



European Territorial Cooperation

Work Package 11

*Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes
2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional
Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund
(CF)*

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Case study: South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes
2007-2013, financed by the European Regional
Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF)
European Territorial Cooperation (Work Package 11)

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Executive Summary

The present case study provides an assessment of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme's main achievements, cooperation mechanisms put in place and their effects in terms of reducing barriers to cooperation. The area covered by the programme geographically covers five EU Member States (Poland, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, and Lithuania) and 24 NUTS III regions¹ (a map of the eligible area is presented in Chapter 1). The South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation programme places **high priority on the theme of joint management of the Baltic Sea environment, especially under Priority Measure 2.1: "Management of the Baltic Sea environment"**. The thematic focus on *environment* has been highly profiled within the programme. **This case study focuses primarily on this theme.** Besides the analysis of the documents and feedback from the interviews, the findings of the evaluation are based on a specific on-line survey, targeting projects under Priority Measure 2.1. The survey was responded to by 8 Lead Partners out of a total of 10 projects. Moreover, 7 project participants provided their responses to the survey.

The South Baltic CBC Programme managed to successfully attract partners from all participating countries. More than 600 new innovative solutions, tools and concepts have been developed by the programme, leading to: intensified relations between SMEs in the area – more than 80 solutions (examples include intensified relations and cooperation activities between SMEs in the region, cross-border supply chains, technology transfer activities between firms); strengthened links between higher education and labour markets – 10 solutions; improved transport connections and services – almost 100 solutions; improved management of the environment – 140 solutions; stronger commitment to renewable energies and energy efficiency – more than 100 solutions ; and a more efficient use of natural and cultural heritage – 70 solutions. In Priority 2, in which environmental aspects are included, highly innovative projects have been financed, focusing on green energy and energy efficiency.

The implementation of joint, innovative cross-border projects as well as exchange of knowledge and good practices has led to tangible results, bringing innovation and new solutions to the area and thus contributing to the programme objectives. In Priority 2, in which environmental aspects are included, innovative projects have been financed, focusing on green energy and energy efficiency.

The quantitative web-based survey demonstrates that project leaders and partners who have most actively participated in the South Baltic CBC Programme are experienced players in terms of benefitting from ERDF funding opportunities. The requirements for e.g. high project quality promote organisations with accumulated know-how on programmes such as South Baltic CBC Programme.

¹ The area eligible for the programme includes the following NUTS III units: **Poland**: Koszalin, Stargardzki, Miasto Szczecin, Szczeciński, Slupski, Gdanski, Trojmijski, Starogardzki, sub-regions and as adjacent area : Elblaski sub-region; **Sweden**: Kalmar län, Blekinge län, Skåne län and as adjacent area: Kronobergs län; **Germany** : Sub-regions of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Greifswald, Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, Bad Doberan, Nordvorpommern, Nordwestmecklenburg, Ostvorpommern, Rügen, Uecker-Randow; **Denmark**: Bornholm and as adjacent area: Sjælland sub-regions: Østsjælland, Vest-og Sydjylland ; **Lithuania**: Klaipėdos apskritis and as adjacent area: Telsiu apskritis and Taurages apskritis.

Priority 2 exhibits a series of innovative projects with possible high impact in a mid- and long-term perspective. The total budget of Priority 2 and 2.1 "Management of the Baltic Sea environment" in 2007-2013 is, however, not sufficient to produce any significant impact in terms of the Baltic Sea environment on a larger scale. The impact lies more in long-term effects, e.g. increased cross-border cooperation, joint innovation initiatives, and creation of new knowledge related to the environment.

New cooperation networks have been created, covering various fields and leading to the better integration of the area. The gains of cooperation are not limited to potential transfer of know-how and technology only, but also include joint mutual learning, contacts with new international business, research and project cooperation partners. A challenge has been to extend the collaboration also to inland areas within the programme area. Intensive internal and external communication has been a key enabling condition in the removing of barriers for cooperation.

The most common results of projects are long term cooperation agreements and new extended cooperation networks. The partnerships and cooperation built within the projects are also valuable assets for future projects and will facilitate future partnerships. Moreover, the programme also supported small-scale investments. Intensifying cross-border cooperation, intensifying integration and creating knowledge exchange networks are the most useful effects of the implemented projects.

Besides the actual learning processes and knowledge transfer, the programme has given birth to more systematised cooperation and administrative joint learning in the South Baltic Region. The partners of larger size are likely to learn more because they usually coordinate projects and receive and process information at a higher level, whereas smaller organisations might not interact with all other actors in the project – or across projects. The programme has benefited a large group of other organisations and individual participants. The main beneficiaries are public authorities at national, regional or local level, followed by academia and R&D institutions.

Communication and cooperation have been working well at the project level. The cooperative processes have taken place also in-between organized meetings and workshops. Implemented projects resulted in the formation of 'knowledge agents', mainly hosted by Lead Beneficiary institutions. Cooperation and collaboration is important to enable that the common work continues even after the end of the project. It is difficult, however, to assess the extent to which learning mechanisms and cooperation would actually take place in the future without further EU financing.

The co-funding by the CBC programme has enabled cross-border cooperation projects to be developed at an earlier stage and with stronger impact. Compared to national and regional initiatives, the projects co-financed by the Programme have introduced and developed more ideas and solutions to be adopted and adapted in additional countries and regions, and gathered international experts to work on joint projects.

CBC programme objectives are complementary with those of national/regional programmes and of the ERDF programmes, with the Baltic Sea as a common denominator "setting the scene" to many national and regional initiatives, too.

1. Introduction

This case study is part of the ex-post evaluation of all programmes in the period 2007-2013 aiming at promoting European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), widely known as Interreg, with view to creating synergies and European value-added by eradicating internal borders and capitalizing on the existing assets of the whole territory of the Union. It is one of 9 case studies of programmes aiming at cross-border cooperation (Strand A of Interreg).

The purpose of this case study work in the overall evaluation is to deepen the analysis of the contribution of cross-border programmes to cooperation and to economic and social integration between European regions. This Task 2 of the overall evaluation is performed through a field analysis with a variety of programme stakeholders. Task 2 complements a first documentary analysis and an interview with the Managing Authority already carried out during Task 1 of the evaluation.

The present case study provides an assessment of the main achievements of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation programme, the cooperation mechanisms put in place, their effects in terms of reducing barriers to cooperation and taking advantage of common opportunities. It also aims to identify the added value of this programme in comparison with mainstream programmes at play in the same area.

This case study focuses on the environmental theme (Environmental protection and enhancement). The South Baltic programme is one of the programmes in Strand A that places highest priority on that theme (the two other priority themes for this evaluation being Capacity building and Research and Development). This programme is ranked 9th of all 53 cross-border programmes in terms of budget allocated to this theme, with around 27% of its budget going to environmental protection and enhancement.

Section 2 of this report presents the methodology adopted for the case study.

Section 3 is the core of the report. It is structured according to the evaluation questions as mentioned in the terms of reference (the order of the first two questions has been switched compared to the terms of reference). Each sub-section responds to each evaluation question in turn.

- Section 3.1 assesses what has been delivered by the programme and its impacts. It also provides an analysis of resources spent and types of activities supported (evaluation question b).
- Section 3.2 deals with impacts of the programme on cooperation practices in the area (evaluation question a).
- Section 3.3 appraises achievements in terms of learning and capacity and knowledge transferred (evaluation question c).
- Section 3.4 discusses sustainability of cooperation and learning and the extent to which these achievements are dependent on EU funding sources (evaluation question d).
- Section 3.5 discusses the issue whether the projects would have happened without the existence of EU funding if there were no prior CBC programmes (evaluation question e).

- Section 3.6 assesses the quality of the programme monitoring system (evaluation question f).
- Section 3.7 investigates the value-added of the INTERACT programme to support implementation of this programme (evaluation question g).
- Section 3.8 appraises the extent to which the objectives of this programme have been coordinated with those of other regional and national programmes active on the same territory (evaluation question h).
- Section 3.9 compares this programme to the “Småland and the islands” regional programme in Sweden.

1.1 Main features of the programme

Following the enlargement of the EU, cooperation between local, regional and national institutions across the Southern shores of the Baltic Sea Region has grown rapidly and gained new quality over recent decades. Cross-border cooperation significantly contributed to this process, allowing neighbouring regions to tackle their common challenges and to boost their competitiveness through joint actions. Until 2008, however, no formal cross-border cooperation structures covering the whole South Baltic area had been set up. The establishment of the “South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme” has therefore been the first ambitious attempt to fully utilize the potential of the area.

The Baltic Sea is a unique area and ecosystem. Its coastline traverses 9 countries, 5 of which are covered by the South Baltic Programme. They all speak different languages and the programme area features countries with significant disparities in the level of socio-economic development. The driving force of the OP interventions is reflected in the overall objective: “Strengthening of sustainable development through joint activities improving competitiveness and enhancing integration of people and institutions in the programme area”. The countries benefitting from the programme see plentiful developmental opportunities in the fields of diversity, natural and cultural resources and heritage. They also join hands in a collective effort to protect the Baltic Sea environment and wish to act conjointly in order to address climatic changes, to build climate resilience and to respond to natural and environmental disasters.

The area covered by the programme geographically covers five EU Member States and 24 NUTS III regions. The program however cooperates with its “sister” programme, the Central Baltic programme, a cooperation which has become more institutionalized throughout the programme period.

Significant development disparities persist between the participating regions, both in terms of socioeconomic development and in terms of environmental sustainability. The implementation of joint, innovative cross-border projects as well as exchange of knowledge and good practices has led to tangible results, bringing innovation and new solutions to the area and thus contributing to the overall programme objectives.

In total, more than 12 000 people were directly involved in the cross-border activities and almost 145 000 citizens were affected by the programme, which constitutes c.a. 1.5% of the total programme population of approx. 8.9 million inhabitants. Furthermore, more than 1 400 companies have benefited from the project activities (i.e. training, workshops, exchanges etc.).

The two priorities of the programme stem from the its overall objective: "Strengthening of sustainable development through joint activities improving competitiveness and enhancing integration of people and institutions in the programme area". The priorities are defined as:

Economic Competitiveness: to foster entrepreneurial development and support; improve integration of higher education institutions and labour markets; develop better transport accessibility. This priority is allocated 36 % of the programme's budget.

Attractiveness and Common Identity: to support the joint management of the Baltic Sea environment; improve energy efficiency; develop a sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage; promote local community initiatives. This priority is allocated 57 % of the programme's budget, roughly half of which is allocated to environmental priorities.

The intervention logic addresses strategic needs and opportunities meaningfully identified through clear background analysis and SWOT analysis. Objectives reflect broad consensus between five countries, although the original programme concept envisaged participation of only 3 countries - Denmark, Sweden and Poland only. Germany and Lithuania enrolled in the programming process in mid-2006. Objectives include postulates to stimulate convergence over borders (thus recognizing socio-economic and developmental disparities in the programme area) and used the diversity of the area's natural, cultural and institutional ecosystems to its advantage.

The South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme places high priority on the theme of joint management of the Baltic Sea environment; improving energy efficiency; developing a sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage; promoting local community initiatives. Especially under Priority Measure 2.1 "Management of the Baltic Sea environment", the thematic focus on *environment* has been highly profiled within the programme; the case study focuses primarily on this theme.

The Operational Programme is financially small; it has a total budget from the EU of EUR 61 million; this compares to an average of EUR 100 million for Strand A programmes.

