



EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

Communication Strategy for the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)



1. EUSBSR overall communication objectives

The Communication Strategy aims to strengthen EUSBSR's position, increase the awareness of the EUSBSR, promote the results it delivers, measure the impact it gives, show the benefits it provides for the countries involved and ordinary people, and lower the threshold for people to join the actions.

The vision of the Communication Strategy is an effective, modern and smart communication that supports the implementation of the EUSBSR.

Success factors in order to promote the EUSBSR are:

- a. To broaden commitment to and ownership of the EUSBSR in Member States among politicians and other decision makers on a national, regional and local level
- b. To communicate the positive change and the initiatives developed in EUSBSR
 - i. Spread the achievements of the EUSBSR
 - ii. Make people care about the development of the EUSBSR
 - iii. Ensure information sharing between responsible actors implementing the EUSBSR
- c. To create sense of community ownership in line with the EUSBSR
- d. To show how resources and knowledge are pooled in the EUSBSR to increase efficiency
- e. To highlight that transnational (commonly agreed) challenges need transnational (commonly coordinated) solutions and demonstrate added value for countries involved.

The overall goal of the communication is to support internal and especially external communication, as well as brand

building, lobbying and marketing of the Baltic Sea Region. This will help to identify stories to tell and stories to follow.

Communication activities shall whenever possible connect to the objectives and sub-objectives of the revised Action Plan of the EUSBSR and show examples of positive change achieved, but still be mindful there is still much to be done. There are no quick fixes, but every good story gives fuel and energy to solve the next task or clean a hotspot.

All involved have the same overall goal, even though it may be expressed differently, having its own angle depending on who is telling what about the EUSBSR to whom. Each Member State shall have its own Communication Strategy linked to this one, as the consistency needs to be ensured.

It should bring messages and stories from one Member State or one "area" to a broader distribution. Important messages and stories told in one language should when relevant be translated into English and highlighted on the EUSBSR web and other relevant media. It is important to share success, and to inspire other actors to learn from different activities. This approach is clearly asking for a political ownership among Member States and the PA/HA actors.

The work done under the EUSBSR needs to have a 'flag' of the Strategy. This means that all Strategy actors, in particular when it comes to projects or processes which have applied and have been granted flagship status, should use the EUSBSR visual identity. Work done in the framework of the EUSBSR should clearly be presented as the work done within the Strategy.

In all communication activities there is a need to use and to link it to the 3 main objectives of the EUSBSR: Save the Sea, Increase Prosperity and Connect the Region. It is even better if it can be directly linked to the sub-objectives since actions dealing with e.g., clear water, is applicable to everyone. It makes the communication clear and meaningful. A general rule for all communication is to use plain language and avoid jargon.

2. EUSBSR specific communication objectives and indicators

The specific objectives are chosen as actions that can be followed up upon and measured. For each of these communication objectives there is a suggestion for a follow up activity. The suggestion builds upon quantitative indicators. Other relevant indicators will be determined as part of developing the communication work packages in the activity plan.

• CO1: Promote the existence of EUSBSR

In order to meet this objective there is a need to agree on common communication approaches and minimum actions/tasks for stakeholders. When starting to do the agreed tasks each stakeholder can make a follow up on the amount of visitors on individual Web pages and the effect should also have an impact in the form of more visitors on other relevant web sites. By doing so, stakeholders start building a EUSBSR community where sharing also others' successes becomes natural and the spread of good practices are widely shared and recognised.

Indicators:

- ✓ **Number of visitors of the EUSBSR official website (unique users)**
 - Baseline: Mars 2014-April 2015: 32 000 => 2016: 40 000 2017: 45 000
- ✓ **Number of visitors on the national website dedicated to the EUSBSR**
- ✓ **Number of followers on the EUSBSR tweet account.**
 - Baseline: 2015: 1151 => 2016: 1500, 2017: 2000

• CO2: Mapping positive changes and the added value which EUSBSR brings

When showing the added value online and in publications it will increase the knowledge about EUSBSR.

- ✓ **Number of tweets highlighting successes and re-tweets on the EUSBSR account**
 - Baseline: 2015: 979 => 2016: 1700, 2017: 2500

• CO3: Raise awareness among the traditional and new key stakeholders

It is crucial to get more people, companies and organisations involved in the implementation of the EUSBSR. There is need for people outside the inner circle to get interested and activated towards the development of the EUSBSR

- ✓ **Numbers of followers on YouTube channel of the EUSBSR**
 - Baseline: 2015: 58 => 2016: 150, 2017: 250

The baselines and targets mentioned for 2016 and 2017 are based on quantitative data. The qualitative aspects can be followed up by a survey for example, if the communication streams have worked out the way that was planned when the Communication Strategy was developed. The table showing the number of visitors on the national EUSBSR web-sites is shown in Annex 3.

