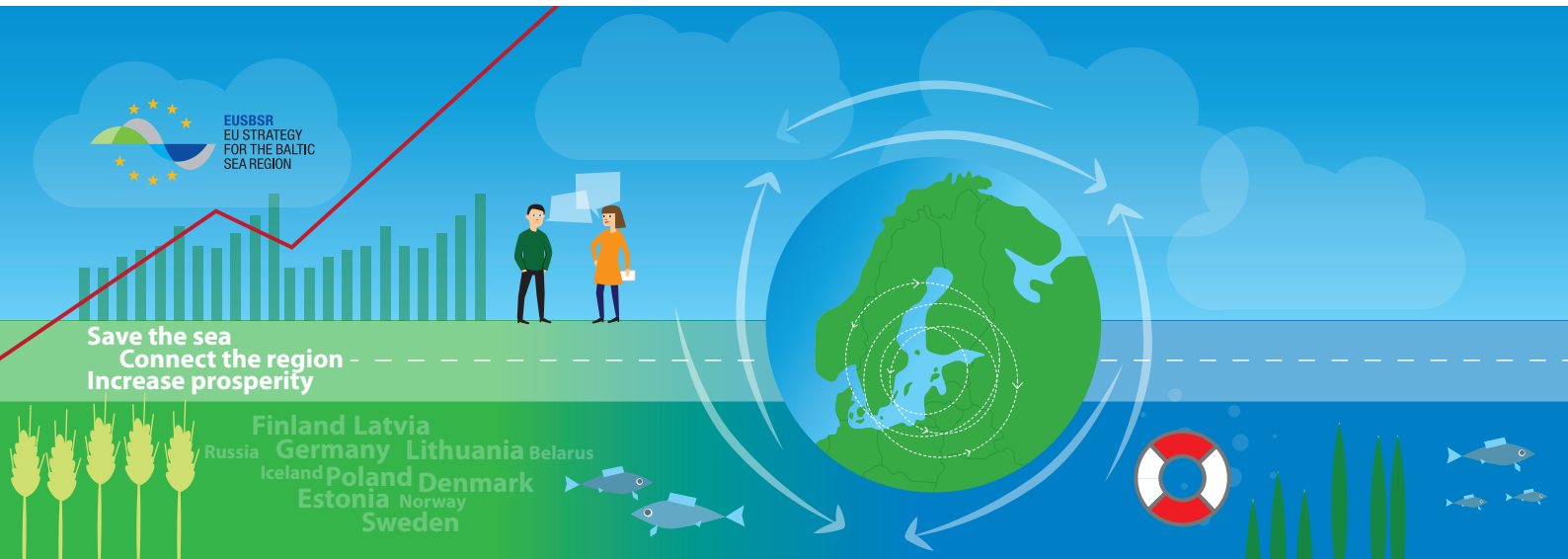


# A Beginner's Guide to the Baltic Sea Region Strategy



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***Are you curious about what the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is and how cooperation might benefit you? Then this is the brochure for you!***



# The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in brief

Why is it so important to cooperate with other Baltic Sea States? What is the difference between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Europe 2020 and the Baltic Sea Region Programme, and how do they all fit together?

This brochure provides answers to these questions and more. You'll learn more about the common objectives that the region is striving to achieve, and what to do if you want to work on a project.

## What is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region?

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is about joint problem-solving – and taking advantage of the opportunities that greater cooperation provides. The Strategy is an agreement between Member States of the EU and the European Commission to deepen cooperation between the Baltic Sea States in order to tackle joint challenges facing the countries in the region today, such as cleaning up a polluted sea, mitigation against the impacts of climate change, and fighting cross-border crime.



# Baltic Sea Region Strategy objectives and sub-objectives

## Save the sea

- Clear water in the sea
- Rich and healthy wildlife
- Clean and safe shipping

## Connect the region

- Good transport conditions
- Reliable energy markets
- Connecting people in the region
- Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime

## Increase prosperity

- EUSBSR contributing to the implementation of Europe 2020
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region
- Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

Read more about the three objectives on pages 10–12!



## Is the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region a strategy only for the sea?

**No. The Strategy covers many other joint challenges and opportunities that are specific to the EU countries on the Baltic Sea rim and are better solved together.**

The Strategy primarily affects the Member States of the EU in the region: Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

Non-EU countries are also participating actively in work with the Baltic Sea Region Cooperation. These include Norway, which is often involved the work, and Russia, an important partner country. In addition, Iceland and Belarus are sometimes involved.