The decisions regarding project selection and funding for the South Baltic Programme in the programming period 2007-2013 were made by the joint Steering Committee, comprising of representatives from all participating countries. The Joint Technical Secretariat located in Gdansk, Poland was responsible for day to day programme management, and acted as the main contact point. The Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development acted as Managing Authority, being in charge of the ERDF funds. A joint Monitoring Committee oversaw the use of ERDF funds.

Figure1. Map of the eligible area

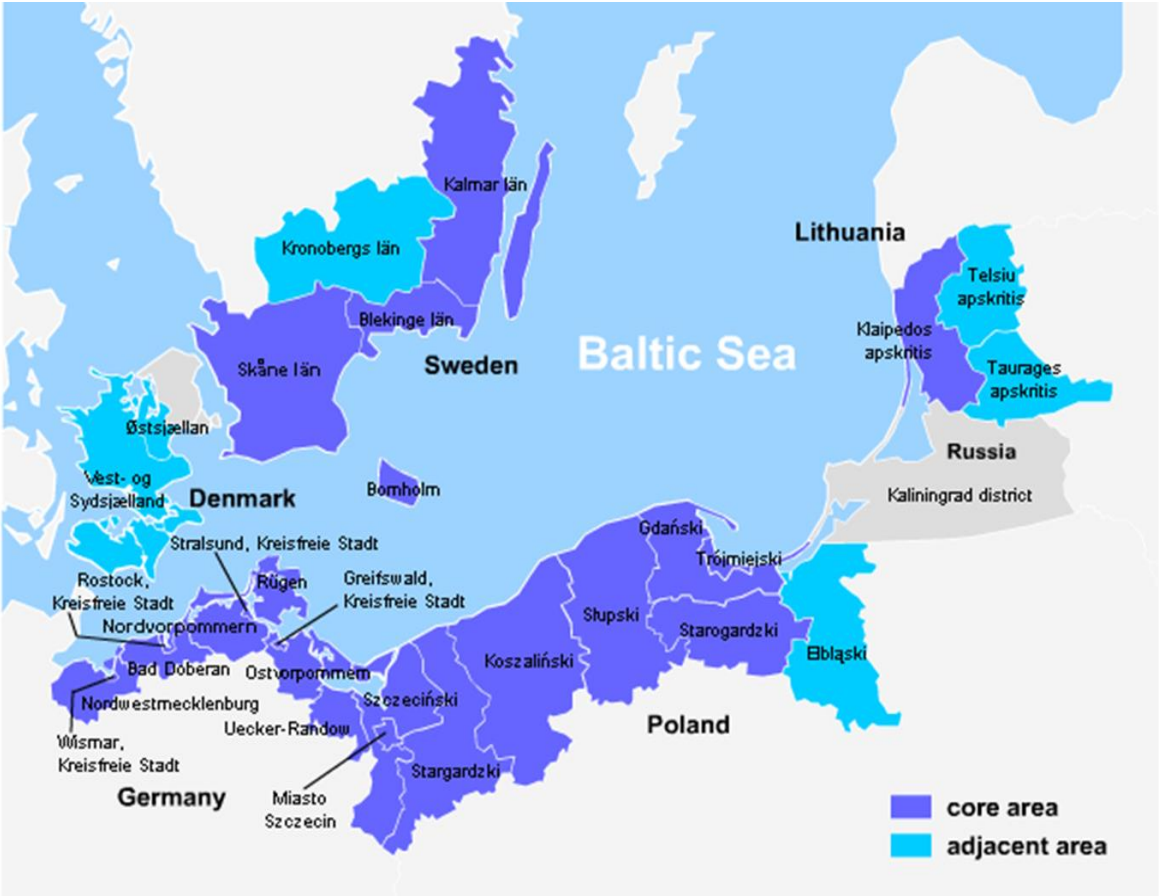


Figure 2. Thematic priorities for Type 4 programmes in Strand A

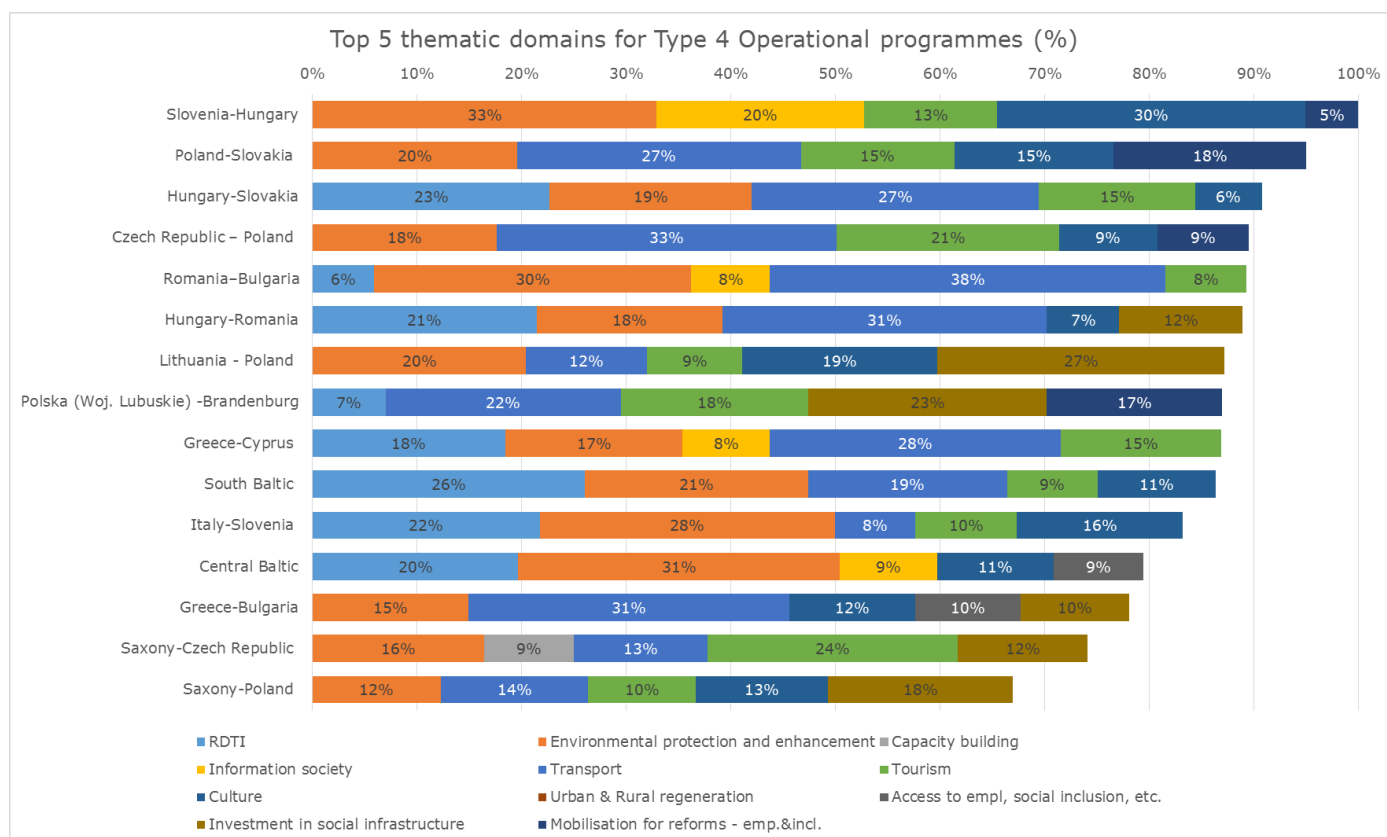


Table 1. Contextual conditions in Type 4 cross-border cooperation programmes

Type	Operational programme	Border	History	Institutionalisation	Development	Institutional power	Density	Connectivity	Diversity
Type 4 New internal borders Low degree of cooperation	Central Baltic	Internal	Old	Not institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Different	Low	Average
	Czech Republic – Poland	External	Intermediate	Not institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Different	Average	Average
	Greece-Bulgaria	Internal	Intermediate	Institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	High	Average	High
	Greece-Cyprus	Internal	Intermediate	Institutionalized	Unbalanced	Centralized	High	Average	Average
	Hungary-Romania	Internal	Old	Institutionalized	Balanced	Centralized	Different	Average	Average
	Hungary-Slovakia	Internal	Old	Institutionalized	Balanced	Decentralized	Different	Average	Low
	Italy-Slovenia	Internal	Old	Partly institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	Different	Average	Average
	Lithuania - Poland	Internal	Intermediate	Institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	Low	Average	Average
	Poland-Slovakia	Internal	Old	Institutionalized	Balanced	Decentralized	Low	Average	Low
	Polska (Woj. Lubuskie) -Brandenburg	Internal	Recent	Partly institutionalized	Unbalanced	Decentralized	Low	Average	High
	Romania-Bulgaria	Internal	Intermediate	Institutionalized	Balanced	Centralized	Different	Low	High
	Saxony-Czech Republic	External	Old	Partly institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Low	High	High
	Saxony-Poland	Internal	Intermediate	Institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Low	Low	High
	Slovenia-Hungary	Internal	Intermediate	Partly institutionalized	Balanced	Centralized	Different	Average	High
South Baltic	Internal	Recent	Partly institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Different	Low	High	

As mentioned above, the programme is structured along the following 2 main priorities (Table 2):

1. Economic Competitiveness: to foster entrepreneurial development and support; improve integration of higher education institutions and labour markets; develop better transport accessibility.

2. Attractiveness and Common Identity: to support the joint management of the Baltic Sea environment; improve energy efficiency; develop a sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage; promote local community initiatives.

These priorities were allocated funds in the OP in accordance to Table 2 below.

Table 2. Priority Axes in South Baltic Programme

Priority Axis	EU Investment	National Public Contribution	Total Public Contribution
1. Economic Competitiveness	22.4	5.3	27.7
2. Attractiveness and Common Identity	34.6	8.1	42.7
3. Technical Assistance	3.6	1.2	4.8
Total	EUR 60.7 million	EUR 14.6 million	EUR 75.3 million

Source: South Baltic Operational Programme.

Overall, the programme managed to successfully attract partners from all participating countries. The programme exhibits achievements in four key areas: border challenges (transportation and people flow) through supporting intelligent transport solutions and multi-modal transport centres and improving oversize freight across the Baltic Sea; border challenges (environment) through introduction/promotion of integrated prevention and pollution control, renewable energy, energy efficiency and protection of biodiversity; regional branding through promotion of regional destinations, value chains in tourism and cultural services, and good levels of critical mass contributing to the flagship projects of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

2. Methodology

This case study builds further on the investigations performed in Task 1 of the evaluation of the South Baltic programme and uses case study methodology to further investigate the impact of cross-border cooperation within the theme of environment. Annex 2 provides an overview of projects supported under Priority 2.1: "Management of the Baltic Sea environment".

The methodology of this evaluation uses a qualitative approach and has been built around visits to the region and meetings with stakeholders, focus group meetings, telephone interviews and correspondence. The stakeholders have been interviewed via face to face meetings, focus group meetings and e-mail and telephone interviews. The respondents include the MA (Managing Authority), JTS (Joint Technical Secretariat), National Contact Points, Regional Contact Points, project leaders and project participants. The list of interviews and focus group meetings is presented in Annex 3.

To learn more about the perceptions of project leaders and participants, we have also implemented a specific survey, targeting projects under Priority 2.1. The electronic survey was distributed to all projects (lead partners, with the option for the lead partners to send it further to their project participants, too) within Priority 2.1. The survey was responded to by 8 Lead Partners out of a total of 10 projects. Moreover, 7 project participants provided their responses to the survey.

