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ACTION PLAN [COM(2009) 248 final]
Revised Action Plan replacing the Action Plan of 17 March 2017 - SWD(2017) 118 final

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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

ACTION PLAN [COM(2009) 248 final]

Revised Action Plan replacing the Action Plan of 17 March 2017 - SWD(2017) 118 final

Executive summary

The Baltic Sea region has a long tradition of cooperation, as evidenced by the multiple networks and organisations in the region. Based on this tradition, the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) provides a unique platform for cooperation and coordination with open and transparent participation, inclusiveness and multi-level governance for its eight EU Member States, neighbouring non-EU countries and the numerous international and regional cooperation formats in the region. The strategy contributes to a better division of labour among existing networks and organisations. This reduces overlaps and strengthens synergies.

The EUSBSR focuses on challenges and opportunities, which are more efficiently addressed when working in a coordinated manner across countries within the region. The multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model of the strategy has been successful in engaging a wide range of stakeholders to network, cooperate and contribute to policy shaping and development in the region.

Whereas the current revision of the action plan accompanying the EUSBSR takes into account emerging global challenges (i.e. climate change, pandemics, demographic changes and migration), the EU's new strategic frameworks and 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework ('the EU budget'), as well as the governance challenges of the EUSBSR, the main objectives of the strategy - Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity - are not modified.

The revised action plan streamlines policy areas and places them in a strategic context, assesses their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and provides links to "embed" the strategy into EU policies and funding programmes. Furthermore, it empowers stakeholders and increases their ownership by providing clear roles and responsibilities, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation. Clear links to policy-making at the national level serve to increase the engagement of line ministries and to solidify political support and implementation in the EUSBSR Member States.

The revised action plan is more focused, with 14 policy areas covering 44 actions. The formats of the activities implemented under each action are decided by the policy areas to best suit the needs of the action.

Due to their cross-cutting nature and increased importance, climate change aspects and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries are mainstreamed as essential elements into all 14 policy areas. Integrating these elements into the policy areas ensures that they are properly taken into account. It also allows the policy areas to tailor-make the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries, in ways that are the most efficient for each policy area.

The important functions of communication and capacity building are consolidated with support from the Baltic Sea strategy Point, which also provides administrative and technical support for the EUSBSR management, development and implementation.

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1. The scope of the EUSBSR action plan

1.1. Background

The Baltic Sea region has a long tradition of cooperation, as evidenced by multiple networks and organisations in the region. Based on that tradition, in 2009 the EU Member States in the region decided to start a new type of transnational cooperation. The EU strategy for Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) is the eldest of the four EU macro-regional strategies¹.

The EUSBSR provides a unique platform for cooperation and coordination between eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden), including also with the neighbouring non-EU countries in the region where relevant and appropriate (Belarus, Iceland, Norway and Russia). It focuses on challenges and opportunities, which are more efficiently addressed when working in a coordinated manner within the region.

During the past decade, the experimental multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model of the EUSBSR has been successful in engaging a wide range of stakeholders to network and cooperate. It has strengthened their ownership and raised their engagement to tackle common challenges and seize common opportunities. The cooperation model itself adds value by connecting people, creating networks, improving coordination and enhancing synergies. In 2019 the European Commission reported that the EUSBSR has successfully generated projects, networks and platforms. The Council has underlined the importance of continued use of macro-regional strategies as a strategic framework promoting more coherent and synergic implementation of EU policies, programmes and funds².

The EUSBSR is accompanied by an action plan, a rolling document to be regularly revised as necessary. The current revision takes into account emerging and increasingly pressing global challenges (i.e. climate change, pandemics, demographic changes and migration), the EU's new strategic frameworks and the EU budget, as well as the governance challenges of the strategy.

The revised action plan streamlines policy areas and places them in a strategic context, assesses their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and provides links to "embed" the EUSBSR into EU policies and funding programmes. Furthermore, it empowers stakeholders and increases their ownership by providing clarified roles and responsibilities, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation.

The revised action plan is also more focused. It comprises 14 policy areas (previously 13 policy areas and 4 horizontal actions) and the total number of actions is reduced from 73 to 44.

¹ Four EU macro-regional strategies have been adopted so far: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR; 2009), EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR; 2010), EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR; 2014), EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP; 2015).

²https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/council_conclusions_17_052019.pdf

The revision of the action plan does not modify the main objectives of the strategy, nor the multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation model.

1.2. Strategic context

The most essential framework for the EUSBSR and this action plan is the European policy context. The EU Strategic agenda 2019-2024³ focuses on four priorities:

- Protecting citizens and freedoms;
- Developing a strong and vibrant economic base;
- Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe;
- Promoting European interests and values on a global stage.

This action plan aligns to these priorities whenever the EUSBSR can make a contribution. Furthermore, gender equality⁴ as a core principle of the European Union is to be implemented in the actions. Alignment with the European Green Deal⁵ and the objective of making the EU climate-neutral by 2050⁶ requires that actions to address climate change and promote sustainable development are integrated into the strategy as a whole. Therefore, all policy areas must take into account EU climate and environmental policy objectives. Strengthening the efforts to do not harm the environment⁷, on climate-proofing, resilience building, prevention and preparedness is crucial, and the work on climate adaptation and environmental sustainability should continue to influence public and private investments. This approach is consistent with the strong political commitment to climate action confirmed by the European Council⁸.

While the EUSBSR is a strategy of the European Union, it is clear that its objectives can only be successfully pursued through constructive cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries. The EEA Member States, Iceland and Norway as well as the neighbouring countries Russia and Belarus are inextricably linked to the Baltic Sea region through historical, political, economic, environmental, cultural and people-to-people ties. Therefore, cooperation with these countries should be promoted, where relevant and appropriate, across the activities within all policy areas.

Furthermore, the numerous international and regional cooperation formats (organisations, networks, initiatives etc.) within the Baltic Sea Region constitute an essential part of the EUSBSR operative environment. The strategy can provide these formats with a wider strategic and

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/eu-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

⁶ See Proposal for a Regulation establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) - Brussels, 4.3.2020 - COM(2020) 80 final

⁷ Pursuant to the “Do no significant harm the environment” principle stemming from the Taxonomy Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088) and also recalled by the European Green Deal (https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance/eu-taxonomy-sustainable-activities_en).

⁸ 12 December 2019 (EUCO 29/19) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41768/12-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>

institutional framework, while benefiting from their experience and expertise. It contributes to a better division of labour among the various formats, which helps avoid overlaps and strengthens synergies. The macro-regional cooperation is without prejudice to the decision-making mechanisms of these bodies. A non-exhaustive list of these cooperation formats is presented in Annex 1.

1.3. Objectives, sub-Objectives and policy areas

The three objectives of the strategy - Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity – remain valid and in force⁹. Each of them covers a wide range of policies and has impact on the other objectives – they are interlinked and interdependent.

The objectives are complemented by sub-objectives, which have been modified over time due to changes in circumstances and challenges. Most sub-objectives relate to more than one objective and they are also interlinked and interdependent. The current sub-objectives are:

- Clear water in the sea;
- Rich and healthy wildlife;
- Clean and safe shipping;
- Reliable energy markets;
- Good transport conditions;
- Connecting people in the region;
- Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime;
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region;
- Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.

Detailed descriptions of the objectives and sub-objectives can be found in Commission Staff Working document SWD (2017) 118¹⁰.

The work within the EUSBSR is thematically divided into policy areas (PAs), each of which develops between two and four actions. The 14 policy areas are: PA Nutri, PA Hazards, PA Bio-economy, PA Ship, PA Safe, PA Transport, PA Energy, PA Spatial Planning, PA Secure, PA Tourism, PA Culture, PA Innovation, PA Health and PA Education.

As the strategy has evolved, policy areas have become more interlinked and interdependent. Their actions are often cross-sectoral and their scope can serve several EUSBSR objectives and sub-objectives. These interlinkages are strongly encouraged by the EUSBSR.

Due to their cross-cutting nature and increased importance, the former horizontal actions climate change and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries are mainstreamed as essential elements into all 14 policy actions. Integrating them into the policy actions ensures that they are properly taken into account. It also allows the policy actions to tailor-make the implementation of

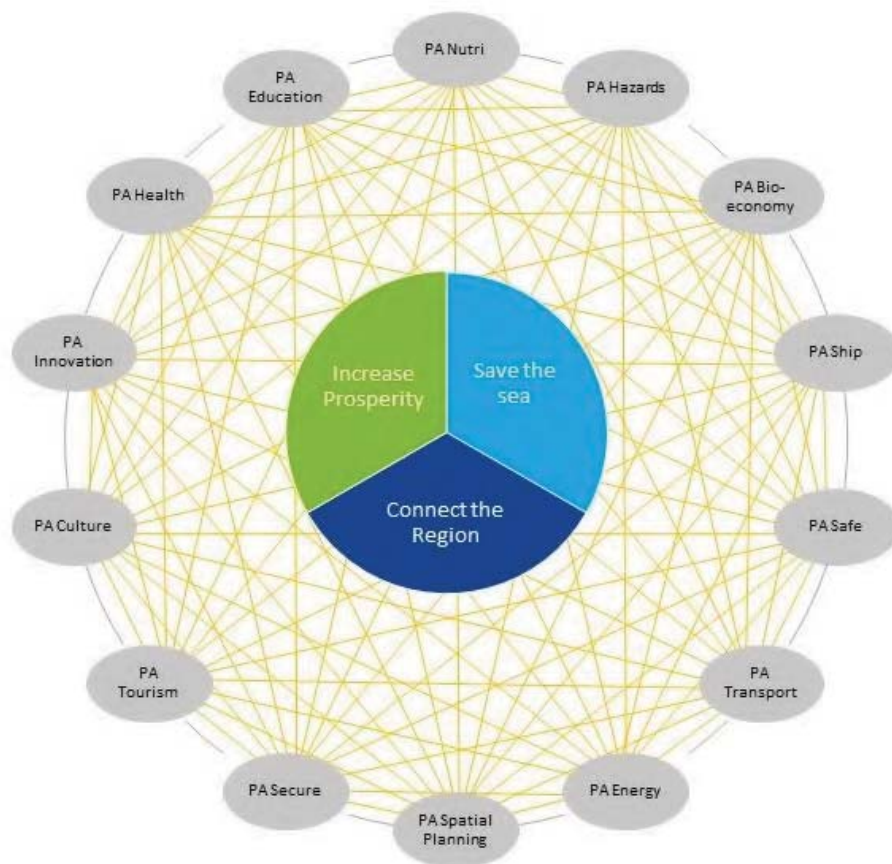
⁹ 23.3.2012 COM(2012) 128 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

¹⁰ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/action-plan/17-action-plan-2015/viewdocument/17>

climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries in ways that are the most efficient for each policy action.

Given the importance of communication and capacity building, the functions of the Interreg-funded project “Let’s Communicate!” and the former horizontal action capacity are consolidated. Communication, information and publicity about the EUSBSR and targeted capacity building for stakeholders are ensured by the National Coordinators Group (NCG) supported by the Baltic Sea Strategy Point.

Graphic 1: EUSBSR objectives and policy areas



1.4. Actors and modes of operation

1.4.1. Actors

The strategy is based on open and transparent participation, inclusiveness and multi-level governance. The wide thematic coverage of the policy areas provides opportunities for different kinds of stakeholders to participate and propose various kinds of activities. While the strategy promotes the building-up of longer-term networks and platforms, new stakeholders as well as novel ideas and initiatives are welcome.

Among the established stakeholders are national, regional and local authorities, intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies, universities and research organisations. However, there is a need to increase the involvement of NGOs, civil society, youth organisations and the business community.

1.4.2. Modes of operation

Each policy area (PA) develops actions which contribute to achieving the EUSBSR objectives. The proposed activities under each action are to be evaluated based on their merits and expected added value.

The format of the activities implemented under each action is decided by the PA to best suit the needs of the action. Activities under an action can be – but are not limited to - projects (single or grouped in clusters), processes, networks or platforms. Activities can be linked either to existing capacities or to break new ground. Building on existing capacities is important and PAs may continue to use the flagship concept. However, it is important that the strategy remains open also for activities outside of established structures.

The national coordinators group ensures the development of the modes of operation and that the implementation rules in force, including the operational framework and detailed guidance about the modes of operation, are published on the EUSBSR website¹¹.

1.5. Funding

As the EUSBSR does not have specifically allocated financial resources, funding for operations under the Strategy is intended to come from existing financial instruments. In the period 2021-2027, the Interreg Baltic Sea region transnational programme continue to support the implementation of the strategy, especially as regards its governance. However, the limited programme budget cannot cover all the needs of the EUSBSR.

Therefore, it is important to mobilise and use also EU ‘mainstream’ national and regional programmes, cooperation programmes and other EU funding sources. These include i.a. European Regional Development Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, European Social Fund+, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, Horizon Europe, TEN-T, Erasmus+, LIFE and the Connecting Europe Facility.

In general, funds from the European Investment Bank and other international financial institutions, as well as private sector financing should be used more under the EUSBSR.

All funding sources have their own eligibility rules, selection criteria and implementation modalities. The managing authorities of EU funding programmes play an important role by ensuring the embedding of the actions of the action plan into their respective programmes and financial instruments. Close cooperation with the managing authorities and their networks is of the essence for all stakeholders of the strategy. National coordinators and members of steering groups cooperate with managing authorities at the national level, national coordinators (NC) on strategic level and

¹¹ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>

steering groups (SG) members on operational level. On the operational level, policy area coordinators have the main responsibility for such cooperation regarding their respective policy areas.

1.6. Monitoring & evaluation

The European Commission monitors the overall added value and development of all the Member States, including EUSBSR. It provides a bi-annual report to the other EU institutions on progress made in implementing the strategies and the results achieved.

The NCG endorses the overall monitoring and evaluation framework within the EUSBSR and ensures that it is published on the EUSBSR website.

Policy area coordinators (PACs) monitor their PAs and actions and prepare annual substantial reports on PA achievements, which they present to their respective steering groups (SGs). SGs evaluate and endorse these annual reports and submit them to the NCG for information¹². The NCG reviews the annual reports and shares them with the EC.

The managing authorities report on their programmes' contributions to the implementation of the strategy.

2. EUSBSR governance

2.1. The purpose of the EUSBSR governance

The governance structure provides clear roles and responsibilities of the various actors, strengthened management capacity at the strategic level, effective decision-making and reinforced results-orientation.

Furthermore, it empowers relevant stakeholders, increases their ownership and encourages them to network, cooperate and participate in the implementation and development of the strategy.

Clear links to policy-making at the national and regional levels serve to increase the engagement of line ministries and other public authorities and to solidify political support and implementation in the EUSBSR Member States.

The governance of the EUSBSR is consolidated with the creation of the Baltic Sea strategy point (BSP). The BSP coordinates capacity building, knowledge-sharing and communication.

¹² In order that this important accountability and learning process can take place without placing undue administrative burden, PACs and SGs are encouraged to seek links within financial reporting required by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region transnational programme, as well as to make use of appropriate external data sources, e.g. the European and Macro-regional Territorial Monitoring Tool developed by ESPON.

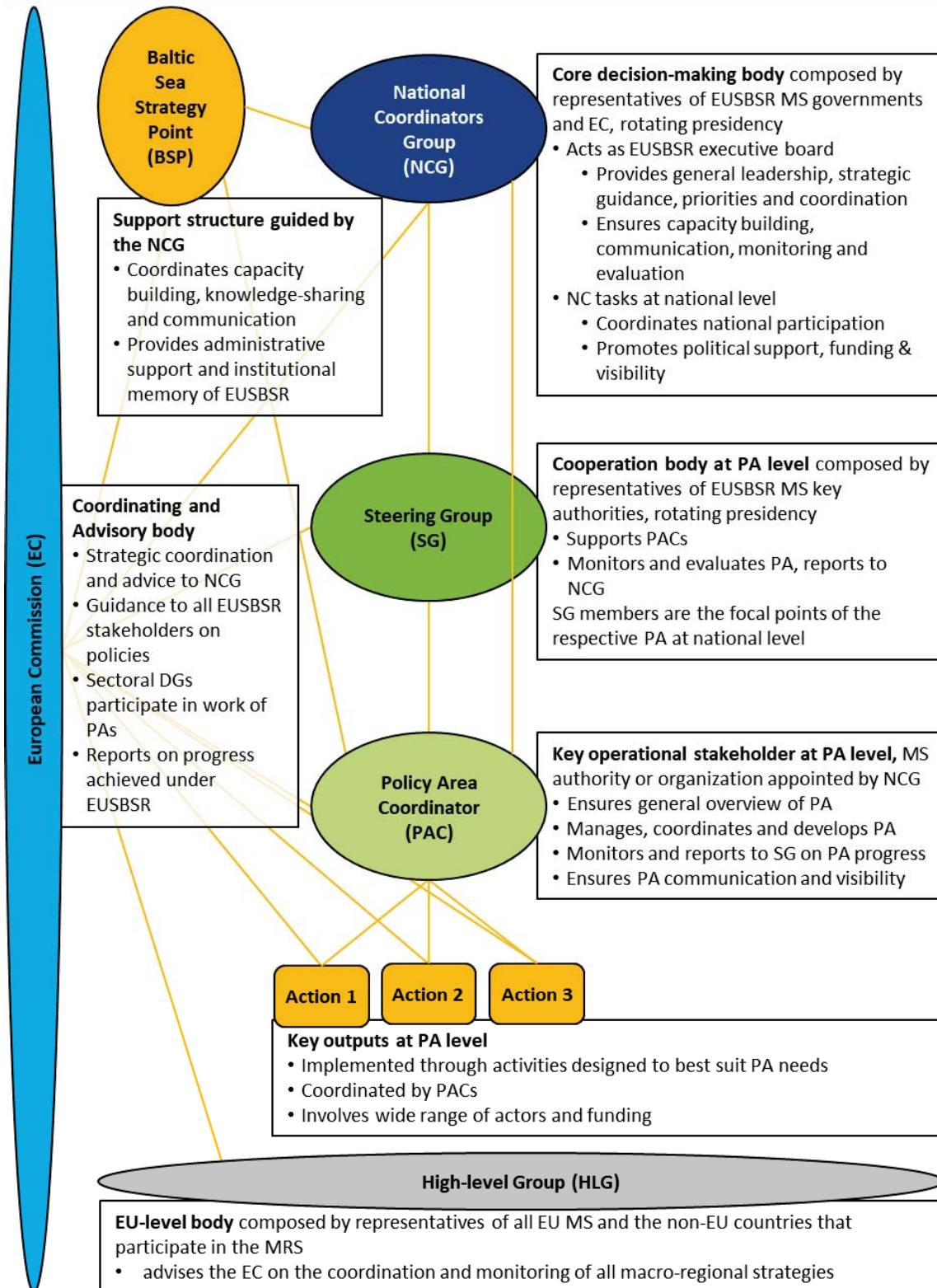
This action plan only specifies the main elements of the EUSBSR governance. More details are provided in the national coordinators group's rules of procedure and those of the various PA steering groups. The national coordinators group may decide on further specifications as needed. The group ensures that all documents and other essential information related to the EUSBSR governance, are published on the EUSBSR website¹³.

