

# The Benefits of Cross-Border Cooperation

Inspiration from the  
South Baltic Programme



European  
Regional  
Development  
Fund

## COLOPHON

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## Introduction

The Umbrella project was meant to be exactly that - an umbrella to gather other projects and a way to connect people through cross-border projects. It was aimed at newcomers who had not yet been involved in projects in the South Baltic Programme. These included small local and regional organisations with an interest in developing a South Baltic identity.

Stakeholders were invited to participate in national training courses in project management and offered tailor-made solutions to help build capacity. Different initiatives and micro-activities such as “meet-your-neighbour” have helped break down barriers and spread the concepts and values of cross-border cooperation.

### **A cross-border project to inspire more cross-border cooperation**

The overall purpose of this project was to enlighten people that cooperation is important for geographic, economic, and social cohesion, and that approaching the field of EU grants and projects can be an advantage in local development policies.

### **A gradual process with great potential**

This development is not without obstacles, and capacity building should not be seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a process. To build a house you need to lay brick by brick, starting from the foundation. That is why the Umbrella project was introduced with awareness raising events to say: “Hey you! Change is just around the corner! Go out and see what is going on in the region you live in.” And for those who were already aware of the great potential of the Baltic Sea Region, well, knowledge can always be increased.

We have been looking forward to introducing you to the benefits of cross-border cooperation in the South Baltic Sea region. These 12 Interreg South Baltic projects are here to motivate and to inspire – and we are pleased to include our own achievements – and tips & tips on how to be part of the Interreg South Baltic family.

### **This is our Success Story Book**

To inspire. To encourage. To bring action!

## PART 1

### Get inspiration South Baltic Programme projects

- Attractive Hardwoods - Best practice in Tourism Development, marketing and sustainable management of Attractive Hardwoods
- DUNC – Development of UNESCO Natural and Cultural ASSETS
- BioBIGG - Bioeconomy in the South Baltic Area: Biomass-based Innovation and Green Growth
- CaSYPoT - Capacity Building for Strategic Youth Policy and Transnational Cooperation
- South Coast Baltic - Establishing durable cross-border boating destination management
- Live Lagoons - The use of active barriers for the nutrient removal and local water quality improvement in Baltic lagoons
- Biking South Baltic - Promotion and development of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route (Route No. 10) in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden
- BalticMuseums: Love IT! - New brand of gamified tourist products for sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage tourist destinations
- Interconnect - One ticket to the future
- SB BRIDGE – Building bridges for green-tech future
- FOCUS - Facilitating blue growth with open courses by utilizing R&D products and virtual mobility
- SB Food INNO - Developing food innovation capacity in the South Baltic Region

## PART 2

### Umbrella: Boosting cross-border cooperation

- Awareness Raising Events: Developing your idea and cross-border network
- Providing expert help for project development
- Thematic cross-border conferences: Expanding your knowledge and network
- Essential knowledge for cross-border cooperation: EU-project training workshops
- Meet your South Baltic neighbours: The impact of study visits

## PART 3

### Best tips & tricks from the Umbrella partnership

- Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic (Elbląg - Poland)
- Pomorskie in the European Union Association (Gdańsk - Poland)
- Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs - BISER (Gdynia - Poland)
- Klaipeda University, (Klaipėda - Lithuania)
- Region Kalmar County (Kalmar - Sweden)
- Guldborgsund Municipality, (Nykøbing - Denmark)



# PART 1

**Get inspiration**

**South Baltic Programme projects**



**Umbrella**

**Get inspiration**  
South Baltic  
Programme projects

**Budget****1.493 252,65 EUR****Programme co-financing****1.189 875,44 EUR****Duration****July 2016 - June 2019****LEAD PARTNERS:**

- Swedish Forest Agency, Sweden

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Region Blekinge, Sweden
- County Administrative Board of Blekinge, Sweden
- Regional Directorate of State Forests in Gdansk, Poland
- Pomorskie Tourist Board, Poland
- Directorate of Žemaitija National Park, Lithuania

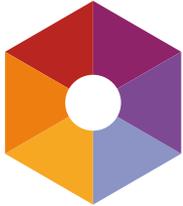
## TIPS AND TRICKS

Communication and willingness to cooperate is the most important factor to success.

Be positive and always truthful within the partnership. Do not try to hide the problems nor think that you are there for yourself.

If you gain trust, you will benefit your organisation directly from the particular project and benefit personally, as you will meet the fantastic people from around our region or Europe.

Do what you promise to do and do not avoid taking responsibility.



## Attractive Hardwoods

### Best practice in Tourism Development, marketing and sustainable management of Attractive Hardwoods

#### Connecting nature and people through ecotourism

How can we bring people closer to nature, and boost ecotourism in the South Baltic Region? This is the question connecting the many different partners involved in the Attractive Hardwoods project. The solution: To find and promote best practice by sharing the challenges the partners experienced.

While that may be easier said than done, a main part of solving the challenges the region faces has been through developing international cooperation. Piotr Neubauer, manager in the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Gdansk, stresses the importance of building “the multidimensional relations, both between the institutions and what is even more important: between the people.”

#### Identify common challenges to find common solutions

The Attractive Hardwoods project began in 2016 as a partnership between municipalities, national parks, tourist boards, and private organisations from Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. The participants seek to support cross-border cooperation in the South Baltic Region and aim to provide the partners with knowledge and skills to solve problems and implement solutions.

Some of the main difficulties the partners faced were due to a lack of knowledge about why tourists visit forests and a low interest from commercial operators in offering hardwood ecotourism. In addition, much of the information available was outdated and only available in the different countries’ own languages, making it difficult for the partners to share ideas and difficult for tourists to access the information. To solve these issues, the partners conducted surveys in their respective countries to learn more about the tourists visiting hardwood forests, like why they came to visit, and how long they stayed.

Shared solutions to shared problems Having gained this knowledge, the partners have produced tourist maps, made movies about the hardwood forests - and Poland and Lithuania have even developed national strategies for promoting ecotourism. By working together, the different countries can share not only their challenges, but also their strengths. Neubauer describes it as an organic process: “we learn from each other and there is a diffusion of habits and activities between us, like the Swedish order flowing to us and Polish or Lithuanian spontaneity going north.”



**Budget****1.713 067,00 EUR****Programme co-financing****1.364 113,25 EUR****Duration****August 2017 - August 2020****LEAD PARTNERS:**

- Municipality of Karlskrona, Sweden

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Municipality of Mörbylånga, Sweden
- Curonian Spit National Park administration, Lithuania
- EUCC Baltic Office, Lithuania
- EUCC - The Coastal Union Germany, Germany
- Tourist Board Stralsund, Germany
- Tourist Board Wismar, Germany

## TIPS AND TRICKS

It is amazing what you can achieve in an international project when you unite with a common goal.

Taking part in an international project is an opportunity for a shared experience where we can learn from each other and develop.

Seeing things from different perspectives can result in even more productivity, problem solving and creativity.



## **DUNC**

### **Development of UNESCO Natural and Cultural Assets**

#### **Unlocking the full potential of the Baltic Sea World Heritage sites**

The Baltic Sea region is rich in natural and cultural heritage. Some of the most remarkable UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves lie along the shores of the Baltic Sea. Due to their outstanding value and their growing international recognition, these sites attract more and more tourists every year, who want to discover the region's natural beauty and cultural identity. These sites also have the potential to be role models for sustainable tourism and be globally recognised for their contribution to regional development and the empowerment of local communities.