3. Target Audiences and their tasks and roles

EUSBSR target groups have been split into the following groups:

Internal groups¹

- European Commission and other EU institutions
- Member States /National Coordinators
- Policy Area Coordinators / Horizontal Action Coordinators
- Leaders and partners within flagships
- Local and regional actors/communities, also NGOs (could also be under external groups)

External groups

- Policy makers on a national, regional and local level;
- Private companies (businesses)
- General public; especially in local and regional communities
- Attracting relevant partners, beneficiaries - a new group of actors not directly involved in EUSBSR right now but that have a large network and a real connection to the Baltic Sea Region such as photographers, NGO activists, authors
- Researchers and students
- Science journalists

The tasks for the internal groups are defined in Annex 1. For the external groups there is a need to further develop these approaches. In the attached Communication (Activity) plan for upcoming activities 2016-2018 (Annex 2) there is a set of selected Work Packages to be developed to enhance the EUSBSR communication activities.

¹ Task for key stakeholders described in Annex 1

4. Key messages

The work within the EUSBSR aims at good living conditions in the Baltic Sea region, therefore actions that improves the situation in-line with the sub objectives in the EUSBSR should be shown, e.g.,

We want to have clear and clean water in the sea
We enjoy exploring a rich and healthy wildlife
We like to contribute to clean and safe shipping
We build good transport links in the region
We offer reliable energy markets
We are connecting people in the region
We cooperate in fighting cross-border crime

The above mentioned messages are just examples and other messages should be developed by relevant actors involved and adapted to the specific context and the target audiences. It is a common task to define and use new messages in-line with the sub-objectives. The detailed lists of agreed roles and tasks for key stakeholders regarding communication is listed in Annex 1.

6. Main tools and methods

The following activities introduce the necessary arrangements and actions to be implemented in-line with the communication objectives, using various forms and methods of communication at the appropriate level. Activities should be carried out with sustainability in mind e.g. by using environmentally friendly graphic design and printing.

Internal communication

Information within EUSBSR is dependent upon stakeholders taking on ownership and responsibility for the EUSBSR communication task, both within their respective sector (PA/HA) and Member state but also across border by, for example, feeding in relevant information to the EUSBSR web.

Visual identity

The EUSBSR visual identity manual set out the design guidelines and requirements for EUSBSR products and documents. It is imperative that EUSBSR communication activities are recognisable by all target audiences and the visual identity is perceptible in external actions.

5. Mission statement and slogan

Mission statement

We who communicate about the EUSBSR are all part of an international process. We think cooperation across borders and countries are benefitting the citizens of the region. It also makes sense to pool knowledge and resources. That is what macro-regional strategies are about.

Slogan

We in the Baltic Sea Region solve common problems with different solutions, and solve different problems with common solutions.

Digital platforms

Information about the implementation of the EUSBSR, including its main achievements, will be updated on the EUSBSR and other relevant websites. Building community engagement on relevant online platforms such as social media and e-tools for collaboration will help spread good practices both within and across Member States. It will also help to promote EUSBSR events, tools and publications.

Tools, events and publications

The agreed Communication (Activity) plan 2016-2018, (Annex 2) ensures that relevant EUSBSR communication tools are developed and that achievements, events and publications are communicated effectively. The NC group will make sure there is a follow up of the implementation of the communication activities and development of communication tools. The Communication Strategy is a living document that will be updated on regular basis. It means e.g. there is a need to have new plan developed as a follow up to the plan attached to this document for the following period until the end of 2020.

Media

In order to aim for the widest possible media coverage, the EUSBSR stakeholders should communicate EUSBSR activities and macro-regional achievements e.g., sending of press releases, development of lists of media contacts, availability of photos etc.

Future work aiming at formulating the Communication/ activity plan

In Annex 2 there is a mandatory set (minimum requirements) of activities formulated as work packages that is guiding

the future activities during the next 2-3 years. These are purely focused on communication activities in order to strengthen the communication about EUSBSR and its achievements. The list (Annex 2) will also be attached to the call on targeted support for communication activities that the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme will launch in December 2015.

Contact:

For possible questions regarding the Communication Strategy you are welcome to contact Ulf Wikström, INTERACT Point Turku, ulf.wikstrom@interact-eu.net or +358 50 395 2471

Annex 1: Agreed roles and responsibilities regarding communication for key stakeholders.