¹³ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>

2.2. Governance structure

Graphic 2: Simplified version of the EUSBSR governance structure

EUSBSR governance structure



2.3. National coordinators and national coordinators group

Each EUSBSR Member State nominates a national coordinator (NC) and one or more deputies. They need to keep the national coordinators group (NCG), the Presidency and the European Commission updated as soon as changes occur.

EUSBSR national coordinators have two kinds of tasks. On the one hand, they represent their governments in the NCG, and, on the other hand, they perform their tasks at the national level in their own capacity.

The NCG consists of representatives of all eight EUSBSR Member States. The European Commission participates regularly in the meetings of the group.

Representatives of other countries, organisations and cooperation formats can be invited by the NCG Presidency to participate in NCG meetings on an ad-hoc basis, but cannot participate in the decision-making.

The NCG meets at least four times per year. A joint meeting between NCs and PACs is held at least once a year.

NCG meetings are organised and chaired by the Member State holding the NCG Presidency, in cooperation with the European Commission and with support of the Baltic Sea strategy point (BSP), which also take part in the meetings.

The NCG adopts its own rules of procedure.

2.3.1. Tasks of national coordinators group

The national coordinators group (NCG) is the core decision-making body within the governance structure of the EUSBSR, acting as its executive board.

The NCG tasks include:

- General leadership, coordination and development of the Strategy, including providing strategic guidance and establishing priorities;
- Acting as interface and link between the EUSBSR and the political level;
- Ensuring targeted capacity building for stakeholders, in general via the BSP;
- Ensuring communication, information and publicity about the Strategy, in general via the BSP;
- Ensuring a monitoring and evaluation framework;
- Appointing PACs and Lead PACs and providing a common structure for the SG rules of procedure;
- Directing and monitoring the work of the BSP, taking into account specific requirements due to the fact that the BSP is implemented as a project;
- Serving as guardian of the proper functioning of the governance of the EUSBSR. Any non-compliance with the action plan that affects the proper functioning of the strategy must be addressed by the NCG;

- Representing the EUSBSR in its overall relations, e.g. with the European Commission, other EU institutions, other EU macro-regional strategies, managing authorities including Interreg Baltic Sea region programme, Interact and other cooperation formats in the region;
- Initiating revisions of the strategy and/or the action plan;
- Deciding on revisions of the action plan after having consulted the PAs and other relevant stakeholders¹⁴. The NCG can decide on revisions of the action plan as long as these do not modify the strategy itself, which can only be altered by a decision of the Council.

2.3.2. Presidency of the national coordinators group

The NCG Presidency rotates annually among the EUSBSR Member States (beginning of July – end of June), in line with a rotation schedule agreed by the NCG and included in its rules of procedure.

The Presidency coordinates the national coordinators and the policy area coordinators, supported by the BSP and in cooperation with the European Commission, and strives to facilitate decision-making and cooperation. .

In order to promote coherence and continuity of work across the Presidency cycles, regular information exchange takes place between the NCG Presidency and the previous and incoming Presidencies. This Presidency Trio (TRIO) has a supportive role vis-à-vis the incumbent Presidency, as described in the NCG Rules of procedure. The European Commission and the BSP are invited to participate in TRIO meetings.

2.3.3. National coordinators' tasks at national level

In addition to their responsibilities as members of the national coordinators group, the national coordinators have tasks at the national level. Their role in the national administration includes:

- promoting political support and commitment to the strategy;
- ensuring overall coordination and overview of, as well as guidance and support for, active participation by different national stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy;
- promoting appropriate funding for the strategy implementation, including by encouraging cooperation with relevant managing authorities;
- acting as interface and link between the operational level of the EUSBSR and the political level and
- promoting the visibility and raising awareness of the strategy, its actions and results.

2.4. Policy areas

Policy areas (PAs) represent the expertise in their respective areas of activity and ensure the implementation of the Strategy and the action plan. Having an overview of the relevant sectors, PAs hold policy discussions and identify key ways to achieve the EUSBSR objectives through different means of action and determine how to best implement the required solutions.

¹⁴ The national coordinators group sends the action plan proposal to the European Commission. After completion of the Commission internal procedure, the action plan is published as a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD), which is the legal status of the action plan.

PAs are managed operationally by policy area coordinators (PACs), supported and guided strategically by their respective steering groups (SGs).

2.4.1. Steering groups

Each policy area has a steering group (SG). SG members are representatives of the national or regional governments of the EUSBSR Member States. The SG may be an existing cooperation body within the PAC organisation, if appropriate and approved by the NCG.

SG members have two kinds of tasks. On the one hand, they represent their governments in their respective SG. On the other hand, they perform their tasks as focal points at the national level.

The objective is that all SGs include members from all EUSBSR Member States. However, a Member State can choose not to participate in a specific SG. A Member State can also appoint more than one representative to an SG, if this is necessary due to the structure of the Member State or other similar reasoning. In this case, one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative and act as such.

SG members should come from key ministries or authorities in the relevant field. They should have sufficient capability, mandate and resources to fulfil their tasks as required by the EUSBSR.

A SG may also invite representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations to join the group as members or observers, upon a decision taken by consensus by the EUSBSR Member States' representatives in the group. However, before such a decision is implemented, it has to be endorsed by the NCG. Such representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations cannot block decisions of the EUSBSR Member States, but they may choose to opt out of specific decisions taken by the SG. This must be laid down in the steering groups' rules of procedure.

PACs must keep the SG presidency and the BSP updated as soon as changes in the composition of SG membership occur.

SGs should convene at least twice a year. Online meetings are encouraged. The meetings are prepared and organised by the SG presidency, in close cooperation with the respective PAC/PACs. The SG Presidency should rotate among the SG Members, normally on an annual basis.

SGs take decisions by consensus. They adopt their own rules of procedure, in accordance with the action plan and the common structure for the SG rules of procedure provided by the NCG, while taking into account the specific requirements of their PA.

SGs are cooperation bodies at PA level. Their main task consists of:

- Supporting the respective PAC/PACs in fulfilling their tasks, including:
 - guiding the development of the PA in general by policy discussions and by endorsing new objectives, developments and operation formats, including flagships;

- endorsing proposals to update targets, references etc. that do not change the action plan substantially, in close dialogue with the EC¹⁵ and
- ensuring linkages to relevant national and regional policy-making.
- Monitoring and evaluating the policy areas include:
 - endorsing the work plans and annual substantial reports on achievements for the PA, drafted by the PACs, and submitting these documents to the NCG for information.

2.4.2. Steering group members' tasks at national level

In addition to their responsibilities within their group, SG members' representing national or regional governments serve as focal points in their respective administrations. Their role includes:

- acting as liaison between their PA and the respective administration, ensuring linkages between macro-regional and national or regional policy processes;
- raising awareness and ownership of the objectives, means and achievements of the EUSBSR within their respective administrations and amongst other relevant stakeholders;
- cooperating with relevant managing authorities in their respective home countries, regarding the operational level;
- supporting the national coordinator in promoting political commitment to the strategy as well as in raising national awareness and promoting visibility of the EUSBSR.

2.4.3. Policy area coordinators

Each PA is managed by one or several policy area coordinators (PACs). They are appointed and recalled by the NCG, following a proposal by the respective SG. If a PA has more than one PAC, the NCG decides which one of them is the leading PAC, following a proposal by the respective SG.

A PAC organisation representing a EUSBSR Member State can be a ministry or other official authority of the national or regional government. A PAC can also be an organisation or an intergovernmental or non-governmental body, which can ensure the operationalisation of a PA. A PAC cannot hand over the coordinator role or tasks to another authority, organisation or body. A PAC organisation has to keep the corresponding NC, the SG Presidency, BSP and the European Commission updated as soon as relevant personnel changes occur.

The PAC organisations work in close cooperation with each other and divide their tasks in their work plans to best suit the needs of the PA. The lead PAC is responsible for coordination among the PACs and for the administration of the PA.

PACs are the key operational stakeholders of the EUSBSR at the policy area level, ensuring the implementation of the Strategy with support and guidance of their respective SGs. They facilitate and serve as a strong liaison between their PA groups of actors by offering a platform for exchanging and coordinating initiatives, stakeholders, policy processes and information.

The tasks of a PAC can be divided into four groups:

¹⁵ Decisions on substantial changes to the action plan remain the sole competence of the national coordinators group.

1. Ensuring a general overview of the PA, including various types of developments and modes of operation;
2. Managing, coordinating and developing the PA, including:
 - facilitating the implementation of Actions defined in the action plan, while ensuring that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the PA;
 - facilitating the funding of the Actions, incl. via cooperation with the managing authorities;
 - facilitating the involvement and cooperation of and relevant policy discussions among stakeholders;
 - identifying and facilitating cooperation activities, including networks, platforms and processes;
 - liaising and cooperating with other PAs, the BSP and other stakeholders to ensure coherence and synergies and to avoid duplication and
 - contributing, as appropriate, to the targeted capacity building for stakeholders coordinated by the BSP.
3. Monitoring and reporting on progress within the PA, including i.a.:
 - drafting a PA work plan, based on the Action Plan, and an annual substantial report on PA achievements, to be endorsed by the respective SG and submitted to the NCG for information and
 - reporting to the SG on relevant developments within the PA, incl. possible needs to revise the action plan.
4. Ensuring communication and visibility of the PA, including:
 - maintaining and updating the website and other suitable communication channels for the PA, included in or linked to the EUSBSR website¹⁶, with the support of the BSP and
 - providing information and suitable material within the scope of the PA to the BSP for communication and visibility purposes.

2.5. EUSBSR Annual Forum

Since 2010 a yearly forum has been organised to support the EUSBSR. The purposes of the EUSBSR Annual Forum are to communicate on the work of the Strategy, its objectives and achievements to stakeholders, policymakers and a wider audience, to stimulate policy discussions, to share results and to provide stakeholders with a networking opportunity.

The Annual Forum takes place in one of the EUSBSR Member States and aims to attract key stakeholders and active partners of the EUSBSR from local, regional, national and EU level. The hosting of the Annual Fora is based on a sequence of the EUSBSR Member States agreed by the NCG and included in its rules of procedure.

2.6. European Commission

The European Commission (EC) plays a key role within the EUSBSR. DG REGIO provides strategic coordination and advice to the NCG on the managing and developing strategy and gives guidance to

¹⁶ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>

EUSBSR actors on prioritising strategic frameworks and policies. It also strives to ensure that the EUSBSR is duly taken into account in the design and implementation of all relevant EU policies and financial instruments.

DG REGIO promotes interlinkages and alignment between the EUSBSR and relevant EU-funded programmes during their programming and implementation (EU, national, regional and centrally managed funding instruments), including transnational and cross-border cooperation programmes. It promotes the embedding of the EUSBSR at both strategic document level and at operational level, including by promoting continuous dialogue between European Commission actors (desk officers in DG REGIO and sectoral Directorates-General) and programme bodies (e.g. monitoring committees, managing authorities, joint secretariats, intermediate bodies).

DG REGIO promotes and facilitates the dialogue and involvement of stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region within the EU, and across EU macro-regional strategies. DG REGIO supports participation of European Commission sectoral Directorates-General in the work of PAs, as appropriate.

The European Commission reports regularly to other EU institutions on the progress made in implementing the EUSBSR and on the results achieved. It also promotes coherence and mutual learning between the EUSBSR and other EU macro-regional strategies. For this purpose, every two years, the European Commission presents a report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

DG REGIO regularly participates in NCG meetings, and, where possible, in meetings of SGs and PACs.

2.7. Baltic Sea strategy point

The Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) is a function providing administrative and technical support for EUSBSR management, development and communication.

Its main tasks are:

- coordinating targeted capacity building for the EUSBSR stakeholders, including those in neighbouring non-EU countries;
- coordinating knowledge sharing and best practices between PAs as regards integration of essential elements, such as addressing climate change and cooperation with neighbouring non-EU countries;
- coordinating the overall communication activities of the EUSBSR;
- coordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the EUSBSR;
- serving as the institutional memory of the EUSBSR;
- ensuring technical support to the NCG and, where possible, also to PACs and
- supporting the planning and organisation of the EUSBSR Annual Fora.

The BSP is guided by and accountable to the NCG, which decides on its terms of reference and its detailed tasks. The day-to-day work of the BSP is conducted in close contact with the NCG presidency.

2.8. High Level Group

The High Level Group (HLG) on macro-regional strategies (MRS) is an EU-level body, advising the European Commission on the coordination and monitoring of all macro-regional strategies. It is made up of official representatives of all EU Member States and the non-EU countries that participate in the macro-regional strategies.

The HLG ensures the coordination and monitoring of the macro-regional strategies, assesses progress made in their implementation and may provide policy orientation and strategic guidance. It is the forum where the approaches and practices of each macro-regional strategies are compared, in order to maximise the leverage and impact of the strategies. The annual HLG meetings provide overall strategic guidance also for the individual strategies, including EUSBSR.

3. The actions

Actions are developed to translate the EUSBSR objectives into results. Actions are implemented through activities.

An action is an important issue requiring intervention to achieve the objectives of a PA. It can for example be the development of a policy recommendation, a new approach, an increased coordination in policy making, support to a process already engaged or a networking initiative. The PAs ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the Actions.

The actions included in this action plan are based on the input provided by the PACs and endorsed by the NCG. They also reflect the inputs provided by European Commission departments.

This action plan only includes a short strategic outline of each action. More detailed descriptions of actions are provided in the detailed PA work plans endorsed by the respective SGs. Further information is available on the website of the EUSBSR¹⁷ as well as on those of the individual PAs.

Table 1: Overview of actions grouped by policy area

PA Nutri	Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources
	Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources
	Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling
	Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea
PA Hazards	Action 1: Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances
	Action 2: Mitigate and remediate contamination
PA Bio-economy	Action 1: Strengthen the role and importance of the bio-economy for achieving increased sustainability, productivity and adaption to climate change as well as resilience, including climate resilience in ecosystems
	Action 2: Improving agricultural practices for sustainability and adaptation (e.g. to climate change) in a sustainable and resilient growing bioeconomy
	Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-

¹⁷ <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>

	sectorial approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy
PA Safe	Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea
	Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges
	Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation
	Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues
PA Ship	Action 1: Support measures reducing emissions from shipping including digitalization.
	Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea.
	Action 3: Support development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for alternative fuels
PA Transport	Action 1: Improve connectivity of the regions and cooperation with third countries
	Action 2: Development of measures towards climate-neutral and zero pollution transport
	Action 3: Facilitate innovative technologies & solutions in the Baltic Sea region
PA Energy	Action 1: Streamlining efforts on energy efficiency in the region by deepening regional cooperation
	Action 2: Further regional gas and electricity market integration including climate-proof infrastructure development
	Action 3: Baltic synchronization
	Action 4: Increasing the share of renewable energy including marine renewable energy
PA Spatial planning	Action 1: Strengthening territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea region through land-based spatial planning
	Action 2: Ensuring coherent maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea
PA Secure	Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management.
	Action 2: Strengthening mechanisms for joint strategic and operational actions protecting human beings and societies from criminal threats.
	Action 3: A common societal security culture in the Baltic Sea region
PA Tourism	Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas
	Action 2: Investing in people, skills and technology in the tourism industry
	Action 3: Protection and sustainable utilization of cultural heritage and natural resources in tourism destinations
PA Culture	Action 1: Promoting the Baltic Sea region cultural and creative industries, encouraging creative entrepreneurship
	Action 2: Promoting Baltic Sea region culture and European values, using culture for sustainable development
	Action 3: Preserving the BSR's cultural heritage, strengthening regional identity
PA Innovation	Action 1: Challenge-driven innovation
	Action 2: Digital innovation and transformation
	Action 3: Co-creative innovation
PA Health	Action 1: Promoting active and healthy ageing to address the challenges of demographic change
	Action 2: Promoting a Health in all policies approach with focus on the impact of environmental factors, and especially climate change on human health

	Action 3: Increasing stakeholder and institutional capacity to tackle regional health challenges.
PA Education	Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work
	Action 2: International excellence and wider participation in science and research
	Action 3: A labour market for all, using resources of longer lives
	Action 4: Recognising potential – easing the way for migrants

3.1. Policy area Nutri

Policy area coordinator: Finland (Ministry of the Environment); Poland (Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation).

1. EUSBSR objectives

Policy area ‘Nutri’ contributes to the ‘Save the Sea’ objective and is connected to two sub-objectives:

- ‘Clear water in the sea’: One of the most serious and difficult environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea is the continuing problem of eutrophication arising from excessive nutrient loads of nitrogen, phosphorus and ammonia emissions from agriculture. According to HELCOM State of the Baltic Sea report (2018), 97 % of the Baltic Sea is eutrophied. PA Nutri aims to reduce nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea to acceptable levels to mitigate eutrophication and to achieve a good environmental status.
- ‘Rich and healthy wildlife’: Eutrophication increases the primary production of the sea, leading to toxic algae blooms and excessive growth of filamentous algae. It also causes oxygen depletion, reduced water clarity and other harmful effects that can lead to changes in the whole ecosystem. Climate change is foreseen to amplify the eutrophication symptoms. Further, eutrophication affects the use of marine resources and recreational activities.

PA Nutri serves as a cross-border and cross-sectoral policy tool for cooperation in the Baltic Sea region. The actions are designed to reduce nutrient losses and manage nutrients more efficiently to mitigate eutrophication and to mitigate climate change. PA Nutri will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change including contributions to eutrophication stemming from outside the Baltic Sea region and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Nutri is contributing to SDGs 14 and 6.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Nutri supports the implementation of European Union directives and the Helsinki Convention and promotes development of strategic flagship projects and opportunities for their financing. PA Nutri is related to the following EU regional and international strategic frameworks:

- HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan;
- HELCOM Baltic Sea Regional strategy for Nutrient Recycling (in preparation);
- EU Water legislation;
- EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- EU Nitrates Directive;
- EU Resource efficiency roadmap;
- EU Biodiversity strategy;
- EU Circular Economy strategy;
- Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea area (HELCOM);
- EU Common agricultural policy.

This policy area can also build on certain key actions of the European Green Deal, principally: the Zero Pollution Ambition and the related action plan, the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, the Farm to Fork strategy and the Circular Economy action plan.