#### **Working towards sustainable tourism**

Tourism is an important and growing factor in the region's economy, but it has undesirable consequences: a negative impact on the environment, risk of damage to the visited locations, and problematic seasonal visitor patterns. Municipalities and tourist boards from Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland are involved in the DUNC project, which was launched in 2017 to develop an effective and sustainable tourism strategy for the UNESCO sites in the Baltic Sea region. DUNC also seeks to preserve and promote heritage by encouraging ownership within the local communities.

#### **Cooperation and a common purpose**

Some of the steps the DUNC project takes to promote the development of UNESCO Natural and Cultural Assets are working together with local businesses and creating long term and holistic management strategies and action plans for the partner sites. They also work to secure genuine and joint stakeholder participation in planning processes and promote cooperation across borders and with other projects. The project aims to facilitate networking among tourism stakeholders, develop quality activities that prolong the tourist season, and create pleasant visitor experiences for tourists without compromising the environmental, social, and economic assets of the region. The idea of networking across national borders is at the core of DUNCs working method – not only in the short term, but also in a broader perspective. While the focus of the project is on UNESCO sites, all the results and outputs will be applicable at other heritage sites. The project gives know-how and is a great opportunity for networking among the partners, while encouraging a common identity around a common purpose in the region. Get inspiration from other South Baltic Programme projects





### Budget

**1.904 434,41 EUR**



### Programme co-financing

**1.526 249,26 EUR**



### Duration

**July 2017 - July 2020**



#### LEAD PARTNERS:

- Roskilde University Centre, Denmark

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:

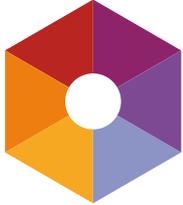
- RISE Research Institute of Sweden, Sweden
- Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland
- University of Greifswald, Germany
- Agency for Renewable Resources, Germany
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Contact companies directly and arrange face-to-face conversations. Entrepreneurs are very busy people; phone calls, e-mails, and official letters are not enough to learn something.

To begin a cooperation with companies, you must be able to offer something. Companies are not non-profit institutions and they care about money.

Cooperation must be valuable for both sides. Offering new business contacts or opportunities is attractive but just offering "know-how" is not enough for them.



## BioBIGG

### Bioeconomy in the South Baltic Area: Biomass-based Innovation and Green Growth

#### **From waste to win - a new approach to unused resources**

Many biological resources go unused, which is a waste – both in an economic and in an ecological sense. These biological resources can be by-products or residuals from the agricultural industry, and the BioBIGG project aims at finding ways to utilize these by-products and residuals, thereby turning waste into profit. The partners involved in BioBIGG also seek to decrease the levels of pollution discharged in the South Baltic Area and to support small and medium-sized enterprises. To do this, they have identified possibilities for innovation by partnering with universities, companies, and municipalities. By having a cross-border approach, it became easier to find relevant pilot projects to invest in and ensure that ideas are spread and developed.

#### **Find inspiration through cooperation**

The partners come from Denmark, Poland, Sweden, and Germany, and include an agency for renewable resources as well as several universities, whose scholars bring complimentary skills to the project. An important part of the BioBIGG project is learning from each other, inspiring each other, and working together to find solutions and new ways of turning waste into

a usable product. To this end, the BioBIGG project has had workshops in Lund and Gdańsk, hosted a conference about business potentials for SMEs within the bioeconomy in Gdańsk, participated in a European Bioeconomy Congress in Poland, and sent participants on study tours to Germany, Benelux, and Italy.

#### **Pass your knowledge on**

For the scholars this has been an opportunity to learn, experiment, and expand their horizon. A participant from the Department of Energy and Industrial Apparatus at Gdańsk University of Technology, describes a desire to “broaden our expertise, learn good practices from our European neighbors, show what is happening in Poland in the field of bioeconomy - and finally to be forerunners in the region. We hope to transfer the acquired knowledge to the future generations of engineers educated at our university.” From an engineering perspective the BioBIGG project is an opportunity to develop new technologies, which can lengthen the life cycle chain of biomass through conversion. The BioBIGG project is an exercise in rethinking our approach to waste, and considering it something valuable, which can – and should – be used.



**Budget****457 331,00 EUR****Programme co-financing****357 732,35 EUR****Duration****July 2016 - June 2019****LEAD PARTNER:**

- Association of municipalities in Kalmar County, Sweden

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Klaipeda University, Lithuania
- Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, Poland
- The City of Slupsk, Poland
- Emmaboda municipality, Sweden
- Linneaus University, Sweden

**Partners from Kaliningrad Region (RU) through twin project financially supported by Swedish Institute:**

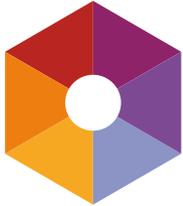
- Svetlogorsk
- Gusev
- Agency for Youth Affairs in Kaliningrad Region
- Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Be open and try to understand the other culture's point of view.

Prepare to be patient.

Accept the differences - sometimes there is no one optimal solution for all the countries.



## CaSYPoT

### Capacity Building for Strategic Youth Policy and Transnational Cooperation South Coast Baltic

#### Creating a better world for the youth

A high percentage of young people in the Eurobaltic Region move from their home region, leaving many places at risk of depopulation. The CaSYPoT project seeks to solve this issue by creating better opportunities for the youth in the region. To do this, the partners had to figure out what young people want and what they need to be able to stay in their home region. Using a Swedish survey, which was adapted to fit the different countries, the partners set out to examine why young people left their home region, and how they viewed their future. The questionnaire was answered by almost 1600 respondents aged 16 – 19 from six municipalities in Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. From the survey, the partners discovered that between 65 and 90% of the young respondents planned to leave their home region because of a perceived lack of opportunity.

#### Discovering similar worries in different regions

Using the information uncovered in the survey, the CaSYPoT project works towards making strategies regarding the youth at both a local and regional level in the Eurobaltic Region. Even though there were regional differences between the answers the young people gave, many of their wor-

ries were similar and touched areas like the future, work, and local influence. Because of this, it makes sense to have a common approach to the situation.

#### Engaging the youth through festivals and influence

One of the results of the CaSYPoT project is a re-organisation of the City Youth Council in the City of Slupsk, Poland. The City Youth Council now actively engages 23 members, who represent the city's youth. They come from different areas and schools and participate in the local political life. Inspired by a Lithuanian project, the City of Slupsk is also developing an online map to make it easier for the youth to find out what is happening in the city and explore their opportunities. A third initiative is an open space called Telegraph in Svetlogorsk, Russia, where young people can meet and investigate art, entrepreneurship, educational projects, self-realization and self-organisation. The project has also resulted in a Baltic Sea Youth Camp: a three-day festival promoting friendship, culture, and political awareness for young people between 18 and 25 from 11 countries in the Baltic Sea Region and Iceland. By involving the young people in local life and activities, the project aims to provide answers to the young people's concerns about their future in regions.





### Budget

2.516 732,99 EUR



### Programme co-financing

2.127 223,04 EUR



### Duration

Oct 2016 - Dec 2020



#### LEAD PARTNERS:

- Association of Sea Cities & Municipalities, Poland
- Economic Development Corporation Vorpommern, Germany

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:

- Tourism Association Vorpommern, Germany
- Marina Network Association, Germany
- Municipality Ostseebad Heringsdorf, Germany
- Bornholm Regional Municipality, Denmark
- Westpomeranian Sailing Route, Poland
- Żegluga Szczecińska, Poland
- Municipality Darłowo, Poland
- Maritime University in Szczecin, Poland
- Petla Zuławska Harbour Network, Poland
- Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland
- Klaipėda District Municipality, Lithuania
- Šventoji Tourism Association, Lithuania
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kaliningrad region, Russia (associated)

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Working in international projects connects different partner regions, highlights similarities and differences and can thus help to better understand one's own region and culture.