The quantitative indicators were taken as a starting point for this investigation along with the operational programme, AIRs (Annual Implementation Reports), as well as other documents and evaluations of the programme and projects. This material, however, does not fully provide the deeper understanding of the way the projects and programme as such have impacted on learning, transfer of knowledge, cooperation, etc. that this case study seeks. We have tackled this challenge by collecting additional qualitative information from the Managing Authorities, stakeholders in the cross-border region, and from people and organisations involved in projects funded by the programme. An analysis of the allocation of resources spent and of the types of activities supported, and an analysis of the projects database with a focus on the environmental theme also contribute to an assessment of the results achieved by the programme. This helps create a qualitative picture of the results achieved by the programme, completing the analysis based on verified indicators with more a descriptive, narrative approach.

In this case study, the field visits have been organized mainly in the form of focus group meetings in Kalmar (on September 22, 2015) and in Gdansk (on September 25, 2015). This was the most feasible way to meet as many stakeholders as possible from the programme region. Besides focus group meetings, we have conducted telephone interviews with regional representatives, as well as e-mail interviews with some stakeholders. Moreover, there has been a continuous dialogue with the JTS throughout the evaluation.

3. Answers to the evaluation questions

This section responds to the evaluation questions listed in the introduction.² Each subsection starts with the question copied from the terms of reference, provides relevant information related to the evaluation question, and includes an analysis of the issue treated in the evaluation question.

3.1. Achievements and impacts of the programme

EVALUATION QUESTION

b) What has been delivered via cooperation, and what is its impact (e.g. in terms of R&D and innovation, enhanced administrative capacity, or better environmental status)?

The Operational Programme (OP) interventions of the South Baltic CBC Programme 2007-2013 have inspired and catalysed positive changes regarding the situation in the programme area in terms of the environment. There is no dedicated analysis of the progress or monitoring of the change sought after in the programme area with regard to the environment. Admittedly, if there had been any, the OP budget 2007-2013 as such is insignificant to bring about any significant overall tangible change. The main purpose of the OP interventions is to inspire change in the future through 'soft' projects rather than 'hard' projects on the ground.

No direct linkage can be established between regional performances and the achievements of the South Baltic CBC Programme. Indeed, the nature of the programme interventions measured by result indicators is not aimed at increased or improved sectorial performance. In the environmental sector under review, the support is aimed at improving institutional capacities and commitment of the beneficiaries to use environmental assets in a more friendly and respectable manner, and inspiring future change.

Allocation and spending are rather well in line with the OP general priorities. The average approval rate within the South Baltic CBC Programme was about 38 %, and the project approval rate as per AIR 2013 in the area of environment was 44 %.

The funded projects under 2.1 "Management of the Baltic Sea environment" demonstrate clear joint character in terms of project design, implementation, personnel and funding. These compliance criteria are well reflected in individual project reports. More importantly, the projects address the main cooperation needs and opportunities as indicated above. Only one project under 2.1 suffered from partnership structure change in the course of its implementation, mainly due to a mismatch between the expectations and the actual course of the implemented action.

Project leaders and partners who have most actively participated in the South Baltic CBC Programme are experienced players in terms of benefitting from ERDF funding

² As mentioned in Section 1, the order of questions a) and b) has been switched in order to first provide an analysis of programme's achievements and impacts, which can be referred to when discussing impacts on cooperation more specifically.

opportunities. The results of the web-based survey demonstrate that since 2005, the majority of organisations being either Lead Applicant or Partner have participated in 5 or more projects co-financed by the ERDF.

Increased levels of institutional cooperation across the borders have been observed among the projects and their partners under the environmental theme. The project design and development process was actively supported by the JTS, including the organisation of partner search forums, information sessions and initial reviews of the quality of draft project proposals respecting principles of transparency, equal treatment and division of duties in terms of programme management principles. The joint character of the funded projects directly contributed to the expected effects in terms of increased collaboration, although the sustainability of the integration levels cannot be fully validated at this juncture.

It is important to note that in the South Baltic CBC area there are great differences between the participating regions. The South Baltic programme is perceived by respondents of the evaluation process as a great arena for transferring knowledge and know-how. Evidence for this can be found not only at project level but also at the institutional level. Some Baltic states actually had it in their agenda to participate in projects under certain themes in order to build capacity and learn from other regions, e.g. in the fields of renewable energy or water treatment. Since regions are also at different stages of economic development, there are needs for also developing low-tech solutions; something which can be interesting from a global transferability perspective.

Regarding the impact on the future, it is perceived by several regional contact points and JTS that many partners/project teams will also pursue projects in the 2014-2020 period of the South Baltic programme. The work and cooperation in the period 2007-2013 has created a foundation for future cooperation, too.

3.1.1. What has been delivered via cooperation?

Annex 2 provides an overview of projects supported under the environmental theme. An examination of this portfolio of projects reveals at least the following key deliveries of the projects:

1. Transnational products and services related to environmental challenges in the South Baltic region
2. Regional, national, and transnational dissemination events and material related to the status, challenges, and solutions of environmental issues in the South Baltic region
3. Joint learning and benchmarking, especially among the project partners, their key relevant interest groups, and among the public sector experts involved in the South Baltic programme administration
4. Increased transnational awareness of the environmental challenges and common identity.

Table 3 summarises the outputs of the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme under the theme of environment (source: AIR 2013).

Table 3. Outputs of South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme under the theme of environment

Theme	Indicator	Target	Value
Attractiveness and Common Identity (with indicators especially relevant for the sub-theme of environment highlighted)	Number of projects with politically welcomed ³ and promoted results	30	83%
	Number of projects creating cross-border networks based on formal agreements	15	313%
	Number of projects unlocking public and private investments	7	129%
	Number of projects improving institutional capacity in management of the Baltic Sea environment	10	100%
	Number of projects increasing commitment to renewable energy sources and energy saving patterns	4	150%
	Number of projects demonstrating more efficient use of natural and cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea area and regional development	10	100%
	Number of projects intensifying intercultural dialogue and better involving the broader public	20	110%

³ The expression 'politically welcomed and promoted results' is used for example in the South Baltic Annual Implementation Report 2013, p. 4. In this context the expression refers to more or less political appreciation of the cross-border cooperation. As a general rule projects shall contribute to the macro-regional, regional and local strategies, consequently the political decision-makers need to be informed or even actively involved in the cooperation process. (Clarification received from South Baltic JTC)

3.1.2. What is the impact of the programme?

The direct impact of the programme includes the impact of numerous new solutions and proposals to environmental challenges in the programme area. The outcome of the projects enables and inspires organisations and citizens to address the environmental challenges in a novel way, and in some cases paves the way for new, innovative environmental solutions with business potential.

The indirect impact of the programme consists of the effects of the projects on issues such as awareness, common identity, and a new transnational contact network. **Without the South Baltic EU project, many of these issues would not have been initiated and/or realized.**

It is also important to note that the impact of the programme lasts far longer than the lifetime of the programme 2007-2013. For example, it is already known that several project structures and cooperation teams created by the programme still exist, 2-3 years after the completion of the projects.

A very concrete example of how projects have had both an impact on cooperation and a concrete environmental impact is the Household Participation in Waste Management project, which is featured in box 1 below. By developing best practices and transferring knowledge across borders, the project has stimulated new solutions and transfer of knowledge on sorting of municipal solid waste and raised awareness of these issues in the program region.

Another example of a concrete impact of the programme is depicted in box 2, which discusses the EUROSLAM project. Through EUROSLAM, new technologies have been implemented in waste water treatment and waste water treatment plants have been brought into cooperation with a biogas producer. The project has also generated waste water upstream work, where the municipalities compare and discuss their analysis in order to improve their sludge quality.

Box 1

Reduction of regional imbalances in the South Baltic Region : Household Participation in Waste Management - HPWM

The overall idea of the HPWM project was to reduce the disposal of household waste in landfills. According to the project, in Poland 95% of waste ends up in landfills without any pre-sorting, in comparison, in Sweden the figure is only 3%. The main project goal is to reduce this imbalance between the countries. The project is backed by a number of municipal partners and universities in Poland, Germany and Sweden, with the aim of developing pilot studies and methods, transferring knowledge across borders and implementing targeted communication campaigns.

By developing best practices and transferring knowledge across borders, the project has aimed at stimulating the sorting of municipal solid waste and raising awareness of the EU five-step waste hierarchy. In the course of the implementation of the project significant results have been generated and presented. According to the project partners, the partnership and cooperation across the Baltic Sea has grown strong and is appreciated by partners. For instance, the Szczecin region established a cooperation with a group of Swedish experts who design modern recycling centres in the Skåne region. As a consequence, the construction of a new waste recycling facility in Szczecin was realised.

As a spin-off and continuation, HPWM has also looked into the possibility and need for a wider-scale Baltic Sea Waste Management Cooperation.

Lead Beneficiary	Region Skåne (SE)
Duration	May 2010 – April 2013
Total budget	€ 1 526 657,60
ERDF contribution	€ 1 201 974,96
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kristianstad Waste Management Company (SE)• NSR AB - North West Scania Recycling Company (SE)• VA Syd (SE)• University of Lund, Department of Environmental Strategy (SE)• Municipality of Szczecin (PL)• Municipality of Koszalin (PL)• Wismar University of Applied Sciences (DE)• Ernst Moritz Arndt University of Greifswald (DE)• Sysav R&D - South Scania Waste Management Company (SE)• Sustainable Business Hub (SE)

www.hpwm.eu

Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews with projects

Box 2

New action model for smaller communities :

The beneficial use of sewage sludge from small and medium sized municipalities - EUROSLAM

The overall idea of the EUROSLAM project was to reduce the amount of nutrients in the Baltic Sea by improved sludge handling and biogas production. The problem identified by the project was the insufficient recycling of nutrients from the waste and sewage sludge in the South Baltic area, due to the fact that the waste plants are mainly small and medium sized, and they have not enough capacities to utilise produced biogas and reuse created biosolids. The WWTPs (Waste Water Treatment Plants) in different municipalities face sludge pollution, which could be alleviated by the production of biogas.

EUROSLAM defined a wide range of actions to tackle the problem identified: biogas production, biogas utilisation, preparation of a handbook on the implementation of the proposed methods of using the biogas and biosolids, testing the use of sludge as a fertiliser with quality assurance via the creation of a certification programme and a system of regular seminars. Considering the wide scope of target groups defined by the project, e.g. municipalities and waste plants, farmers, food industries, households, vendors and suppliers of biogas technology, as well as energy companies, EUROSLAM and similar projects could have a wide-ranging impact in the Baltic region.

Through EUROSLAM, new technologies have been implemented in WWT and waste water treatment plants have been brought into cooperation with a biogas producer. The project has also generated waste water upstream work where the municipalities compare and discuss their analysis in order to improve their sludge quality.

Lead Beneficiary	Region Skåne (SE)
Duration	July 2011- June 2014
Total budget	€ 1 199 084,00
ERDF contribution	€ 937 419,00
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable Business Hub (SE)• The municipality of Höganäs (SE)• The municipality of Hörby (SE)• Östra Göinge Municipality (SE)• The administration municipality of Šilalė (LT)• Municipal Infrastructure Company „KOS-EKO” (PL)• Polish Biogas Association (PL)
	www.euroslam.eu

Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews with project managers

3.2. Impacts of the programme on cooperation

EVALUATION QUESTION

a) To what extent has cooperation been enhanced? What barriers to cooperation have been removed? What is the evidence for the contribution of Interreg programmes?