This policy area should also contribute to the achievement of the commitments made in “Our Baltic” Declaration on 28 September 2020 to fight anthropogenic eutrophication, notably through a sustainable agriculture. This declaration was signed by the Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries of the EU Baltic Sea Member States to achieve a clean, healthy and sustainable Baltic Sea¹⁸. These commitments are also in line with actions implemented at EU level with the Marine strategy Framework Directive and with the European Green Deal, and with actions implemented at regional level within the Helsinki convention for the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM).

Other relevant frameworks include: Convention on Biological Diversity (also in the context of the revised (CBD), Closing the loop - an EU action plan for the Circular Economy, the 8th Environment action programme to 2030 and the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

At implementation level and thematic focal areas: mainly through projects and in longer processes: national ministries & agencies, cities & municipalities, NGOs, publicly owned entities (like waste water treatment plants), farmers’ organisations, research organisations and foundations.

5. Key policy area achievements so far

The nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea have decreased during the last decade. Under Policy Area Nutri, flagship projects (Phosphates in detergents, Baltic Deal, Identifying priority projects in Belarus, PRESTO, NutriTrade, Baltic Blue Growth, IWAMA, CONSUME, BEST, DESIRE and BigRivers4Baltic) have been carried out in various ways such as demonstration farms, investments in wastewater treatment plants, capacity building and sharing good practices in the region. However, to save the Baltic Sea, further and continued action is necessary.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/ministerial_declaration_our_baltic_conference.pdf

The EUSBSR PA Nutri, PA Hazards and HELCOM have established functioning cooperation, where HELCOM sets the policy targets in the region and EUSBSR supports Member States in reaching those targets. Nutri also brings results, policy recommendations and new emerging issues from flagship projects to the HELCOM discussion. PA Nutri and its platform projects (BSR Water and SuMaNu) have supported the initiation of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient recycling strategy.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources				
<p>Objective: Action 1 aims to limit nutrient emissions from diffuse sources and reduce their pressure on the Baltic ecosystem. The action also strengthens European action to fight against climate change. Several measures are envisaged.</p> <p>Description: Actively encourage the sectors (from agriculture, aquaculture and forestry) generating nutrient leakage from diffuse sources to mitigate their influence on eutrophication by showing economically and/or timely attractive measures and/or practices reducing nutrient pressure. Promote cost-efficient and innovative measures to prevent and reduce nutrient leakage from agriculture and forestry e.g. agrotechnic methods to prevent over fertilization, application of gypsum or structural lime, establishing wetlands, buffer zones or other nutrient trapping structures/methods. Improve monitoring and the knowledge base of nutrient flows and loads, taking climate change into account.</p> <p>Raise awareness of best practices to prevent and reduce nutrient discharges and increase knowledge of linkages between climate change and eutrophication. Best practices will inter alia come from the flagships promoted by the PA.</p>				
Timing:				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Practical activities focusing on preventing or reducing of nutrients leakage	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships
Regional policy messages	Number of online publications of policy messages	1/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships & platforms
<p>Flagship ongoing or planned under this action Ongoing: DESIRE flagship, SuMaNu platform.</p>				
<p>Project (s) and other action (s) are planned under this action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support implementation of the updated HELCOM BSAP. * Achievement of commitments from “Our Baltic Declaration” to address all nutrient inputs at source * Communication of achievements, needs and results in EUSBSR channels and in Baltic Sea countries. * Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary. 				

Action 2: Reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources				
<p>Objective: Action 2 aims to reduce nutrient emissions from urban areas and other point sources. A number of measures are envisaged.</p> <p>Description: Support to cross-sectoral activities and measures that reduce discharges to the Sea from point sources, taking climate change into account. Develop innovative and nature based solutions to urban water management and scattered sources to reduce nutrient discharges. Improve monitoring and the knowledge base of nutrient flows and loads. Raise awareness and influence consumer behaviour. Since a key player in this action are local administrations, the established partnerships of the projects/processes/platforms must</p>				

include relevant type of partners. Results to be shared i.a. in a platform.				
Timing:				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on reduction of nutrient emissions	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri
Regional policy messages	Number of online publications of policy messages	0/2020	2/2025	PA Nutri, flagships, platforms
Flagship ongoing or planned under this action Ongoing: BEST flagship, Baltic Sea region WATER platform				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned under this action * Support implementation of the updated HELCOM BSAP. * Communication of achievements, needs and results in EUSBSR channels. * Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary.				

Action 3: Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling				
Objective: Action 3 aims to propose measures to strengthen and promote safe and sustainable use of nutrients in a circular economy. Description: Action 3, in relation to the New Circular Economy action plan of the Green Deal, proposes measures to strengthen and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling as part of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient Recycling strategy. Promote and develop environmentally safe and economically viable solutions to recover and reuse nutrients from agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and municipalities. Encourage new business models and symbioses with cross-sectoral cooperation. Promote knowledge exchange, influence consumption patterns, raise awareness and carry on policy dialogue.				
Timing:				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on recycling of nutrients	Number of actions/projects/pilots	2/2020	4/2025	PA Nutri, flagships, platforms
Flagship ongoing or planned under this action Ongoing BSR Water and SuMaNu platforms				
Project (s) and other action (s) are planned under this action * Support promotion and implementation of the HELCOM Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy. * Achievement of commitments from "Our Baltic Declaration" regarding nutrient recycling in order to reduce the losses of nutrients into the Baltic Sea. * Communication of achievements, needs and results to the Baltic Sea countries. * Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary (for e.g. workshop in February				

2020 with HELCOM as part of the elaboration of the Regional Nutrient Recycling strategy).

Action 4: Address nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea

Objective: Action 4 aims to address the consequences of nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea, in particular with a sectoral focus to reduce the environmental and climatic impact of nutrients on ecosystems.

Description: Develop ecologically and economically sustainable ways and partnerships to reduce nutrients from the sea e.g. management of fishing, mussel farming or collecting algae/nutrient rich biomass from the sea. Improve the knowledge base and undertake pilot actions of sea-based measures, addressing internal nutrient reserves, considering and evaluating their risks to ecosystem and human health, as well as the long-term sustainability of their effects in line with the HELCOM work on the regional principles and risk assessment framework for internal nutrient reserves management.

Timing:

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities focusing on reducing of nutrients accumulated in the BS	Number of actions/projects/pilots	0/2020	2/2025	PA Nutri, flagships

Flagship ongoing or planned under this action

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned within this action

* Support development of activities in line with the HELCOM work on regional principles and risk assessment framework for management of internal nutrient reserves.

* Achievement of commitments from “Our Baltic Declaration” regarding internal nutrient reserves..

* Communication of the needs and methods to the Baltic Sea countries.

* Organising workshops and other stakeholder events whenever it is necessary.

3.2. Policy area Hazards

Policy area Coordinator: Sweden (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency)

1. EUSBSR objectives

The policy area is contributing to the overall objective “Save the Sea” and the following existing sub-objectives:

- *Clear Waters*
- *Rich and Healthy wildlife*

Indicators¹⁹:

¹⁹ HELCOM core indicators according to BSAP 2013. The central objectives of the BSAP and MSFD are to **achieve** or **maintain** ‘good environmental status’ (GES). Please note that the HELCOM BSAP is currently being revised .

- *Concentration of Hazardous substances close to natural levels*
- *Healthy wildlife*
- *All fish safe to eat*

The PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

Added value of PA Hazards:

PA Hazards supports and promotes macro-regional responses to global challenges related to chemicals management, sound chemical management and a better linkage to international policy agendas (such as climate change, biodiversity, agriculture, production and consumption). The PA works for the prevention of pollution and the reduction of use of hazardous substances as well as for mitigation and remediation of historic pollution in the Baltic Sea environment. The policy area 'Hazards' assists stakeholders in the development of projects or other initiatives for development of measures and solutions in the field. Results are brought back to relevant policy forums at EU, regional and national level.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Hazards is contributing to SDGs 3, 6, 11, 12, 14 and 15.

3. EU or other policy frameworks²⁰

The policy area Hazards is related to the following EU- regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) ;
- EU Marine strategy framework directive (MSFD) ;
- EU Water framework directive (WFD);
- REACH regulation;
- EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment²¹;
- EU Chemicals Strategy for sustainability towards a toxic-free environment²² and
- Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

This policy area can also build on some key actions of the European Green Deal, principally: the Zero pollution action plan, the Circular Economy action plan, the Chemicals strategy for sustainability and the Farm to Fork strategy.

This policy area should also contribute to the achievement of the commitments made in "Our Baltic" Declaration on 28 September 2020 to reduce pollution and contaminants of emerging concern, also

²⁰ In addition to those listed below, the PA is also includes: 8th Environmental Framework programme, EU Circular Economy strategy and action plan (current 2015 & 2.0).

²¹https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-dangersub/pdf/strategic_approach_pharmaceuticals_env.PDF

²² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/chemicals-strategy_en

in line with actions implemented at EU level and at regional level within the Helsinki convention for the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM).

This declaration was signed by the Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries of the EU Baltic Sea Member States to achieve a clean, healthy and sustainable Baltic Sea²³.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

On the implementation level, in flagships, single projects and actions the PA cooperates with relevant actors on all levels of governance: national, regional and local authorities, Pan Baltic organisations, NGOs and research organisations.

We seek closer cooperation with the private companies and branch organisations.

The PA ties in closely with PA Nutri, Bioeconomy and Health.

The PA establishes reference groups when developing new thematic focus areas in the PA, consisting of SG members and other relevant actors like regional, local, academia, NGOs and private sector representatives.

5. Key policy area achievements (since 2015)

- establishment of macro-regional Baltic Sea region-Pharma platform on Pharmaceuticals in the Environment (PIE) combined with respective awareness raising and contribution to the establishment of Correspondence Group (CG) Pharma under HELCOM;
- establishment of macro-regional network on highly fluorinated substances (PFAS) with respective awareness raising and an inventory study on awareness, action and strategies related to PFAS in the Baltic Sea region;
- the flagship NonHazCity has developed chemical action plans for several Baltic Sea region cities, regions and municipalities, paving the way to a more sustainable management of chemicals in the region;
- study on the 'Effectiveness of measures applied in the EU Water framework directive programmes in the EU BSR countries'; informing the revision of HELCOMBSAP post 2021.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances

<p>Objective: Action 1 aims to develop and implement (non)-regulatory measures and Baltic Sea region wide policies to reduce the use and prevent emissions of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea environment. The policy area supports the development of suitable measures, practical solutions and policy recommendations for reduction of hazardous substances, from both diffuse and point sources on land. The topic is linked to the HELCOM expert group on reduction of pressures from the Baltic catchments area (PRESSURE) and the HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances. The action mainly focuses on two issues:</p>

<p>Human and veterinary pharmaceuticals: Through the Baltic Sea region Pharma platform PA Hazards offers knowledge transfer and capacity building through: training courses and workshops; testing of solutions and practical measures through cooperation in projects and policy impact; through recommendations from lessons learnt in the cooperation processes to relevant policy makers and other stakeholders.</p>

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/ministerial_declaration_our_baltic_conference.pdf

Per-and poly fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) To tackle the issue on a macro-regional level, we enable knowledge transfer from countries that have come further in the process of developing national actions, capacity building, development of harmonized policy approaches through cooperation in the regional platform PFASeOUT.				
Timing: 2015 – 2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Develop Baltic Sea region PFAS expert platform	Number of platforms	0/ 2019	1, existing by 2020	PFAS in the Baltic Sea Region, 2017 ²⁴
Development of policy recommendations/strategies on PFAS	Number of policy recommendations	0/ 2019	5/2025	PFAS in the Baltic Sea Region, 2017
Development of policy recommendations/strategies on PIE	Number of Policy recommendations	2/ 2019	10/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Engagement of relevant stakeholders at all levels of governance	Number of stakeholders engaged	100/ 2019	200 in all BSR-countries/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Flagship processes	Number of flagships	1/ 2019	2/ 2025	PA Hazards Annual report, 2019
Flagship processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baltic Sea region Pharma platform; • PFAS(e)Out – highly fluorinated substances in the Baltic Sea Region environment (planned) Other Flagships (ongoing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NonHazCity 2; • HazBref 				
Other ongoing actions and projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micropollutants in wastewater, storm water and sludge (ongoing) • Baltic Leadership Programme on highly fluorinated substances in the Baltic Sea Region • Achievement of commitments from “Our Baltic Declaration” to promote preventive or mitigation measures to reduce chemical pollution to levels no longer harmful for human health and the environment 				

Action 2: Mitigate new and remediate historic contamination
Objectives: Action 2 aspires to mitigate new and remediate historic contamination, causing negative effects in the Baltic ecosystem.
<p>The circular economy approach offers the possibility to develop measures and practical solutions to both getting rid of chemicals and other harmful pollution, recycling nutrients and other (raw) materials to be (re)used in production streams, as well as generating new data for better marine spatial planning to prevent and mitigate new sources of pollution.</p> <p>Risks associated with acute pollution by oil and other harmful substances cannot be eliminated. New generation fuels and variety of chemicals transported require analysis of their behaviour in the marine environment, effectiveness of the the existing response means and methods, and further enhancement in preparedness and response.</p> <p>Historic contamination with hazardous substances includes industrial emissions accumulated in soil and sediments, and hazardous substances in marine wrecks, as well as in items deliberately dumped to the Sea,</p>

²⁴<http://www.swedishepa.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/internationellt-miljoarbete/multilateralt/ostersjoregionen/PFAS-BSR-October-2017-FINAL.pdf>

such as munitions, which contribute to contamination of sediments in the Baltic Sea region. They need to be dealt with depending on their category by tailor-made approaches based on precautionary principle and risk assessment for prioritisation. A macro-regional stakeholder platform will bring together different kinds of relevant stakeholders from different policy levels to jointly develop action plans, strategies, policy recommendations, 'best & worst practice' briefs and product cases. Innovative projects and initiatives addressing these issues are encouraged.

The topic is linked to the HELCOM expert group on environmental risks of hazardous submerged objects and the HELCOM expert network on hazardous substances.

Timing: 2015 – 2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Develop platform for contaminated sediments, marine spatial planning and blue growth	Number of platforms developed	0/2019	1/2022	DAIMON & DAIMON 2 projects
Action plan on remediation of contaminated sediments, incl. fiber bank and CWAs	Number of action plans developed	0/2019	1/2023	DAIMON & DAIMON 2 projects
Flagship processes	Number of flagships	0/ 2019	1/ 2022	PA Hazards own internal analysis, 2019
Engagement of relevant stakeholders	Number of stakeholders engaged	20/ 2019	100, 2025	PA Hazards own internal analysis, 2019
Understanding the environmental impacts of new generation low sulphur marine fuel and improving response capacities	Number of new fuel oils analysed and recommendations for oil spill response involving the new generation of fuel oils	/ 2020	/ 2021	IMAROS project
Integrated preparedness and management of wildlife response in marine pollution incidents	Number of guidelines and tools	/ 2021	/ 2022	EUROWA II project
Enhanced training capacities and response to hazardous and noxious substances (HNS)	Number of tools focused on gaseous and volatile HNS issues	/ 2021	/ 2022	MANIFESTS project

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

- Daimon 2;
- CONTAMINATE: Clustering knowledge, expertise and data from ongoing projects, platforms and networks on contaminated sediments (planned)
- Achievement of commitments from "Our Baltic Declaration" to promote preventive or mitigation

measures to reduce chemical pollution to levels no longer harmful for human health and the environment, and to address the issue of hazardous submerged objects in the Baltic Sea

3.3. Policy area Bioeconomy

Policy area coordinator: Nordic Council of Ministers; Finland (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry); Sweden (Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Swedish Board of Agriculture), Lithuania (Ministry of Agriculture).

1. EUSBSR objectives

The PA delivers primarily on the EUSBSR objective “Save the Sea” and the sub-objectives of “Clear Water” and “Rich and healthy wildlife”, which includes promoting a sustainable use of marine, agricultural and forest resources as well as development of rural areas. Additionally, on the objective “Increase prosperity” and the sub-objectives “contributing to the implementation of Europe 2020 (2030) Strategy; Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region; Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.” The added value lies in transnational cooperation on issues that one Member State cannot solve alone (e.g. the state of the Baltic Sea). In addition, learning from each other, also across the borders, would speed up spreading of new sustainable practices and productions in agriculture, forestry, blue bio-economy including fisheries and aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region. The PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Primarily goal 14 and 15, but also contributing to SDG’s 2, 7, 11, 12 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Bioeconomy is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- EU Common agricultural policy;
- EU Common fisheries policy;
- EU Bioeconomy strategy for sustainable Europe;
- Communication from the Commission on the European Green Deal and in particular its following key actions:
 - the Farm to Fork strategy
 - the new EU Forest strategy (to be adopted in 2021)
- Agenda 2030 for sustainable development;
- HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan;
- HELCOM Strategy for Nutrient Recycling (in preparation);
- Nordic Bioeconomy strategy;
- EU Biodiversity strategy 2030;

- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- Zero Pollution action plan²⁵ ;

This policy area can also build on other key actions of the Green Deal, principally: the Zero pollution action plan, the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, the Circular Economy action plan, the Sustainable Europe investment plan, the EU Industrial strategy, the new EU strategy of adaptation to climate change and the EU strategy on offshore renewable energy.

This policy area should also contribute to the achievement of the commitments made in “Our Baltic” Declaration on 28 September 2020 to secure adequate funding and promoting a sustainable blue economy. This declaration was signed by the Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries of the EU Baltic Sea Member States to achieve a clean, healthy and sustainable Baltic Sea²⁶. These commitments are also in line with actions implemented at EU level with the Marine strategy framework Directive and with the European Green Deal, and with actions implemented at regional level within the Helsinki convention for the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM).

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Bioeconomy serves as a body where local, regional, macro regional and international organisations (private and public) become involved, to horizontally improve and widen the impact of different strategic frameworks (listed above). Moreover, it is planned to invite youth participants and participation from Norway and Russia. Representatives within the actions, from projects and activities etc., are another important stakeholder group. PA Bioeconomy aims to provide a structure that can facilitate development of activities, which can feed into the strategic frameworks and are supported by the PA Bioeconomy action plan - specifically connected to our three actions of priority.

5. Key policy area achievements

- Development of sustainability criteria and a trend analysis for bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea region;
- Outreach in form of workshops, Youtube-videos and podcasts;
- Establishment of networks for the Managing Authorities in the EMFF and in the EAFRD;
- Implementation of three Baltic Leadership Programs (BLP) and following up with the BeUBio project;
Several forestry related flagship projects and
- Several transnational seminars and workshops on nutrient recycling in agriculture.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Strengthen the role and importance of bioeconomy for achieving increased sustainability,

²⁵https://ec.europa.eu/environment/news/commission-outlines-road-zero-pollution-action-plan-2020-10-01_en

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/ministerial_declaration_our_baltic_conference.pdf

productivity and adaption to climate change as well as resilience, including climate resilience in ecosystems.