International project teams combine the experience and know-how of the individual cultures so that the greatest possible benefit can be derived from this.

Cross-cultural cooperation fosters creativity, so that unconventional solutions and innovations can arise.



## South Coast Baltic

### Establishing durable cross-border boating destination management

#### Where boating adventures begin

The southern shores of the Baltic Sea are a beautiful place with lots of great opportunities for boating, sightseeing, and enjoying life. However, the region has struggled with lack of visitors. To solve this, partners from Vorpommern (DE), Bornholm (DK), Zachodniopomorskie (PL), Pomorskie (PL), Klaipėda region (LT), and Kaliningrad region (RU) gathered in the South Coast Baltic project to promote the region to attract more visitors. The initiative was launched in 2011. In the first phase, the partners sought to initiate and strengthen cooperation, cross-border activities, and international knowledge transfer. This added genuine value in the regions. The project is now in its second phase and aims to attract more guest boaters to the southern shores of the Baltic Sea. Both phases are funded by the European Union within the Interreg South Baltic Programme, which provides economic support and great networking opportunities.

#### Inspiring boaters and attracting new visitors

According to project coordinator Marta Czarnecka-Gallas, the strength of the project lies in its strong and diverse part-

nerships, which has allowed the partners to be very productive. The project has already resulted in activities ranging from boat rallies to guidebooks to networking events. Especially the boat rallies have been popular. In 2018 German TV channel NDR made a documentary about that year's rally, showing the boats sail a route from Denmark to Lithuania via Poland and Russia. So far, the documentary has been seen by close to 500.000 viewers, introducing them to the boating possibilities in the region and attracting future tourists. Cooperation with local tourism associations and port operators is an important part of the project. The South Coast Baltic project organizes courses and trainings, such as a course for Marina Operators in Szczecin, publishing brochures for motorboaters, and more. The project has also produced a harbour guide about the ports and marinas in the Southern Baltic with information about touristic, nautical, and practical features of the area. As a promotional tool the partners have also produced high-quality journalistic material about the region, as well as made sure there are lots of excellent photos available, letting the region's beauty speak for itself.





### Budget

**1.154 670,00 EUR**



### Programme co-financing

**981 469,50 EUR**



### Duration

**August 2017 - July 2020**



#### LEAD PARTNERS:

- Klaipeda University, Lithuania

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:

- EUCC - The Coastal Union Germany, Germany
- IBW PAN - Institute of hydro-engineering of the polish academy of sciences, Poland
- Curonian spit national park administration, Lithuania

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Decide if you want to use the floating islands as biodiversity hotspots (use endangered species such as *Iris pseudacorus*) or as tourist attractions (use flowering plants such as *Lythrum salicaria*).

Choose plants that bloom several years in a row.

Consider local environmental conditions, like salinity and climate.

Think about biomass utilization (such as fodder, energy, construction material) before harvest.



## LiveLagoons

### Green islands in blue lagoons - floating macrophyte islands

#### Green islands in blue lagoons

Many lagoons in the South Baltic suffer from bad water quality due to high levels of nitrate and phosphorus. The LiveLagoons project aims at improving the water quality in these lagoons by using floating wetlands to remove nutrients. This is done by planting emergent water plants, which can use the nutrients and restore the coastal habitats, thereby making the water clear and suitable for recreational use. The project uses already existing commercial systems for freshwater and adapts them to fit the local habitats in the Baltic region.

#### Find solutions that are attractive and economically sound

Some of the challenges similar projects have had come from finding solutions that are only usable in one specific location, or planting plants that could not easily be used or have low market value. The LiveLagoons project therefore seeks to make a model for floating islands that will be easily applicable in the different regions, while remaining economically sustainable. When choosing plants for the floating islands, the partners consider plants that are visually attractive, making them interesting for tourists and visitors, or look for plants that are endangered, and could benefit from a biodiverse hotspot, such as these floating wetlands. Through their

root systems, the plants take up nutrients from the water, and then release oxygen back into the water. The green islands also reduce water currents, enhance sedimentation, and enable higher water transparency – something that both residents and tourists appreciate. Bacteria in the floating islands also transform nitrate to molecular nitrogen, thereby removing nitrate as a direct nutrient in the lagoons.

#### Working together allows for testing in different environments

The first floating wetlands have been installed in Darss-Zingst Bodden Chain (DE), in the Curonian lagoon (LT) and in the Szczecin lagoon (PL). Working together across borders allows the project partners to test both technological and socio-economical methodologies in different environments. So far, the partners have published policy briefs with recommendation. In the policy briefs, they give advice about choice of plants, what to consider before installing floating wetlands, and make suggestions for other options for nutrient removal, such as attaching long lines for mussel to the islands. They have also published a video showing floating islands being installed in coastal lagoons, and participated in workshops and conferences, like the EUROPARC 2018 in Scotland and the 8th European Lagoon Symposium in Greece.





### Budget

**988 036,69 EUR**



### Programme co-financing

**807 982,52 EUR**



### Duration

**January 2017 - Dec. 2019**



#### LEAD PARTNERS:

- Pomorskie Tourist Board - Pomorska Regionalna Organizacja Turystyczna, Poland

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:

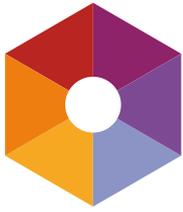
- Pomorskie Voivodeship, Poland
- Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship, Poland
- European Cyclists' Federation, Belgium
- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourism Board, Germany
- Centre for Regional and Tourism Research, Denmark
- Danish Cycling Tourism, Denmark

## TIPS AND TRICKS

The EU Funds create a great opportunity to build or modernize infrastructure.

Being in a partnership lets you exchange experiences and use already tested solutions.

By working with international partners, you can make a product that can be addressed to varied age groups and regions of Europe.



## **Biking South Baltic!**

**Promotion and development of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route (Route No. 10) in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden**

### **Connecting Europe one biking path at the time**

The team behind Biking South Baltic! is developing a route that allows you to bike along the coast of the Baltic Sea. It will be route No. 10 in the EuroVelo-project, a project which aims to connect all of Europe through biking routes. Biking through national parks and past UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the cyclists will experience both cultural and natural highlights of the regions. Cycle tourism is a highly sustainable type of tourism as the means of transportation is climate-friendly and many cycle tourists travel in the off-season. Since the routes pass by both rural and urban places the number of tourists is also spread over a wider geographical space than if they had remained in one city, thereby avoiding crowding in high season.

### **Improving information and infrastructure**

A representative for the Lead Partner Pomorskie Region, Piotr Książek, gives a deeper understanding of what the Pomorskie Region has gained by participating in Biking South Baltic. The project is partially funded by the EU, and the region's participation has made it possible to build and improve infrastructure, helped the region attract tourists, and developed their international collaborations. Piotr Książek also highlights the social benefits of being

part of an international project. "Our meetings and relations with partners are often not only professional, but we also establish private relationships."