1. European Commission

- Regularly update information about the EUSBR (i.e. official documents, etc.) on the Commission webpage dedicated to the EUSBSR;
- Disseminate best practices, results achieved and lessons learned in implementing the EUSBSR
- Promote the EUSBSR in relevant political events
- Add and regularly update information on EUSBSR on EU Commission representation pages in the Member States involved in the strategy

2. National Coordinators (NC)

- Ensure that information about the strategy exists in the national language and in English, where appropriate, on the Member States website. Update every three months at a minimum.
- Ensure that communication is regularly discussed at NC meetings.
- Convene annual or bi-annual meetings in each Member State with a formal or informal role in the Strategy, and ensure communication is on the agenda.
- Use the National focal Points to ensure communication flows.
- Promote and suggest a regularly update info on EUSBSR on relevant national webpages
- Promote the EUSBSR in relevant political events and reach out to regions, cities, business organisations, NGOs, and academia.

3. Policy Area Coordinators / Horizontal Action Coordinators (PAC/HAC)

- Commitment to refer to the EUSBSR in all information and communication activities
- To always use the EUSBSR visual identity
- Ensure that information about PA/HA achievements is available and updated when relevant, preferably at least every three months.
- To collect and use stories and photos from all relevant activities and processes.
- Identify relevant contacts and relevant networks. Maintain and use the list.
- Submit a description of on-going, finalized and planned/emerging projects/activities to NC whenever relevant but at least every 6 months.
- Regularly inform about projects of the biggest communication potential to NC
- Convey meetings with Flagships (include communication in the meeting agenda)
- Illustrate project stories in collaboration with interviews and photos.

4. Flagship leaders

- Commitment to refer to the EUSBSR, in all relevant activities
- To always use the EUSBSR visual identity in relevant material
- Ensure information is online, updated, sharable on social media, preferable updated every three months.
- Actively participate in online discussions promoting the project
- Create a basic communication strategy for each Flagship and to plan relevant communication activities throughout the project life time.
- Inform PA/HA on achievements on a regular basis
- Engage local and regional media informing the public about - plans, activities and achievements
- Connect with other projects and processes in relevant PA/HA for mutual learning on how to communicate individually or together

5. National focal Points /Policy Area /Horizontal Action Steering Group Members

- Contribute with ideas about developments in their own field of expertise that should be communicated to a wider public
- Give ideas and feedback to PAC/HAC/Flagships on channels and media where their ideas and achievements could be highlighted to reach out to a broader audience

All stakeholder groups are asked

- to feed the EUSBSR web with info about achievements, conferences, calls, etc.
- to actively tweet (using the #EUSBSR) in all communication activities
- to ensure that photos are taken are collected and used in the communication activities
- to actively contribute via blog, interview or responding to questions raised on the EUSBSR web
- to respond to relevant groups or organisation that is asking for information on EUSBSR
- use the EUSBSR visual identity in relevant material while presenting the EUSBSR activities.

Annex 2: List of agreed communication activities (work packages) to be included in the upcoming Communication (Activity) plan¹

The Lead partner(s) and the group behind the upcoming project is expected to formulate their communication project respecting this framework with the 11 work packages, which is mandatory. On top of this they will have the freedom to add on other activities they see relevant. This plan is based on the assumption that the communication project gets proper funding. If the funding is not sufficient there might be a need to prioritise and reduce the number of work packages.

WP 1 Introduce and develop Wikipedia articles

The work has already been initiated during autumn 2015. The Task Force for communication are working on it and will publish the first version of the general EUSBSR text by the end of the year 2015. The work need to be continued and developed. It should also cover more specific parts of the EUSBSR. The activity is primarily done in English and it is expected that Member States translate relevant parts into respective national languages.

WP 2 Publication(s)/video(s) on good practices, success stories (achievements)

One or several publications (print and/or online) that shows the added value of the work done within EUSBSR. Publication is done in English. Producing a video or set of videos is also thought as publication activities under this headline.

¹ The listed activities is to be seen as the minimum requirements for the upcoming Communication project (financed by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme) covering the period 2016-2018

WP 3 Produce an easy to read brochure of the EUSBSR Action Plan

The Action Plan is a long and heavy document. There is a need for a short and simple version of the content. The brochure will be done in English but Member States are welcome to make translation into other languages.

WP 4 Develop a toolkit to use Social Media and Photos in communicating EUSBSR

The work has partly started in the Task Force. It needs to be further developed and most likely also extended to other areas.