Sustainable use of natural resources must be considered in all decision-making processes, where often a holistic point of view helps capture opportunities. The bioeconomy in combination with the principles of circular economy represents an opportunity for productivity, economic benefits and environmental improvement, often referred to as circular bio-economy. It is evident that current resource outtake is not at a sustainable level, which triggers Baltic Sea region youth to act. Circular bio-economy can in this context become an enabler for sustainability, which draws young people’s interest towards bio-economy sector. The Baltic Sea region is already a bioeconomy hotspot and is the home of strong bioeconomy industries, perhaps most notably in the forestry and food sectors. The Baltic sea region with abundant natural resources, such as 30% of Europe’s forests, and its long tradition for sustainable management has demonstrated how the bio-economy can benefit the climate and provide various ecosystem services as well as being the backbone of the circular economy in the region. This includes development of new food and other products and services from land, sea, lakes and the forest in line with the Farm to Fork strategy, which contributes to sustainability of other sectors such as tourism. This action will function as an umbrella for many cross-cutting bio-economy activities such as: sustainable forestry; increased use of wood; sustainable food systems; identifying and developing use of alternative proteins and digitalization while mainly focusing on the blue and green bio-economy potential. This activity includes a bioeconomy trend analysis in the Baltic Sea region , identifying the most relevant macro trends for bio-economy in the region. The results of the analysis will be used to support policy dialogue within the national and regional stakeholders of EUSBSR and raise awareness of the development of bio-economy and the potential of a more circular bio-economy in the Baltic Sea region.

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Policy impact	Policy recommendations	0	1 pr. year	Own database based on publications and workshops. www.BSRBioeconomy.net google analytics, twitter analytics www.BSRBioeconomy.net and individual flagship websites.
Public impact	Number of communication activities	0	5 pr. Year	
Develop the circular economy	New circular initiatives	0	Identify 3-5 new cases for industrial symbiosis in BSR	
Umbrella flagship	Umbrella flagship gathering activities of joint value for the macro region – action 1 focus	0	1 umbrella flagship	

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

RDI2CluB – Smart and sustainable bio-economy; Blue Growth (new flagship process); Retrout – Sustainable costal fishing tourism; Bonus Bluewebs – Blue growth and environmental benefits; WAMBAF Tool Box; Wood in Construction and 2-3 other new flagships or flagship processes.

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned under this action

Seminars and workshops; deliver a report describing the macro trends in the region; communication activities such as podcasts and short videos; new flagship process on blue growth; initiating new cooperation projects for sustainable use of biomass, new pilot project on biodiversity in the Baltic Sea region .

Action 2: Improving agricultural practices for sustainability and adaptation (e.g. to climate change) in a sustainable and resilient growing bio-economy.

Eutrophication is still one of the major threats to the Baltic Sea environment. This is caused by oversupply of nutrients (N and P) mainly released from the agricultural sector and waste water. The global phosphorus resources are limited and often situated in geopolitically delicate areas. At the same time, valuable nutrients, e.g. in manure, are wasted instead of being used for plant nutrition. New solutions such as digital tools, organic fertilizer products and biochar must be developed and implemented to facilitate the transition towards a circular bio-economy, as well as better adaptation to the different aspects of climate change. The action is closely coordinated with the activities of PA-Nutri and will partly be a continuation to the current action: Recycling of nutrients in agriculture. This new action must, when so is appropriate and beneficial, include aquaculture and forestry management into the concepts. For example, farmers are often forest owners, with the forest in connection with their agricultural land. Therefore, considering an area's various natural resources can be an appropriate strategy to meet eutrophication challenges. There is still much to do to improve efficiency and sustainability of the use of natural resources. In addition, the new action will include new activities that can improve the sustainability and adaptation of agriculture to climate change, such as improved management of water and waterways in agriculture, increased energy sustainability in farms and activities to improve the adaptation of peatlands, wetlands as well as for connected forestry lands and aquaculture. There will be focus on new digital solutions for achieving the objective: knowledge exchange, especially peer-to-peer learning has proven to be the most efficient method in adopting new tools or methods; development of communication channels and learning platforms. The new action will look for synergies with reducing emissions of air pollutants from agriculture such as ammonia (e.g. fertiliser use, manure processing) and NOx (e.g. energy efficiency, non-combustible renewable energy).

Timing: 2020-2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
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Development of knowledge exchange tools/material	Number of stakeholders using the tools or taking part in the knowledge exchange events	0	1000 stakeholders by the end of 2030	Participants in the organised events and users of the development tools
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
Ongoing flagship projects: manure standards and SuMaNu.				
Planned new flagship projects in accordance with the actions mentioned below.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned within this action				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved water management in agriculture and forestry, for better adaptation to the increasing floods and droughts hazards. - Activities to improve adaptation of peatlands in the Baltic Sea region. - Energy self-sustainability of farms. - Continuation of the current and earlier nutrient recycling projects. There is a need for further actions in recycling of nutrients contributing to a cleaner Baltic Sea. The activities will be implemented in cooperation and consistence with the new HELCOM strategy for nutrient recycling that is currently under preparation. 				

Action 3: Strengthen multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectoral approaches to release potential and accelerate the development of a sustainable circular bio-economy				
<p>Bio-economy cuts across sectors, connects land and aquatic ecosystems and comprises both economic, social and biological aspects. It includes primary production sectors that use and produce biological resources (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) as well as sectors using biological resources and processes (e.g. food, bio-based products, energy and services). This action will address the importance of multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectoral approaches to accelerate the deployment of a sustainable bio-economy and its contribution to climate change adaptation in the Baltic Sea region. Results will contribute to the implementation of the EU strategy for a sustainable bio-economy and could be used as practical means of approaching multiple use of resources in planning of land, forest and aquatic ecosystems. Activities will support knowledge sharing and approaches that link actors, sectors, territories and value chains. This could include: to visualise methods and models to extract more value out of limited resources; identifying cross-sectoral industrial symbiosis that increases use of bio-based products; assessing cross-cutting challenges and opportunities; assessing impact and importance of policy instruments and alignment of funding sources; visualise potential to provide sources of income diversification and visualise values of non-market benefits, ecosystem services and social values such as recreation.</p>				
Timing: 2020-2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source

Activities focusing on challenges, limitations and opportunities regarding multiple use of biological resources	Number of actions/projects/pilots	0/2020	3/2025	PA Bioeconomy
Methods identified or created to visualise non-market benefits	Number of methods	0/2020	5/2025	PA/Bioeconomy
Identify good examples of bio-industrial symbiosis	Number of identified examples	0/2020	10/2025	PA Bioeconomy
Policy papers promoting valorisation of multiple use benefits	Number of policy papers	0/2020	3/2025	PA Bioeconomy

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: New initiatives and projects should be developed

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

- Support implementation of the European strategy for a sustainable bio-economy;
- Identify methods and models to extract more value out of limited resources;
- Identify challenges, limitations and opportunities to increase multiple use of resources;
- Visualise the potential of different sectors and actors to enhance multiple use of resources through cross-cutting and cross-sectoral approaches;
- Support knowledge sharing and increase awareness of non-market benefits and added value of multiple use of resources;
- Identify importance of policy instruments and alignment of funding sources;
- Develop management strategies and plans using geographic information system and digital tools.

3.4. Policy area Safe

Policy area coordinator: Denmark (Danish Maritime Authority); Finland (Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom).

1. EUSBSR objectives

The policy area on maritime Safety and Security provides a sound platform for reinforcing maritime safety and security in the Baltic Sea region. PA Safe contributes to the objective “Save the sea” and its sub-objective “Clean and safe shipping”. PA Safe will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Safe is contributing to SDG: 8, 9, 13 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Safe is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- High-level action plan of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- Integrated Maritime Policy including blue growth and other maritime policies of the European Union;
- Baltic Sea action plan (adopted in 2007) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM);
- White Paper on Transport (2011);
- NAIADES II European action plan for the promotion of inland waterway transport (2018);
- TEN-T network and regulation;
- EU Water legislation;
- EU Marine strategy framework Directive;
- EU Sulphur Directive;
- Habitats Directive in connection with the Birds Directive;
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive;
- SEQUE-UE Regulation;
- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea;
- EU Single Use Plastic Directive and
- IMO Conventions such as MARPOL and SOLAS Conventions.

This policy area can also build on some key actions of the European Green Deal, principally: the Zero pollution action plan, the Chemicals strategy, the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, the Sustainable Europe investment plan, the EU industrial strategy.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

The international steering committee meetings, the PA Safe events and the flagships bring together policy makers, scientists and people working in different fields of the maritime industry.

5. Key policy area achievements

A wide range of Flagships has been established, the results of which include but are not limited to:

- Real world tests for e-Navigation services in the area of the Baltic Sea;
- Re-surveying the major shipping routes and ports in the Baltic Sea area to provide more accurate sea charts;
- Enhancements for emergency preparedness and situational awareness in navigation (including winter conditions).

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Providing reliable navigational conditions to the Baltic Sea				
Objectives: The aim of action 1 is to improve navigation safety in the Baltic Sea by providing more accurate bathymetry data, which can be used to create state-of-the-art nautical charts for E-navigation. In the future, this action will also focus on developing innovations based on such data as well as on training of the maritime personnel to use ECDIS equipment. Furthermore, this action will continue with development work of the backup systems for Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).				
Timing: Ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New innovations based on more accurate bathymetry data	Number of innovations	0	2/2023	PA safe reports
Coverage of accurate hydrographic survey areas (percentage of the target)	Area covered	Year 2019	2023-2025	Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission will set the target in 3/2020
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
The Flagship “Speed up re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports” aims to ensure reliable bathymetry data for major shipping routes and ports of the Baltic Sea. This project is supported by another project, namely “Finalising Surveys for the Baltic Motorways of the Sea (FAMOS)”. Moreover, the flagship “R-mode Baltic” focuses on testing of GNSS independent PNT systems. Furthermore, a new Flagship called FASTMOS continuing the work of FAMOS and STM validation is under preparation.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
The new Flagships can include: i) developing new innovations based on more accurate bathymetry data, ii) training of maritime personnel to use ECDIS equipment and promoting the utilisation of more accurate bathymetry data in such equipment, iii) resurveys in shallow waters to provide more accurate data for leisure crafts and fairway planning. iii) facilitation of enriching electronic navigational charts with dynamic data and building a digital model of physical transport infrastructure as well as facilitation of adoption of interfaces developed in the STM project.iv) development and utilisation of Baltic Sea as a test bed in transport system level automation pilots.				

Action 2: Developing winter navigation to meet future challenges

Objectives: Action 2 aims to improve the safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability of winter navigation through enhanced cooperation between relevant authorities, transport operators and research institutes.				
Timing: Ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developing and implementing risk assessment and management tools for winter navigation	Number of tools	0	2/2025	PA Safe report
Solution for improved integration of winter navigation to maritime data sharing	Number of solutions	0	1/2025	PA Safe report
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
The completed flagship Winmos and the ongoing flagship Winmos 2 are developing maritime winter navigation systems and icebreaking resources for the EU's northernmost waters. A continuation for Winmos is also under preparation. Furthermore, a new flagship focusing on risk management of winter navigation is under preparation.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
The future flagships can include: i) developing intelligent transport systems (ITS) solutions for winter navigation, ii) further development of training both for merchant vessels and icebreaker operators and iii) developing more advanced ship simulators and training courses for winter navigation.				

Action 3: To be a forerunner in digitalisation and automation				
Objectives: Action 3 aims to focus on developing reliable and sound systems for maritime traffic management, including digitalisation and autonomous shipping. What is more, the action aims to develop maritime training and education in order to meet the future challenges.				
Timing: Ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New and improved services for e-navigation	Number of services	0	4/2025	PA Safe reports
Developed training courses for the use of new digital technologies	Number of services	0	2/2025	PA Safe reports
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
The Flagship “STM BALT SAFE (2019-2021)” aims to increase safety of navigation in the Baltic Sea by providing Sea Traffic Management (STM) systems for oil transportations. This project is based on the methods, results and the maritime service infrastructure, which were developed in previous flagship projects, including EfficienSea II, MONALISA 2.0 and Sea Traffic Management Validation. Furthermore, a new flagship called FASTMOS continuing the work of FAMOS and STM Validation is under preparation.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
The actions can include:				

- i) reinforcement of fundamental functions of vessels;
- ii) enhancement of communication between vessels as well as vessels and shore facilities;
- iii) new and improved services that enhance operations both on-board ships and for shore based facilities;
- iv) development of maritime education curricula to meet future requirements;
- v) better training of personnel regarding to use of new digital technologies;
- vi) improved understanding of interaction between human and automatic/autonomous system in different conditions;
- vii) developing robust risk management measures to mitigate cyber threats and
- viii) establishing a test area to the Baltic Sea for autonomous shipping.

Action 4: Ensure accurate preparedness and response for maritime accidents and security issues

Objectives: Efficient search-and-rescue (SAR) and pollution preparedness and response (PPR) are essential functions to prevent loss of life or environmental damages. Therefore, Action 4 aims to reinforce these activities through improved cross-sectoral and cross border cooperation, including allocation of resources and transfer of knowledge between countries.

Timing: Ongoing

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Further developed and deployment of SOPs for preparedness and response of maritime accidents	Number of solutions	0	4/2023	PA Safe other
Developed risk assessment and management measures for security and cyber risks	Number of tools	0	2/2025	PA Safe reports

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

The “ResQU2” is a project platform funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme, which aims to increase preparedness and coordination of rescue operations.

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

The actions can include:

- i) improve coordination of crisis management capacities and resources;
- ii) improved co-operation and sharing of real-time information in order to increase Maritime Situational Awareness among authorities and other stakeholders in order to make SAR-operations more efficient;
- iii) improved safety of the search and rescue authorities and services;
- iv) improved availability of ships’ cargo information related to oil, HSN and IMDG cargoes on-board;
- v) advancing the implementation of safety management systems and good safety culture in shipping companies for accident prevention and
- vi) developing robust risk management measures against security risks.

3.5. Policy area Ship

Policy area coordinator: Denmark (Danish Maritime Authority).

1. EUSBSR objectives

The objective of PA SHIP is to help facilitate the transition to sustainable shipping industry and to make it a positive business opportunity²⁷. The region can function as a test-bed for new and innovative products, services, methods and practices addressing global challenges, such as environmental degradation and climate change, creating prosperous opportunities for blue growth in the Baltic Sea region (BSR). Overall, the vision is that the BSR should become *a model region for sustainable shipping*²⁸.

The high level of competence in clean shipping technologies in the Baltic Sea region contributes to reaching the overall objectives of the Strategy, but in particular 'Save the Sea'. As such, PA Ship also contributes to the sub-objectives, such as: 'Clear water in the sea' and 'Clean and safe shipping'. Finally, PA Ship will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

The strength of PA Ship in the midst of other regional cooperation forums is its strong ability to support transnational cooperation, its focus on a project-based policy dialogue and its ability to help align EU funding with the agreed policy objectives.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Ship is contributing to SDGs 9, 13, 14.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Ship is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- High-level action plan of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- Integrated maritime policy including blue growth and other maritime policies of the European Union;
- Baltic Sea action plan (adopted in 2007) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM), currently under revision, the updated version to be adopted by the Ministerial meeting in 2021;
- White paper on transport (2011);
- NAIADES II European action plan for the promotion of inland waterway transport (2018);
- TEN-T network, especially TEN-T Regulation 1 315 (2013);
- EU water legislation, especially Water framework Directive (2000/60/EC);
- Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in connection with the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC);
- Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive and its update (ongoing);

²⁷ European Commission, Report "Towards an implementation strategy for the sustainable blue growth agenda for the Baltic Sea region", Brussels, 2017.06.09

²⁸ Full working paper on PA Ship in the EUSBSR: <https://www.dma.dk/Vaekst/EU/EUOestersoestrategi/Sider/default.aspx>

- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD), Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea;
- MARPOL Convention;
- IMO’s Ballast Water Management Convention (2014);
- IMO’s AFS Convention and EU Regulation and
- IMO’s Initial Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions (2018) and measures developed thereunder.

This policy area can also build on some key actions of the European Green Deal, principally: the EU Zero pollution action plan, the Chemicals strategy (e.g. including availability of shore power), the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, the Sustainable Europe investment plan, the EU industrial strategy..

4. Involvement of stakeholders

The international steering committee meetings and other dissemination activities organised by PA Ship bring together a broad set of stakeholders related to the maritime industry, as well as local authorities.

5. Key policy area achievements

Completed results and ongoing work include:

- Four flagships on development of infrastructure and value chain of LNG in the Baltic Sea region, with the objective to reduce air pollutant emissions from ships. The flagships built on each other’s results and gradually moved closer to concrete infrastructure investments;
- Three flagships working on policy impact and concrete solutions for sewage and waste in the ports;
- Six flagships focusing on emissions from shipping in the Baltic Sea region and on economic incentives to reduce emissions;
- Project platform focusing on the environmental effects of shipping and the business potential of clean shipping and
- Creation of a regional project-based policy dialogue among maritime stakeholders.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Support measures including digitalisation in reducing emissions from shipping.				
Objectives In order to establish the Baltic Sea region as a model region for clean shipping, Action 1 will support a broad range of clean shipping measures involving relevant stakeholders. Thus, focus of PA Ship has to be on more research and development of solutions regarding alternative marine fuels and sources of energy, taking a holistic approach and giving preference to solutions that reduce both air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions on a well-to wake basis e.g. evaluating batteries, electricity, LNG, biofuels, hydrogen, ammonia, hybrid solutions, methanol and others for use in the Baltic Sea area. This action contributes to the achievement of the European Green Deal's climate-neutral objectives.				
Timing: Ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source

Development of research and policy measures aimings at reducing emissions of ships.	Number of initiatives	Year 2019	3/2023-2025	HELCOM annual statistics and Programme database.
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Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

ECOPRODIGI (Ongoing); CSHIPP (Ongoing)

Project (s) and other activities (s) planned under this action

Strategic priorities in this action include: i) actions to develop or improve technical installations on board ships to clean harmful emissions from ships; ii) issues of enforcement of environmental regulation for ships operating in the Baltic Sea; iii) improved monitoring of ship emissions (better target actions and regulations); iv) improving energy efficiency; v) actions to deploy propulsion systems and bunkering infrastructure for carbon-neutral, clean maritime fuels; vi) development of economic incentive schemes to reduce the environmental impact; vii) improved capacity and competence to address climate neutral and clean shipping.

Action 2: Support research on emerging thematic challenges related to clean shipping and its impact on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea.

Objectives: Action 2, in connection with the European Green Deal objectives, aims to qualify the impact of the shipping on the environment and wildlife in the Baltic Sea area.