3.2.1 To what extent has cooperation been enhanced?

Communication and cooperation has been working really well at the project level, both internally and externally. The co-operative processes have also been going on beyond the formal project structures, and have taken place in-between organised meetings and workshops. Especially in projects where there has been a specific focus on solving some challenges in "pilot areas", there has been a vivid and ongoing collaboration. Collaboration has been the key to solving the tasks of these projects.

Some projects have created better possibilities for cooperation than others. For example, some projects were large enough to invest in also focusing the time of the project coordinators on more ambitious communication and collaboration schemes. It is generally perceived that cooperation and collaboration is important for the sustainability of projects i.e. that the joint activities of the project participants would continue also after the end of project financed by the South Baltic CBC programme. Some project structures and activities actually have already proven to exist at least 2-3 years after the formal South Baltic project finished.

Concrete examples of how cooperation has been enhanced and how this has benefited the development of new solutions in the region can be found in almost any project, one example is brought forward in box 3 below. The ECODUMP project has brought together experts in the field of ecosystems principles of planning of marine systems. Specifically the project focused on dumping sites for sediments, and one of the main successes of the ECODUMP project was the establishment of a community for eco-dumping approaches, with experts from Poland, Lithuania, Russia and HELCOM. This is a very concrete project where networks have been established as well as an output (in this case guidelines and a monitoring system) and the consortium has signed an agreement to continue working on these issues (the cooperation can also be said to be sustainable after the project has ended).

Box 3

Creating novel ecosystem principles and networks of experts:

Application of ecosystem principles for the location and management of offshore dumping sites in SE Baltic Region – ECODUMP

The overall idea of the ECODUMP project was that the maintenance and the development of new ports would imply dredging of sediments and a need for new dumping sites. The project plan was to establish proper management of existing dumping sites, to develop new ecosystem based principles for location of the new sites, to test the developed methodology in the pilot area of the Sventoj port in Lithuania and to make recommendations to HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection

Commission) as to how to locate, monitor and manage the new dumping sites.

The project consortium prepared a detailed analysis of legislative requirements on the topic, examined the current situation in the existing dumping sites and organized new scientific surveys for new data collection. The main outputs of the project are the produced guidelines for the location of dumping sites. The final document integrates both legal and environmental concerns and fosters the sustainable use of marine resources, as well as contributing to the achievement of the good environmental status of the Baltic Sea.

The output is of major importance for Poland, which had no established monitoring system for the dumping sites. This has been changed and a proper monitoring and dumping control programme has been developed.

One of the main successes of the ECODUMP project is the establishment of a community for eco-dumping approaches with experts from Poland, Lithuania, Russia and HELCOM.

In order to guarantee the sustainability of project results, the ECODUMP Advisory Group was established. The members of the group undersigned a commitment to work further on the activities covered in the project, related to applications of sustainable management of dredged material in the South Baltic region including ecologically grounded dumping of clean sediments.

Lead Beneficiary	Klaipėda University Coastal Research and Planning Institute (LT)
Duration	June 2011- May 2014
Total budget	€ 849 150,00
ERDF contribution	€ 662 702,50
Partnership	• Maritime Institute in Gdańsk (MIG) (PL)
	www.corpi.ku.lt/ecodump

Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews with project managers

3.2.2 What barriers to cooperation have been removed?

Existing barriers to cooperation have in many cases been removed or diminished. The main existing barriers to cooperation were well covered in the OP document and further validated through an independent and qualitative review during the engagement with the stakeholders. Those barriers include: language, institutional capacities, staff competencies, accessibility/proximity, differences in socio-economic development level and differences in degrees of experience of similar actions.

According to several respondents, intensive internal and external communication during and after the project has been a key enabling condition in removing barriers to

cooperation. Even though language issues might be perceived as potential barriers to cooperation, this is not the perception of the project managers and contact points of the South Baltic program.

One challenge regarding cooperation has been the extension of the collaboration to inland areas (without direct geographical connection to the Baltic Sea). For instance, there is an ambition to network within the larger EUSBSR and develop projects and cooperation.

Interreg Strand A over multiple borders is more demanding in terms of cooperation issues than Interreg interventions over a single border. This concerns both management structures and beneficiaries. Moreover, it seems as if the most sophisticated projects and project proposals are likely to come from countries with longer experience of managing transnational projects and with longer experience of transnational cooperation. For example, out of the projects funded under the environmental topic, there is no single Lead Beneficiary from Poland. Only 2 projects were led by entities from Lithuania. It is worth mentioning that Poland and Lithuania are the two participating countries with the least experience in EU cooperation programmes when compared with other participating countries. Moreover, the capacity to manage complicated projects was highlighted as an important issue by some respondents to the evaluation.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that there are numerous small-scale achievements regarding removal of cooperation barriers (including domestic and/or transnational cooperation barriers) that often remain unnoticed but that contribute to the success of the projects. As the following interview quote demonstrates: *"Thanks to our South Baltic 2.1 Environmental project, the practical cooperation with the local Water Council got started, and co-funding was arranged."*

3.2.3 What is the evidence for the contribution of Interreg programmes?

The direct evidence for the contribution of Interreg programmes is challenging to prove. This is especially true regarding projects with an environmental theme, where the evidence of the improved conditions of the environment may be available only after a long time period. The reporting and dissemination of the 2.1 "Management of the Baltic Sea environment" projects, illustrated for example in the South Baltic Project Portfolio publication and on the websites of the projects, include evidence on products, services, solutions, cooperation methods, and information and communication tools produced in the projects.

In 2012 an external evaluation of the South Baltic CBC Programme was conducted and the main results of this investigation highlighted some evidence for the contribution of the programme, too (Ecorys 2012).

The most common results of projects are long term cooperation agreements and new extended cooperation networks. The partnerships and cooperation built within the projects are also valuable assets for future projects and will facilitate future partnerships. Beyond that, the programme also supported small-scale investments, thus allowing for the piloting of activities and the testing of the developed solutions in practice.

According to the beneficiaries, intensifying cross-border cooperation, intensifying integration and creating knowledge exchange networks were the most useful effects of the implemented projects, which confirm the need for this type of cooperation activity.

The complementarity level of the projects supported within the South Baltic Programme is high, both within the programme measures and between projects implemented within different measures, as well as with projects implemented within other Interreg Programmes. The CBC Programme creates and defines solutions and designs the type of investments that can in turn be financed by other programmes. The environmental theme is particularly relevant as it by default features transnational character and dimensions. The CBC Programme is often an inspiration for designing and defining collectively what is good for the area in a concerted manner, and the national and regional programmes, or in some cases other programmes with transnational character, afterwards take the baton regarding investments or solutions that are better adapted and more efficient than if they had been designed in isolation.

3.3. Impacts on learning, knowledge transfer and capacity building

EVALUATION QUESTION

c) What learning has been generated during the implementation of the CBC programme? Who has benefited? From which stakeholders to which other stakeholders has knowledge and capacity been transferred?

3.3.1 What learning has been generated during the implementation of the CBC programme?

Besides the actual learning processes and knowledge transfer within and across the South Baltic CBC project partnerships in 2007-2013, the programme has given birth to more systematic cooperation and administrative joint learning in the South Baltic Region since there had been no earlier similar interventions. For the first time, the MA, JTS and stakeholders in the programme area attempted to work together in the programme area at hand. Brand new organisations and systems were put in place and the management structures underwent the initial process of learning-by-doing and subsequent growth. Also national and regional stakeholders experienced a brand new dimension of over-the-border cooperation.

The survey implemented by the evaluators in 2015 included a question on motives for participating in the South Baltic EU projects regarding Lead Partners, see Table 4 below.

Table 4: Motives for participation in South Baltic projects: Lead Partners

2.1 Please indicate your motives for participation in the South Baltic project:	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
[Gain experience on approaches, strategies and priorities different from your own]	6	2	0	0
[Identify new technologies]	4	1	2	1
[Finance your own R&D]	3	2	1	2
[Reinforce your know-how]	6	1	1	0
[Create/strengthen contacts with international players in your field]	7	1	0	0
[Be more active regarding EU initiatives]	3	3	2	0
[Finance activities that could not be carried out otherwise]	5	2	1	0
[Invitation from an organisation which you have worked with in the past]	2	1	2	3

Source: Evaluation Survey 2015, n=8

Based on the survey, the key motivation of the partners to participate in South Baltic EU projects is strongly related to learning, including not only technology and R&D knowledge generation but also learning related to international cooperation.

The interviews, together with the survey results, confirm that learning has taken place in many forms, including:

- daily learning throughout the project time by co-planning, co-developing, and co-creating, including individual and joint learning
- specific joint learning events organised by the South Baltic projects and programme administration
- learning related to administrative capabilities. As one respondent put it: *"The years with the South Baltic programme have provided us with improved administrative capabilities, too, to utilize programmes with EU co-funding. In our region, we are now much better prepared for the 2014-2020 EU programme period."*
- "unanticipated learning" that was not expected by the project participants when preparing the joint project, including unanticipated meetings with experts enabled by the project meetings and matchmaking efforts by the projects and the programme administration.

3.3.2 Who has benefited?

In general, the perception of respondents to the evaluation is that "everyone learns"; the people working on the projects, the organisations, the organisations who act as contact points, but also the wider institutional fabric of the regions. Personal and institutional contacts are extended, knowledge is generated by the projects (practical knowledge as well as sometimes even academic knowledge) and there is a build-up of structure and mechanisms towards more complicated and complex projects in the future.

It is difficult, however, to verify “when someone has learnt” and “how much”. It was said at one focus group interview that it might be so that the partners of larger size learn more because they usually coordinate projects and receive and process information at a higher level, whereas smaller organisations might work with more specific tasks and might not interact with all other actors in the project – or across other projects. Larger partners usually have more time and funding and hence more time to reflect and accumulate knowledge. It is important in structuring the projects to pay specific attention to facilitating learning and sharing of learning. This is an important task for the lead partners and can be supported by JTS and complementary tools from INTERACT. Again, it is important to ensure that everyone in the project learns from the process. In order for partners to share learnings and results outside the project group, it is important to boost a sense of ownership of the projects. The participants should feel that they own project results and be proud to share them externally. It was mentioned that in the South Baltic region the technical secretariat (JTS) has supported all projects to establish local regional stakeholder groups in order to facilitate the grounding of results in the regions and to ensure the impact of project outcomes. Although this was not mandatory, it was the case in many projects. In relation to this it was mentioned as a general note that the target groups of the projects should always be investigated and incorporated into the projects throughout the processes.

It seems that most projects in the South Baltic CBC Programme (looking most closely at those in Priority 2.1) have managed to include, and sometimes also engage, local authorities and other stakeholders, both as participants in the projects, and as recipients of results. There seems to be a perception in many projects that it is important to show local policymakers how things are done elsewhere, and that this is part of the learning task of the projects as well. It is considered easier to implement a new solution in one’s region (for instance in storm water treatment or waste handling) if you have seen how it functions somewhere else.

The results of the quantitative web-based survey of this evaluation in 2015 indicate that all respondents actively participated in their project’s promotional and dissemination activities by organising events, delivering presentations or by demonstrating their own achievements. The project participants claim that their know-how has significantly increased during the project. The learning experience was rated by all respondents as 4 or 5 (on a 1 to 5 degree scale where 1 means very little, almost no learning, and 5 means a great volume of learning, very beneficial to the work and mandate of the institution).

