitator in the above-mentioned thematic priorities and the governance of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.