Description: In order to address these issues adequately, research would be of high importance. Firstly, there is a need to adequately research all potential impacts and consequences on the environment and the wildlife. Subsequently, there is a need for research-based development of measures on how to address these issues in the most optimal manner, in order to preserve a healthy marine environment.

Timing: Ongoing

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Research on impact of shipping on the marine environment.	Number of research papers	0/2019	3/2023-2025	HELCOM annual statistics and Programme database.

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

COMPLETE (ongoing)

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

Strategic priorities in this action include: i) actions to identify the impact of shipping on the environment in the Baltic Sea in line with and beyond relevant developments in the framework of the International maritime organisation; ii) research & development of technical installations on board ships to ensure a less harmful impact on environment and wildlife; iii) development of efficient policy recommendations to address emerging challenges related to shipping; iv) increase scientific knowledge and support research; 5) address and possibly reduce pollution by hazardous substances, invasive alien species (IAS) and plastics from maritime activities.

Action 3: Support development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for climate-neutral and clean fuels.

Description:

Renewable electric power generation for vessels is a key part of reducing the pollution and the greenhouse gas emissions from shipping and reaching the EU climate objectives. Further, access to climate-neutral and clean marine fuels through land based infrastructure and shore-side facilities could accelerate the reduction of both air pollutant and GHG emissions from shipping. Further, the ability to receive and treat the different types of ship-generated waste in a responsible manner is key to achieving cleaner shipping. Building upgraded reception facilities for sewage in BSR is a challenge and hence an important objective for the EUSBSR.

Timing: Planned

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
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Development of shore-side facilities to enhance clean shipping measures including infrastructure for alternative fuels.	Number of development projects	0/2019	3/2023-2025	Project database.
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
None				
Project (s) and other activities (s) planned under this action				
Strategic priorities in this action include: i) contribute to the development of a regional infrastructure related to shore-side and climate-neutral and clean fuels; ii) develop reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and cross border infrastructure; iii) upgrade infrastructure in passenger - and industrial ports and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, iv)with increase resource efficiency; v) greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes; vi) improve port reception facilities and their ability to treat and separate waste from ships and marine litter brought to land; vii) support the improvement of waste separation and handling on board ships.				

3.6. Policy area Transport

Policy area coordinator: Sweden (Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport Markets Division); Lithuania (Competence Centre of Transport and Logistics (CCTL) of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University).

1. EUSBSR objectives

Increased prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has a strong dependence on efficient, affordable and sustainable cross-border connections within the Baltic Sea Region and beyond, including third countries. This will enable improved foreign trade and international exchange of knowledge and services and, in a longer perspective, increase global competitiveness and the region's prosperity. Each policy area will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Transport is contributing to SDGs 7, 9, 11 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Transport is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- PA Transport contributes to the implementation of EU and international agendas. These include i.e.: white paper roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM (2011) 144 and following strategies & documents on future transport;
- Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the TEN-T (2013);
- Eastern Partnership: new Indicative TEN-T Investment action plan for stronger connectivity (15.01.2019);

- An agenda for a socially fair transition towards clean, competitive and connected mobility for all –COM (2017) 283;
- A European strategy on Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems, a milestone towards cooperative, connected and automated mobility 30.11.2016 COM (2016) 766;
- The European Green Deal, COM (2019) 640 final;
- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD),
- Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- EU strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility, COM (2020) 789 final and
- Zero Pollution action plan

4. Involvement of stakeholders

Lead Partners from project and platforms supported by policy area Transport are involved on PA Transport Coordination Group level. On policy area implementation level primarily all stakeholders participating in projects and platforms supported by policy area Transport are involved. Currently the PA Transport is planning to strengthen governance by implementing flagship processes for broader competence and improved endurance and continuity. The Lead Partner of a flagship process will be expected to constitute a supportive part of the PA Transport governance.

5. Key policy area achievements

Completed results and ongoing work include:

- The first joint project launched was the Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 study which was an important step towards a shared view on the common transport system in the Baltic Sea region;
- Four Flagship projects have been successfully carried out focusing on the implementation of the complementary governance activities facilitating development of TEN-T transport corridors;
- In recent years, around 25 projects have been completed with the support from PA Transport. One example from the excellence category is a project named Real Time Ferries. The project has succeeded to develop cooperation between involved partners to deliver real-time information for the benefit of travel planning systems that cover different modes of means of transport;
- The established East-West Transport Corridor Association (EWTCA) served as innovative instrument (platform) to facilitate development of transport links of the Baltic Sea region with EU Eastern Partnership countries, as well as with Asian economies.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Improve connectivity of the regions and cooperation with third countries
Description: The prosperity of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has a strong dependence on cross-border cooperation (incl. third countries), foreign trade and international exchange of knowledge and services. The TEN-T core network corridors (CNC), their connection with third countries and Motorways of the Sea (MoS) play an important role. It is still of key importance to ensure effective physical and functional access of the urban nodes and farther located rural & peripheral regions to the three core network corridors crossing the Baltic Sea region.
Timing: 2020-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Capitalise on the TEN-T core network corridors for better connectivity, accessibility and cohesion	No. of thematic events organised in cooperation with European Coordinators	0	Once a year	Minutes from the arranged thematic events
	No. of core network corridors in the Baltic Sea region covered with networking projects for more sustainable growth, better accessibility and territorial cohesion	0	3	Programme databases
	Implementation of one (or possibly two) flagship process(es) covering the action	0	1-2/ latest 2022	Programme databases

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

Currently active: Baltic Sea region Access, COMBINE, EMMA Extension and MARA.

Planned flagship processes: Baltic Sea region Access (probably under new name), "Optimize port calls" (notional name).

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

Strategic priorities in this action are: i) to identify and contribute to eliminating missing links and bottlenecks in secondary and tertiary transport networks for seamless flows to/ from the CNC; ii) to integrate long – distance transport in urban mobility planning as a precondition for smooth last mile transport (freight and passenger); iii) to enhance synergies for transport development resulting from the linkage of TEN-T CNCs, crossing the Baltic Sea region , and the cross-border links to third countries, including EU Eastern Partnership countries (EaP); iv)to develop flagship processes aiming to promote complementary national and regional activities along the core network corridors, addressing de-carbonization and de-pollution of transport, intermodal logistics, integration of urban nodes, intelligent transport systems and etc.

Action 2: Development of measures towards climate-neutral and zero pollution transport

Description:

Transport is responsible for a substantial part of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second-biggest emitting sector after energy. Significant reductions in the emissions from the transport and logistics sector are needed when the EU is to achieve its long-term climate goals. The EU has recently adopted policies that will help the EU stay on track with its climate commitments (e.g. the Communication on the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (COM/2020/789 final)²⁹ and its Action Plan (SWD(2020) 331 final) of 9 December 2020, Green Deal). Focus will be put on transformation towards a fossil –free society. The BSR is ideally placed to be a pioneer in the greening of the transport sector in Europe (e.g. through coupling of sectors). Synergies with reducing emissions of air pollutants from transport should be encouraged.

Timing: 2021-2027

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Activities towards climate neutral transport in the BSR	No. of flagship projects promoting climate neutral transport in the	0	5	Programme databases

²⁹ Communication on the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2020:789:FIN>)

	Baltic Sea region			
	Implementation of one (or possibly two) flagship process(es) covering the action	0	1/ latest 2022	Programme databases
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
Ongoing: EMMA Extension, COMBINE. De-carbonization (notional name) is discussed/planned.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
Strategic priorities in this action include: i) development of sustainable supply chain strategies as a multi-fuel approach in the BSR (considering alternative fuel such as LNG, CNG and H2); ii) developing and enabling modal shift actions from road to rail and inland waterway transport that also considers city logistics ; iii) steps towards climate neutral operations of terminals (harbors, dry ports, inland ports) ; iv) enabling and promoting a smooth integration of High Capacity Vehicles and Platoons in existing intermodal networks; v) development of regulatory framework for sustainable transport actions, considering border-crossing transport as well maritime and land-based transport; vi) developing and enabling of harmonised platforms to facilitate digital data exchange between public and private organisations.				

Action 3: Facilitate innovative technologies & solutions in the Baltic Sea region				
Description:				
The action will aim at facilitation (creation of added value) of a sustainable and efficient transport system in the Baltic Sea region requiring - along with infrastructural investments - also innovative measures dwelling on new technologies. The digitalisation, automation, 5G technology, Blockchain technology and synchromodal transport solutions are key instruments to reduce bottlenecks, transport externalities and improve the utilisation of payload capacities along the supply chain. This should be achieved by regional stakeholders mobilising resources, which aim to optimise knowledge flows and spread the benefits of innovations to the entire macro regional (Baltic Sea region) economy. Realisation of Smart Specialisation (S3) policies is a great tool for the achievement of the above-mentioned goals. A preliminary survey of S3 in the Baltic Sea region (performed in 2019) revealed the necessity, first of all, to cooperate in creating innovative transport corridor management models and the autonomous controlled vehicles including their interconnection (internet of things) and connections with road infrastructure on the entire Baltic Sea region level.				
Timing: 2021-2027				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Development of innovative technologies and solutions for passenger and freight transport in the Baltic Sea region	No. of thematic events and initiatives	0	Once a year	Minutes from the arranged thematic events
	No of research papers	0	1/ latest 2024	Programme databases
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
MARA (ongoing), Smart specialisation (discussed / planned)				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
Strategic priorities in this action include: i) to contribute to the research and build an integrated transport system spanning all modes of transport where people and businesses are provided with innovative and safe door to door mobility services; ii) to increase the knowledge generated by the applied science.				

3.7. Policy area Energy

Policy area coordinator: Latvia (Ministry of Economics); Lithuania (Ministry of Energy); European Commission, Directorate General for Energy.

(Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) action plan for Competitive, Secure and Sustainable Energy).

1. EUSBSR objectives

Objective: 'Save the sea' and 'Connect the Region' (to improve the access to, and the efficiency and security of energy markets), sub-objective: reliable energy markets.

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Energy is contributing to SDGs: 7, 11 and 13.

3. EU or other policy framework

The policy area Energy is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- The action plan of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection plan (BEMIP) High-Level Group (2021);
- Communication on offshore renewable energy (2020), COM(2020)741 final (19 November 2020)
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 17 June 2009 by the President of the European Commission and the political leaders of eight participating Member States;
- The fourth Union list of projects of common interest;
- The integrated national energy and climate plans, in the context of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action.
- National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD),
- Ambient Air Quality Directives (AAQD);
- Zero Pollution action plan and
- The Offshore renewable strategy under the European Green Deal.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

In addition to the work within the BEMIP High-level group and European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy, PA Spatial Planning's work is closely linked the energy grid development and other energy market related issues.

PA Energy has a stimulating cooperation with other Baltic Sea region initiatives - Nordic Council of Ministers, Interreg programmes, HORIZON and other financial institutions and initiatives, universities, municipalities, associations and industry representatives etc.

As energy is a topic important for everyone, it is preferred to work on various levels, across-sectors therefore tackling issues from different perspectives. As a result, the involved stakeholder spectrum is varied, using different approaches and working techniques from specific working groups on specific common issues or big informative campaigns.

5. Key policy area achievements

Thanks to a coordinated approach through a comprehensive set of measures, the BEMIP action plan contributed to integrating the energy infrastructure in the Baltic Sea region and thus effectively ending the energy isolation of the Baltic States and connecting them with the rest of Europe, it helped increase the integration of renewables into the grid and the security of supply in the region.

6. Actions for the policy area

The list below contains an example of four actions chosen from the full **PA Energy – Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) action plan for competitive, secure and sustainable energy**, which can be consulted on the website of the Directorate-General for Energy³⁰.

Action 1: Streamlining efforts on energy efficiency in the region by deepening regional cooperation				
Description: Ensuring the full implementation of the existing legislation by sharing best practices and putting in place processes to facilitate application of the “energy efficiency first” principle in policy planning and investment decisions, and facilitate the implementation of the NECPs, and of the long-term renovation strategies ³¹ to decarbonise the national building stock by 2050.				
Timing: 2019 -2030				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Level of energy consumption		2019	2030	Eurostat
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Ongoing: EFFECT4building, Act Now Planned: Flagship process on strengthening cooperation on energy efficiency.				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action Baltic Leadership Programme, best practices exchange, regular meetings and reporting, the development of pilot projects. Further collaboration (cluster, workshops etc.) based on the programme’s results. More information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en				

Action 2: Further regional gas and electricity market integration including climate-proof infrastructure development.

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

³¹ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/long-term-renovation-strategies_en#national-long-term-renovation-strategies-2020

Description:

Gas market integration between LT and FI-EE-LV (common market zone) to be developed by 2022. The Regional Gas Market integration process started as a political process in which the Baltic States' Prime Ministers endorsed, in December 2015 in Riga, the Regional Gas Market Development action plan and invited Finland to take part in this process. The objective is to establish a competitive regional gas market in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, encompassing all four Member States, to improve market liquidity, integration and competitiveness, ensuring affordable gas prices and high quality service, thus being attractive for existing and new market participants. Market integration is an opportunity for the Baltic States and Finland to best use the existing and future infrastructure like the gas storage facilities, the LNG terminals, the Balticconnector and the GIPL pipeline between Lithuania and Poland. It is also a chance to increase competition to the benefit of the end-consumers in the region and attract suppliers which otherwise would not come as the separate markets are relatively small. This is the general political will, expressed by all parties (TSOs, NRAs and Ministries) of all four countries. In order to achieve timely implementation of market merger, a clear roadmap/action plan towards a final agreement involving all four Member States is necessary early in 2020. This roadmap should ensure that the design of the common regional market is: (i) subject to clear and non-discriminatory rules that effectively facilitate competition, in-line with the EU legislation, in particular the network codes and (ii) based on the regional Cost Benefit Analysis agreed by all parties. Such a roadmap would serve as guidelines for the final design of the gas market integration (common market zone) by 2022. The first steps towards the creation of a regional gas market have been initiated by Latvia, Estonia and Finland.

Electricity market integration

The Baltic region electricity market integration and the role of consumers should be increased in particular by the integration of the regional balancing markets within the European balancing platforms according to the Electricity Balancing Guideline (EBGL).

Infrastructure

Since 2014, the implementation of the Trans-European Energy Networks (TEN-E) policy and Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) have allowed the implementation of the necessary infrastructure in the region, substantially increasing the interconnection level and effectively ending the isolation of the Baltic States both in electricity and gas. The higher interconnection level in gas and electricity has ended the state of isolation, helped the diversification of gas supplies and increased energy security of the region. The gas PCIs that are to be developed until 2025, at the latest, should bring about further diversification of gas supply in the region and, also, pave the way for the coal to gas switch and allow the move towards decarbonised or renewable gas. This will bring about the sustainable development of the economies of the BEMIP Member States. Despite progress in increasing the electricity interconnection level between the Nordic countries and within the Baltic States, transmission capacity is still needed to ensure a well-functioning electricity market in the whole region. Existing projects, such as the third interconnection between Finland and Sweden and internal lines reinforcing the Nordic grid are expected to be implemented by 2025 and achieve this objective. The remaining objective is to ensure that the current PCIs delivering these benefits are being implemented without delays, as well as the timely development of all future projects identified as necessary for renewable energy development in the Baltic Sea.

Timing: 2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Increase market integration		2019	2025	

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Dedicated BEMIP working groups on infrastructure, markets, gas and electricity and security of supply

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

Information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Action 3: Baltic synchronisation**Description:** *The synchronisation of the three Baltic States with the European continental grid*

The three Baltic states remain synchronously connected to the Russian/Belarusian IPS/UPS system hampering their full integration into the European electricity market and grid. Flagship project of the Energy Union and political priority of the Commission, the synchronisation of the Baltic States with the continental European network by the target date 2025 is key to ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy for the Eastern Baltic Sea region, in line with EU's energy policy objectives, particularly regarding the well-functioning of the EU internal electricity market and energy security.

On 28 June 2018, the Heads of State and Government of the three Baltic States, Poland and the President of the European Commission agreed on a Political Roadmap that defined the process and put forward a concrete solution for synchronising the Baltic States' electricity system with the continental European network by the target date of 2025. The Heads of State and Government agreed on a scenario and a process for the synchronisation through the existing interconnector between Lithuania and Poland (known as "LitPol Link"), complemented by a new high-voltage cable between Lithuania and Poland (known as "Harmony Link") and additional optimisation measures (synchronous condensers). A follow-up Political Implementing Roadmap, signed in June 2019, sets an ambitious timetable and specific milestones in order to achieve the timely completion of the project by 2025. Due to the complexity of the synchronisation, the infrastructure investments have been split in phases and their implementation is well underway. The first phase of the synchronisation regards the necessary reinforcements in the three Baltic States and has received financial support under the Connecting Europe Facility that amounts to EUR 323 million.

The transmission system operators from three Baltic States and Poland are working on preparing the second phase of the synchronisation. The investments of the second phase include the update and strengthening of the Polish and Baltic States' electricity transmission systems and the control systems required for synchronisation. The key to the success of the second phase of Synchronisation is to obtain funding from CEF instrument.

Timing: 2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Grid synchronisation		2019	2025	ENTSO-E

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

Dedicated BEMIP working groups on security of supply and synchronisation

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

Information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en

Action 4: Increasing the share of renewable energy including marine renewable energy**Description:**

- Commit to continue and intensify cooperation towards the achievement of the binding national and the EU's 20% renewable targets for 2020, and to ensure the delivery of the national contributions to, and the collective achievement of the binding 2030 EU target of at least 32% (or higher as may be revised), as provided for in the Renewable Energy Directive (2008/28/EC) and the recast Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU);
- Intend to strengthen cooperation to explore and facilitate the modalities of energy transition with a view of carbon neutral economy and to help Europe achieve climate neutrality by 2050. This includes cooperation and coordination on the development of offshore renewable energy;
- Commit to implement fully the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) and the recast Renewable Energy Directive (2018/2001/EU);
- Engage in sharing more best practice on renewable energy communities and renewable self-

<p>consumption, the integration of renewables in the building, industry, district heating and cooling sectors, the promotion of advanced biofuels and electrification in transport, as well as sector integration and sector coupling that can help decarbonising the heating, cooling and transport sectors;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options and funding possibilities to engage in joint projects; • Continue work on the integration of renewable electricity into the power system and explore possibilities of cooperation in concrete areas, such as the development of the region’s offshore wind potential, investment in and management of the electricity grid, including as regards system services, the use of storage and sector integration or coupling; • Discuss possibilities and modalities to use cooperation mechanisms, such as cross-border and joint support schemes, joint projects, statistical transfers and the renewable development platform established under the recast Renewable Energy Directive to facilitate delivering the national targets and contributions and to move towards full decarbonisation by 2050; • Work together in the area of research and development on renewable energy technologies in electricity, heating and cooling and transport, and solutions for sector integration and sector coupling, with the aim of a fuller and more cost-effective use of the region’s R&D capacity and innovation potential, and a more effective use of EU funding possibilities, including those designed for territorial cooperation. • Promote the concept of “do no significant harm” to the environment for the use of renewable energy and promote synergies with reducing emissions of air pollutants. 				
Timing: 2030				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
RES share		2019	2030	Eurostat
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
Cross-border renewable energy and grid development				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action:				
Baltic Innovation in Offshore Wind				
Baltic Leadership Programme in collaboration with the Swedish Institute				
BEMIP working groups on renewable energy				
BEMIP Offshore Wind Cooperation				
More information can be found: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/infrastructure/high-level-groups/baltic-energy-market-interconnection-plan_en				

3.8. Policy area Spatial Planning

Policy area coordinator: vision and strategies around the Baltic Sea, VASAB; the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission HELCOM)

- VASAB (for land-based spatial planning issues)
- HELCOM & VASAB (for maritime spatial planning issues)

1. EUSBSR objectives

The overall goal of PA ‘Spatial Planning’ is to increase **territorial cohesion in the Baltic Sea region**. In 2030, the Region will be a better-integrated and more coherent macro-region, with reduced socioeconomic development divides between its individual parts and global challenges that have been turned into assets. To achieve this, PA is encouraging the use of maritime and land-based

spatial planning as well as integrated/ territorial approach to development policies in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation.