3.3.3. From which stakeholders to which other stakeholders has knowledge and capacity been transferred?

During the implementation of the South Baltic CBC 2007-2013 programme, knowledge transfer has taken place between many actors. e.g. from R&D organisations to public sector entities. Indeed, this transfer occurred in the absence of a stand-alone priority aimed at capacity building, and can be considered to be a form of organic knowledge and capacity transference on account of the requirements set through project selection criteria and the ‘soft’ nature of the programme interventions.

Implemented projects resulted in the formation of 'knowledge agents', mainly hosted by Lead Beneficiary institutions. Those agents are individuals actively participating in the projects. Under Priority 2.1, seven thematic categories of knowledge area can be distinguished: i) eutrophication, ii) renewable energy, iii) sulphur pollution, iv) waste management, v) herbicide loads, vi) traffic pollution and vii) low economic viability of broadleaf forests. Experience and learning generated during the implementation of projects have been captured and promoted by the knowledge agents over the course and after the compilation of each project. The JTS has actively promoted the experience and knowledge gained by publishing and disseminating dedicated publications such as Smart Environmental Solution in the South Baltic and the related website. The main stimulus in encouraging learning and knowledge transfer is diversity and disparities across stakeholder institutions, which are learning from their more developed peers. In addition to that, knowledge transfer was promoted through numerous conferences, seminars, and discussion fora organised by the projects themselves, and through stakeholders' participation in the Pan-Baltic Forum, Euroregion Baltic and Euroregion Pomerania.

Some respondents emphasize the value of the South Baltic CBC programme in enabling cooperation and learning between regions with different levels of expertise: *"The EU South Baltic CBC programme has done its part in integrating different programme regions and their actors and in finding win-win solutions between regions of different advancement."*

One project that exemplifies the dimensions of learning, knowledge transfer and capacity building is the ARTWEI project, featured in box 4. The project established the South Baltic Transitional Waters' partnership network of the key institutions based on a long-term cooperation agreement and supported by the regional activity network of the EUCC – The Coastal and Marine Union. The overall idea of the project was to develop a model for holistic management of transitional water areas in the South Baltic area. A web-based multilingual platform, including webGIS and other ICT tools, was created to facilitate an interactive knowledge exchange - experiences were exchanged throughout the whole project and results spread all over the South Baltic area. As a consequence of the ARTWEI project, the capacities of the stakeholders in proper management and maintenance of the environmental integrity of the SBTWs in the target areas were considerably improved.

Box 4

From regional to transnational level:

Action for the Reinforcement of the Transitional Waters' Environmental Integrity - ARTWEI

Transitional waters (TW) link adjacent river basins and marine areas and are critically important for the ecological health of the Baltic Sea. With this in mind, the ARTWEI project was initiated with the aim of striking an operational balance between EU requirements for a Maritime Spatial Planning framework, Water Framework Directive and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, which do often overlap with or contradict one another. The

project established the South Baltic Transitional Waters' partnership network of the key institutions based on a long-term cooperation agreement and supported by the regional activity network of the EUCC – The Coastal and Marine Union.



'Transitional Waters' regions in the ARTWEI project

The overall idea of the project was to develop a model for holistic management of transitional water areas in the South Baltic region through the establishment of four "Transitional Water Stakeholders Bodies", one on each cross-border Transitional Waters region of the South Baltic area – Curonian Lagoon (LT/RU), Vistula Lagoon (PL/RU), Odra Lagoon (DE/PL) and Oresund Sound (DK/SE). All four "TWSB" jointly built an innovative knowledge pool containing best practices. It forms the basis for a "Good Practise Code of Conduct" for reinforcing the environmental integrity of the South Baltic area. A web-based multilingual platform, including webGIS and other ICT tools, was created to facilitate an interactive knowledge exchange within and among Transitional Waters Stakeholder Bodies. Experiences were exchanged throughout the whole project and results spread all over the South Baltic area. The project results and findings were also transferred on a more general and transnational level, e.g. through the endorsement of the "Good Practise Code of Conduct" by HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission). The results of the ARTWEI project can be further used for joint information and lobbying action towards EU and national authorities on environmental needs in the South Baltic area.

Lead Beneficiary	Klaipėda University (LT)
Duration	March 2010 – February 2013
Total budget	€ 1 408 400,00
ERDF contribution	€ 1 169 150,00
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUCC Baltic Office (LT) • EUCC – Coastal Union Germany (DE) • World Maritime University (SE) • University of Szczecin (PL) • National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (PL)
www.baliclagoons.net/artwei	

As a consequence of the ARTWEI project, the capacities of the stakeholders in proper management and maintenance of the environmental integrity of the SBTWs in the target areas were considerably improved.

*Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews
with projects*

3.4. Sustainability of learning and cooperation

EVALUATION QUESTION

**d) What is the likely future for such learning mechanisms and cooperation?
Will its sustainability depend on future EU financing?**

3.4.1. What is the likely future for such learning mechanisms and cooperation?

Regarding the sustainability of the learning mechanisms, one problem in the South Baltic perceived by the respondents was that sometimes projects neglect to link up the newly gained knowledge with previous knowledge. It is perceived to be so important to look to the future and show what the novel results of the new project are that the link to the past is sometimes forgotten. The new knowledge should be related back to previous practices or knowledge in order to provide context and to understand the full story of a current project and its findings. It is too early to state that the vast majority of the learning mechanisms initiated by the environmental projects will continue. There is a high likelihood, however, that many of the solutions designed in the period 2007-2013 will translate into action in the 2014-2020 perspective.

3.4.2. Will its sustainability depend on future EU financing?

Based on this evaluation, it can be stated that learning and cooperation mechanisms and knowledge/capacity transfer mechanisms are increasingly being integrated by regional institutions and do not depend exclusively on the CBC programme.

The programme offers co-financing and brings together partners which would be unlikely to cooperate without EU funding, with the high cost of networking on account of limited accessibility in the programme area being the main reason. ERDF funding encourages cooperation, but regarding the long-term sustainability, it must be noted that collaboration within the framework of the South Baltic Sea Programme has a relatively short track record. A more in-depth analysis of long-term sustainability would need a longer track record.

Sustainability of achievements per se cannot be distinctly assessed due to the 'soft' character of the supported projects, though added value appears to be significant. In the quantitative survey of this evaluation, all respondents indicated that, thanks to the programme, they experienced added value that otherwise could not be generated through participation in national or regional EU-funded programmes (response 'yes' or 'rather yes').

There had been instances in the past where various local and regional authorities worked together either on an ad-hoc or more systematic basis e.g. through institutional twinning cooperation schemes or similar mechanisms. Such cooperation, however, was very seldom used to lead to more tangible outcomes or knowledge transfer. Project-based cooperation appears to add value that would not normally be generated.

It is important to remind from the viewpoint of sustainability that, as already stated earlier in this report, some project structures and activities have actually already proven to continue to exist after the formal South Baltic projects have finished.

Finally, the sustainability of the initiatives depends not only on the availability of future EU funding but also on the readiness and hunger of the regions to seek funding for new projects. As one informant put it: *"Yes, the future is dependent on EU co-*

funding but also on the availability of experts here in our region that are able to prepare winning EU project proposals.”

3.5. Significance of Interreg programme

EVALUATION QUESTION

e) If there were no prior CBC programmes, would the projects co-financed through the programme have happened without the existence of EU funding?

Activities carried out through CBC projects have effectively promoted joint action and synergies across borders that would not have been possible under other funding modalities. Qualitative and quantitative feedback generated during the evaluation exercise clearly indicates that the projects financed through the programme may have happened without the existence of the EU funding, but not at all with the same breadth and intensity. As the following two quotes from the respondents demonstrate: *"We have had the cooperation already existing before the South Baltic project but the 2.1 project enabled a whole new intensity of cooperation and new personnel resources to keep the cooperation going."* *"The networks at the Programme region have always existed but the South Baltic programme has significantly catalysed the networks. Catalysing is the word! "*

Most likely the transnational projects could not have been financed through other funding modalities, given that cross-border impact was an imperative criterion, and also given the scale of projects (approx. EUR 0.8 million of EU contribution on average) as well as accessibility constraints that would have discouraged organisations from working in a collaborative manner using only their own funding.

Based on the survey implemented by the evaluators in 2015, the South Baltic projects included unique elements that would not have been gained through other cooperation projects (see Table 5).

Table 5: Significance of EU South Baltic projects: Lead Partners

6.1 Do you agree with the following statements :	Yes	Rather yes	Rather no	No
[You would have never learned or achieved what you did without participation in the project]	7	0	1	0
[You could have benefitted the same without participating in the project]	1	1	0	6
[You could have benefitted the same through participation in your national or regional EU-funded programmes]	0	0	3	5
[Cross-border cooperation adds value that cannot be generated through participation in national or regional EU-funded programmes]	6	2	0	0

Source: Evaluation Survey 2015, n=8

Based on the feedback from project participants and regional contact points, the regions and the project partners would probably have tried to solve the same challenges and work on the same topics without the support of CBC project funding. But, and this is important, they perceived that the solutions found in the projects, and the integration of those solutions into practice, has been greatly improved by the collaboration and project setup enabled by the cooperation. To summarize, the projects would have been developed in some way or another, with local funding or through national programs (the topics need still to be solved without the CBC program), but there would have been less effort, impact, and especially, less transnational collaboration. And some respondents mentioned, too, that the CBC program allowed projects to be developed at an earlier stage due to co-funding and partnership with additional actors.

An explicit example of the significance of the Interreg program is depicted through the MOMENT UP project in box 5. MOMENT projects had a strong emphasis on knowledge transfer and experiences were exchanged throughout the whole project period, with results intended to be spread all over the South Baltic area. According to the project's management, the partners have also started to exchange knowledge and experiences outside the project requirements.

Another project which features significant benefits from the exchange of knowledge and shows the significant impact of the Interreg program (as it would not have taken this shape without the program) is the WAB project shown in box 6. This project clearly shows the way Interreg projects can be used to exchange knowledge, coach each other and improve interaction when developing solutions for dealing with environmental issues in the Baltic Sea Region.

Box 5

Sustainable success :

Modern Water Management in the South Baltic Sea Area: MOMENT and MOMENT UP

The overall idea of the parent project "MOMENT" was to test and develop a model for modern water management through Water Users Partnerships (WUP), i.e. for river basin based management with strong participation from local stakeholders. Smaller rivers in LT, PL and SE were used as pilot areas. Each pilot area established a Water Users Partnership, which developed local programmes of measures for decreased outlets of nutrients and hazardous substances.

Regional politicians and experts then compiled and analysed the pilot area experiences and applied them on a more general and transnational level, i.e. with the perspective of the Euroregion Baltic.

The MOMENT UP project was created as an upgrade to its predecessor. Additional concrete pilot area measures were added to the MOMENT project which further enhanced its impacts on the socio-economic development of the Baltic Sea region. The concept of managing water through Water Users Partnerships was spread to the Kaliningrad region within the pilot area of the Primorskaya River, with the intention to possibly to spread its ideas to a broader Russian public.

MOMENT projects had a strong emphasis on knowledge transfer, and experiences were exchanged throughout the whole project period, with results are intended to be spread all over the South Baltic area. According to the project's management, the partners have also started to exchange knowledge and experiences outside the project requirements.