# What use may the Baltic Sea Region Strategy be to a municipality, region or organisation?

## It allows you, for example, to:

- Work with urban planning and sustainability issues from a broader perspective,
- Solve important issues for the future that are fundamental to the development of tourism and other related industries for example,
- Collaborate on transport issues or maritime safety,
- Work with business development to assist enterprises to develop export markets and international partnerships close by,
- Get ideas about working smart with Green Public Procurement,
- Cooperate on energy issues and other issues that bring together the environment and the economy,
- Gain inspiration on how to help young people who have left before completing their schooling
- Streamline work with emergency plans and crisis management,
- Help gaining support for important development projects from government agencies and authorities at different levels ... and much more.

### Does the Baltic Sea Region Strategy concern all municipalities and regions?

Yes. Most of the questions taken up by the Baltic Sea Region Strategy concern, and may involve opportunities for, all municipalities and regions in the countries in the Baltic Sea Region. So it doesn't only concern those with a shoreline to the Baltic Sea, although the coastal regions may find it easier to see the connection and are affected by more of the Strategy's Priority Areas.



# Seven reasons to increase cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

Well-prepared cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region has many advantages. Here are seven examples of what you can gain from this kind of cooperation.

## 1. Smarter problem-solving

Better conditions for solving common problems that require actions from all involved, for example, the environmental problems in the Baltic Sea, inadequate transport routes or access to energy.

## 2. Smarter ways of working and methods

Greater access to ways of working with, for instance, labour supply and sustainability, which are relevant to all countries covered by the Baltic Sea Region Strategy.

## 3. Better cooperation on environmental issues

More opportunities for cooperation on how to prevent flooding and other issues to do with climate change adaptation.

## 4. Bigger market

A bigger market for the products and services of local enterprises, as well as better opportunities to push issues that facilitate export and import, for example, transport issues.

## 5. Increased knowledge and bigger networks

Increased market knowledge and contacts that make enterprises stronger on the global market.

## 6. Safety and security

Cooperation within areas such as crisis management and crime prevention.

## 7. More resources

By joint ventures you can pool knowledge and financial resources.

In addition, there is the opportunity to become a model for Europe and the world when it comes to solving problems across borders!





**Ewa Hedkvist  
Petersen**  
Project manager  
Norrbotten  
County Council

Photo: PRO

# Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

## Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

– The County Council has identified demographics as an important issue for the future. We have a high average age in Norrbotten and saw the opportunity to analyse this issue together with others in the Baltic Sea Region in a similar situation. We wanted to learn and from this develop methods so that we can become forerunners.

## What are the most rewarding aspects of the cooperation?

– It is very rewarding: not only working with different countries, but also with different skills. You learn different ways to tackle a problem and different ways of thinking. At the same time, we have in common that we all want to improve "our" region.

## What advice would you give to others interested in starting some form of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Don't allow it to remain just an idea. Make it a reality!
- Look beyond the administrative obstacles.
- Have the attitude that there is a lot to learn.
- Language is not a problem. Everyone speaks English, but no one has English as their first language.



- Clear water in the sea
- Rich and healthy wildlife
- Clean and safe shipping

## What do the three objectives mean?

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has three main objectives: saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity.

### Save the sea

We can only save the Baltic Sea together – one of the world’s most polluted seas, and greatly in need of remedial action. This objective concerns the Baltic Sea’s vulnerability to eutrophication, pollution and over-fishing for example, which place particularly high demands on cooperation within the region. The objective Save the sea is about achieving a good environmental status and biological diversity in the sea and making the Baltic Sea Region a model region for clean shipping.

A clean Baltic Sea not only provides better conditions for the people who live and work around it. It also provides opportunities to develop the tourism and hospitality industry – an industry that is growing and thus becoming increasingly important for the economy and employment.

## Connect the region

Large parts of the Baltic Sea Region are sparsely populated with long distances to other markets. For historical reasons, its transport systems and energy markets have developed independently of each other and are not yet sufficiently integrated to take the best advantage for the region's potential in terms of competitiveness and its quality of life. Better cooperation is needed to improve the region's transport systems and to secure its energy supply.

Connecting the region is also about bringing people closer together to be able to take advantage of a larger critical mass when it comes to knowledge, ideas and enterprise. This can be achieved through student and research exchanges and business contacts for instance, or by developing the region's potential as a tourist destination.