The seven partners work to build awareness of Route No. 10 through trade fairs, contact with tour operators and other stakeholders. Besides building and improving infrastructure, one of the main goals of Biking South Baltic is to make the route accessible and easy to follow with a uniform information system, so cyclists will be able to follow the route cross-borders. The partners also collaborate with networks of business partners to establish and improve the services offered to cyclists along the route such as accommodation, food, ferry carriers, tourist information centres, and more.

### **An opportunity for newcomers to build partnerships**

The project is still in the implementation phase and continues with a strategy for developing the Baltic Sea Cycle Route (EuroVelo 10) between 2020 to 2030. Piotr Książek encourages newcomers to participate in EU-projects, as "The EU Funds create a great opportunity to build or modernize infrastructure, offering cyclists a new quality and at the same time giving an opportunity to build partnerships and alliances (...) and the use of already tested solutions functioning in other countries."



**Budget****1.484 375,00 EUR****Programme co-financing****1.237 673,75 EUR****Duration****January 2017 - July 2020****LEAD PARTNERS:**

- University of Szczecin, Poland

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- National Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Poland
- Lithuanian Sea Museum, Lithuania
- Malmö Museums, Sweden
- NaturBornholm, Denmark
- Experiment Science Centre in Gdynia, Poland
- Foundation of Internet Industry Development "Netcamp", Poland
- Business Academy North gGmbH, Germany

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Do not be afraid to join an international project or community – it always pays off in the sense of new friends, experience, and opportunities for new ideas and activities!

Being in an international partnership for many years has given us a wealth of experience that allows us to feel confident in any international contacts, activities, or relations.

As part of the project we gain not only new tools, but also ideas, and a spirit of sharing, openness, and improvement.



## BalticMuseums: LoveIT!

### New brand of gamified tourist products for sustainable development of natural and cultural heritage tourist destinations

#### Coastal attractions as sustainable tourism destinations

Nine project partners and eight associated partners have teamed up to turn coastal attractions around the Baltic Sea into sustainable tourism destinations. One of the challenges the attractions share is technological. The technological possibilities – and the public’s interest and expectations – change extremely fast. Even though IT can be an asset for a museum, it can also be difficult to make and maintain a high-quality product. Jurgita Eglinskiene from the Lithuanian Sea Museum describes how international cooperation can help solve the challenge of how to keep the museum up to date and its mode of information relevant: “We need to share developments with other institutions to continuously have an attractive offer for our visitors.”

#### Gamified tours and a spirit of sharing

Lead partner University of Szczecin is developing a framework where museums and attractions easily can gamify eGuide tours. The BalticMuseums LoveIT framework is developed over several stages to ensure that it is user-centric and easy to use for the museums and attractions. Stages include training sessions for staff and hackathons, where programmers meet for an intense and creative programming session.

“We gain not only new tools, but also ideas, and a spirit of sharing, openness and improvement,” Jurgita Eglinskiene says. She continues to describe several benefits from participating in the project: A new multi-lingual app for visitor’s smartphones with gamification elements, a new perspective on an exhibition from colleagues in Malmö, inspiration from colleagues in Gdynia when analysing User Experience, and becoming part of an international community.

#### Be inspired by people from different national cultures

The products developed in The Baltic-Museums: LoveIT! will help museums and other tourist attractions deal with challenges like bad weather, low season, crowds in high season, and make the attractions accessible for tourists who speak other languages than the attraction’s main audience. At the Lithuanian Sea Museum, a new multilingual app has already been implemented to improve visitor engagement. Visitors can access the app from their smartphones and explore the museum with the gamified app. Working with other nationalities to improve IT has certainly been a fruitful and inspiring experience, and Jurgita Eglinskiene describes it as a “great inspiration to work with people from different national cultures and work backgrounds!”





### Budget

**3.502 280,90 EUR**



### Programme co-financing

**2.845 624,88 EUR**



### Duration

**June 2017 - May 2020**



#### LEAD PARTNERS:

- Region Blekinge, Sweden

#### PROJECT PARTNERS:

- InnoBaltica Ltd, Poland
- Assoc. for Promotion of Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Development at the University of Rostock, Germany
- Hanseatic City of Rostock, Germany
- Guldborgsund Municipality, Denmark
- Klaipeda Public Transport Authority, Lithuania
- Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden
- Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, Poland
- Viimsi Municipality, Estonia

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Reaching international partners gives a project better chances of evolution and implementation.

Interreg-framework for international cooperation gives clear guidelines on how to work together in an easy and well-known way.

The beauty of working with other nationalities is the possibility of creating something unique that might reach beyond any kind of borders.



## Interconnect

One ticket to the future

### Connecting coastal regions through public transportation

Interconnect is a project which seeks to connect the coastal regions of the South Baltic areas through public transportation. At the moment, public transportation is not very flexible; information can be difficult to find, and you might need to buy tickets from different operators for a single journey. To change this, the Interconnect project gathered 20 formal and associated partners from 6 countries to work together to supply straightforward and user-adjusted solutions.

### Overcoming boundaries to gain common goals

Ania Dudziak, Project Officer at Euroregion Baltic in Poland, is part of the Interconnect project. This was her first time participating in an international project, which she enjoyed: "As a newcomer in both partnership and international projects, I was amazed by how well people from different environments and institutions can work together, overcoming any boundaries, and sharing their experience and knowledge to gain common goals."

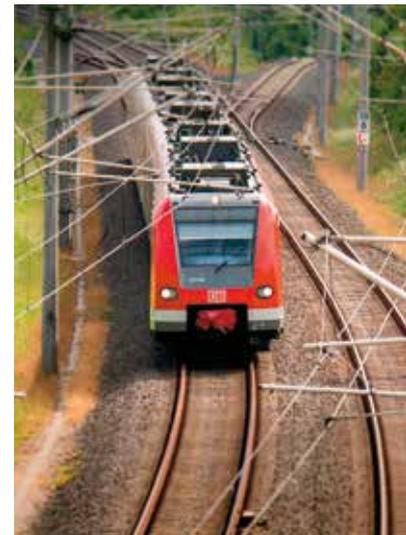
Many previous attempts have been made to develop public transport services in the area, but they have suffered from a lack of cohesion. The Interconnect project follows a given Interreg-framework for international cooperation which gives

clear guidelines on how to work together and guarantees sharing of information and a central plan. By following the Interreg-framework for international cooperation the chance of success is higher.

### Single ticket solutions and cross-border travel information

The Interconnect project is part of a continuous response to the mismatch between the need for public transportation and what it looks like today. It builds on earlier projects like Interface and Interface Plus. The overarching theme is to promote user-adjusted and sustainable public transport services. Depending on the needs of the participating regions this results in different approaches. In the Pomorskie Voivodeship the project has invested in a single ticket solution. Between Blekinge and Pomorskie the Interconnect project offers cross-border travel information system, while the partners push for more cooperation across the German-Danish border to improve the Rostock-Gedser route for foot passengers, and to improve regional integration and economic growth.

For the involved partners, the project has been an opportunity to share international experience and know-how in developing and implementing solutions in this aspect of regional development.



**Budget****1.223 072,50 EUR****Programme co-financing****996 999,38 EUR****Duration****July 2018 - July 2021****LEAD PARTNERS:**

- Klaipeda University, Lithuania

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- ATI ert g GmbH education, Germany
- Gdansk Entrepreneurial Foundation, Poland
- County Administrative Board of Skåne, Sweden
- Holbaek Municipality, Denmark
- Klaipėda Economic Development Agency, Lithuania

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Real life examples make a significant impact on youth. Opportunities to experiment and solve specific cases can be a great motivation for young people to join the green growth field.