WP 5 Create a plan on how to engage the Academia in the EUSBSR work

The researchers and the students are an essential community in order to spread awareness about the EUSBSR and its achievements. The MRS concept and in this case EUSBSR should be a natural part in the curriculum. Many of the researchers and students could contribute to raising awareness but also gain from learning more about the implementation of the EUSBSR.

WP 6 Develop a set of training opportunities that can be offered to key stakeholders

Until recently training has been provided in the fields of Web use and development, Storytelling techniques, and Plain English. There is still a need to continue these activities but also to offer trainings e.g., on how to take good photos, how to get media interest and how to engage with science journalists in order to get a better outreach. There is a need for a dialogue with the planned Capacity Building project and similar activities to avoid duplication.

WP 7 Develop and organise a network of multipliers that can broaden the perspective

In order to show the relevance also for people outside the key stakeholders it is important to involve "Ambassadors" from the outside world. When they act and react to EUSBSR it will reach out to a wider audience. The idea is that the EUSBSR web would be updated with an area for blogs and interviews that on a regular basis would be updated. In this "corner" key stakeholders would also get their views and experiences highlighted. It would be an excellent opportunity to ask other people about the importance of cooperation, about what has been done within EUSBSR and to present their views on future cooperation.

WP 8 Establishing an annual award for outstanding communications on the EUSBSR

Establishing an annual award for outstanding communications on the EUSBSR would raise the profile of EUSBSR, highlighting the importance of communications, and could serve as an inspiration to others. The award could be aimed either at an individual who has been a good ambassador of the EUSBSR, or go towards a project which has been particularly successful in their communication. An award would require a coordinating entity as administrating the nomination process and award ceremony, as well as promoting the award is a relatively time consuming task. It also requires funding, both for staff time and, possibly, for a prize sum. Ideally, the award should be presented at a public event. The Annual Forum would be a natural choice. Consistency is an important factor in the success of an award. It is worth to note that it takes time for an award to become established and well known. Managing an annual award with project funding could therefore be challenging.

WP 9 Development and publication of joint articles

Cooperation between Member States in joint or coordinated communication efforts, in particular development and elaboration of joint articles on the EUSBSR matters could be broadly used in promoting the EUSBSR for example in bigger Daily Newspapers across the Baltic Sea Region or in Blogs on Social Media.

WP 10: Prepare a toolkit in the field of communication

The toolkit(s) will serve NCs and other national stakeholders with recommendations, examples of best practises on how to develop the communication work.

WP 11: Use the EUSBSR Annual Forum as a platform for innovative communication activities

Since the Annual Forum is the biggest single EUSBSR event there is a need every year to build a good cooperation with the hosting country in order to identify and develop innovative communication activities highlighting the achievements of the work done in the EUSBSR.

Possible related tasks:

Since there are strong links to communication also in other areas that will be included in the Baltic Sea Region call for targeted support (Autumn 2015) it would be good to consider whether the consortia when fulfilling the communication project also could include other closely related activities.

Annex 3: Number of visitors on the national website dedicated to EUSBSR

COUNTRY	BASELINE	TARGET	
	BY 20 NOVEMBER 2015	2016	2017
FINLAND	3 358	5 000	6 000
POLAND	3 489	5 000	6 000
ESTONIA	350	400	430
SWEDEN	7432 By 20 Nov. 2014	To be inserted by 31.3.2016	To be inserted by 31.3.2016
GERMANY	292 (May - Sept. 2015)	750	To be inserted by 31.3.2016
DENMARK	596	To be inserted by 31.3.2016	To be inserted by 31.3.2016
LATVIA	1529	To be inserted by 31.3.2016	To be inserted by 31.3.2016
LITHUANIA	No data	To be inserted by 31.3.2016	To be inserted by 31.3.2016



Background paper:

A report on what has been done regarding communication since the adoption of the EUSBSR in 2009 and a description of the state of play including a SWOT analysis for the communication and promotion of the EUSBSR.

Introduction

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first macro-regional strategy in Europe uniting 8 Member States (Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden), and representing 85 million inhabitants or 17% of the EU population. It aims at reinforcing cooperation within this large region in order to tackle specific challenges in the area, including the environmental deterioration of the Baltic Sea, poor transport links, and barriers to energy supply. It also builds on opportunities to work together on research and development, innovation, support to enterprises, and maritime growth issues. The Strategy was endorsed by the European Council in 2009 following a communication from the European Commission.

Communication of the Strategy and the results it delivers is the key action to ensure outreach. Even if there would be successful initiatives and major improvements due to the implementation of the EUSBSR it will fail if those results are not appropriately communicated.