MOMENT projects have generated concrete conclusions and recommendations for future water cooperation, and the results could also be used for joint information and lobbying action towards EU and national authorities on environmental needs in the South Baltic area. MOMENT has also been reflected well in the media, and many articles and interviews have been produced with regards to the project.

The MOMENT and MOMENT UP projects have successfully established seven WUPs within Lithuania, Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), Poland and Sweden. An external evaluation by Ramboll Management confirms that they have all functioned in a satisfactory manner and points out a great potential for further development of the WUP concept. This is also acknowledged by the EU, and the WUP method has been highlighted in the greater EUSBSR Action Plan.

Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews with projects

Lead Beneficiary	Regional Council in Kalmar County (SE)
Duration	September 2009 - December 2012
Total budget	€ 1 691 433,00
ERDF contribution	€ 1 274 007,50
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of the Marshal of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (PL)• Regional Water Management Board in Gdańsk (PL)• Institute of Meteorology and Water Management (PL)• Coastal Reserach and Planning Institute of the Klaipėda University (CORPI) (LT)• Klaipėda District Municipality (LT)• Region Blekinge (SE)• Regional Council in South Småland (SE)• Kamlar Municipality (SE)• Torsås Municipality (SE)• Mönsterås Municipality (SE)• Nybro Municipality (SE)• Ronneby Municipality (SE)• Swedish Forest Agency, Region East (SE)• Blekinge County Administration Board (SE)• Kalmar Water (SE)

www.momentproject.eu

Box 6

Creation of a new circular model for the Baltic region:

Wetlands, Algae and Biogas : A southern Baltic Sea Eutrophication Counteract Project - WAB

The aim of the WAB project was to create a regional model for sustainable water management and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in the South Baltic Sea through pilot regions and exchange of experiences.

The overall concept of the project was the establishment of a holistic approach for reducing eutrophication by combining the reconstruction of wetland with the distraction of algae from shores as well as the promotion of their use for biogas production and as fertilisers in regional production cycles. WAB has contributed to the reduction of nutrient outflow into the Baltic Sea and the removal of algae from the beaches. Thus the attractiveness of the Baltic shores for tourism has been improved, and new income possibilities for farmers have been created.

The exchange between the pilot regions was facilitated by coaching from the Swedish side via a number of study visits and workshops. The project results have been widely disseminated by regional dissemination partners in the South Baltic area and beyond and by using the networks of relevant pan- Baltic organisations. Significant interest has been generated and this can be seen from the international, national and local response that the project has received.

The WAB project has offered an innovative, holistic approach by constructing a cycle previously unseen in the Baltic Sea, and the project findings have a potential to bring about social and economic benefits throughout the Baltic Sea area.

Lead Beneficiary	Municipality of Trelleborg (SE)
Duration	February 2010 - December 2012
Total budget	€ 1 548 871,00
ERDF contribution	€ 1 218 040,35
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipality of Sopot (PL)• Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Science (PL)• Pomeranian Agricultural Education Center (PL)• River Basin District Authority for the Southern Baltic Sea River Basin District (SE)• Linnaeus University, Marine Science Center (SE)• The Skåne association of Local authorities (SE)• Community Union Dolina Redy i Chylonki (PL)• Pomeranian Center for Environmental Research and Technology (POMCERT) (PL)
www.wabproject.pl/en	

Source : South Baltic Programme Portfolio, project website and interviews with projects

3.6. Quality of monitoring system

EVALUATION QUESTION

f) Which programmes have the best monitoring systems and which have the worst?

The list of indicators for the South Baltic CBC Programme is presented in Annex 4.

Indicators are relevant, regularly measured and regularly used for assessing the effectiveness of the programme - but qualitative evaluation deserves more attention

The OP document outlines intervention logic, which is clearly based on output indicators. Target values have not been set and are only captured at the end of the implementation phase of each project (final report). The AIR 2013 does not capture project/operation target values for outputs. Such a solution can be explained by the disposition of the programme – without any predecessors – and by the fact that the 2007-2013 initiative was chiefly aimed at “testing the waters”, learning-by-doing. Instead, result indicators are regularly captured and turn out to be a sound decision-making tool in terms of the sequencing of calls for proposals, reaching consensus on project selection, etc. The monitoring system faces, however, some challenges in assessing value-added or impacts of projects with quantitative figures only – an issue mentioned, for example, at the evaluation focus group meetings in 2015 (see Annex 3).

The monitoring system contributes to raising the quality of the formulation/implementation of the programme and projects – but deserves further refinement in the future

Whilst output level monitoring may be considered to have some deficiencies, a sound financial monitoring framework has been put in place which has led to the use of savings in order to enhance project pipeline development for the 2014-2020 perspective through a ‘seed money facility’. Similar mechanisms exist in other operational programmes, e.g. the Baltic Sea Region OP. Additionally, meticulous financial monitoring helped to avoid de-commitment of funds, being an important achievement for a brand-new Interreg programme in Europe. All this is good, but supports purely financial management, not strategic management focusing on content.

Monitoring is not entirely geared towards quantitative performance and achievements. In close collaboration with the Steering Committee, the MA and JTS monitored the quality of submitted proposals under Priority 2.1, which had been an issue of concern in the early phases of the programme roll-out and resulted in low project approval rates for the measure at hand. This feedback mechanism from the proposal adjudication helped the programme management structures respond accordingly, putting more emphasis on a more intimate interaction by potential applicants with the environmental domain of the programme.

The MA and JTS are aware of the monitoring framework challenges. A new electronic Programme M&E system is being established for use in a 2014-2020 perspective. The establishment of the new M&E tool is a part of the current programme closure activities.

Obviously, the indicators of the program were collected, but it was perceived that this did not really indicate clearly enough if the projects were successful, and what was the impact of the projects. The lead partners, project partners, contact points and JTS had many other ideas about how to measure success, including descriptions (even stories) of the concrete impact of the projects. It was mentioned by several respondents that these project descriptions should focus more on how the projects have impacted on the end-users. The idea of highlighting the success stories of flagship projects was also raised.

It was also stated by the respondents that many results of the projects are not captured by the indicators provided by the monitoring system. Additional project reporting and information material is needed to be prepared to reveal these results. Also, results are often better understood when projects are presented and discussed at seminars and workshops.

The involvement and activity of political decision-makers regarding the monitoring process and meetings raised some discussion among the respondents: *"Political anchoring, the politicians in our region should be more engaged to this South Baltic Programme. MA, the Secretariat, they have done a good job. But we need to make monitoring process, including attendance in the relevant meetings, more attractive to politicians. Maybe some study visits to relevant Programme projects to be included into monitoring meeting agendas."*

In the new programme, there has been an ambition to build more dimensions into the monitoring and evaluation, and to improve the way projects' results are reported. For instance, sustainability (project survival) has been an important dimension to highlight and understand. There will also be more work in the JTS on meetings and follow up to projects on top of the progress reports. It is perceived that there is much to be gained from a more integrated approach to monitoring and feedback, and from having more dialogue between the JTS and the projects, in order to work really proactively on developing projects. Obviously, this is also a question of resources allocated to monitoring.

3.7. Value-added of INTERACT

EVALUATION QUESTION

g) What has been the added value of the INTERACT programme to the effective functioning of the CBC programme?

INTERACT is considered to be a very good learning and knowledge exchange platform. Learning from other programmes' experiences resulted in improved objectives setting forward a call for proposals and improved result indicators for the 2014-2020 perspective. INTERACT also helped the programme authorities to actively participate in 3 virtual networks and to take advantage of better knowledge and cross-border experience exchange mechanisms. Inspiration comes partly from other Strand A, B and C Programmes but the real value-added originates from cross-border cooperation between smaller countries, e.g. Latvia-Lithuania.

The JTS and several regional contact points have greatly benefited from INTERACT and learnt a considerable amount from INTERACT cooperation. Among other things, the idea of working more with post-closure monitoring tools such as success stories is an idea picked up from an INTERACT forum. They also established an

interaction/collaboration, now annually reoccurring, to exchange knowledge with the Central Baltic programme. This is something initiated by INTERACT cooperation.

3.8. Coordination with national and regional programmes

EVALUATION QUESTION

h) To what extent were the programme objectives coordinated with those of national and regional programmes? Can synergies be objectively evaluated?

3.8.1. To what extent were the programme objectives coordinated with those of national and regional programmes?

During the programme implementation, all key national and regional stakeholders from the relevant Member States and Russia were adequately engaged in order to avoid unnecessary overlaps and to promote synergies. The national and regional programmes of the participating countries include environmental aspects and objectives. Moreover, the Baltic Sea as a common denominator “sets the scene” to many national and regional initiatives, too. The transnational nature of the South Baltic EU programme, with different project funding arrangements, underlines the complementarity of the South Baltic Programme and the national and regional programmes. As one respondent put it: *“Our national environmental objectives are well in line with our project objectives in our South Baltic 2.1 project.”*

There are also instances, as mentioned above, where the same ministry performs the function of Managing Authority for several CBC programmes and – in addition to that – coordinates national or regional operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF or Cohesion Fund. For example, in Poland the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development is the MA for both CBC programmes and national programmes co-financed by the ERDF and CF. The same ministry is also a strategic coordinator for all regional operational programmes. Additionally, all regional contact points for the CBC are located in regional marshal’s offices which are at the same time MAs in charge of the respective regional operational programme. Such a set-up ensures proper coordination and encourages building on synergies across various operational programmes.

Elsewhere, Lithuania features the Ministry of Finance playing the coordination role for all ERDF and CF interventions and a dedicated department within the Ministry of Interior is the MA for the Lithuania-Poland Interreg programme. The Ministry also coordinates the ENPI CBC programme between Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus.

The CBC programme objectives were complementary with those of national/regional programmes. The CBC programme objectives were coordinated and complementary with those of the ERDF programmes. The intervention logic of national and regional operational programmes does not seem to unnecessarily overlap with that of the South Baltic CBC Operational Programme. Though interventions of the CBC programme compared to national/regional programmes may speak to the same theme or sector (environment), the ultimate goal is to protect a (larger) South Baltic region rather than a small region or specific constituency within a Member State only. This goal is clearly reflected in project selection criteria and expected result indicators.

Although the Programme addresses similar topics and themes to those included in national and regional operational programmes financed by the ERDF, the South Baltic

Sea OP interventions support different types of projects and operations. The “demarcation line” concerns: 1) cross-border results and impact, 2) the nature of the projects, where the programme finances ‘soft’ operations (and if there is any infrastructure or equipment purchased those have pilot or demonstration character, which is different to ‘hard’ projects individually financed by Member States) and 3) types of beneficiaries: the programme promotes partnership between the educational sector and public sector institutions and across public sector organisations. It is worth mentioning that private sector institutions benefit at least indirectly from the OP measure supporting the environment, too, e.g. the measures improving the environmental status of the Baltic Sea have a positive impact on the attractiveness of the Baltic Sea region.

The programme, and more specifically Priority 2, does not compete with national and regional interventions concerning the theme under consideration due, for example, to a different constellations of partners and the emphasis on the “softer” character of interventions by the EU South Baltic CBC programme. The same applies to other measures focused on research and development, where chiefly partnerships between R&D organisations and the private sector are the point of focus.

