

**8th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR in Berlin 13 – 14 June**

**Summary report**

**Seminar: Sustainable transport connections in the Baltic Sea Region – added value of building up cooperation platforms for transport projects**

**Time:** Tuesday, 13 June, 17:00 to 18:30 hours, Stresemann-Saal

How can cooperation platforms for transport projects help achieve EUSBSR objectives for sustainable and efficient transport systems in the Baltic Sea region? This was discussed at the seminar to find out needs for project platforms co-financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region as well as for further cooperation among transport projects in the region.

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme presented its plans to launch a call for project platforms in the autumn 2017. Project officer Attila Darabos explained that project platforms are a framework for cooperation of different EU funded projects with other stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region and its adjacent areas in a certain thematic field. The aim to establish such platforms is to increase impacts and visibility of projects’ outcomes. The cooperation of project partners in a platform should help to deepen the knowledge used as a basis for projects’ outputs, streamline activities of different stakeholders, support communication of projects and programmes and ensure better usage, durability and transferability of projects’ outcomes. Joint policy papers, agreements on joint standards, policy statements and pilot projects using a combination of different funding sources are examples of expected outcomes. Project platforms under Interreg Baltic Sea Region would have a budget of up to EUR 1 million and run three years.

All panellists shared the opinion that cooperation among transport projects would bring added value to their work. People working in projects have a lot of knowledge that could be better taken in use in the implementation of different transport matters of the EUSBSR. Projects’ cooperation in platforms could help bring this knowledge to the policy level. “It would coordinate communication and help

developing new projects that fill existing gaps in the transport field”, said Thomas Erlandson. Jouni Lappalainen pointed out that flagship projects are already well connected to the policy level, while there is a lot of unused potential in local and regional projects that could be brought to wider audience and to policy level. Tālis Linkaits would for instance bring an upcoming study on trends of internal and external accessibility of the Baltic Sea Region to joint reflection by experts working in a platform. Jouni Lappalainen continued that in maritime safety there is a lot of knowledge developed in the projects that could be promoted into global business with the help of a project platform. One aim of the cooperation could also be to work together on safety issues cross transport modes.

Kurt Bodewig described a successful TEN-T corridor as a functioning net of highways, ways, railways, ports and airports. “Breaking up the existing silos” and cooperation is essential for implementation of a corridor. Cooperation of different EU funded projects could help in solving cross-border challenges

along the corridor as well as in bringing the corridor closer to people making better use of the corridor for growth and jobs in the regions. In addition, joint work of projects from different funding sources could advance de-carbonisation of transport as well as private capital involvement.

“Many projects have the same target audience and should not compete, but join forces for reaching the audience and show evidence based on streamlined activities,” concluded Wiktor Szydarowski on the importance of cooperation for a project. The current cooperation of Interreg projects TENTacle, NSB CoRe and Scandria aims at helping to generate regional growth impulses out of the core network corridors. The representatives of Interreg projects ChemSAR, DiveSMART-Baltic and HAZARD brought up their cooperation in emergency interventions bringing together national level actors to develop common operational plans and to carry out joint trainings that help to improve the quality of the interventions. The examples showed that there is already existing cooperation among several projects. Additional support would be needed, however, in order to reach higher ambitions. These include bringing in projects from the regional level to joint work, working together cross-funding sources (e.g. Interreg projects could benefit from HORIZON 2020 projects involving industries) and to ensure durable outcomes in the form of changed policies or new business. Importantly, it was reminded that any cooperation needs an aim. A clear aim for their work would need to be defined jointly by partners forming a project platform.

Interreg Baltic Sea Region will use the seminar outcomes in its further preparations to open a call for platforms. All cooperation needs cannot be solved by the Programme platforms, however, but the seminar hopefully encouraged also further initiatives for cooperation among projects cross funding sources.