Use social media to share knowledge relating to the commercial success of green growth companies, not just your specific green project.

Offer the target audience relevant business solutions in green growth. The thematic green camps and Technolympics are designed to engage participants in new challenges, while revealing more about the field itself.



## **SB Bridge**

**Building bridges for green tech future**

### **There is no planet - B. Join the Green side!**

There is a mismatch between the green and blue labour market and higher education. Even though many young people are engaged in the fight against climate change, too few students have an interest in technical education. The SB Bridge project is a response to this disparity. With the slogan 'There is no planet B. Join the Green side!', the partners seek to engage the youth by inviting young people participate in competitions in the South Baltic region. Based on earlier experiences, this can awaken students' interest in technical subjects and be part of a larger effort to build bridges between the youth and interested parties like SMEs and relevant authorities.

### **Green camps and Technolympics**

SB Bridge hosts camps and events where young people from the region's different countries meet and spend a few days visiting companies and solving problems. Two camps have already been held, while several more are planned, with themes like water management and clean transportation. One of the camps took place in Schwerin, Germany, in 2019 and focused on renewable energy. A local energy

company provided a problem for the students to solve, which they worked on with experts in the field. The project also hosts Technolympics where young people solve problems in the thematic field 5R – reduce, reuse, refuse, replace, recycle.

### **Finding motivation in solving real problems**

Solving real-life problems can be a powerful motivator for the young participants and attract them to the competitions. Local companies operating in the blue and green fields are encouraged to join the project and help create challenges for the students to try to solve during the green camps. By participating, companies can also help develop skills and interest in potential future employees.

The students enjoy using their skills to solve specific problems instead of being asked to solve textbook problems. Experiencing success and meeting new friends while working on projects motivates the young people to keep investigating technical and environmental ideas and seek out internships. The project's practical initiatives to include young people are important, since it can form their habits and decisions in the early stages of their career.



**Budget****1.023 000,00 EUR****Programme co-financing****823 700,00 EUR****Duration****January 2017 - Dec. 2019****LEAD PARTNERS:**

- Klaipeda University, Lithuania

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Lithuania Business University of Applied Sciences, Lithuania
- Linnaeus University, Sweden
- University of Gdansk, Poland
- Roskilde Business College, Denmark

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Distance learning requires good study habits: set a schedule, make a study plan - and stick to it.

Prepare for your studies – find headphones, install or update needed programs, and download course materials.

Chose a good place to study – and stay focused!



## FOCUS

**Facilitating blue growth with open courses by utilizing R&D products and virtual mobility**

### Creating interest in blue economy

The FOCUS project is focused on blue economy – marine biotechnology and coastal tourism. The project aims to improve knowledge about the sector, as well as make more people interested in blue-growth economy. A survey was sent to employers in the South Baltic Region to identify their needs. The participating experts then designed open courses to improve the needed competences. Partners from Lithuania, Sweden, Poland, and Denmark worked together with associated partners to produce digital educational material and to ensure that it is available online. This will help share knowledge and good practice, as it is a way to transfer information and understanding from experts to practitioners and students. So far 11 open courses are available online.

### Benefits of online learning

The online learning resources cover subjects like Blue-Based Solutions, Sustainable Blue Economy, and Management and

Planning Tourism Business. One student, a recent graduate from Klaipeda, Lithuania, describes how participating gave him relevant knowledge: “Passing this course gave me a lot of knowledge regarding Sustainable Tourism, which I implemented to write my thesis.” The student heard about the FOCUS courses from one of his teachers. He explains that studying online made it easier to participate and says: “This course is easy to understand and provides almost all the required information. The course material is of high quality covering almost all aspects.” Another benefit of studying this way was improved flexibility, since the student could study when it fit in his schedule.

As part of the INTERREG South Baltic Program, the FOCUS-project is an example of how knowledge and knowhow can be shared between different countries and made accessible for an even greater audience.





**Budget**  
2.020 000,29 EUR



**Programme co-financing**  
1.534 975,03 EUR



**Duration**  
July 2017 - Dec. 2020



**LEAD PARTNERS:**

- University College Absalon / Professionshøjskole Absalon, Denmark

**PROJECT PARTNERS:**

- Lund University, Sweden
- Rostock University, Germany
- Aarhus University, Faculty of Science and Technology, Department of Agroecology, Denmark
- Zealand Institute of Business and Technology, Denmark
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
- University of Copenhagen, Department of Food and Resource Economics

**TIPS AND TRICKS**

Follow your ideas - there is great possibility to make it part of your daily work through international cooperation. We saw huge potentials for scaling up the local food industry in the rural South Baltic Region, and succeeded in building a strong partner group to pursue our ideas and plans.

For us it was all about transforming The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) into the companies' development goals!



## **SBFOODINNO.eu**

### **Developing food innovation capacity in the South Baltic Region**

Innovation in the food industry is crucial. Due to the increasing world population, food demands are expected to increase on a worldwide scale. Investments in food innovation are essential to qualify the South Baltic Region's food industry to take part in these new and increasing markets. By innovating, we can secure and maintain global competitiveness and growth in the regional food industry.

The project SBFOODINNO.eu has met these challenges by developing innovation activities between food sector SMEs and knowledge institutions in the period 2017-2020. Previously, only 20% of food sector SMEs innovations were based on cooperation between food sector SMEs and innovators such as knowledge institutions. The project partner group consists of seven knowledge institutions who all have extensive experience collaborating with food sector SMEs to strengthen their growth potentials. The institutions have provided profound practice-based innovation addressing how to support development in food sector SMEs and demonstrated how knowledge institutions can play an important role in making business development accessible.

#### **Plant-Protein-Product focus**

The project highlights the food industry's demand for profitable knowledge regard-

ing growing and processing vegetable proteins. To generate growth in the food industry, it is important to consider the whole process – beginning with agriculture and primary production, moving to production processing, and finally considering the consumer's experiences regarding texture, taste, and visual appearance. The project has implemented several innovation activities and facilitation tools:

- Field trials crops: Lupine, Pea, Soya, Faba bean, Quinoa.
- Plant protein product development on Faba bean, Quinoa, Pea, texturized, Amaranth, Hemp, Concentrated potato protein, Coffee protein, Aqua faba, Chickpea, Seaweed, Seeds.
- Food Innovation Council meetups -expert panel debates and connecting food SMEs to resources in knowledge institutions and food clusters.
- The Food Innovation Canvas Model - a food SME development tool.
- Students involvement stimulating innovation within e.g. market demands and research, new products and market potentials. e.g. Case-based learning.
- Network meetings & innovation camps as F2F meeting and online webinars.
- Rural Public Food Policies and Strategies case studies.





# PART 2

## Umbrella

### Boosting cross-border cooperation

The Umbrella project started in 2018 with the ambition to help boost the cross-border cooperation capacities of local actors in the South Baltic Sea. From the beginning, the Umbrella partnership has initiated and supported a large range of capacity building activities; like knowledge-sharing activities and study visits to neighbouring South Baltic countries.

Umbrella introduces the following stories on how to help build capacity and inspire more stakeholders to become involved in cross-border cooperation. The stories show examples of networking, providing information on current and future discussion in thematic areas, how teaching materials of

project management and development provide knowledge about the opportunities in cross-border cooperation, and the impact of visiting our South Baltic neighbours to find inspiration and ideas for cross-border cooperation. Ultimately, getting expert advice on project development is the path to a successful application.