Spatial planning is an integrative process to influence the future spatial distribution of human activities. It aims to ensure functional integration across multiple scales (macro-regional, national, regional, local levels) and different sectors of public policy in order to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, to reduce the vulnerability of spatial development and spatial structures to adverse climate change impacts and to achieve social and economic objectives. Spatial planning is therefore an important tool for promoting sustainable development and improving the quality of life.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This PA is contributing to SDGs 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework:

PA Spatial Planning is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- Territorial agenda 2030 of the European Union: A future for all places.
- Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning;
- The European Green Deal that is the Commission's commitment from 2019 to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges with a goal of making the EU climate neutral by 2050;
- VASAB long term perspective for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea region and Tallinn Declaration 2014;
- HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan and
- Regional Baltic MSP roadmap 2013-2020 and the new Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2021-2027.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

At steering group: National ministries and/or agencies responsible for spatial planning and development, maritime spatial planning and environment issues. Steering group can convene in two different formats based on the questions on the agenda: one for maritime spatial planning (HELCOM-VASAB) and other one for land-based (VASAB).

At implementation level: In addition to the steering group members, also national/regional ministries and/or agencies from related sectors (e.g. transport, energy), regional and local municipalities, research institutions – through application of PA policy recommendations and using PA reports, as well as participation in flagships and other cooperation projects.

5. Key policy area achievements

PA is represented by two well-established macro-regional networks involving both EU and non-EU countries:

- VASAB prepares policy options for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea region and provides forum for exchange of the know-how on spatial planning and development among the BSR countries;
- HELCOM is an environmental policy maker for the Baltic Sea region and it develops common management solutions and actions to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation.

Land-based spatial planning is carried out by all Baltic Sea region countries at national and/or regional and local level. PA ensures a joint framework to follow up on territorial development trends and challenges, to build a territorial cohesion perspective for the BSR in the 2030, as well as to propose specific actions to stimulate territorial development potentials to overcome existing gaps.

Widely recognized BSR collaboration on maritime spatial planning (MSP) within the joint HELCOM-VASAB maritime spatial planning working group has turned the Baltic Sea region a global forerunner in regional cooperation and governance on MSP applying ecosystem-based approach.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Strengthening territorial cohesion in the BSR through land-based spatial planning				
Description:				
VASAB long term perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea region (LTP) sets the main framework for PA. In order to implement LTP within the EUSBSR and achieve coherent development of the Baltic Sea region, PA aims to:				
i. contribute to better adaptation of strategies to different types of areas and propose specific approaches for a diverse urban pattern by ensuring pan-Baltic dialogue;				
ii. underline the need to apply place-based approaches to territorial development policies as well as effective use of functional area's concept and territorial impact assessment tools by acting as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices, thereby contributing to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda for the EU from 2021 on;				
iii. observe the territorial development processes in the Region by using and advancing territorial development monitoring solutions, including developed within projects of the ESPON programme;				
iv. encourage transnational actions improving accessibility and connectivity of the Region using potential of TEN-T for regional development and observe regional effects of the European transport infrastructure development and				
v. Contribute to adaptation, mitigation and resilience to climate change in land-based spatial planning process.				
Timing: ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Increased knowledge on land-based spatial planning in the BSR	Number* of workshops, thematic monitoring reports and possibly policy statements (*according to the chairmanship priorities)	By 2019 at least one thematic seminar has been organised per year, two thematic monitoring reports have been elaborated	Continuous	VASAB CSPD/BSR, national ministries, ESPON, project reports of European Territorial Cooperation programmes
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action:				

MARA – Mobility and Accessibility in Rural Areas” (flagship of PA)
SUMBA – Sustainable Urban Mobility and Commuting in the Baltic Cities” (Flagship of HA Climate)
Project (s) and other action(s) planned under this action: VASAB is currently discussing a possible update of the long-term perspective for the territorial development of the Baltic Sea region (process has been initiated in January 2019). This process might suggest new priorities / actions/ tasks for PA.

Action 2: Ensuring coherent maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea				
Description: The Regional Baltic MSP roadmap 2013-2020, along with VASAB LTP and HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan sets the framework for MSP cooperation and defines the necessary steps to achieve the goal to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans throughout the BSR which are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem-based approach to contribute to reaching jointly agreed environmental and climate goals. Transboundary coherence of maritime spatial plans implies strengthening of cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations.				
Timing: ongoing				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem-based approach.	Elaborated and applied maritime spatial plans throughout the BSR.	In 2019 all EU countries in the BSR are engaged into MSP. Maritime spatial plans covering whole national marine waters in the Baltic Sea are adopted in 3 countries.	Maritime spatial plans elaborated and applied throughout the Baltic Sea in 2020/2021.	EC DG MARE, national ministries, HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG, European Territorial Cooperation programmes' reports.
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Capacity4MSP (2019-2021)				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action: Current Regional Baltic MSP Roadmap 2013-2020 includes an agreed goal: “to draw up and apply maritime spatial plans throughout the Baltic Sea region by 2020 which are coherent across borders and apply ecosystem-based approach”. According to the work plan 2020-2021 of the HELCOM-VASAB maritime spatial planning (MSP) working group, the elaboration of new roadmap for 2020+ will be carried out by 2021. In the period after 2020 focus of the activities on maritime spatial planning will move from preparation of the plans to their implementation and to follow up of effectiveness. There will be important updates for the overall policy frameworks. An update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan is going on and a new Regional Baltic maritime spatial planning Roadmap is under development. Both documents are expected to be adopted by the end of 2021. Also, an update of the VASAB LTP has started . Baltic Sea region MSP Data group works on establishing the joint Baltic Sea region MSP webmap where adopted maritime spatial plans in the Baltic Sea will be available. Capacity4MSP project platform (ongoing till September 2021, funded by Interreg Baltic Sea region programme).				

3.9. Policy area Secure

Policy area coordinator: Sweden (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency); Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat (CBSS).

1. EUSBSR objectives

PA Secure contributes to all 3 objectives of the EUSBSR and to the sub-objectives: “Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management”; “Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime” and “Connecting people in the region”. PA Secure offers a platform for cross-border, cross-sectoral and multi-level cooperation to strengthen societal security, and allows for better coordination of activities dealing with prevention and preparedness related to both natural and man-made threats and developing methods for responding to security risks posed by climate change. PA Secure helps aligning national priorities with EU and global strategies, action plans and funding opportunities.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Secure directly contributes to SDGs 1 - 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17 (see mapping [here](#)).

3. EU or other policy framework

Several policy frameworks constitute the base for the PA Secure strategic actions, the most important are: the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Decision No. 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Secure covers a wide spectrum of societal security challenges and has broad participation from different sectors and levels. PA Secure works closely with relevant PAs/HAs such as Climate, Spatial Planning, Capacity, Neighbors, Safe, Hazards, Health and Culture, and strives for increased cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing challenges in the Baltic Sea region. The contact with the other EU macro-regional strategies (EU MRSs) is also important. PA Secure strives for greater exchange between the EU MRSs to build better capacity in Europe for cooperation on societal security challenges.

5. Key policy area achievements

- Establishing a pan-Baltic mechanism for civil protection cooperation by adopting the strategic document [“Joint Position on Enhancing Cooperation in Civil Protection Area”](#) (2017) that streamlined the cooperation efforts, focusing on the most important actions to strengthen resilience and preparedness for various types of common risks and threats.
- Institutionalisation of the [Baltic Leadership/Excellence Programme in Civil Security \(BLP / BEP\)](#) which has, to date, brought together 120 experts in key leadership positions from civil protection and law enforcement agencies from all 11 countries in the Baltic Sea region. The BLP has been organised with support from the Swedish Institute and a sustainable platform has been developed.
- From 2012 – 2019, a series of projects have contributed to improving the quality of risk and capability assessment methods. [Project 14.3](#) developed six disaster scenarios for the Baltic Sea region; [From Gaps to Caps](#) explored the countries’ capabilities to deal with them. The results directly informed national risk assessment strategies and improved national legislation. The latest project [CASCADE](#) focuses on prevention of risks posed by climate change.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Build capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency and crisis management

Description: The strategic action has a holistic, multi-level and all-hazard approach with a focus on capacity building related to the whole civil protection cycle: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The aim is to build resilient societies and to develop and strengthen integrated approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Key action 1.1: a) Ensure that the MSs maximise the added value from participating in global and European policy frameworks and cooperation mechanisms, such as [UN Sendai Framework for DRR](#) and the [Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#); b) Support continuous joint capacity building processes linking professionals across the region, and; c) Promote common situational awareness and increased understanding between countries and sectors.

Key action 1.2: a) Improve the methodologies and capacities to assess various relevant risks in the risk and capability assessments at all levels of governance; b) Facilitate cooperation with regard to the use of climate change data and projections from Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and its Climate Data Store (CDS); c) To this end, increase the cooperation and exchange of knowledge between civil protection professionals and climate change experts.

Key action 1.3: Increase societal resilience through focusing on strengthening the prevention and preparedness capacities for different groups.

Timing: 2020 – 2024

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
PA's activities strengthen the capacity of the stakeholders to work with prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in emergency.	The stakeholder organisations express that their capacities have been strengthened through participation in PA Secure activities.			Stakeholders' survey - Monitoring&Evaluation toolkit.

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: [Baltic Leadership/Excellence Programme](#) (BLP/BEP) in Civil Security (activities every year), [CASCADE](#) (2019 – 2020), and [ResQU2](#) Project Platform (2018 – 2020).

Project(s) and other action(s) planned under this action: BLP/BEP seminars or courses will be organised annually. Cooperation between higher education institutions and practitioners will address gaps in education related to capacities in the civil protection cycle. The policy dialogue on the Sendai Framework will continue in the PA Secure SG. New initiatives will explore how to increase societal resilience through focusing on various groups.

Action 2: Strengthening mechanisms for joint strategic and operational actions protecting human beings and societies from criminal threats

Description: To protect human beings and societies from criminal threats effectively, the relevant authorities need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach, increase their cooperation across various policy fields as well as the cross-border coordination.

Key action 2.1: Facilitate the development of an agreement on an international coordination platform for law enforcement agencies focusing on external funding when appropriate and connecting the EU EMPACT priorities with the needs of the Member States.

Key action 2.2: a) Develop a cooperation agreement for cross-border comprehensive assistance and/or transfer of identified trafficked persons; b) Strengthen the capacities of relevant authorities in investigating labour exploitation; c) Strengthen the role of mass media in preventing THB.

Key action 2.3: Establishing a cross-border network for multidisciplinary and interagency services for child victims and witnesses of violence to promote harmonisation and consolidation of practice according to International and European law and the European quality standards for [Barnahus](#).

Timing: 2020 – 2030

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
PA's activities contribute to strengthening the	Revised agreements	2019	2030	M&E quantitative and qualitative analysis of

cross-border cooperation to fight criminal threats.	or mechanisms developed. Revised strategy of BSTF (Baltic Sea Task Force on organised Crime)			secondary sources
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: TF-THB Strategy 2018 – 2020 , TF-THB strategy 2021 – 2023 and Comprehensive and sustainable child protection (ongoing).				
Project(s) and other action(s) planned under this action: Develop an agreement on a multi-lateral platform consisting of representatives of the police authorities focusing on cooperation on external funding. Awareness raising of human trafficking through strengthened media actions. Upcoming project TALOS (protection of victims of trafficking). PROMISE 3 will support countries in Europe to adopt the Barnahus model as a standard practice.				
Action 3: a common societal security culture in the Baltic Sea region				
Description: Promote a common societal security culture by developing reliable standards and sharing best practices in prevention of increased risks.				
Key action 3.1: a) Strengthen the analytical capacities of relevant agencies and develop common standards for data collection; b) Develop common standards related to emergencies and accidents; c) Support the diagnosis of key obstacles for inter-departmental and cross-sectoral cooperation.				
Key action 3.2: Strengthen the relevance of education and research through increased cooperation between researchers and higher education institutions in the societal security discipline and practitioners and experts from the field.				
Key action 3.3: a) Encourage increased involvement of NGOs and volunteers in the field of civil protection and emergency management; b) Strengthen the role of children and youth in promoting a common societal security culture in the BSR, and their role as contributors to building resilient societies.				
Timing: 2020 – 2024				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
PA's activities contribute to the development of common standard practices, guidelines or regulations.	Regulations, standards, guidelines for practice or education developed.			M&E quantitative and qualitative analysis of secondary sources.
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: BLP/BEP in Civil Security, FIRE-IN , ResQU2. Planned flagship: BALTPREP .				
Project(s) and other action(s) planned under this action: Planned project NEEDS: Needs-based education and studies in societal security. Planned pre-study on strengthening the role of children and youth in building resilient societies.				

3.10. Policy area Tourism

Policy area coordinator: Germany (Ministry of Economics, Employment and Health Mecklenburg-Vorpommern).

1. EUSBSR objectives

PA Tourism contributes to the following objectives, sub-objectives and indicators:

Connecting the region

- Connecting people in the region -> Participation in cultural / educational / scientific cooperation;
- Good transport conditions -> Sustainable connectivity / accessibility / mobility;

- Fostering the digital transformation of tourism -> Data-driven Decisions / In-Depth Analysis.

Increase Prosperity

- Improve long-term competitiveness of the BSR;
- Collaborate internationally to ensure that policies and decisions are regionally sustainable;
- Welcome business intelligence;
- Invest in the customer experience (reputation).

Save the Environment

- Sustainable tourism, environmental protection, natural resources -> Status of ecosystem;
- Better cooperation among tourism actors -> Mitigation of environmental footprint;
- Foster changes in policies, business practices and consumer behavior in tourism.

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

Added value of PA Tourism:

PA Tourism provides a strong platform to reinforce sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea region; creates networks and strengthens the dialogue with stakeholders of the tourism industry and tourism education institutions to ensure competence development in the tourism sector across the Baltic Sea region. It develops synergies by linking projects, initiatives and organisations with tourism activities; facilitates and strengthens the cooperation in the area to find solutions for common challenges; and enhances the profile, visibility and attractiveness of the Baltic Sea region as a preferred partner for tourism cooperation within the Baltic Sea region.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The four most relevant SDGs for PA Tourism are goal 8, 11, 12 and 14.

3. EU or other policy framework (background)

- Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism;
- Blue growth agenda;
- 2030 Agenda for sustainable development;
- Tourism and transport: Commission's guidance on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's tourism in 2020 and beyond (May 2020);
- [New European Agenda for Culture of the EC](#) (May 2018);
- [European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#) – Cultural Heritage for an Inclusive Europe (December 2018);
- [Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, November 2018](#).

The EIT (European Institute for Innovation and Technology) will launch two new KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities); one of them with focus on the cultural and creative industries (CCI) planned to start in 2022. Policy area Tourism is also closely connected with the European Green Deal.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Spring 2020 and its economic consequences in the Baltic Sea region also underline the need for EUSBSR level preparation of coordinated macro-regional recovery policies

and actions on tourism, which would ensure health and safety standards based on science and epidemiological situation, not just in the aftermath of the current crisis, but also in the longer term.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Tourism maintains, inter alia, collaborations with PA Education and PA Culture. PA Tourism is planning to create stronger synergies with other PAs in the course of creating new flagships (e.g. with PA Bio Economy, PA Transport, PA Innovation, PA Education, PA Culture, PA Spatial Planning and PA Health). PA Tourism has been engaged in a process of inter-macro regional strategy cooperation and coordination and is aiming at increasing these interregional bonds in the future.

New emerging flagships and projects will seek to involve Stakeholders from national and regional tourist boards /organisations/agencies, national/regional/local public authorities, municipalities, business support organisations, higher education and research, education and training/schools, Euro-Regions, SMEs, sanitary and epidemiological services, partner countries, International organisations (ETC, UNWTO, etc.) and other interest groups/actors (including NGOs) and the civil society.

5. Key policy area achievements

The Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) is a leading center for improved communication and cooperation within the Baltic Sea region. With focus on the Core Competences Partnerships, Insights and Skills, the BSTC aims at becoming the central contact point for tourism stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region, providing services in the fields of Tourism Policies, Market Research, Training Offerings and Sustainable Tourism.

- The BSTC launched the “State of the tourism Industry” report and the “trend report” within the field of Market Research. The reports offer tourism stakeholders trans-regional industry data for strategic decisions on Baltic Sea region tourism development as well as on tourism trends in the Baltic Sea region .
- The BSTC devised a series of four “consecutive product development workshops” that equip not just tourism stakeholders with the necessary knowledge on how to develop and launch new offers by means of targeted innovation management, efficient methods and creativity. The result is a handbook “Co-development toolkit - a shortcut to expanding your business”.
- The BSTC developed a “Business Plan” and a “Convention Paper”, forming the basis for the future acquisition process of the BSTC within the framework of an EGTC. In addition the BSTC compiled a “Position Paper on sustainable tourism development in the Baltic Sea region post 2020” to better position and lobby the Baltic Sea region tourism sector on EU level.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Transnational tourism development in remote and rural areas

Description: Sustainable Tourism development in remote areas (including remote regions, disconnected cities, archipelagos and islands), taking into account the protection of the environment and ecosystems, not only helps to spread the benefits of tourism in terms of expenditure by tourists, it also helps to create employment, a well-functioning infrastructure, a good living environment and other local support services as a result, which can help to slow down rural-urban migration in the Baltic Sea region . This can help to create more resilient and sustainable communities, both in remote/rural areas and urban cities.