It might also be about concrete partnerships for fighting cross-border crime such as human trafficking and the smuggling of contraband, etc.



- **Good transport conditions**
- **Reliable energy markets**
- **Connecting people in the region**
- **Better cooperation in fighting cross-border crime**



- EUSBSR contributing to the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy
- Improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region
- Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

## Increase prosperity

Develop the Baltic Sea Region – create a region of growth! With the enlargement of the European Union in 2004, today eight of the nine Baltic Sea States are also members of the EU and thus part of the EU’s single market. This means greater opportunities for trade and exchanges of skills and knowledge. Trade between the Baltic Sea States is already substantial, but could increase.

The Baltic Sea States can improve their competitiveness and increase prosperity by cooperating more on R&D and deepening and fulfilling the single market in various ways.

Strong sectors in the Baltic Sea Region include IT, environmental technologies, health, and the wood and forest products industry. Through better partnerships including clusters in areas of common strength, the region can be developed into a stronger global player.

# The Action Plan for the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

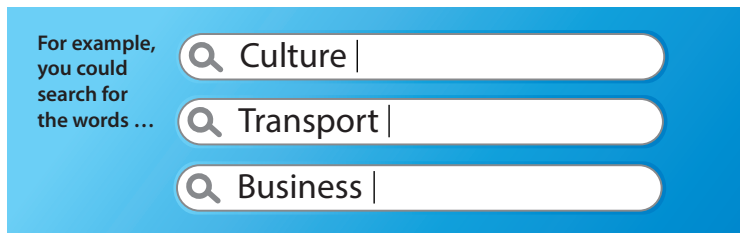
There is an Action Plan for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which details the three objectives. Priority areas are identified for each of the objectives with appointed responsible government agencies and ministries in the different Baltic Sea Region States.

The Action Plan, which is now available in all the languages of the region and English, also describes Flagship projects which are intended to serve as inspiration. One way of using this Action Plan is to search in it for words that best correspond to your area of interest.

You can download the Action Plan from [www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu)

## Good to know about the Baltic Sea Region!

- The Baltic Sea Region is one of the most competitive regions in the world.
- By 2020, it is anticipated that almost EUR 10 billion will be converted into more than 1000 projects within the EU's territorial cooperation programmes.





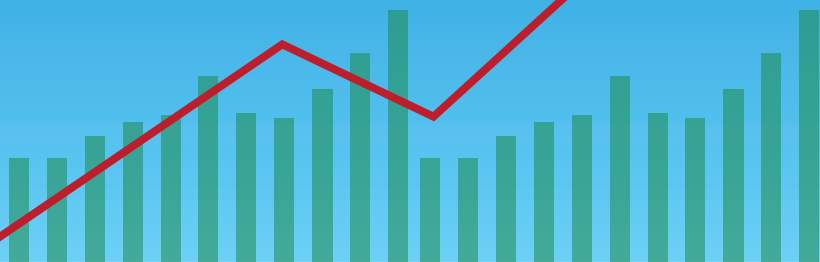
**Our main trading partners are in our neighbouring area. We can stand stronger globally by working together.**

**Save the sea  
Connect the region  
Increase prosperity**

Finland Latvia  
Russia Germany Lithuania  
Iceland Poland  
Estonia Norway  
Sweden

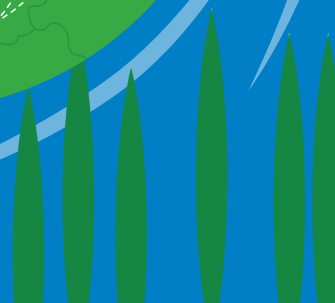
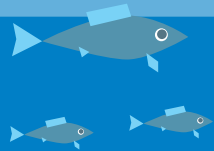
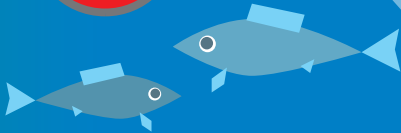


**The Baltic Sea is a resource for human health and well-being. But it also provides great potential for job creation and growth.**





Partnership gives us the opportunity to share each other's knowledge, ideas and solutions.



**Could town twinning  
provide an opening?**

Many municipalities have twin towns in another Baltic Sea Region States. These contacts can provide an opening for establishing partnerships.