Umbrella hopes to motivate new stakeholders to participate in cross-border cooperation, and hopefully, change your way of thinking about participation in EU projects - and to see the opportunities provided by the South Baltic Region and other EU funding programmes.



**Umbrella**

Boosting cross-border  
cooperation

## TIPS AND TRICKS

Use your regional contact point – they know your national conditions and can help you navigate the rules and regulations.

Work with other countries in the same region to promote a regional identity.

Experience from one project can help you in other projects.



## Developing your idea and cross-border network: Creating awareness about opportunities

The Umbrella Awareness Raising Event is a dynamic occasion to raise awareness among stakeholders about opportunities of cross-border cooperation and EU grants in the Baltic Sea Region. The ambition is to increase the curiosity among local and regional stakeholder by getting people together to meet, to discuss and to get to know each other to build new networks to understand that cross-border cooperation is a way to tackle common challenges and find shared solutions.

Umbrella has held two Awareness Raising Events in Gdansk, Poland in 2018 and in Sorø, Denmark in 2019 – and more than 200 participants took part in these event. We are pleased to introduce this inspiring story on how to successfully start a cross-border project using our first Awareness Raising Event as the platform to develop their partnership and idea.

### **From idea to project: Crossroads in History**

As part of the first Awareness Raising Event in Gdansk, June 2018, a small group of participants from Kalmar, Wismar, Klaipeda, and Gdansk were invited to be part of a thematic side-event initiated by Kalmar Museum.

The project idea came from the historical background of the countries in the South Baltic Region, a history full of conflicts and cooperation, trading and troubles. This inspired the project Crossroads in History to use shared cultural heritage to improve social cohesion in the region. A network of museums from Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, and Poland collaborated to explore the theme “migration” using the “Time Travel” method. This is an approach to learning where the participants dress up in a historical fashion, meet in historical surroundings, and act out a fictional story based on factual events. This helps bring

the past to life and lets the participants approach topics in a new way.

The Umbrella project offered financial support for workshops where the participants could meet to discuss ideas and to shape the partnership. In addition, the project group also had the opportunity to make use of the Umbrella Rent-An-Expert service. This allowed the group to get help with EU funding and project development from an expert. This provided quality assessment of the project idea and of the project application for the South Baltic Programme. The project application was successfully approved, and in January 2019 the Crossroads in History project started.

### **Remarks from the Crossroads in History project partnership:**

The Crossroads in History partnership found it hard to navigate among the different EU funding programmes, especially since they were inexperienced in the area and considered themselves to be newcomers. Initial contact to the South Baltic Contact Point kick-started the making of the Crossroads in History project, and the initiating project partners were soon after introduced to the Umbrella project and the possibilities provided by Umbrella activities. During the project application phase, the Umbrella project provided the Crossroads in History project with an expert to help write the application. It was highly valued to get help from someone who understood EU-language and could help elaborate the important parts of the application, including preparing the budget. Without this expertise it is uncertain whether the Joint Programme Committee would have approved the project. The partners now feel prepared to write an application on their own in the future.





## Providing expert help for project development

Newcomers to EU projects often find the project development phase challenging. How do you get started, where should you begin, how do you find partners, and how can you write a successful application? A very effective way to help stakeholders gain knowledge, inspiration, and become involved in cross-border cooperation is undoubtedly by involving experts on EU project development.

To encourage stakeholders to get involved in cross-border cooperation and become partners in EU projects, the Umbrella project has offered different free of charge expertise services, such as the Umbrella “Rent-An-Expert” service. Umbrella also established a “Pool of Experts” where various experts offer support for the stakeholders’ specific needs. This can take many forms such as facilitating workshops, seminars on project development, supporting stakeholders in developing a specific project idea, finding the right EU programme – and preparing the application for submission.

### **Experts facilitate workshops and webinars**

Umbrella has organised several workshops on various topics in the areas of energy, tourism, bioeconomy, and culture – all trying to encourage and support the participants to get more knowledge of the challenges and future trends in the specific area. The workshops and webinars gave better possibilities for interaction, since the smaller audience was able to discuss topics which were relevant for them. The use of experts was very useful, as they could give direct feedback and suggestions for the next steps in the project preparation. Using experts to moderate, ask questions, and sum up the findings is also a valuable way to get perspective,

involve stakeholders, and collect the most valuable and thorough feedback.

### **Experts help write successful applications**

The ‘Rent-An-Expert’ services also offered support for beneficiaries who had identified relevant themes or concrete ideas for the development of projects within the South Baltic Programme or other EU programmes. This support can be quality assessment to consolidate a specific project idea or concept, help to understand and translate the (often) frightening EU-language in the various programmes, help to understand how to build a partnership, or learning how to develop an application. Umbrella has successfully supported project applications from both the South Baltic Programme, the Swedish Institute, Erasmus+, and the Danish-German Programme for financial support from EU.

### **Input for the future South Baltic Programme**

Together with an expert on strategies in the Baltic Sea Region, Umbrella has also organised online focus group workshops to provide input for the new INTER-REG South Baltic programme period 2021-2027. These workshops consulted relevant stakeholders to collect honest opinions, new ideas, and to examine the needs in areas like Blue and Green growth, energy transition/connectivity, building civil society, and sustainable and innovative tourism.

The Umbrella Rent-An-Expert services have proven a valuable opportunity to help more newcomers find inspiration, become engaged in their search for EU opportunities, and get help to start their own journey in future EU projects and cross-border cooperation.



**Financial support is crucial for project development:  
Remarks from the round goby project**

Getting financial support was the reason for developing the international project group. By meeting each other and getting professional help to mature the project idea it became a successful seed-money application. We are confident that the path to the seed-money would not have been so smooth without the support from the Umbrella project. This is exactly what we needed, to meet to develop the project idea but also getting valuable input and feedback to the application. This is often the most difficult part: how to write the successful application. The seed-money project has given us time to mature the partnership and develop the project idea to get ready to apply for funding the future programming period.



## Thematic cross-border conferences: Expanding your knowledge and network

The Umbrella cross-border conferences are another great opportunity for participants to find relevant information about cross-border cooperation in a specific thematic area. It is also a good occasion to meet fellow colleagues who are interested in similar topics. The cross-border conferences was organised in close dialogue with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Panel Area coordinators (EUSBSR), which proved an excellent opportunity for participants to engage with experts, be informed of the latest discussions, and hear about future projects and activities.

The conferences consist of panel sessions as well as discussion sessions in smaller groups to ensure interaction among participants, experts, and policy areas. The cross-border conferences can be a first occasion to network and be inspired to investigate the possibility of creating new projects together with participants in your area of expertise. The projects can then be submitted to the upcoming call for proposals for the EU programmes. The Umbrella project has organised three cross-border conferences on the topics bioeconomy, energy and electromobility, and sustainable tourism.

### **Round goby-invasion of the Baltic Sea: problems and solutions**

One of the workshops at the cross-border conference in Kalmar in September 2018 was on the topic of the round goby – an invasive species in the coastal areas of the South Baltic region.

At the workshop, which gathered participants from Sweden, Poland, Denmark, Lithuania, and Latvia, it was clear that similar challenges were found throughout the South Baltic region. Round gobies had spread across all countries in the southern and central Baltic. Since they spread through shipping traffic, they had become abundant in some regions while they were absent in others. Therefore, there was a keen interest in establishing a network with key stakeholders to develop a concept note and project application to benefit commercial small-scale fishery for round goby in the Baltic Sea region.