This has been recognised by both the European Commission and the Council calling for improved communication, better awareness of the Strategy's approach, and the results it delivers. Experience shows that the EUSBSR could benefit from better promotion: it should more clearly show the interest and added value for countries that are involved, as well as for project applicants.

The Communication Strategy has been developed in order to strengthen the communication efforts in promoting the EUSBSR. It embodies several cornerstones foreseen in the revised Action Plan of the EUSBSR¹ where it is stated that:

- There is a vital need to communicate the achievements on all levels to all possible target groups;
- Stakeholders' messages shall be tailor-made to raise the understanding of the benefits of working together in the Baltic Sea region. The messages should meet the needs of the target audiences. Every actor should use plain language in order to transmit powerful and understandable messages. Every actor and stakeholder needs to have an outreach plan and then choose the best possible channel to reach the target audience;
- The basic responsibility lies with the implementing stakeholders of the EUSBSR, namely national coordinators, policy area coordinators (PACs) and horizontal action coordinators (HACs), as evident in the governance of the EUSBSR. Dissemination, information and communication are key tasks for everyone.

¹ Working document accompanying the Communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - 10.09.2015 - SWD(2015) 177 final.

State of play

The need for a more structured approach towards Communication of the EUSBSR has grown step by step since the adoption of the EUSBSR in 2009. There was no intention of formulating a Communication Strategy nor develop its own branding and Visual Identity when the Strategy was established. However, already in the progress report on the Implementation of the EUSBSR (2011) the Commission recommended to 'develop a 'Communication initiative' to ensure broader participation in the Strategy, as well as understanding of its achievements'.² Several Commission reports and Council Conclusions have recommended improving communication systems and visibility of the EUSBSR 'via as broad a range of actors and of communication channels as possible'.³

Therefore certain initiatives have been taken up by the EUSBSR stakeholders. Under the initiative of INTERACT, the Visual ID for the EUSBSR was developed in 2011 and adopted during 2012. At the same time the EUSBSR web was launched. In the beginning of 2012 there was also an agreement to establish a Taskforce on communication to develop and support communication initiatives to highlight the work done in the framework of the EUSBSR.

Since 2012 a lot of communication actions have been taken. The Task Force on communication consisting of communication experts from institutions around the Baltic Sea region have supported and helped to develop communication activities and also acted as a test platform for the ideas. During 2012 a study was made by DEA Baltika⁴ on the Communication needs in the EUSBSR, which has shown that

- There are limited or non-existent resources for professional communication;
- Language use when communicating the EUSBSR is often rather difficult and complex;
- Huge variation in political commitment causes regional imbalance regarding communication.

Conclusion: Improvement of information flows require an active involvement by all "actors" involved, including allocation of resources specifically for this purpose.

Many of the recommendations in the study have served as a basis for future initiatives. The main activities have focused on developing online platforms and to use those in an efficient way.

Communication has been on the agenda in most Annual Forums of the EUSBSR and in other relevant meetings. Many Member States have also introduced their own network meetings to discuss the implementation of the EUSBSR, including communication of the Strategy.

The table below is aiming at highlighting communication activities implemented since the launch of the Strategy up to today. It could be reminded that the communication work for the EUSBSR was initially led by DG Regio of the Commission and later the responsibility was further distributed to other key stakeholders of the EUSBSR. INTERACT Point Turku has played a major role in developing some of the communication tools.

² Report on the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - 22.6.2011 - COM(2011) 381 final.

³ Commission Communication concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, 23.03.2012 - COM(2012) 128 final.

⁴ <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/images/olddocs/Final+Report+EUSBSR+Communication+needs+.pdf>