## **What do I do if I want to work with a EUSBSR project?**

- Start from your own development needs.
- Get help from others who have experience of cooperation projects, for example, those described in this brochure.
- Attend thematic conferences and make contacts.
- Ensure that you have all the stakeholders essential to achieving your goals with you from the start.

**You find contact information to key stakeholders in the  
Baltic Sea Region at [www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu)**



# How your work with the Baltic Sea Strategy is promoted!

## How is a municipality's or region's implementation of a project in line with the Baltic Sea Strategy promoted?

There is great interest from the EU and stakeholders around the Baltic Sea Region in learning about projects that contribute to the Strategy.

It means that you are welcome to share information about your project to others. At [www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu) you find tools to help you communicate your Baltic Sea Region project.

The Baltic Sea Strategy is firmly established with all Member State governments.





**Håkan Knutsson**  
CEO  
Sustainable Business  
Hub, Malmö

# Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

## Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

- We want to help develop the whole Baltic Sea region into the 'domestic' market for our member enterprises.
- There is huge growth potential for environmental technologies in the region, especially if you include Russia, Belarus and even Ukraine.
- The countries south of the Baltic are generally very positive to our region. So we have advantages there that we shouldn't neglect.

## What is the most rewarding aspect of the cooperation?

- There is a positive attitude to change and improvement.
- Meeting with people and entrepreneurs from neighbouring but nonetheless different cultures. We have many similarities but there are also stimulating differences. There will be interesting work to do there for the foreseeable future.

## What advice would you give to others who are interested in starting some form of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Be persistent, patient and present.
- Think from the customer's perspectives.
- Approach markets and people with sincerity and respect. They are generally well-educated, serious and have outlooks that can enrich us, besides the purely commercial gains.



**Annika Lundqvist**  
Head of Unit  
International office  
Gävle Municipality

# Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

## Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

– We've based our actions on our Vision 2025 and our municipal objectives, 'docking' them from a multi-level perspective to the Baltic Sea Strategy and Europe 2020. In areas that coincide, we look for opportunities for cooperation with others.

## Can you give an example of issues where working from a Baltic Sea Region perspective adds value?

– We share many of the challenges we are facing with cities and regions in other Baltic Sea Region States. In this programming period, we have participated in several projects with connections to the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. These are projects where cooperation with others has led to concrete development and benefits, both locally and transnationally.

– An example is the Baltic Climate project studying the impacts of climate change: on the one hand to provide input for changes in building permit regulations for example, and on the other hand to review potentials for developing new services and products. In the SMOCS project, the

Port of Gävle developed a method for converting contaminated dredging spoil into building materials. A further example is Bridging Baltic, a project using culture to reach out to new target groups.

## What advice would you give to others who want to work with cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Have faith that cooperation with others leads to development.
- Start from your own objectives and plans, place them in a wider context and find opportunities for cooperation.
- Utilise existing, developed contacts (for example, town twinning and international networks such as the Union of Baltic Cities) and seek out new contacts by participating in thematic conferences.
- Invest in your own project organisation – steering group, project management, finance and accounting. This is useful in running a project and positive for an effective implementation of the project results in your own organisation.



**Matilda Gradin**  
Environmental  
Strategist  
Trelleborg  
Municipality

# Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

## Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

– Trelleborg Municipality is dependent on a living sea for its economy and good quality of life. We are seeing the clear impacts of eutrophication in the form of changing ecosystems with more filamentous algae, for example. We also have a large port with cargo and ferry services to Poland and Germany, which are important for the municipality but, at the same time, impact the environment. Because we share a common sea, it is obviously important to cooperate on issues relating to discharges of effluent, counter-measures, rules for shipping, etc.

## What are the most rewarding aspects of the cooperation?

- The new knowledge and new perspectives that come from the cooperation.
- Opportunities to seek joint funding from the EU and thus gaining the opportunity to implement bigger and better environmental measures that there is no room for in a municipal budget.

## What advice would you give to others who are interested in starting some form of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Be thorough in the application phase and try to find good partners who have similar objectives.
- Don't get too stressed about the administration.
- Don't be afraid to test things out, it's fun and often a boost for the organisation.



Hans Bjurbäck  
East Sweden  
Regional Council

## Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

### Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

– As early as 1996, the East Sweden Regional Council pointed out the importance of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. This led to us establishing a special function that provides support to the Regional Council's areas of activity and its members in monitoring issues related to the Baltic Sea Region. It's about stimulating, developing and coordinating relationships; about skills, information and collaborative projects (in particular from EU programmes) with partners from the Baltic Sea Region.