Supported fields of action:

- Improving the accessibility, connectivity, visibility and the attractiveness of remote areas;
- Mitigating seasonal fluctuations and diminishing peaks and troughs in tourism demand by promoting all year round offers and more tailored products and services;
- Promoting sustainable consumption (referring to tourists and private consumption of tourism products and services, including travel/soft mobility);
- Fostering sustainable production, including resource-efficiency (referring to tourism companies and establishments, green products and services);
- Protecting biodiversity and developing visitor management.

Timing: 2020-2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods 1) to improve accessibility and connectivity in remote areas, 2) to mitigate seasonal fluctuations, 3) to promote sustainable consumption and production and to act in accordance with health standards based on science and epidemiological situation that limit epidemics // 2025	Monitoring by PA
New trans-national networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new transnational networks // 2023	Monitoring by PA

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action Flagship planned to start in 2021

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

- Implementation of seminars and workshops;
- Publication of policy briefings and reports;
- Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with PA Bio-economy, PA Transport and PA Health

Action 2: Investing in people, skills and technology in the tourism industry

Description: Training, modern labour markets, digital skills, technological innovation are not only key drivers for socioeconomic development and sustainable growth but also more equitable and inclusive societies and for the well-being and personal fulfilment of its citizens. In order to work towards a sustainable future in the travel and tourism industry, the Baltic Sea region needs to be prepared to enable new technologies and further invest in people’s skills, competences and quality.

Supported fields of action:

- Facing the challenges of the labor market;
- Improving relevant skills and competences in the Baltic Sea region for employability, entrepreneurship and innovation;
- Promoting closer cooperations with educational, training, labour and research institutions in particular on a transnational, regional and bilateral level;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing market research and trend studies as a basis for strategic decision making; • Fostering the digital transformation of tourism SMEs and new technologies, which will enable the leap to new business models. 				
Timing: 2020-2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods to foster digital transformation, skills and competences // 2025	Monitoring by PA
New international networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new international networks //2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) ongoing				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of future scenarios for tourism in the Baltic Sea region 2030; - Implementation of yearly fora, exchange meetings, workshops and trainings; - Publication of position papers and reports; - Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with with PA Education, PA Innovation and PA Health 				
Action 3: Protection and sustainable utilisation of cultural heritage and natural resources in tourism destinations				
<p>Description: Tourism has a unique reason to be concerned about the sustainability of the cultural and natural environment and thus holds the responsibility for its protection, owing to its dependency on the appeal of unspoilt landscapes and accessible local heritage. The idea of Action 3 is to encourage a green/authentic/sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism and to promote a kind of tourism that is respectful of local identities, host communities and cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea region.</p> <p>The development of specific “green/sustainable” touristic offers and products, and greater investment in greener infrastructures (more efficient transport facilities, reduced air pollution, reduction of water pollution and consumption, energy and waste, recycling of natural resources, conservation of heritage sites and open spaces, etc.) should result in smarter and greener places, from which residents and tourists, can benefit all year round.</p> <p>Supported fields of action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the touristic infrastructure with regard to climate protection and sustainable mobility, accessibility and connectivity in an ecological way; • Fostering sustainable destination management approaches; • Controlling and monitoring tourism flows using digital tools to reduce negative impacts on nature, culture and local communities, taking active measures to protect the environment and combat climate change and looking for new opportunities which climate change might offer for the Baltic Sea region; • Respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contributing to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. 				
Timing: 2020-2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
New approaches, concepts or methods	Number of 1-2	0	New approaches, concepts or methods for green/sustainable tourism and destination management // 2025	Monitoring by PA
New international networks of stakeholders	Number of 1-2	0	Establishment of new international networks // 2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action. Flagship planned to start in 2021				

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action

- Implementation of seminars and workshops;
- Publication of discussion papers and reports;
- Striving to build new international networks and new cooperation projects with PA Culture.

3.11. Policy area Culture

Policy area coordinators: Germany (Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection of Land Schleswig-Holstein): Poland (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland).

1. EUSBSR objectives

PA Culture contributes to the EUSBSR objective: 'Increase prosperity - Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region'. PA Culture is especially active in promoting the Baltic Sea region cultural and creative sectors, encouraging creative entrepreneurship.

PA Culture contributes to EUSBSR objective: 'Connect the region – Connecting people in the region'. Culture has the power to integrate; culture builds bridges across borders and across social and political differences.

PA Culture will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA culture is contributing to SDGs 8 and 11.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Culture is linked to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- [New European Agenda for Culture of the EC](#) (May 2018);
- [European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage](#) – Cultural Heritage for an Inclusive Europe (December 2018);
- [Work plan for Culture 2019-2022, November 2018](#) and
- The EIT (European Institute for Innovation and Technology) will launch two new KICs (Knowledge and Innovation Communities), one of them with focus on the cultural and creative industries (CCI) planned to start in 2022.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

Within the Baltic Sea region a wide range of inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies are addressing culture. First of all bodies, who are represented in the PA Culture Steering Group, thus contributing to coherence of Baltic Sea region cultural cooperation. However, there is an open space for cooperation with regional and local organisations, whose priorities are in line with the EUSBSR. SME entities and municipalities are also encouraged to contribute to the quality of Baltic culture events and tangible results. Involvement of cultural actors takes place point by point when there is a need of dealing with specific issues (e.g. Planning concept of Baltic Sea Cultural Cities, engagement of game industries in CCI sector).

5. Key policy area achievements

Since the establishment of PA Culture, cultural actors from all political levels meet regularly to coordinate activities. Subsequently, visibility and awareness for cultural cooperation in the region have been improved. Moreover, cultural cooperation in the Baltic Sea region gains political weight. Further achievements – PA Culture:

- started to regularly organise strategic project development workshops with success – such as project of Baltic Sea Cultural Cities, Baltic Sea Youth Camp;
- gave political impetus to a better funding framework for cultural projects (seed money field);
- encouraged youth involvement in Baltic Sea region cultural cooperation by e.g. contributing to the success of the EUSBSR Baltic Sea Youth Camp;
- PA Culture succeeded in involving non-EU countries in PA Culture activities such as involvement of participants from Kaliningrad Oblast.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Promoting the Baltic Sea region cultural and creative industries, encouraging creative entrepreneurship				
Description: Objective of the action is to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) of the region through macro-regional cooperation. The CCS are seen as one of the drivers of economy. They are gaining importance also for regional development. Many creative sectors are characterized by a large number of micro-sized enterprises and self-employment with all related problems. To facilitate practical support for CCS enterprises there is potential in existing flagships ‘Creative Ports’ and ‘Baltic Game Industry’. It is in accordance with our aims: Institutional capacities of support structures for CCS, (other) framework conditions for CCS, development of entrepreneurial skills of CCS actors etc. Activity planned in this action could be: taking stock of the findings of the flagship projects, development of policy recommendations, e.g. as regards access to capital or marketing opportunities. Cooperation among Baltic Sea region countries’ creative sectors will help to share the creative potential across the whole region and contribute to its faster and more coherent economic development. Pooling and complementing resources and joint marketing initiatives are suitable means to increase international visibility.				
Timing: ongoing process				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
capacity building measures of CCS start-ups	Number of CCS supported	0	30	Flagship project, workshops, conferences
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action Baltic Game Industry - ongoing; Creative Ports- ongoing				
Project (s) and other activities (s) planned under this action Strategic project development workshops. Analysis of the findings of terminated projects, particularly with improvement of framework conditions in mind.				

Action 2: Promoting Baltic Sea region culture, cultural diversity and European values, promoting culture as a driver for sustainable development
Objectives: Main objective of the action 2 is to present the diversity, quality and attractiveness of Baltic Sea region culture and arts in all its variety and complexity. By this, PA Culture strives to strengthen and support the European project and to promote European values. Another objective is to trigger innovation in economy and society by cultural interventions. Activities promoting culture as a driver for social innovation and sustainable living must strengthen civil society and its institutions.

Description: Fostering cultural exchange and cooperation shall serve the cultural sector in itself and help promoting the BSR as an attractive cultural region. An important instrument for these aims is addressing the citizens of BSR directly, with special focus on young generations. The nomination of a “Baltic Sea Cultural City” shall foster people-to-people contacts and exchange and cooperation on a level besides day-to-day topics. A rough concept was developed by the PA stakeholders and which will be regularly reviewed. As an obstacle for a more vivid cultural exchange, the lack of accessible and low-threshold funding for small scale actions showed up. The further development of an instrument filling this gap will be pushed and promoted by the policy area.				
Timing: ongoing process				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developed tools and processes using culture as a trigger of innovation.	Number of projects, workshops, conferences Number of tools and processes	0		projects, workshops, conferences
Supporting measures for improving the image of BSR cities and regions	Number of measures developed	0	5	projects, workshops, conferences
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action Urb Cultural Planning (ongoing); Baltic Sea Cultural Cities (seed money funded, ongoing), Umbrella funding for small scale and micro projects (planned).				
Project (s) and other activities (s) planned under this action Umbrella project for cultural micro-funding activities in the Baltic Sea region Strategic project development workshops				

Action 3: Preserving the Baltic Sea region cultural heritage, strengthening regional identity				
Description: The action aims at increasing the societal and economic value of cultural heritage through innovative and visitor-friendly presentations of heritage sites and museums, thus also contributing to strengthening the regional identity. Another objective of the action is to focus on the cultural and historic roots of the Baltic Sea region, which are fundamental for mutual understanding, coexistence and cooperation. Overall objective of this action is to preserve the cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea region on land and under water. The action aims at facilitating the management of the region’s cultural heritage and promoting public interest in and access to these assets. The cultural heritage of the region has a high non-material and economic value for the overall attractiveness of the region for inhabitants and tourists. Transnational projects addressing the common cultural heritage, traditions and history of the region assist people in getting aware of regional cultural resources and provide essence for CCS products.				
Timing: ongoing process				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Developing measures for integrated cultural heritage management in the Baltic Sea region	Number of measures	0	5	Project report

Flagships on-going or planned under this action

Baltic Sea History Project; BalticRIM – Baltic Sea Region Integrated Maritime Cultural Heritage Management

Project (s) and other activities (s) planned under this action

Strategic project development workshops

3.12. Policy area Innovation

Policy area coordinator: The Baltic Institute of Finland; Estonia (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications); Poland (Ministry of Science and Higher Education).

1. EUSBSR objectives

Increase prosperity: Baltic Sea region as a frontrunner for deepening and fulfilling the single market; Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region; Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; Connect the region: Connecting people in the region. (PA INNO contribution below).

Added value: policy area Innovation (PA INNO) promotes a globally competitive position within innovation for sustainable economic growth in the Baltic Sea region, and provides a strong platform for an enhanced macroregional collaborative ecosystem for innovation, research, SMEs and digitalisation. It enables shared learning through knowledge-transfer activities; creates and strengthens networks across the Baltic Sea region; aligns resources and regulations e.g. through co-ordination of funding sources; facilitates the joining up of forces in common programmes and investments and in the development of solutions for common challenges. Moreover, it raises the Baltic Sea region's profile, visibility and attractiveness as a partner of choice for international innovation cooperation within and beyond the Baltic Sea region. Each policy area will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the policy area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA innovation is contributing to SDGs 8 and 9.

3. EU or other policy framework

PA Innovation is related to the following EU regional - and international strategic frameworks:

- European Strategic Cluster Partnerships (COSME);
- Smart Specialisation Strategy;
- Digitising European Industry, in particular the support to Digital Innovation Hubs that can support SMEs with their digital transformation;
- Activities to support cultural and creative industries;
- Digital Single Market;
- EU Blue Bio-economy roadmap and Bio-economy strategy;
- Policy goals of Horizon Europe;
- A new Circular Economy action plan for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe.

The innovation AP is to be linked to the European Green Deal, support for R&I being a cross-cutting element of the pact. It will also be directly linked to certain key actions of the Green Deal: the EU Industrial strategy, the Circular Economy action plan, the Farm-to-Fork strategy.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

In addition to institutions represented in the PA INNO SC, other national level government agencies and organisations (such as innovation agencies), universities and other research and knowledge institutions, large scale research infrastructures, business development, cluster and technology transfer organisations, incubators and co-creation platforms/ecosystems, industry associations and companies are strongly involved in PA INNO as action/flagship operators and stakeholders. Furthermore, PA INNO stakeholders include banks/financial institutions, investors and business angels, NGOs and citizen communities. PA INNO explores links with other PAs and HAs and supports them by sharing best practices, knowledge and other outcomes of PA INNO flagships, as well utilizes their knowledge and data on joint challenges in the Baltic Sea region .

5. Key policy area achievements

PA INNO has helped versatile Baltic Sea region innovation cooperation to evolve into strategic and complementary actions with stronger impact and more scalable results. In recent years, PA INNO activities have been centered around the implementation of the PA INNO Strategic action plan 2016-2020 focusing on increasing innovation capacity and supporting entrepreneurship, business development, and science within the three drivers of innovation: market, knowledge, and challenges. PA INNO flagships such as BSR Stars, SUBMARINER Network, ScanBalt, Baltic Science Link and Baltic Sea region Digi co-lab have produced numerous interesting and highly relevant results and new solutions e.g. in the fields of research collaboration, health, blue growth, bio/circular economy and digital economy. PA INNO experiences and results on transnational S3 are providing strong evidence and basis for the next wave of S3 in the next EU programming period. Related to this, a network of ERDF managing authorities (MA Network) has been established to develop proposals on transnational S3 collaboration. Pilot projects on clean technologies and digital transformation have been created under the MA Network.

6. Actions for the policy area

Action 1: Challenge-driven innovation

Description: Macro-regional challenge-driven innovation policies and actions aim at fostering disruptive, breakthrough and market-shaping innovations to respond to the 21st century social, environmental, and economic grand challenges in the Baltic Sea region(e.g. climate change, resource efficiency, demographic change, pandemics, rapid urbanisation, healthy living and aging, clean energy, inclusive societies, sustainable food and feed production and various environmental challenges of the Baltic Sea). Building on the strong background and experience on challenge-based innovation cooperation, and leveraging and scaling up the successes and best practices, stronger innovation ecosystems can be created and common BSR challenges tackled by developing shared solutions and related new pan-Baltic value chains. The aim is to turn challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth in Baltic Sea region.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Spring 2020 and its economic consequences in Baltic Sea region also underline the need for EUSBSR level preparation of coordinated macro-regional recovery policies and actions on business and innovation, not just in the aftermath of the current crisis, but also in the longer term.

Smart specialisation is a key policy framework for challenge-driven innovation. The ‘next wave’ of the EU’s policy framework for Smart Specialisation is widely expected to focus on interregional collaboration through aligning regional S3 priorities and innovation investment efforts, and to help regions (and their industries) to draw on their collective strengths and common challenges to carve out new innovation focused value chain opportunities.

Timing: 2020-2027				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Transnational value chains (especially in 4 key areas: circular and bio-economy, blue growth, digitalisation and health)	Number of value chains	TBD	20/2027	Eurostat Regional Statistics indicators, Regional Innovation Monitor, Regional Ecosystem Scoreboard, KETs Observatory, EU Trade Tool
<p>Flagships ongoing or planned under this action:</p> <p>On-going: Baltic Sea Region Smart Specialisation Ecosystem (Interreg BSR, platform project); BSR Stars: (sub-flagships: LARS, Smart-Up BSR and BSR Stars S3 (Interreg BSR); SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth (sub-flagships: Blue Platform, Baltic Blue Biotechnology Alliance and Smart Blue Regions (Interreg BSR), InnoAquaTech (Interreg South Baltic 2019); ScanBalt (sub-flagships: BFCC and BALTSE@NIOR (Interreg BSR, 2019)</p> <p>Planned: BSR S3 Ecosystem Support Programme (based on the S3 platform project results especially on circular bio-economy), Interregional innovation investments through the provision of acceleration services aimed towards commercialisation and scaling up of interregional innovation projects having the potential to solve BSR challenges, to generate new business, and to encourage the development of Baltic Sea region/European Value Chains.</p>				
<p>Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action</p> <p>Sector/S3 priority-specific S3 initiatives (e.g. on blue growth, circular economy, health, industry 4.0, smart cities); DNA - Digihealth Nordic Acceleration; BSR initiatives on public procurement for innovation; BSR leadership programmes and capacity building activities on Action 1 topics.</p>				

Action 2: Digital innovation and transformation				
<p>Description:</p> <p>Digital transformation is a societal change. Emerging digital technologies such as AI, VR/AR, blockchain, robotics and Internet of Things (IoT) are key tools to tackle societal challenges, facilitate new businesses, innovations, services and more sustainable, usable and vital living environments and infrastructures, and develop BSR innovation (e.g. smart city initiatives) and startup ecosystems. 'Industry 4.0' relying on big data, IoT, AI and autonomous machines is a key challenge for SMEs even in Baltic Sea region. It can be tackled with transnational sharing of best practice and knowledge. Developing common standards for interoperable public and private solutions (e.g. e-identity) and harmonising of data will support transfer of solutions across Baltic Sea region, new market opportunities and globally more competitive digital ecosystems. This will put Baltic Sea region at the vanguard of digital territories in Europe and worldwide. PA INNO gives businesses and public service providers opportunities to analyze, evaluate, develop, co-create and test new ideas and services together. PA INNO also promotes knowledge sharing and institutional capacity building within digitalisation to facilitate digital transformation and bridge digital divides in Baltic Sea region.</p> <p>Smart Specialisation is a relevant policy framework to support digital innovation and transformation related Baltic Sea region cooperation. Smart Specialisation can generate scaled up innovation efforts (e.g. on Digital Innovation Hubs), accelerate cross-regional value chains (e.g. on digital transformation of bio-economy /circular economy) and generate new market opportunities in digital economy.</p>				
Timing: 2020-2027				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
BSR digital performance	Average BSR ranking	TBD	10/2027	The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)

(improvement in %)	position			
<p>Flagships ongoing or planned under this action:</p> <p>Ongoing: BSR Digi co-lab: (sub-flagships: DIGINNO: Digital Innovation Network; and INNOCAPE: Industry 4: transforming innovation ecosystem through better capacity of public enablers (Interreg BSR); Internet of Business (IoB) based on Real Time Economy concept;</p> <p>Planned: Real-Time Economy (with numerous sub-projects); Joint development, implementation and monitoring of Digital Innovation Hubs (BSR DIH Hub/research network); Industry 4.0 Programme for BSR SMEs; BSR Smart City Accelerator Programme; Baltic Sea region Artificial Intelligence Accelerator; Digital transformation of (blue) bioeconomy /circular economy in the Baltic Sea region; including the establishment of more efficient and effective data and information generation and provision based on new ICT solutions (Operational Pilots).</p>				
<p>Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action</p> <p>Increasing digital trust and cybersecurity; Smart city initiatives e.g. on smart urban mobility, buildings and energy, health and well-being, safety and security; Baltic Sea region open data initiative; DigiResBSR - Digital Innovation Research Community for the Baltic Sea region; Regions 4 Future: enabling policy mix tool and training to expand 5G & Artificial Intelligence for regional single market development.</p>				