2009 - 2011	2012 & 2013	2014 & 2015
Mailing list run and organised by DG Regio	EUSBSR website developed to meet daily communication and COMMISSION website for official documents	EUSBSR website developed to meet daily communication and COMMISSION website for official documents
Online newsletter on the EUSBSR produced by DG Regio	Visual ID and logo agreed and used. EUSBSR templates for e.g. documents presentations, roll-ups and wall produced	Sweden publishing "Handbook for beginners" and Finnish publication on EUSBSR
Baltic Sea Region programme made a video on the EUSBSR	PACs/HACs starting to develop own EUSBSR websites pages linked to EUSBSR website	EUSBSR image and photo bank established on Flickr
DG Regio website informing about the EUSBSR	EUSBSR printed Newsletter highlighting PACs/HACs activities and providing communication support for Annual Forums of the EUSBSR	Video productions from the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Turku, Finland and as trailers for Annual Forums
EUSBSR information on Member States pages developed in some cases into national EUSBSR pages	Study on the EUSBSR Communication by DEA Baltika	Upgrade of national webpages on the EUSBSR e.g. new approach in Latvia and Finland
National stakeholders meetings in Member States on how to work with and how to communicate the EUSBSR	EUSBSR Twitter and YouTube channels and the BDF initiative NewsWave started	EUSBSR Communication Strategy prepared
EUSBSR Posters produced by DG Regio and Panorama Magazine special edition about EUSBSR in 2009	Communication seminar in the EUSBSR Annual Forums in Copenhagen, Denmark and Vilnius, Lithuania and 4 th EUSBSR Working Meeting in Espoo, Finland REGIO made a video on the EUSBSR	Leadership Programme on Communication in EUSBSR led by Swedish Institute
Direct communication activities such as press releases and press conferences about EUSBSR implementation e.g. during Open days 2010 in Brussels, Belgium	Training for the EUSBSR PAC/HAC web use and storytelling approach	Latvia and Commission invited, paid and organised for a group of international journalists to follow and report on the 6 th Annual Forum in Jurmala, Latvia

However, despite these initiatives, additional efforts are still needed aiming to increase awareness of the EUSBSR and its achievements/results. It is also crucial that actors are communicating how these good results have been achieved.

SWOT Analysis for the communication and promotion of EUSBSR

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear roles and responsibilities • Common Visual ID and branding • Motivated actors / stakeholders • Finished and ongoing actions, projects or flagships • The need to communicate highlighted / underlined by Member States and stakeholders • Good networks within individual PACs/HACs • Willingness to develop communication • EUSBSR high ranked on search engines • Use of EUSBSR Social media tools use increasing • Strong tradition of cooperation in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear decision making process • EUSBSR community building is weak • Little evidence that work in EUSBSR leads to policy changes or measurable impact • Little mobilised funding outside the Interreg area • Scattered target groups • Different level of commitment among stakeholders • Some actors do not care about Visual ID • Some actors 'sell' the work done within the EUSBSR without referring to the Strategy • Added-value of the EUSBSR is questioned in view of existing regional networks/organisations • Lack of political commitment
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve internal communication • Further develop EUSBSR webpage, national webpages dedicated to the EUSBSR, as well as webpages for specific PAs/HAs • Develop clear messages • Use of Social media to create interest • Use a clear communication framework • Address target groups • Connect to multipliers/ambassadors • Create tools and toolkits • Market the EUSBSR to networks via regional organisations/networks • Follow up on results - transforming to change in policies and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little cross networking between PACs/HACs • Fragmented information • Insufficient resources for communication • Not understanding the overall picture, not "belonging" to the EUSBSR • Funding possibilities not aligned to EUSBSR • Little involvement of multipliers that could "open up" the strategy to a wider audience

The SWOT analysis above shows that there is a good basis to build upon. There is an outspoken need to focus the EUSBSR communication, but also recognise that some stakeholders are doing a great job. However, the commitment varies; skills and available resources are not always optimal and in some cases the EUSBSR is not recognised.

The higher the political commitment the easier it will be to communicate the EUSBSR achievements. The future communication activities are aiming at increasing political and public interest in the EUSBSR activities. Thus it would be easier to promote agreed EUSBSR measures and policies/processes. It will also give real meaning to the 3 overall objectives of the EUSBSR - and show how they are met in practice. It will give EUSBSR a human face.

Annex 4: Background/Summary of planned Communication activities in the Member States, responses sent in after the National Coordinators' meeting in Gdansk, Poland on 15 September 2015

Denmark: Denmark has a national website about the EUSBSR in Danish and English. The website outlines Danish Baltic Sea policy and priorities. It includes links to websites of Danish policy area coordinators. The website also briefly explains financing possibilities. Denmark is looking into the possibility of increasing activity on the website.

Estonia: Estonia will further develop designated area of the MFA website and also encourage the stakeholders to reach out to the media and use also social media to inform about their activities, mainly about real projects.

And finally- small countries have very limited resources and it is important to leave it to NC-s together with national stakeholders to find the best solution. Creating too big binding communication systems will just lead to overburdening of the NCs.

Finland: Finland has a national website, which will be further developed together with Centrum Balticum Foundation. Translating parts of the Finnish language contents into English will be considered, depending on resources. Contents could be exchanged between Member States, adjusting them to national circumstances. The NC writes a blog once a month on the website and PACs, HACs and flagship leaders are invited to do the same. The blogs and other news stories are marketed via Facebook and Twitter. The website also includes a mechanism that follows tweets on BSR issues and publishes them on a daily basis. The NC tweets regularly on various BSR issues in English and retweets others' BSR relevant tweets.