### Can you give an example of issues where working from a Baltic Sea perspective adds value?

– We use our well-developed networks in the Baltic Sea Region to work with issues that are important to us, for example, regional development planning. One project dealt with how we

can develop regions located in the shadow of large metropolitan areas. Here, we cooperated with partners in Finland, Lithuania and Poland.

In the *Baltic Eco Mussel* project, we are cooperating with Finland, Estonia and Latvia on how mussel cultivation can be used to both create jobs in the archipelago and clean the water in the Baltic Sea.

### What advice would you give to others who are interested in starting some form of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Get yourself a good network of partners that you can rely on and keep your network alive. Monitor how your own ideas for cooperation match up with the EU programmes.
- Don't hesitate to take advantage of opportunities for seed finance available to develop your project idea.

## Is there funding available in the Baltic Sea Region Strategy?

The Baltic Sea Strategy comprises strategic guidance and assistance in prioritising joint actions – there is no specific funding allocated to the Strategy. However, there are programmes where you can apply for funding to support cooperation actions among the Baltic Sea Region States.

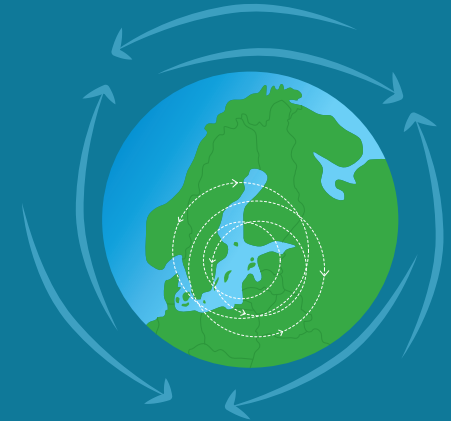
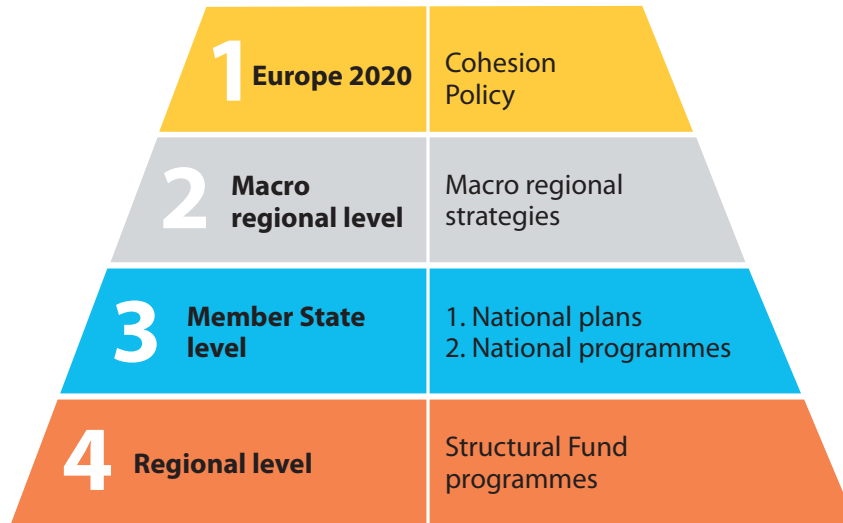
For the 2014–2020 programming period, you can apply for funding for cross-border cooperation in most of the EU programmes, such as programmes under the European Regional Development Fund and Social Fund programmes, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Read more about  
funding sources at:

[www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu)

# How it all fits together!

Different strategies, plans and programmes affect work with development issues locally and regionally. But this does not mean that there is any conflict between them. On the contrary. They build on each other. Working with the Baltic Sea Strategy also means, for example, working towards the objectives of Europe 2020.



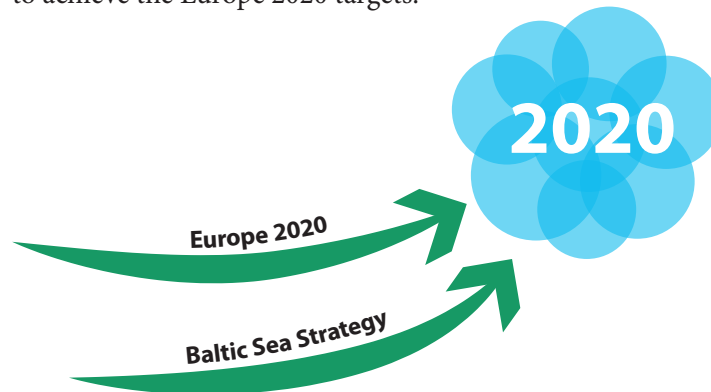
## Why a common strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in particular?