The OP strengthens and reinforces the capacity of key actors in the programme area to tap into funding opportunities that can produce more tangible outcomes. It offers innovative solutions - but also in some cases actual tools. Solutions and tools can be further exploited with the use of national or ERDF funding from national or regional programmes. For that, the South Baltic CBC Programme complements interventions such as:

- Regional OP Warminsko-Mazurskie: Priority 6, seeking to address the protection of the natural environment, especially that of ground waters;
- Regional OP Pomorskie: Priority 3, attempting to support urban and metropolitan functions; Priority 5, focusing on the environment and renewable energy
- Regional OP Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Priority 3, supporting environmental infrastructure for SMEs, especially in the area of waste water management; Priority 1, focusing on innovative climate protection through collaborative R&D projects between research and scientific institutions and the private sector;
- Regional OP Skåne-Blekinge: Priority 3, focusing on special urban measures to support sustainable development.

Programmes under strand A, B and C are well coordinated. The Programme Area overlaps partially with several Strand A operational programmes (Lithuania-Poland, Zachodniopomorskie-Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Brandenburg-Latvia-Lithuania) and the Strand B Baltic Sea Region Operational Programme. In addition to those, there are three ENPI CBC programmes in place: Baltic Sea Region, Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus (not territorially overlapping with the South Baltic Programme), Estonia-Latvia-Russia (not territorially overlapping with the South Baltic Programme) and Lithuania-Poland-Russia.

Coordination is exercised within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and Managing Authorities work closely together to ensure that sound communication channels and coordination mechanisms are put in place either on an institutional or individual level, e.g. through participation in programme monitoring or steering facilities.

Good institutional coordination practice is exhibited, e.g. by Poland, where a single ministry exercises the role of Managing Authority for all CBC programmes in the country. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Development coordinates all Interreg programmes implemented within the Polish territory along with regional programmes, national programmes and one ENPI programme. In addition to that, the role of JTS for both programmes is performed by the same entity, as the Centre of European Projects.

There have been meetings and other contact to discuss the content and potential projects with the other programs, too. According to some respondents, the actual cooperation with national and regional programmes is not, however, without challenges.

There is a programme level and a project level in this issue. Everyone wants synergies, but they don't always know how to reach them. At the programme level, the mechanism for keeping in line with programme priorities is to make sure those topics and projects are in line with the themes defined in the OP. In the OP, there was some work to make sure that the work within the SB CBC is in line with what is happening in other areas, and does not overlap too much but rather creates synergies. However, the programme scope for the South Baltic CBC is considered to be relatively broad, so there has obviously been some overlap, allowing for a varying degree of synergies with activities in other funds. At the project level, the complementarity of the South Baltic CBC projects with other programmes was studied in 2010. The main findings from the survey by the JTS were included in the programme's Annual Implementation Report 2010. As an example, the MOMENT project under the South Baltic CBC Programme was developed as a consequence of analysis and conclusions of the Seagull II project implemented under the Baltic Sea Region Interreg III B Programme. (AIP 2010 pp. 25-27). The complementarities of the South Baltic CBC contribute to positive regional development in the programme area.

One hands-on aspect of ensuring that funds are complementary, create synergies and still don't overlap too much, is that many members of the selecting committees and steering groups actually sit in similar positions for the other programs. This is obviously a rather "unstable/related to chance" aspect of making sure of synergies and coherence.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that novel regional partnerships have been created in which the South Baltic Program 2007-2013 has played important role. The "Anchorage Process- Kalmar County" is an example of these regional partnerships, with an aim to contribute to a more positive regional development during the programme period 2014-2020.

3.8.2. Can synergies be objectively evaluated?

Based on the feedback from the respondents, there are challenges in evaluating synergies objectively. Firstly, the indicators used simply don't fully reflect the synergies gained from the projects. More descriptive material, including narratives of the projects, might be one future avenue to reveal the synergies. Secondly, synergies may in some cases be found only a long time after the completion of the projects. Thirdly, the project partners are likely to identify and utilise the synergies easier than external evaluators. At the same time, the project partners are "defending their own cases" which sometimes makes external objective evaluation challenging. Finally, there are different types of synergies to be gained in different projects.

3.9. Comparison with regional programme

EVALUATION QUESTION

The contractor will compare for the theme of the case study the selected programmes with a programme financed from the national/regional ERDF budgets to understand the difference between the different programmes as regards their impact on the theme and on cooperation.

The ERDF-funded regional programme for the composite region of "**Småland and the islands**" in Sweden has been chosen in order to compare its features with those of the South Baltic CBC programme. The regional programme "Småland and the islands" covers the NUTS region SE21, which includes part of the same areas as the Swedish side of the South Baltic programme. Another programme on the Swedish side also partly the area, the "Skåne-Blekinge" programme, covering the adjacent NUTS region SE22. Both these programmes follow rather closely to the so-called National Swedish ERDF programme (the 9th Swedish programme covering the entire country) and prioritizes research and innovation, competitiveness of SMEs, and transition to a low carbon economy. The "Småland and the islands" programme prioritizes exactly those themes, and has added one theme of increasing the availability and use of ICT. The latter programme of "Skåne-Blekinge" follows also the national priorities and has also added ICT as a theme of sustainable urban and social development (focusing on the city of Malmö).

Focusing on "Småland and the islands", the biggest difference is that the environmental theme enters primarily through the theme of transition to a low carbon economy. The South Baltic programme has more of a focus on the environment (as well as culture) of the Baltic Sea. However, there are overlaps since the South Baltic CBC programme also includes many projects in the field of energy and energy efficiency. Also, both programmes have innovation as an important aspect, something which weaves into the environmental dimension. But focusing on the projects in priority 2.1 of South Baltic, the overlap is limited.

Concerning the budgets for the environmental dimensions of the programmes, the "Småland and the islands" program allocates for the new period 15 % of EUR 66 million i.e. 9.9 million. The South Baltic programme allocated in the latest programme period 57 % of its EUR 61 million to the second priority of: "support the joint management of the Baltic Sea environment; improve energy efficiency; develop a sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage; promote local community initiatives", i.e. EUR 34.8 million. Not all of this is allocated in the South Baltic programme to the environment of the Baltic Sea and energy efficiency, but looking at the AIR from 2013, renewable energy, energy efficiency, co-generation (wind and

biomass) already have funding certified at EUR 7.5 million while waste management, integrated prevention and pollution control, risk prevention, and promotion of biodiversity and natural assets and natural heritage exceeded EUR 9.4 million. Hence, the impact of the South Baltic CBC programme can be assumed to excel the regional programme in the domain of energy, environmental protection and enhancement. The Swedish ERDF regional programme focuses heavily on transport in the reduction of emissions, and this is perhaps a thematic field where the South Baltic programme could find interesting areas for joint learning, especially if this topic is extended into the domain of marine shipping.

A difference between the two programmes, worth mentioning even though it is logical and should be evident, is that the Swedish programme does not include any investment, project or initiative with a cross-border dimension: the division of work is very clear in this respect between the two programmes. However, and this should really be noted, there is a strong partnership on the Swedish side when it comes to the implementation and integration of these programmes. The Regional Council in Kalmar County has already during the Structural Funds period 2007-2013 chosen, unlike other counties in Sweden, to work with a joint partnership.

This concerns the NUTS 2- program "Småland and Islands" including both the regional and the social fund, The South Baltic Program 2007-2013 IVA, as well as The Rural Development Program in Kalmar County. Other EU and sector programs (LIFE etc.) are also often on the agenda.

This partnership has been a consultative body for the various decisions concerning the above mentioned funds and programmes, a forum for setting targets, policy discussions and exchange of experience between both programmes and the partnership stakeholders and their special needs, etc. For the period of 2014-2020, The Regional Council and the County Administrative Board of Kalmar County will, due to their good experiences this program period, further develop their cooperation.

According to the South Baltic national contact point in Sweden, *"this is in line with the EU-Commission, EU 2020 and national demands for more focus, results and learning between different programs and sectors. The goal with the renewed regional partnership is to reach more and new stakeholders, get an increased regional coverage, more local commitment and a stronger collaboration with and between stakeholders expanding the partnership to more representatives from the private and voluntary sector, trade unions and industry associations on both regional and national level."*

To conclude, it would seem evident that the South Baltic CBC programme and the Småland and the islands programme have slightly different focuses when it comes to the environmental issues, but the same partners and institutions are active in both types of programme. This can actually be a strong positive force and added value for the sustainability of transnational projects, e.g. if national stakeholders have arenas for working continuously on these issues.

References

South Baltic Programme documents, available at: www.southbaltic.eu. Including:

Operational Programme of South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme

Strategic environmental assessment of the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme

Ex-ante evaluation and SEA of the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme

Annual Reports of the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme for the years 2008-2014

South Baltic CBC Programme Manual as of 31 Aug, 2014

Portfolio: Projects of the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013. Publication by the South Baltic Programme.

Smart Environmental solutions in South Baltic. Publication by the South Baltic Programme. Gdansk 2014.

Ecorys (2012): Effectiveness of the South Baltic Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007 - 2013; challenges and aims for the Programme for the time period 2014-2020.

ERDF Programme 2007-2013 Småland and the Islands, Sweden.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/2007-2013/sweden/operational-programme-smaland-and-the-islands

Annexes

ANNEX 1. Projects supported by South Baltic Program in the priority 2.1

Project name and EU funding	Project description
<p>Modern Water Management in the South Baltic Sea Area (MOMENT)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1 615 676,00 (ERDF: 1 274 007,50 National co-financing: 341 668,50)</p> <p>Duration 36 months</p>	<p>MOMENT has been developed as a part of the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) cooperation. It aims at improved management with water and local/regional preparedness for implementation of the WFD and BSAP. The main idea is to test and develop a model for modern water management through Water Users Partnerships (WUP), i.e. for river basin based management with strong participation from local stakeholders. Six smaller rivers in LT, PL and SE will be used as pilot areas. Each pilot area will establish a Water Users Partnership which will develop a local programme of measures for decreased outlets of nutrients and hazardous substances, and start the implementation. The pilot areas will also implement 11 selected innovative pilot measures, aiming at decreasing the outlets or combat the negative effect of the pollution. These pilot measures deal with land use (farming and forestry), waste water treatment from single houses, storm water treatment and better knowledge/communication</p>
<p>Action for the Reinforcement of the Transitional Waters' Environmental Integrity (ARTWEI)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1 408 400,00 (ERDF: 1 169 150,00 National co-financing: 239 250,00)</p> <p>Duration : 36 months</p>	<p>The overall idea of the project is to develop a model for holistic management of transitional water areas in South Baltic area through establishment of four "Transitional Water Stakeholders Bodies", one on each cross-border Transitional Waters region of the South Baltic area – Curonian Lagoon, Vistula Lagoon, Odra Lagoon and Oresund Sound. All four "TWSB" will jointly build an innovative knowledge pool containing best practices. It forms the basis for a "Good Practise Code of Conduct" for reinforcing of the environmental integrity of the South Baltic area.</p>
<p>Joint use of Danish Decision Support System (DSS) for minimizing use and outflows of herbicides (DSSHerbicide)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1 434 562,27 (ERDF: 1 126 364,67 National co-financing: 274 197,60)</p> <p>Duration: 45 months</p>	<p>The overall idea of the project is to adapt a web-based Decision Support System (DSS) for farmers that has been developed and successfully applied in Denmark. The system helps to optimize and reduce the use of herbicides at the farm level. The added value of its use will be both economic benefits for the farmers through cost saving and reducing the inflow of pesticides into the Baltic Sea. The systems will be further developed within the project in order to utilise it for optimising pesticide treatment of winter weed in the coastal areas of Denmark, Germany and Poland. The system will be kept operational after the termination of the project. Possibilities for extensions (e.g. integration of further crops) are explored.</p>
<p>Household Participation in Waste Management (HPWM)</p>	<p>The overall idea is to reduce the disposal of household waste on landfills. The applicant claims that in Poland</p>