Finland also arranges a national stakeholder meeting every spring in Turku, in connection with the traditional Turku Baltic Sea Forum. Next year this event will be back to back with the European Maritime Day, which will be held in Turku on May 18-19. In December 2015 a stakeholder meeting will be arranged in Oulu in order to engage also stakeholders in Northern Finland for the EUSBSR. Events are organised together with regional councils, cities, universities and chambers of commerce to reach the most relevant audience. The programme of stakeholder meetings always includes up-to-date information on financing programmes, in cooperation with national authorities in the Ministry for the Economy and Labour. The NC also speaks about the EUSBSR in various national and regional events. The NC is also regularly invited to update the Delegation of the Finnish Parliament to the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference.

Finland has a "Baltic Sea Communication Network" representing different ministries, agencies and NGOs. This network has among other things jointly produced a leaflet "Baltic Sea Protection - What can I do?" (See the link <http://www.syke.fi/download/noname/%7B3A980551-57F3-4E5A-A68D-34C658645E04%7D/104151>). A digital version of the leaflet is being planned to be used as a game on various websites. The network also organises joint presentations and information stands in various public events, like the Finland Arena in Pori and the Kotka Maritime Days every July. The network also arranges training days for journalists on various topics, e.g., about the environmental state of the Gulf of Finland, as a result of the Gulf of Finland Year 2014 and the joint research project between Estonia, Finland and Russia. In April 2016 the topic of the training day will be blue growth, related to the European Maritime Day. These training days have been very popular and produced many news stories in the media.

Germany: Germany continues to send out political messages and using public speeches, articles and internet and social media to (re-)present the EUSBSR, its goals and "success stories". It is the task of the NC is to assist the PACs and HACs politically and to use their network to create synergies, avoid duplications and inform of best practices from other macro-regional strategies.

Latvia: Latvia has a national page about the EUSBSR both in Latvian and English within the MFA Latvia website. Information about the possible participation in the EUSBSR, funding sources, Action Plan, Annual Forums and involvement of Latvia in the implementation of the EUSBSR as well as latest news can be found on the page. In the future Latvia is willing to promote more good practices and EUSBSR success stories on the webpage, as well as encourage new partners from Latvia to participate in the EUSBSR. It could be useful to agree between the NCs on the basic information package which is posted on national webpages.

At least three times per year a national stakeholder meeting is organized in the MFA Latvia. It is a good opportunity to discuss the activities of national focal points and exchange relevant information. Latvia is willing to include the communication as an agenda point during these meetings and encourage stakeholders to use social media to promote their activities. Active cooperation between the NC and line ministries takes place on ongoing basis.

Latvian NC is part of the MFA Latvia Baltic, Nordic Countries and Regional Cooperation Division which is responsible for preparing the bilateral and multilateral meetings of Latvian government representatives

with their counterparts from other BSR countries. Information about the EUSBSR is included in the materials for government officials if the regional cooperation is on the agenda. It is a way to ensure that EUSBSR is promoted also through political perspective.

While preparing for the Annual Forum in 2015, Latvia carried out many communication activities to promote the event both at national and regional level. Promotional video, press notifications as well as infographic with specific information about the EUSBSR and AF were created. These activities resulted in huge interest to participate in the AF as well as raised higher statistics of national webpage views. After the AF all plenary sessions are available at EU2015LV YouTube channel.

Lithuania: Keeping in mind the resources (human and financial) that Lithuania has at its disposal, in the short term, Lithuania will aim to take the following steps: to further develop the national website on the EUSBR, improve its visibility and exposure; translation of parts of information in English also to be considered; to consider possibilities for more active use of digital and social media and other communication tools; to consider various interinstitutional mobilisation measures (workshops, preparation and distribution of specific thematic folders, especially on financing opportunities, etc.).

Poland: As repeated in various EUSBSR-related documents, improving the communication system and visibility of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is crucial for its success. By the very nature of the EUSBSR, good communication channels decide about its effectiveness and are a driving force behind its development.

A lot has already been done in this respect by all the key stakeholders including the EC, INTERACT Point Turku, National Coordinators and PACs/HACs.