- Our main trading partners are found in the Baltic Sea Region.
- We have common challenges related to the environment, growth and demographics.
- We have opportunities to position the region in a global context.

## How does the Baltic Sea Strategy relate to Europe 2020?

Europe 2020 is about smart, sustainable growth for all. It is an overall strategy for the entire EU that is consistent with the ambitions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea Region Strategy complements Europe 2020 by taking as its starting point in what is specific to the Baltic Sea Region, and which can best be implemented jointly among these eight northern EU countries. So there is no conflict between the two strategies. On the contrary, the Baltic Sea Strategy aims to make it easier for the Baltic Sea Region States to achieve the Europe 2020 targets.





# What is the difference between the Baltic Sea Region Strategy and the Baltic Sea Region Programme?

The Baltic Sea Region Strategy is a strategic document for issues that are of particular importance for the region. The Baltic Sea Region Programme is one of many EU programmes that actors can access for cross-border cooperation. The Baltic Sea Region Programme is the only one of these programmes that covers the entire Baltic Sea Region, and thus it is common therefore to apply for funding for actions within the Baltic Sea Strategy from this programme. But all EU programmes in the region are intended to contribute to the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, for example the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Programme, the European Regional Development Fund Programmes and the European Social Fund's programmes. It is therefore important to point out other opportunities, and to consider a combination of different EU programmes.

**There is good general information in English here:**  
[www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu)



There is good  
general information  
in English here:

[www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu](http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu)

## Want to access more detailed information?

If you would like to access more detailed information about the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, you can look in the Action Plan (the address is in the margin of this page). Below is a list of the 17 different priority areas in the Action Plan. Each point corresponds to a section that you can easily search for.

### Save the sea

- Agri – Reinforcing sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries
- Bio – Preserving natural zones and biodiversity, including fisheries
- Hazards – Reducing the use and impact of hazardous substances
- Nutri – Reducing nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels
- Safe – To become a leading region in maritime safety and security
- Secure – Protection from emergencies and accidents on land
- Ship – Becoming a model region for clean shipping

### Connect the region

- Crime – Fighting cross-border crime
- Energy – Improving the access to, and the efficiency and security of the energy markets
- Transport – Improving internal and external transport links

## Increase prosperity

- Culture – Developing and promoting the common culture and cultural identity
- Education – Developing innovative education and youth
- Health – Improving and promoting people’s health, including its social aspects
- Innovation – Exploiting the full potential of the region in research and innovation
- Internal market – Removing hindrances to the internal market
- SME – Promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the growth of SMEs
- Tourism – Reinforcing cohesiveness of the macro-region through tourism

## Horizontal actions

Actions to bring the countries in the region closer together and thus reinforce the cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

INVOLVE	Strengthening multi-level governance including involving civil society, business and academia.
NEIGHBOURS	To increase the co-operation with neighbouring countries to tackle joint challenges in the Baltic Sea region.
PROMO	Boosting joint promotion and regional identity building actions.
SPATIAL PLANNING	Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND BIO-ECONOMY	Sustainable development with a focus on climate change.





**Erika Hinz**  
General Manager  
Teknikdalen  
Foundation  
Borlänge

## Working with the Baltic Sea Region Strategy

### Why Baltic Sea Region cooperation?

– The Baltic Sea Region is an important market for our enterprises and the contacts we have with industry organisations can be of great help in commercial contexts. The Baltic Sea Region has great development potential and we believe that partnerships strengthen both us and our enterprises in the global market.

### What are the most rewarding aspects of the cooperation?

– Exchange of experience on incubators and financing.

### What advice would you give to others who are interested in starting some form of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

- Create networks with similar organisations.
- Be open to learning and being influenced by the experiences of others.

Read about some of the projects in the Baltic Sea Region on the following pages.

## Best practise

# Critical mass important for the development of nanotechnology

–There is great potential for growth in the economy when it comes to nanotechnology and smart materials, says Lars Montelius, professor at the University of Lund.



