Project Information Sheet

"Baltic Sea Identity – Facilitating Regional Development through strengthening Commons and overcoming Barriers"

Baltic Sea Identity – What is the project about?

This paper gives an overview of the relevance, aims, content and structure of the project "Baltic Sea Identity – Facilitating Regional Development through strengthening Commons and over-coming Barriers" (BaltSeaIdent) applying for funding within the European Union Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013.

1. What problem does Baltic Sea Identity address?

Lack of mutual understanding and cooperation – Although most of the states of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) are EU-members, the region is characterised by national perspectives, a lack of common identity and a weakness in the field of collaboration and joint action. This is caused by historically difficult relations, individual misunderstandings and a lack of mutual understanding between the different individuals and actors in the BSR. These problems root for example in history, the age of nationalism, two World Wars and the division by the Iron Curtain.

BSR is not perceived as a common area – Additionally, there is no common awareness of the region as an entity on an individual level: Citizens know little about their neighbours, the region's shared history and culture and the century-old exchange within the region. This hinders cooperation, working mobility and cohesion.

Common potentials are unexploited – Regional identity, the awareness of common strengths and a unifying core idea communicated by a regional brand can be a powerful competitive advantage for the BSR on the global market. It has the potential to create a climate for investments and a positive attitude towards products and services from the region as well as to attract skilled labour and tourists. Such a brand does not exist yet.

The project will lay ground to build a regional identity based on a common vision and for the creation a regional brand.

This aim is in line with the EU's Baltic Sea Region Strategy and Action Plan and will strengthen territorial cohesion and cooperation.

2. How will Baltic Sea Identity address the problem?

A twofold approach – On the one hand, BaltSeaIdent addresses individuals and strengthens their understanding of the culture and history in the BSR. This understanding is a key for greater capacities for transnational cooperation and increased working mobility. On the other hand, BaltSeaIdent gives Cities, Regions and other organisations in the BSR assistance to unfold potentials of common identity and strengths in their regional development efforts.

Facilitating Regional Development through awareness building on common Baltic Sea Regional Identity and historical and cultural barriers – A science-based Intercultural Baltic Sea History Book comprehensively explains relevant historical and cultural differences and characteristics in history, culture and societies within the BSR.

Together with the Intercultural Baltic Sea History Book, an Intercultural Baltic Sea Region Management Guide helps dealing with the problems and chances in today's regional intercultural cooperation. With the help of case studies and concrete examples, it gives advice in problematic situations in the field of transnational cooperation.

Both History Book and Management Guide strengthen the mutual understanding in the BSR and leads to improved transnational cooperation and working mobility. To guarantee the quality of these Information and Learning Tools, existing tools, guides & handbooks in regional coopera-

Project Information Sheet

**"Baltic Sea Identity – Facilitating Regional Development
through strengthening Commons
and overcoming Barriers"**

tion are identified and analysed in advance and best practises and lessons learned are taken into account.

This work package is coordinated by the University of Szczecin, Poland, and also Lead Beneficiary of the project.

Enabling Individuals for Transnational Cooperation & Mobility in the BSR – In parallel, Intercultural Training Courses are developed and conducted. They give participants a deeper understanding of differences and commonalities of BSR identity, qualify them to live and work in the BSR's intercultural environment, facilitate working mobility and strengthen the development of a regional identity as a whole by addressing multipliers. Target groups are youth, professionals working on a transnational level, and further multipliers in the region, e.g. teachers. The Intercultural Baltic Sea History Book and Intercultural Baltic Sea Region Management Guide will serve as teaching material within the Intercultural Training Courses.

This work package is coordinated by the Academia Baltica, Germany.

Capitalizing Baltic Sea Identity for Regional Development: Opportunities for Cities, Regions and further organisations to benefit from a Common BSR Identity in fields of common strengths – On the basis of an analysis of existing initiatives and branding activities in the BSR, the impact of regional identity on regional development is examined to elaborate common strengths and potentials in the BSR in past and present. A Branding and Identity Dialogue with relevant actors and experts accompanies this process. Based on the results, a model for a Baltic Sea Region Brand is developed and tested as a pilot in BSR Cities and Regions. This pilot exemplifies opportunities and recommendations for the application of a Baltic Sea Brand and gives insights to the further development of common BSR identity and a Baltic Sea Brand. The results are available for organisations and actors in the region via a Baltic Sea Identity and Branding Internet Platform and Handbook.

Synergies and cooperation with BaltMet Promo – This work package is coordinated by the international organisation Baltic Development Forum (BDF). The BDF as a member of the Baltic Metropoles Network Project (BaltMet Promo) guarantees the cooperation of the two complementary projects and helps to unfold synergies (www.baltmet.org).

Guaranteeing sustainability of project results – The results of the project is, with the help of an organisation model, transferred to a sustainable and lasting structure.

This work package is coordinated by the University of Szczecin, Poland.

Contact and further information

Dr. Christian Pletzing Academia Baltica e.V. Hoghehus, Koberg 23552 Lübeck Germany Phone: +49 451 396 94-0 Fax: +49 451 396 94-25 E-Mail: office@academiabaltica.de	Christian Bürger dsn Cooperation Management Holstenstr. 13-15 24103 Kiel Germany Phone: +49 431 99 69 66-70 Fax: +49 431 99 69 66-99 E-Mail: christian.buerger@dsn-online.de