Action 3: Co-creative innovation				
<p>Description:</p> <p>Ecosystems and platforms are emerging as key frameworks for economic and innovation activity also in BSR. Transnational platforms and change agents are needed to connect Baltic Sea region innovation ecosystems and having access to public, research and business groups, to engage them in the collaborative process of co-creation to bridge the existing knowledge, skills and market access gaps for SMEs. Efficient transnational linkages and matching of end users, innovative firms and research partners for team co-creation, and access to other resources such as knowledge and prototyping is a critical success factor for co-creation scale up and growth. Transnational linkages allow organisations to tap into a larger base of ideas and technology, find complementary expertise and pool competencies in order to overcome barriers, such as lack of management resources and technological competencies. They can also open a broader geographic market for companies.</p> <p>Objectives of this action: to scale up the use of co-creation among Baltic Sea region SMEs through improving their capabilities and absorptive capacities to efficiently turn market demand driven ideas into innovations; to connect innovation ecosystems across BSR through developing and piloting systematic models and practices to engage Baltic Sea region SMEs, researchers, test facilities and end users in co-creation activities; to enhance the adjustment of regional innovation voucher schemes to BSR-wide transnational co-creation activities; to facilitate the understanding and change of mindset among policy makers and SMEs to scale up practical co-creation activities in the Baltic Sea region and; to promote transnational cooperation and SMEs access to RDI infra, and transnational exchange and joint development between Innovation Infrastructure Organisations and incubators.</p> <p>S3 also serves as a suitable policy framework for co-creative innovation in Baltic Sea region by offering a fertile testing ground for its regions to develop new and reinforce existing industry-led collaboration efforts. Transnational S3 activities can include e.g. joint innovation investments aiming at widening the pool of resources and knowledge bases or at accessing complementary assets (e.g. through interregional voucher schemes). Regions can also develop and improve existing regional policy instruments such as ERDF to supporting the co-specialisation approach to S3.</p>				
Timing: 2020-2027				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
BSR innovation performance - Attractive research systems, Firm investments, Innovators, Linkages	Average BSR ranking	TBD	10/2027	European innovation scoreboard

(improvement in %)	position			
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Ongoing: Baltic Science Link (sub-flagships: CAROTS and Baltic Tram (Interreg BSR); SNOWMAN (Interreg BSR); INBETS BSR (Interreg BSR); ScanBalt (sub-flagships: ProVaHealth and BIC (Interreg BSR); BSR Stars: (sub-flagships: SmartUp Accelerator and IRIS (Interreg BSR); SUBMARINER Network (sub-flagships: Baltic Blue Biotech Alliance+ (Interreg BSR) and Blue Platform (Interreg BSR)). Planned: Joint programmes and projects promoting e.g. interconnection of open innovation infrastructures and ecosystems, university-business co-creation, collaborative R&I, technology & knowledge transfer and joint public procurement for innovation (e.g. under EIC/Horizon initiative on Innovation Ecosystems).				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action Transnational utilisation of BSR R&D facilities through transnational voucher schemes; Distance LAB, BSR Startup Alliance; The Alliance Accelerator service offer of the SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth.				

3.13. Policy area Health

Policy area coordinator: Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being (NDPHS) Secretariat.

1. EUSBSR objectives

A healthy population in the Baltic Sea region is a pre-requisite for productivity, economic competitiveness and further development. By aiming to improve the health and well-being of people in the Baltic Sea region, PA Health contributes to the objective of increasing prosperity in the region.

PA Health strives to raise awareness among other policy areas for the impact of their domain on health and for the need to implement a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach.

HiAP is an approach that improves accountability of policymakers for health impacts at all levels of policy-making including emphasis on the consequences of public policies on health systems and determinants of health and well-being. It also contributes to sustainable development.

Each PA will ensure that horizontal aspects, notably addressing climate change and cooperation with non-EU neighbouring countries and organisations, are appropriately integrated into the work of the Policy Area.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Health most directly contributes to SDG 3 “Good health and well-being”. Several work areas of PA Health also contribute to other SDGs, such as 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

3. EU or other policy framework

The work of PA Health is strongly aligned with the NDPHS Strategy 2020, the WHO Europe Health 2020 strategy, the European policy framework for health, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the principle of universal health coverage (UHC) as well as the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Health has an established structure of thematic experts and a network of stakeholders in the region. In addition to the NDPHS Partner Organisations, several stakeholders from civil society, academia, as well as national, regional and local authorities are involved in the implementation of PA Health activities and projects.

In the future, PA Health will work on further broadening its stakeholder outreach and engagement, in particular to NGOs working on health-related issues in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. A strategy on stakeholder relations will be a part of the future increased communication activities of PA Health.

5. Key policy area achievements

Previous activities of PA Health have focused on raising the profile of health on the regional agenda, which has been achieved through the organisation of events bringing together policy makers and experts. Furthermore, efforts have been made to highlight the connection between health and economic prosperity through the commissioning of reports and their dissemination to regional decision makers.

Several successful projects have been implemented in the framework of the PA Health. Among them, the most recent flagship project “Northern Dimension Antibiotic Resistance Study (NoDARS)” provided valuable information on the penetration of antibiotic resistance in society and identified specific resistance determinants among the normal flora of healthy individuals.

The recent focus of PA Health has been increasing stakeholders’ capacity in fundraising to initiate new potential flagship within the PA Health by organising training activities on project design and management in collaboration with HA Capacity.

6. Actions for the policy area³²

Action 1: Promoting active and healthy ageing³³ to address the challenges of demographic change				
Description: As in many other regions of the world, the population in the Baltic Sea region is affected by demographic change. This presents great opportunities for the societies of the BSR, as well as challenges to adapt, in particular the health and care systems.				
Timing: 2019 - 2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Established strategic framework for action aimed at	# of national needs assessment reports # of joint cross-	0	- Strategic framework launched by 2021 - Joint initiatives - 2	PA Health reporting

³² A more elaborate version of the PA Health action plan is available from: https://www.ndphs.org/internalfiles/File/EUBSR/EUSBSR_Action_Plan_PA_Health.pdf

³³ <https://www.who.int/ageing/healthy-ageing/en/>

promoting healthy and active ageing in the BSR	border initiatives		per year	
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Active and healthy ageing in the Baltic Sea region (AgeFLAG).				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
Roadmap to improve the health and well-being of the ageing population in the Baltic Sea Region – AgeFLAG Seed funding project (Large-scale project following the AgeFLAG seed project).				

Action 2: Promoting a Health in All Policies approach with focus on the impact of environmental factors, and especially climate change on human health.				
Description: Action 2 aims to integrate health in all EU policies and sectors with a focus on environmental and climate challenges on human health. Health is interconnected with many different policy areas and sectors. While health and well-being of the population impact the success of other sectors, e.g. labour and education, the policies of other areas can have a large impact on health, e.g. climate, environment and finance. It is therefore crucial to improve the awareness of policymakers from other sectors to understand and analyse the health impact of policies in their sector. In particular, PA Health seeks to explore the connection between antimicrobial resistance and the environment, including relating to food production and pharmaceutical use and manufacturing. PA Health strives to engage an increased amount of stakeholders across the BSR policy areas to promote the Health in All Policies approach.				
Timing: 2020 - 2025				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Increased cooperation and synergies of activities in the BSR	# of new stakeholders # of common initiatives, events, communications	0	3 per year	PA Health reporting
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action				
Planned: HiAP in the Baltic Sea region				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action				
Small-scale activities for cross-sectoral stakeholder involvement and sharing of information about health impacts.				

Continuing the work on circular economy and health.

Action 3: Increasing stakeholder and institutional capacity to tackle regional health challenges.

Description: Enabling capacity building and shared learning through networking, knowledge-brokering and training activities. This action is designed to further enhance the skills and knowledge of regional stakeholders to develop and utilise strategic policy instruments that contribute to the health and social well-being of citizens in the Baltic Sea region.

Timing: 2020 - 2025

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Increased capacity of stakeholders to tackle regional health challenges	# of developed or utilised policy instruments (advocacy tools, policy briefs, policy forums etc.)	0	3 per year	PA Health reporting

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action

Capacity building activities under HiAP flagship (Action 2)

Project (s) and other action (s) are planned under this action

Organisation of trainings, workshops etc. on developing and utilising relevant policy instruments.

3.14. Policy area Education

Policy area coordinator: Germany (Hamburg Institute for Vocational Education and Training); Föreningen Norden (Norden Association).

1. EUSBSR objectives

Increase prosperity:

- Baltic Sea region as a frontrunner for deepening and fulfilling the single market
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region

Connect the region:

- Connecting people in the region

The added value of PA Education is the following:

PA Education contributes to an increased prosperity that presupposes access to quality education and training for all, an effective and inclusive welfare system and a well-functioning labour market

supporting geographical, professional and socioeconomic mobility. In science and research, we face an increased global competitiveness where even though our macro region is performing well, we can do more through closer collaboration, making best use of our resources together in the Baltic Sea region.

2. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

PA Education, science and social affairs are contributing to SDGs 4, 8, 9 and 10.

3. EU or other policy framework

The European Pillar of Social Rights is fully integrated into this policy area with its focus on how to sustain our standards of living, create more and better jobs, equip people with the right skills and create more unity within our society, considering tomorrow's society and the world of work.

Furthermore, the policy area is contributing to the vision with a European Education Area where time spent abroad to study and learn should become the norm. Knowing two languages in addition to one's mother tongue should be a standard. Everyone should be able to access high-quality education, irrespective of their socioeconomic background. People should have a strong sense of their [identity as Europeans](#), of [Europe's cultural heritage](#) and its diversity.

The policy area is also contributing to the realisation of the European Research Area (ERA) as a "unified research area open to the world, based on the internal market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely. Through ERA, the Union and its Member States will strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges"³⁴.

4. Involvement of stakeholders

PA Education engages a wide range of stakeholders in its activities or more strategically, in the five flagships. PA Education keeps a database with more than 1 000 stakeholders from all eight Member States, Norway and Russia. Among activities, the stakeholder seminars are the most common way to get in contact with PA Education. These seminars are held in the Member States, often once per year and are organised by PAEP. Participants are national, regional and local actors, public, academia and civil society. A few companies or business organisations participate as well.

5. Key policy area achievements

The main achievement in PA Education is the flagship concept with currently five flagships. Flagships are to be understood as long-term development processes gathering multi-level stakeholders transnationally and on cross-sectoral level. They are based on membership, sustainable structures with just limited dependence on project funding for their maintenance. All five of them have committed flagship leaders, institutions able to sustain and develop the flagships. Two of the flagships are partly funded by ESF projects, based on transnational cooperation between projects from three to four Member States, one is partly funded by Interreg Baltic Sea region with cooperation partners from seven Member States and Russia.

³⁴ Ref. The European Commission's 2012 policy Communication on the European Research Area (ERA)

Contributing to the success of PA Education is also the commitment from members of the coordinating group including DG EMPL. The support from the ESF MA-network is also contributing to the achievements.

6. Actions for the PA

Action 1: Preventing early school leaving and improving transition from school to work				
Description: Early school leaving often results in alienation and the young persons facing a NEET situation (Not in Employment, Education or Training). Well-skilled teachers are a pre-requisite for effectively tackling these societal challenges. The skills supply also needs to be secured, to make the teaching profession more attractive. 2019 European Semester Country reports for the Baltic Sea region recommendations: Investment needs have been identified in various Baltic Sea region countries ³⁵ to promote measures to prevent early school leaving and improve transitions from school to work for youth in general and youth with migrant background as well as at-risk groups. Integrated support and services to unemployed and inactive, including young people, as well as targeted outreach and individualised support can help to improve access to employment. Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the Covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools, as well as remote office set-ups, reveal the urgency of the response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before. This action focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventing early school leaving; • re-integrating young people in NEET situations into education or labour market and • vocational education and training as an important vehicle to achieve the above. 				
Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Preventing early school leaving (ESL)	Strategy for ESL Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 20 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100 members/2023 10 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA
Re-integrating young people in NEET situations	NEET Agenda ³⁶ Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 40 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100 members/2023 10 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: School to Work (S2W) – ongoing				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action: 2 thematic platforms; (1) Early School Leaving (ESL), (2) not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)				

Action 2: International excellence and wider participation in science and research

³⁵ Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Sweden

³⁶ *An Agenda is a co-created framework for policy and practice. It provides a roadmap for actors on all levels.*

Description:

The Covid-19-pandemia has again demonstrated the utmost importance of science and research for the resilience of our societies to the 21st century's social, environmental and economic grand challenges, including the preparedness to pandemics and responses to outbreaks. There is an urgent need for a more effective coordination of research policies and an intensified transnational use of the research facilities aiming at a common region for research and innovation. By realising the European Research Area (ERA), the Union and its Member States will strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges.

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea region recommendations:

High investment priorities have been identified to enhance and better coordinate the research and innovation capacities of the BSR-member countries, where appropriate across borders³⁷. The universities and research institutions should also improve the commercial viability and market relevance of their research projects³⁸ and intensify the support of collaborative research. A better cooperation on promoting mobility of researchers across borders can help to fully utilise the available human capital in the macro-region.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the Covid-19-pandemia the ad hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools, as well as remote office set-ups, reveal the urgency of the response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This Action focuses on:

- facilitating the cooperation of science and research policies in the Baltic Sea region aiming at a common research and innovation area;
- widening participation among the Baltic Sea region Member States in Horizon Europe;
- enhancing the transnational cooperation in the development and utilisation of existing and new research infrastructures and
- promoting mobility among researchers.

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
A common research and innovation area	Agenda for a common research and innovation area	0	MS informed/2023	Monitoring by PA
	Engaged members	31	100/2023	
	Absorbed funding	1 M EUR	2 M EUR/2023	

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Baltic Science Network (BSN) – ongoing and Baltic University Programme (BUP) – ongoing.

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action: BSN powerhouse (Interreg Baltic Sea region – ongoing) with LaunchPad: RI Connectors and Baltic Science Network Mobility Programme for Research Internships (BARI). Yearly conferences (BSN/BUP), workshops, courses, produces position papers, sailing etc.

Action 3: A labour market for all, using resources of longer lives**Description:**

Lifelong learning will soon be a reality - during the working life, one will regularly upgrade skills, adjusting to the needs of the labour market, or because of the need to find a less physically demanding job, or simply because one would like to do something else, including starting their own company. The educational systems need to be adjusted to these new demands to offer lifelong learning. This also includes upgrading teachers' skills in educating and training adults and elderly.

³⁷ Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Germany

³⁸ Estonia, Finland and Lithuania

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea region recommendations for all eight Baltic Sea region countries: lifelong learning should be promoted, notably flexible upskilling and reskilling, considering digital skills, better anticipating change and new skills requirements based on labour market needs, facilitating career transitions and promoting professional mobility.

Lifelong learning strategies and flexible learning pathways throughout the lifecycle should be developed in cooperation with social partners, civil society and other stakeholders.

Basic skills of adults, including migrants, should be upgraded and new opportunities for low-skilled adults should be created.

Active and healthy ageing with preservation of the work ability of the workforce should be supported. An especially important field of lifelong learning support is identified for the long-term care, healthcare and social care workforce in various Baltic Sea region countries³⁹. This includes building up skilled health workforce planning and forecasting and supporting upskilling and reskilling of personnel.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the Covid-19-pandemia the ad-hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools, as well as remote office set-ups, reveal the urgency of the response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This Action focuses on;

- making lifelong learning a reality, offering competence development and resources for face-to-face guidance throughout the whole life;
- supporting dialogue between social partners, relevant authorities and education providers on a society of longer lives and a sustainable working life;
- active ageing and solidarity between the age groups.

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Support to Making lifelong learning a reality	Life-Long-Learning Agenda Engaged members Absorbed funding	0 35 3 M EUR	MS informed/2023 100/2023 6 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA
Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Baltic Sea Labour Forum (BSLF) – ongoing				
Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action: BSLF – Sustainable Working Life (ESF, on-going). Yearly conference, study visits, thematic working groups, policy briefings etc.				

Action 4: Recognising potential – easing the way for migrants

Description:

The increased number of refugees constitutes a challenge to those Member States where refugees choose to seek asylum. At the same time, many Member States struggle with demographic changes with an ageing population, which within a decade will lead to a deficit of skilled workers – academic and non-academic - in for e.g. industry, health care and other sectors. This underlines the need for an effective integration of refugees and migrants for them to contribute to the building of inclusive, cohesive and prosperous societies which is of common interest to all Member States.

³⁹ Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland

2019 European Semester Country Reports for the Baltic Sea region recommendations for various Baltic Sea region countries⁴⁰:

Socioeconomic integration of third country nationals should be promoted, including inclusive and qualitative education and training plus individual support.

Basic skills of adult migrants should be upgraded and new opportunities for low-skilled adults created.

An effective move from activation measures towards employment should be ensured.

Integration of migrants could be a chance for those Member States who are facing serious problems with a shrinking working-age population and emigration, which leads to growing skills and labour shortages.

Digitalisation is a cross-cutting topic. More responsive educational systems are more critical than ever in the digital economy and will help to reduce the social costs. Forced by the Covid-19-pandemia, the ad hoc required remote teaching and learning at schools, as well as remote office set-ups reveal the urgency of the response to the challenges of digital transformation more than ever before.

This action focuses on:

- early recognition of potential, offering tailor-made vocational education (including language) and in-company trainings for a smooth and fast integration in the labour market;
- involving the society at large in the integration.

Indicator title	Value	Baseline	Target/deadline	Data source
Support early recognition of potential including offering tailor-made VET	Integration Agenda Engaged member Absorbed funding	0 200 1 M EUR	MS informed/2023 400/2023 5 M EUR/2023	Monitoring by PA

Flagships ongoing or planned under this action: Not yet. Planned to start 2020.

Project (s) and other action (s) planned under this action: Not yet.

⁴⁰ Denmark, Finland, Poland and Sweden

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ANNEX 1. International and regional cooperation formats of the EUSBSR

CPMR BSC	Baltic Sea Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe https://cpmr-baltic.org/
BSPC	Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference https://www.bspc.net/
BS NGO Network	Baltic Sea NGO Network multiple national web pages
BSSSC	Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation https://www.bsssc.com/
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation https://www.barentscooperation.org/en
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States https://www.cbss.org/
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helsinki Commission https://helcom.fi/
ND	Northern Dimension http://www.northerndimension.info/
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers https://www.norden.org/en
UBC	Union of the Baltic Cities https://www.ubc.net/
VASAB	Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea https://vasab.org/