We have established good cooperation mainly with Denmark, northern Germany and the Baltic States through a number of projects in recent years.

Besides the research environments in the different countries, this cooperation extends to municipalities, regions, and business and industry. Lars Montelius stresses that above all the projects give a legitimate reason to gather together actors that do not normally cooperate closely with each other.

– For example, the cooperation has contributed to us having opened up research infrastructure to SMEs in the

*“This has worked very well and has led to many new, innovative products.”*

region, allowing them to be developed.

An example is the University of Tartu, Estonia, which invites local enterprises in to be informed about the research.

–This has worked very well and has led to many new, innovative products, says Lars Montelius. We have the same kind of cooperation with Swedish enterprises. We have built up a network of more than 2000 names of individuals working in enterprises and organisations in the greater Öresund area that have activities related to smart materials and nanotechnology.

If you would like more information, you can contact professor Lars Montelius at [lars.montelius@ftf.lth](mailto:lars.montelius@ftf.lth).

## Best practise

# Demonstration farms pave the way for environment-friendly agriculture

The *Baltic Deal* project spreads knowledge about concrete measures to mitigate the environmental impacts of agriculture.

The project's long-term objective is to reduce emissions of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus from farms in the Baltic Sea Region in order to reduce eutrophication. Eutrophication leads to a string of problems that destroy the environment for both humans and animals. Sweden, through the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF), is one of the seven partners in the project.



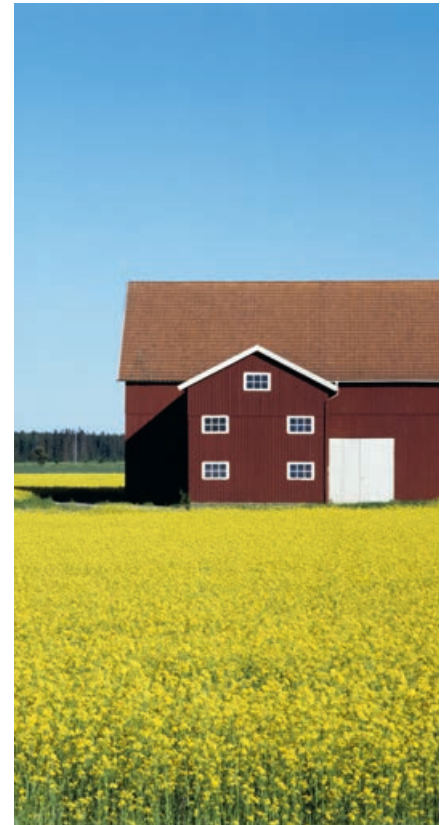
*“The project’s long-term objective is to reduce emissions of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus.”*

*Baltic Deal* has built up a network of 118 demonstration farms in the Baltic Sea States in order to show how environmental impacts can be reduced while farmers retain their profitability and competitiveness.

– We have a good knowledge of what needs to be done, says Stina Bergström, LRF. Through *Baltic Deal*, we’ve created important knowledge transfer between farmer organisations, advisory organisations and farmers both within the countries and across national borders.

But investments cost, and some form of aid may be needed to provide farmers with opportunities to invest in new fertilizer spreaders, new manure tanks, renovating their stables or other things to make their farms more environment-friendly.

If you would like more information about *Baltic Deal*, go to the Federation of Swedish Farmers’ website. You can also contact Stina Bergström at [stina.bergstrom@lrf.se](mailto:stina.bergstrom@lrf.se)



## Best practise

# Multi-level governance for more effective planning

*“We need to gain a better understanding of the different planning cultures in the Baltic Sea Region.”*

**In order to achieve well-planned and efficient transport in the Baltic Sea Region, it’s not enough for one region or municipality to identify the needs and be responsible for the planning. The state level generally also needs to contribute finance and expertise.**

This is called multi-level governance, and is about how the best decisions are made through interaction between different levels in the community. Multi-level governance is a pathway to resource efficiency in activities. We must also plan with other countries if the transport system as a whole is to function well.

– In the worst case, planning done on one side of a border doesn’t connect at all with what is happening on the other side, says Mathias Roos, responsible for the *BSR TransGovernance project* in Region Blekinge.

– We need to gain a better understanding of our different planning cultures in the Baltic Sea Region and who does what in planning and implementation.

The project involves 23 partners from all of the EU Baltic Sea States and Norway.