<p>Total project budget: 1 500 857,60 (ERDF: 1 201 974,96 National co-financing: 298 882,64)</p> <p>Duration: 36 months</p>	<p>95% of waste ends up in landfills without any pre-sorting, in comparison, in Sweden only 3%. The main project goal is to reduce this imbalance between the countries (DE,SK,PL, Kaliningrad Oblast).</p>
<p>Wetlands, Algae and Biogas - A southern Baltic Sea Eutrophication Counteract Project (WAB)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1 563 300,00 (ERDF: 1 244 205,00 National co-financing: 318 895,00)</p> <p>Duration: 35 months</p>	<p>The overall idea of the project is to establish a holistic approach for reducing eutrophication by combining the reconstruction of wetland, distracting algae from shores as well as using them for biogas production and as fertilisers in regional production cycles. This methodology has been developed by the LB in previous projects. It can contribute to reduction of nutrients outflow and even extracts nutrients from the Baltic Sea. At the same time, algae are removed from beaches and thus their attractiveness for tourism improved, and new income possibilities for farmers are created</p>
<p>Dredged Materials in Dike Construction - Implementation in the SBR using Geosynthetics and Soil Improvement (DredgDikes)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1,848,333.33 (ERDF: 1,526,033.33 National co-financing: 269,300.00)</p> <p>Duration: 40 months</p>	<p>The project origins from the problem that extensive dike reconstructions are necessary in the south-western part of the South Baltic area, but there is a major shortage of construction materials along the Baltic Sea coast due its geological characteristics. The overall idea is to make research on new types of dikes to be used in the future and to test them in practice. Two leading scientific institutions in this field from the South Baltic region will cooperate to investigate possibilities for using different materials (e.g. dredged materials or ashes) in dike construction.</p>
<p>Modern Water Management in the South Baltic Sea Area - upgrade project (MOMENT UP)</p> <p>Total project budget: 985,636.00 (ERDF: 766,514.40 National co-financing: 191,121.60)</p> <p>Duration: 32 months</p>	<p>The overall idea of the parent project "MOMENT" is to test and develop a model for modern water management through Water Users Partnerships (WUP), i.e. for river basin based management with strong participation from local stakeholders. Smaller rivers in LT, PL and SE are used as pilot areas. Each pilot area establishes a Water Users Partnership, which develop local programmes of measures for decreased outlets of nutrients and hazardous substances, and start the implementation. The pilot areas implement also pilot measures, aiming at decreasing the outlets or combat the negative effect of the pollution. Those deal with land use (farming and forestry), waste water treatment from single houses, storm water treatment and better knowledge/communication. The results from the pilot measures are used as input to the WUPs and local action programmes. Experiences will be exchanged throughout the whole project and results will be spread all over the South Baltic area. The results will also be used for joint information and lobbying action towards EU and national authorities on environmental needs in the South Baltic area.</p>
<p>Application of ecosystem principles for the location and management of offshore dumping sites in SE Baltic</p>	<p>The project involves partnership consisting of two partners, one from Lithuania and one from Poland, both are scientific institutions. The partnership is accompanied by the three Associated Organisations, one Russian</p>

<p>Region (ECODUMP)</p> <p>Total project budget: 849,150.00 (ERDF: 662,702.50 National co-financing: 116,947.50)</p> <p>Duration: 36 months</p>	<p>scientific institute, which plays significant role in the dissemination activities, and two maritime institutions from Lithuania and Poland assure the implementation of newly developed management and monitoring tools, as well as implementing pilot actions. The overall idea of the project is that the maintenance and the development of new ports will imply dredging of sediments and a need for new dumping sites. The project plans, as a course of action, to establish proper management of existing dumping sites, to develop new ecosystem based principles for location of the new sites, to test the developed methodology in the pilot area of the Sventoj port in Lithuania and to make recommendation to HELCOM on how to locate, monitor and manage the new dumping sites. The project's activities consist of analysis and assessment of current stage of existing dumping sites, preparation of monitoring and control programme of dumping sites and preparation of guideline for the location of new dumping sites. Other planned activities are environmental investigations and modelling of sedimentary patterns and preparation of EIA study for the chosen pilot area. The main target groups are divided into two levels: transnational target group level (e.g. transnational networks on Baltic Sea Region – HELCOM, OSPAR and VASAB) and the local target group level (e.g. local authorities, port owners and managers, non-governmental organizations, environmental authorities, planning organizations and politicians). In view of the transnational target groups, the scope is extended through tackling EUSBSR stakeholders and upgrading the dissemination to Kaliningrad region / RU.</p>
<p>The beneficial use of sewage sludge from small and medium sized municipalities (Euroslam)</p> <p>Total project budget: 1,199,084.00 (ERDF: 937,419.00 National co-financing: 261,665.00)</p> <p>Duration: 36 months</p>	<p>The project involves eight partners from three countries accompanied by the four Associated Organisations. The general composition in the individual countries is that local authorities are implementing the biogas production and utilization, and the Associated Organisations take a role of dissemination partners as well as provide scientific advice to the partnership. The overall idea of the project is to reduce the amount of nutrients in the Baltic Sea by the improved sludge handling and biogas production. The problem identified by the project is that nutrients from the waste and sewage sludge are not recycled enough in the South Baltic area, due to a fact the waste plants are mainly small and medium size, and they have not enough capacities to utilize produced biogas and reuse created biosolids. The WWTPs (waste water treatment plants) in different municipalities face pollution of sludge, this pollution can be diminished by the production of biogas, the biogas increased production can be handled by anaerobic digestion (with the necessity of the necessary investments), gas utilization (with necessary investments and defining the ways of its utilization) and possible sludge recycling. The project defines different actions to tackle the problem identified; it is the biogas production, biogas utilization, preparation of handbook on implementation of the proposed methods of using the</p>

	<p>biogas and biosolids, testing the use of sludge as fertilizer with quality assurance via creation of certification programme and system of regular seminars. There are several target groups defined by the project; municipalities and waste plants, farmers, food industries, households, vendors and suppliers of biogas technology, as well as energy companies.</p>
<p>Joint cross-border actions for the sustainable management of a natural resource (HERRING)</p> <p>Total project budget: 786 607,00 (ERDF: 648 605,95 National co-financing: 138 001,05)</p> <p>Duration: 32 months</p>	<p>The project involves four partners and eight Associated Organisations. The project partners are an environmental agency EUCC (NGO) from Germany, two research institutes - Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries (Germany) and National Marine Fisheries Research Institute (Poland), and World Maritime University (Sweden). The Associated Organisations represent state agricultural and fishery agencies (Poland), Fishermen Co-operatives (Germany), Fishermen Associations (Poland and Lithuania), Biosphere Reservoir (Sweden), and an university (Lithuania). The rationale for the HERRING project is the current, negative situation in the area of sustainable management of the Southern part of the Baltic Sea particularly with regards to the decreasing herring population and the lack of common approach to its protection. The overall project idea is to find solutions for sustainable management of the Herring ecosystem in order ensure the balance of the other demands (transport, fishing, tourism, and energy generation and supply activities). The project's activities consist of a number of measures structured around subsequent stages; firstly the project is going to gain knowledge of ecological conditions, impact of the human activities, the multi-level institutional structure (regional, national, international) and review management instruments that are in place to rule the use and protection of coastal herring spawning grounds. Secondly, based on the collected information, best practice examples are going to be identified that will support options for the strategy and joint recommendations for an improved management of coastal areas as spawning habitats. The main target groups for the project are stakeholders that are involved in using and managing coastal and adjacent maritime areas in the South Baltic region, specifically with respect to coastal herring spawning areas. Depending on the country and region, this includes local and regional planning authorities, local coastal fishermen and fishery associations and scientific fishery institutions, and non-governmental organisations.</p>

Source: Project database of South Baltic program

ANNEX 2. Programme of Evaluation Interviews and Visits

Interview: Mr Rafal Balinski, Deputy Director of the Department of Territorial Cooperation, Poland, on 6 March 2015

Interview: Ms Monika Jurczyk (in charge of the coordination of Northern Interreg programmes), on 2 April, 2015

Interview: Ms Inga Kramarz, Managing Authority (MA), South Baltic CBC Programme, on 2 April 2015

Phone Interview: Niels Chresten Andersen, *Contact Point Region Bornholm*, Denmark, September 21, 2015

E-mail interview: Anna Carnelius, Municipality of Kalmar, Sweden, Sep 11, 2015

Email interview: Pernill Landin, Torsås municipality, Sweden, Sep 11, 2015

Focus Group Meeting, Kalmar, Sweden, September 22, 2015, Participants:

Tobias Facchini, the Regional Council in Kalmar County, Kalmar, Sweden

Yvonne Aldentun, the Regional Council in Kalmar County, Kalmar, Sweden

Johan Lundbäck, the Regional Council in Kalmar County, Kalmar, Sweden

Lena Westman, the Regional Council in Kalmar County, Kalmar, Sweden

Johanna Rönn, Region Blekinge, Sweden

Therese Magnusson, Region Kronoberg

Thorsten Kohlisch, the Head of the JTS, South Baltic CBC Programme

Robert Mazurkiewicz, Programme Manager. JTS, *South Baltic CBC* Programme

Jukka Teräs, Nordregio, Stockholm, Sweden (for ADE)

Gunnar Lindberg, Nordregio, Stockholm, Sweden (for ADE)

Focus Group Meeting, Gdansk, Poland, September 25, 2015, Participants:

Thorsten Kohlisch, The Head of the JTS, South Baltic Programme

Robert Mazurkiewicz, Programme Manager, JTS, South Baltic CBC Programme

Karol Ostrowski, Regional Contact Point, Region Warminsko-Mzurskie

Tomasz Kilianski, independent expert, ADE

Web-based electronic Survey 8-9/, 2015: 2.1 Management of the Baltic Sea environment, responses from 8 Lead partners and 7 Participant Organisations of the projects supported by the South Baltic CBC Programme in the priority 2.1 (Annex 2)

ANNEX 3 List of indicators for the programme

OUTPUT INDICATORS

Output indicators are measured on project level and will be captured towards the closure phase of the OP interventions.

RESULT INDICATORS

Indicators highlighted are “universal” indicators as defined in the Operational Programme document. Result indicators focus on targets for project themes rather than project deliverables per se as creativity and innovation are expected to drive individual operations.

Theme	Indicator	Target	Value*
Economic Competitiveness	Number of projects with politically welcomed and promoted results	15	67%
	Number of projects creating cross-border networks based on formal agreements	7	300%
	Number of projects unlocking public and private investments	7	57%
	Number of projects contributing to intensified cross-border relations between SMEs	7	114%
	Number of projects strengthening liaison between higher education and labour market institutions	10	70%
	Number of projects contributing to improved quality and interoperability of transport corridors and services	5	120%
Attractiveness and Common Identity	Number of projects with politically welcomed and promoted results	30	83%
	Number of projects creating cross-border networks based on formal agreements	15	313%
	Number of projects unlocking public and private investments	7	129%
	Number of projects improving institutional capacity in management of Baltic Sea environment	10	100%
	Number of projects increasing commitment to renewable energy sources and energy saving patterns	4	150%

	Number of projects demonstrating more efficient use of natural and cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea area and regional development	10	100%
	Number of projects intensifying intercultural dialogue and better involving broader public	20	110%

* AIR 2013 outlines cumulative progress in % instead of absolute figures

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