Poland fully understands the need of greater commitment on the National Coordinators part in promoting of the EUSBSR. However the activities have to be adjusted to the institutional capacity of the NC. Taking into consideration the above expectations as well as limitations we foresee the following EUSBSR communication activities in Poland:

1. **Poland acting as EUSBR Chair** - June 2015 - July 2016 Polish MFA plays the role of the Chair. It creates new opportunities inside Poland as well as abroad (Chair participating in many meetings promoting the EUSBR) for promoting activities. On 10 December 2015 a seminar promoting the achievements of the EUSBR is planned.
2. **EUSBSR Working Team in Poland** - the main institutional set up for discussing current developments within the EUSBSR. Created back in 2011 to ensure overall coordination and support for the EUSBSR implementation in Poland. The Team already proved to be useful in updating Polish current and potential stakeholders about the opportunities created by the Strategy.

The Working Team meeting usually three times a year brings together representatives of Polish ministries involved in the implementation of the Strategy, Polish Policy Area Coordinators, Flagship Project Leaders, local authorities, Managing Authorities of Operational Programmes and other institutions involved.
3. **Visual identity** - used and promoted in all presentations and promotional activities.
4. **PL EUSBSR Website**
www.baltic.mfa.gov.pl - a new website integrating all Baltic Sea related issues, including the EUSBSR, has been created at the MFA webpage. The stories are published also in English. The main problem remains with the management of the webpage - NC does not have sufficient time to publish the updates regularly. The website facilitates effective implementation of the Strategy, serves as an information source about the current developments and events (conferences, seminars, etc.). It provides with the relevant links.
5. **EUSBSR in high level political discussions** - since PL NC is also responsible for coordinating the preparation of the talking points for the bilateral and multilateral meetings of Polish government representatives with the high level representatives from the BSR countries, we continue to place the EUSBSR as one of the points in the agenda. In practice the topic is not always exploited, however we see some improvement in this regard.

6. **EUSBSR as one of the topics during the annual meetings of Polish Ambassadors** (usually within a broader regional section) - raising the EUSBSR awareness among Polish Ambassadors posted in the BSR countries may result in more involvement on the part of the Polish Embassies in searching for relevant partners and organising EUSBSR - oriented events.
 7. **Baltic Advisory Team** - continuation of cooperation with its members through daily exchange of e-mail information, possible participation in important events organised by the members of the Team, inviting the members for thematic meetings and EUSBSR Working Team meetings whenever needed
www.baltic.mfa.gov.pl
The Team comprises experienced and established experts representing such areas as environmental protection, economic development, technology and infrastructure, science, education, culture and civil security, and being active in the international Baltic cooperation. The main goal of the Team is to assist the MFA in shaping and developing strategic priorities of Polish foreign policy towards the Baltic Sea region.
 8. **Cooperation with line ministries** - especially the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development responsible for the managing of European Structural and Investment Funds. Organising ad hoc meetings to discuss specific EUSBSR subjects. Participation in the Baltic events organised by line ministries.
 9. **Active participation in the Baltic Sea events** - organised by the regional authorities⁵ as well as line ministries and institutions involved in the Baltic Sea cooperation⁶.
 10. **Cooperation with Polish think tanks on the Baltic Sea issues** - especially the Polish Institute of International Affairs, which cooperates with international partners across the region, organises the Baltic Sea seminars and issues policy papers.
 11. **Participation in the EUSBSR Annual Fora** - including information dissemination and promotion of the Forum among relevant Polish institutions, stimulating their involvement as panelists or participants of the Networking Village.
 12. **Promoting the EUSBSR via Regional Centres of International Debate (RCID)** - RCIDs are placed in each Polish region; they are tasked by the MFA to foster local debates on international cooperation.
 13. **Baltic monthly Newsletter** - in Polish for Polish Baltic stakeholders informing about the Baltic activities of the MFA. It is issued regularly as a monthly starting from January 2015. Additional staff would be needed to realise the task beyond 2016.
- Sweden:** Sweden has a national website about the EUSBSR in the Swedish and English language. The main goal is to spread relevant and current information regarding the EUSBR and its objectives as well as the work of the government in implementing the strategy. We are currently conducting interviews (minimum of three, one for each main objective) with project leaders of different flagship projects in order to create visibility to some of the good work carried out. The interviews will be presented on the website. The Swedish NC is examining the possibility to be more active on the social media.

Sweden will soon rework its current communication strategy for the EUSBSR with a focus of a need for an increase of communication activities in the planning of the EUSBSR Strategy forum in Stockholm 8-9 November 2016.

⁵ The recent example: 2 November 2015 in Gdańsk NC will participate in a 6th Annual Forum of Euroregion Baltic Stakeholders.

⁶ Example: 1-2 Oct 2015 in Gdańsk PL NC took part in the meeting of Baltic Sea Network - European Social Fund organized by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.

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