Read more about the project at [www.transgovernance.eu](http://www.transgovernance.eu) or contact [mathias.roos@regionblekinge.se](mailto:mathias.roos@regionblekinge.se)

– We have received aid from all the transport ministries in the Baltic Sea Region to develop more effective working methods for the planning and implementation of transport infrastructure, says Mathias Roos. One of the objectives is to develop a common forum where we can raise cross-border planning issues. Today, there is no such forum.





## Best practise

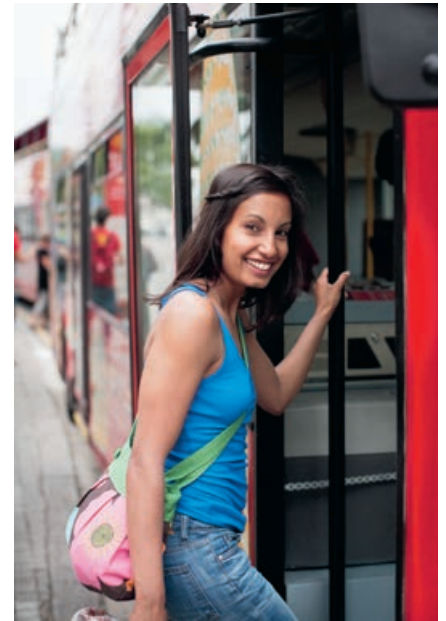
# Easier car free travel

Better information to passengers, coordinated timetables and the expansion of connecting services is making it easier to travel without a car in the Baltic Sea Region.

Previously, it was unusual to use the ferry services between Karlskrona and Gdynia if you were not driving a car. But thanks to a cooperation project, this has now become an option, and the results are appreciable.

– We've increased the proportion of pedestrian passengers by 9 per cent thanks to this cooperation, says Leif Petersson in Karlskrona municipality. Besides improved service for passengers, because many are now leaving their cars at home, we've been able to free up space on the ferries for goods. All in all, it means we can utilise the ferry services more efficiently. This is important because the volume of goods is rising and we want to be able to reduce our environmental impact.

*“We have increased the proportion of pedestrian passengers by 9 per cent thanks to this cooperation.”*



Would you like more information? Visit [www.interfaceproject.eu/](http://www.interfaceproject.eu/)

## Best practise

# Joint solutions for an ageing population structure

**The demographic trend in the Baltic Sea Region of an ageing population with fewer younger people demands innovative thinking in all the Baltic Sea States.**

– We can't just hope that more people will move here. We must look after the people we have, otherwise we won't be able to provide public services in our rural areas, says Ewa Hedkvist Petersen of the Norrbotten County Council, who worked with the demographics issue in the Baltic Sea Region in one finished project, with another in the pipeline.

She views cooperation between the countries as quite natural, because the problems are the same throughout the region.

– We have the same challenges. In any case, outside the metropolitan areas.

According to Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, there is a lot of knowledge in our neighbouring countries that we can benefit from.

– Finland is at the forefront of research on the elderly while Norway has a policy for senior citizens that

we can learn from. And Germany has been working for a long time on the issue of age management in the workplace, says Ewa Hedkvist Petersen.

*The Best Agers project* has shown that older people can contribute to economic activities and innovation processes not only by remaining in the labour market, but also in many other roles. For example, as mentors, senior advisers or contractors.

– For this to work well demands a change in outlook and attitudes, in particular when it comes to management.

*“We must look after the people we have, otherwise we won’t be able to provide public services in our rural areas.”*

This issue is the subject of the new project, *Best Agers Lighthouses*, where age management will be tested in eight enterprises and public institutions in the Baltic Sea Region. The project is intended to result in good examples of how, in order to facilitate generation renewal, enterprises can retain older employees and promote cooperation between different age groups.

Would you like to read more about the Best Agers project?  
Go to [www.best-agers-project.eu/](http://www.best-agers-project.eu/)



## **A Beginner's Guide to the Baltic Sea Region Strategy**

*Are you curious about what the EU Strategy for  
the Baltic Sea Region is and how it might benefit you?*

This brochure is for those who want a quick and easy overview of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. Why is it important to cooperate with others in the Baltic Sea Region in particular, and why has the EU developed a strategy for the region? What is the difference between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Europe 2020 and the Baltic Sea Region Programme, and how do they all fit together?

You'll find answers to these and many more questions in this brochure. Above all, it describes what use stakeholders can make of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy and what to do if you want to work with a project.