With financial support from Umbrella, the group of participants had the opportunity to set up another meeting to take the project idea even further – and became aware of the possibility to apply for seed-money from the Swedish Institute. Together with experts from the Umbrella rent-an-expert service, the project group submitted a project application to investigate the possibilities to develop the project for future funding.



## Some lessons from the EU-project training seminars

- Project management skills are valuable whether you are 5 years old or 75 – they are as useful to a young person planning a Scouting project as they are to a seasoned professional wrapping up a major work assignment.
- Projects are done by people, with people and for people. Remember that knowing the tools is not enough. To truly succeed you also need leadership capabilities and strategic and business proficiency.
- Joining these training seminars to learn about EU funding, meet other participants, and develop our ideas into potential projects has been of great value for us. It now seems less frightening to join an international project partnership.



## Essential knowledge for cross-border cooperation: **EU-project training workshop**

The Umbrella project has created a training programme in all the partner countries to improve the participating stakeholders' skills in developing and managing EU-projects. The tailor-made development programme was made to support the potential project developers and to offer training free of charge. This will help organisations develop their knowledge, enhance skills, and boost their confidence to become involved in cross-border initiatives around the South Baltic region. The training programme is also intended as an opportunity for representatives from all the regional sectors, academia, businesses, NGOs, and local authorities to meet, exchange ideas, and learn.

### **A project to increase confidence in international projects**

User-friendly and ready-to-use educational materials were designed together with professionals to help newcomers with cross-border cooperation.

The educational material covers all steps of the project lifecycle; from getting the idea, through the search for funding opportunities and application process.

Trainers were chosen and educated so they would be prepared to teach future project developers. Stake-

holders were then invited to participate in workshops in Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. The workshops consisted of more than 10 training seminars conducted in national languages. This was done to support stakeholders by training them and as an opportunity for participants to meet and learn from each other.

One of the trainers participating in the Umbrella project describes their outcome from participating, saying "I've discovered the potentials of international projects, including benefits of cross-border networks and possibilities of funding." Even as the trainer taught other people and organisations how to engage in cross-border projects, they discovered the advantages of international work for themselves.

The training materials can be found online for free on the Umbrella Moodle platform, giving easy access for interested parties.

More information to be found on [www.umbrellaproject.eu](http://www.umbrellaproject.eu)



### Remarks from the rural development study visit

We have many things in common and the study trip has given us new experiences and knowledge, new contacts, and new ideas for common projects in the future. These projects could be in areas like food production and tourism. In particular, rural tourism could be an area that would offer many opportunities, like special initiatives for biking, trekking, and horse-riding – but also maritime activities for tourists such as sailing, fishing, or diving.

During the visit, it is important to make time for social interaction. Getting to know each other is a vital part of having good project interaction and solid results. Often, the informal chat over dinner is what provides the atmosphere to explore new and perhaps more inventive results. It also creates ownership to the project process.



## Meet your South Baltic neighbors: **The impact of study visits**

The 'Meet your neighbours' activities are some of the best ways to connect people, get them to know each other, and to establish new networks for further cooperation.

The ambition is to financially support stakeholders in visiting neighbouring South Baltic regions and get them to spend sufficient time together to form a solid understanding of one another, build networks, and be able to discuss possible joint projects and future cooperation. Umbrella has supported micro-activities in topics like developing tourism in hardwoods, culture and art, youth cooperation, and rural development.

One of the study trips hosted by the Umbrella project was in 2019 where rural developers from Kalmar County visited Guldborgsund Municipality, which proved an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences and discuss common challenges and possibilities for common projects.

### **Learning about rural development – exchanging valuable knowledge**

Kalmar County and Guldborgsund Municipality are both characterised by low population density and large rural areas. Many of these areas deal with challenges that are common for Denmark and Sweden, such as depopulation and lack of employment opportunities. The study trip to Guldborgsund had a mixture of seminars and field trips. Presentations were held by representatives from both national, regional, and local authorities and gave an understanding of the structural framework for both countries. This helped the participants understand the similarities and differences of the systems. Visiting various smaller towns and places gave interesting ideas about how others face their challenges. This also let the partners learn about the activities the small towns use to turn challenges into advantages, like involving citizens in smaller communities.

The ambition of the Umbrella study trips is to exchange experiences, learn from good examples, and discuss possible joint projects and cooperation in the future.



# PART 3

**Best Tips & Tricks**  
from the Umbrella partnership



**Umbrella**

**Best tips & tricks**  
from the Umbrella  
partnership



# PART 3

**Meet the UMBRELLA partners**  
Get our Tips & Tricks  
on cross-border cooperation

## Meet the UMBRELLA partners

### Getting our Tips & Trick on cross-border cooperation

The project partners and associated partners that initiated the Umbrella project come from 5 different the INTERREG South Baltic countries. Together, we have made Umbrella an ambitious project with a budget of almost 1 million EUR and a duration of 30 months of activities. Led by Euroregion Baltic, Umbrella had an interwoven structure that involved all its partners, with good opportunities to discuss strategic views about cross-border cooperation with participants from the policy areas' panels.

The Umbrella partners want to share some of their own experiences as partners in the project – and how to engage new actors to take part in cross-border cooperation.







Association of Polish Communes  
Euroregion Baltic (Elbląg - Poland)

### Valentina Scandola Umbrella Project Leader

The Association of Polish Communes ERB is a non-profit organisation working for cross-border cooperation. 40 municipalities from Pomorskie and Warmia-Mazury are members. Most ERB activities focus on developing international cooperation in areas of tourism, culture, environmental protection. A special focus is on people-to-people cross-border cooperation on the local and regional levels. It hosts the ERB International Permanent Secretariat (IPS) which coordinates ERB cooperation.

#### My best tips and tricks for being the Lead Partner:

- Being lead partner of the Umbrella project has been the biggest challenge in my early career and also on a personal level. The biggest success for me has without any doubt been the relationship established among the partners. It kept a flame of motivation and passion for our job alive. We all shared the same multifaceted mission: to bring Umbrella to a brand status, to initiate capacity-building, to increase cross-border relations, to strengthen the existing knowledge, and to intertwine our daily work among partners and new organisations. I think we succeeded, and I hope this is just the beginning of a bigger project. This project taught me a lot, but above all, what I have learnt came from people.
- Have a different culture, background, education, or simply vision of the world.
- Listen and trust but remember to consider things carefully.





Pomorskie in the European Union Association (Gdańsk - Poland)

### **Małgorzata Matkowska, Project Manager**

The main task of "Pomorskie in the European Union" Association is to build a positive image of the Pomorskie Region on the European scene, act as a channel of information between the Pomorskie stakeholders and other EU actors, and to lobby for European and Pomorskie interests. The Association represents regional and local self-government, regional development agencies, universities, NGOs, chambers of commerce and cultural institutions.

#### **My best tips and tricks to help build up capacity for newcomers:**

- If you want to reach potential stakeholders, think what your project offers. Contact your local stakeholders first and invite them to discover your project. Present benefits they can gain by being engaged in the project's activities. Get to know their needs and help them overcome difficulties by guiding them through the variety of EU programmes and initiatives. Communicate with your stakeholders. They might encourage their networks to get involved in project activities. Be proactive.
- As a project partner, do not be afraid to ask for follow-up information or clarification from the partnership. We are together in the partnership and all partners want to make the most of the project. Remember to express your opinions and listen to what others say. They might see things from a different angle than you, but together you will find an optimal solution.





Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs  
(Gdynia - Poland)

### **Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło, President of BISER**

Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs (BISER) is a NGO offering expertise, analysis, and review services. It also prepares and conducts projects covering the purposes of the Association, particularly in areas of social economy and social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, EU macroregional strategy and regional policy, transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region and others.

#### **My best tips and tricks to get help for your project idea and to promote your project:**

- Establish positive contact and relations with the Joint Secretariat and your Contact Point. They have vital expertise and are there to help you.
- Read the Programme Manual if you have questions. Even twice. Honestly, most of the answers are there. If not, ask the Joint Secretariat or Contact Point (as they know it all).
- Get to know other active Interreg South Baltic projects and Project Managers – it is useful to share ideas, exchange views on the project activities, and provide your beneficiaries with content from other projects. Besides, you never know, maybe you are building a new partnership for the future!
- Join the South Baltic programme events in your area – Annual Event, regional workshops and consultations organised by the Contact Point and others – you will get new contacts, new knowledge, and promote your project at the same time.
- Do not be afraid to promote your project, activities, and future events widely on Social Media. Use different media: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or even Instagram – different target groups seek information in various media. By using them all, you will reach more people.
- Create eye-friendly, simple, and understandable graphic content for your Social Media posts and ads.





Klaipeda University, (Klaipėda - Lithuania)

## **Rasa Viederytė, Associate Professor**

Established in 1991, Klaipeda University is a multidisciplinary educational institution with more than 4000 students. Klaipeda University has a leading position at a national and Baltic level in the field of marine sciences and studies integrated into international academic networks. Klaipeda University has extensive experience in international projects, and skilled staff in formal and non-formal education participate actively in professional networks. Klaipeda University develops thematic platforms, initiates ties with industry willing to be more “green” and “blue”, supports SMEs with consultations on business development solutions, and promotes blue and green growth.

### **Here are my best tips and tricks for managing a successful project:**

- A strong and competent team is an important factor for the successful implementation of a project. Therefore, team strengthening, cooperation with each other, team formation, and a close professional relationship with each team member are essential conditions for the successful implementation of project activities.
- A detailed discussion of the qualitative and quantitative results and the expected impact is necessary at the very beginning of the project. This allows the project partners to plan activities and integrate them smoothly with other activities in the organisation.
- Trust and belief in each other’s competencies and abilities are very important in a project with international cooperation. In this way, team members complement each other, exchange knowledge, and give a lot of added value to the project.
- Personal interest in the project content and the active involvement of project organisations’ members in the implementation of each project activity is necessary, even if you plan on subcontracting services or work.





Region Kalmar County  
(Kalmar - Sweden)

### Jan Martinsson, Head of Baltic Sea Region Affairs

Region Kalmar County is a politically controlled organisation that offers health care, public transport, cultural and regional development. Together with the county's municipalities, universities, businesses, and other actors, we want to create the best conditions for our residents.

#### My best tips and tricks to reach and engage stakeholders:

- If there is some kind of “engine” for international cooperation in your region or local area, like EU- and/or international coordinators, they will be pleased to help and guide you further into international network. They are a tool that gives input to the organisations.
- Normally you will know of or find already existing regional networks in a wide range of areas, such as tourism, rural development, environmental questions, transport and communication, digitalisation, librarians, education, social questions, health care, elderly care, business development and so on. These networks can help give input and establish an international aspect in their internal work. Facilitating study visits to other countries can be way to motivate international cooperation.
- Taken on the account of my experiences, the best way to engage people in international cooperation is to make study visits. Meeting people from other counties with similar tasks and being able to exchange experiences, knowledge, and discussing relevant topics help you understand different solutions to the same problem – and also strengthens your network. This understanding should be seen as a strong motivation for going into joint projects.





Guldborgsund Municipality  
(Nykøbing F. – Denmark)

### **Anna Topp Gustavsen, International Coordinator**

Guldborgsund Municipality is the southernmost municipality in Denmark and located on two islands in the South Baltic Sea. Due to the geographic location, due to two international transport corridors running through the municipality, and due to tradition, international cooperation with the neighbouring countries in the Baltic Sea area is high on the agenda in Guldborgsund.

#### **My best tips and tricks for why you should join cross-border cooperation as a municipality:**

- There is important network, knowledge, and experiences in our neighbouring countries and further out in Europe, and we should keep in mind that they have similar challenges to us. Be curious, open-minded, and patient – you will be inspired.
- Concentrate on projects that can be beneficial to the goals of your institution. It will help you develop new and better services for the citizens in your municipality and region. The more time and energy you invest into the project, the more you will gain in return.
- Being partner in an international project helps brand your organisation locally, nationally, and among neighbouring countries.
- It is fun to meet our neighbours - and the best part is that you end up with new international networks, colleagues and friends.



Sweden



Denmark



Baltic Sea



Germany

Poland

## Umbrella:

# Boosting cross-border cooperation

Umbrella is an Interreg South Baltic project endeavouring to boost capacity for cross-border cooperation in the South Baltic. The targets of the project are local and regional actors in the South Baltic Programme area in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden. The project started in January 2018 and runs until December 2020.

It has been an important goal for Umbrella to reach small and local partners such as smaller municipalities, cultural and education institutions and civil society organisations. We are especially interested in welcoming participants from rural areas who only have a little experience in cross-border cooperation. Umbrella offers a wide range of networking and knowledge-based activities to inspire more local and regional actors to build stronger international ties and networks, and strengthen their capacity.

We are 6 partners in the project. Three partners are from Poland: The Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic, Pomorskie in the European Union Association, and Bal-

tic Institute for Regional Affairs (BISER). The three other partners are Klaipeda University from Lithuania, Region Kalmar County from Sweden, and Guldborgsund Municipality from Denmark. 8 associate partners from the 5 South Baltic EU-countries are also involved in the project.

As part of the Umbrella activities, we have published this booklet with 12 inspirational stories from projects from the South Baltic Programme 2014-2020. We also want to inspire with an overview of our own Umbrella achievements to show how we have supported small actors and newcomers to see the benefits of international cooperation. We hope that Umbrella, and our tools and methods have been an inspiration for you for the next programme period. Umbrella will continue as UMBRELLA 2:0 – and still be able to serve as a platform of inspiration for further international cooperation in the future of the Baltic Sea Region.

**Read more about Umbrella on our website [www.umbrellaproject.eu](http://www.umbrellaproject.eu)**

## Project partners

- 1 Association Of Polish Communes Of Euroregion Baltic (Elbląg - Poland)
- 2 "Pomorskie In The European Union" Association (Gdańsk - Poland)
- 3 Baltic Institute for Regional Affairs BISER (Gdynia - Poland)
- 4 Klaipeda University (Klaipėda - Lithuania)
- 5 Regional Council In Kalmar County (Kalmar- Sweden)
- 6 Guldborgsund Municipality (Nykøbing - Denmark)



## Project Partners



BISER | Baltic Institute  
For Regional Affairs



KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY



Region Kalmar län



GULDBORGSUND

## Associated Partners



Torsås  
kommun



Kalmar kommun



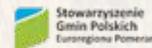
REGION  
SJÆLLAND



ALOUARCAS  
ELAPFOOCHI  
BIYECHAS



Kommunalgemeinschaft  
POMERANIA e.V.



Stowarzyszenie  
Gmin Polskich  
Eurorégionu Pomierania



KL



FÖRENINGEN  
NORDEN



Umbrella



Interreg  
South Baltic



EUROPEAN UNION

European  
Regional  
Development  
Fund