

Appendix 9

**Terms of references
Strategy working group of the BEN network**

Background

According to the BEN project plan in the work package 4 (WP4), the BEN Consortium will develop a document on the BEN network strategy for the future (activity WP4.5 in the project document). The strategy shall give a direction to the BEN partners and its stakeholders on how the BEN network could function in the future, after the end of the project. To elaborate the strategy, the project will develop a working group that will prepare the BEN strategy document. Lead Partner has overall responsibility for implementation of this activity. Other project partners may contribute to coordination of this activity accordingly to their interests and resources.

Proposed Tasks for the BEN strategy working group (SWG)

1. The BEN working group on cross-border cooperation strategy shall develop a draft strategy for the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, including the topics and activities that are part of BEN project.
 - a. The strategy shall include proposals for the development of CBC in the Baltic Sea region for the period until 2015.
 - b. The document shall also include a specific plan of action with an indication of possible funding sources for the next three years after the end of the BEN project.

Calendar and process of development of the BEN strategy

The first draft document of the strategy shall be compiled based on the BEN project reports, policy recommendations and other project documents by a deadline of 15 September 2006.

The draft strategy document shall be then presented for comments for the third BEN project Steering Committee (SC) for comments.

After comments of the SC are incorporated, a consultation shall be organised through BEN workshops and roundtables with the project stakeholders, including the national authorities, regional and local governments, international organisations, NGOs and others. If needed the second draft of the strategy is discussed during the fourth SC meeting in April 2007 in Poland.

After additional final comments of SC members, the BEN SC shall adopt the strategy document during the final SC meeting in October 2007.

Members of the BEN strategy working group

The BEN SWG shall be established to draft the BEN strategy document. The composition of SWG shall reflect representatives of all the stakeholder groups represented in the BEN project in order to be able to encompass all the project experiences and interests of stakeholders in the region.

In the SWG following stakeholder-groups should be represented by at least one person each:

- Lead Partner
- secretariat of an Euroregion from the Nordic, Baltic countries or Russia/Belarus;
- Local or regional authority from the Nordic, Baltic countries or Russia/Belarus;
- NGO from the Nordic, Baltic countries or Russia/Belarus.

The composition of SWG shall reflect the geographical scope of BEN partnership, so that at least one representative from the Nordic countries, one from the Baltic countries and one from Russia/Belarus are in the group (if Euroregion *Pomerania* would express wish to participate they should as well be invited). The composition of the SWG should as well reflect gender equality to the degree it is possible.

The total number of members in SWG should not exceed 7 persons. All project partners may propose candidates for the SWG by e-mail before the second SC meeting in Estonia or during the SC meeting itself. SC will make a decision about members of the SWG during the SC meeting in Estonia. SC will appoint a Leader of SWG.

Activities of the SWG are financed by the Lead Partner and project partners accordingly to planned budgets.

Sub-working groups

Under the SWG, a number of sub-working groups on different topics and issues addressed in BEN project could be established. SWG may form such groups following request and interest of partners. Leaders of the sub-working groups would be personally responsible for the development of strategies for their directions (topics of sub-groups).

Examples of possible sub-working groups:

- Local authorities cooperation/development of grass-root cooperation/Euroregions as institutions;
- Relations with national authorities and international organizations;
- Science and innovation cooperation;
- Cooperation in environment and spatial development.

Project partners may suggest other sub-working groups. Membership in subgroups is open for all BEN partners, which are interested to participate. Leaders of subgroups would be responsible for organization of meetings and preparation of the reports.

Schedule:

26 April 2006 – nomination of group members by SC;

15 May 2006 – deadline registration for sub-groups (if SWG decides to form them)

June 2006 – first meeting of the group

September 2006 – first draft of the strategy;

October 2006 – presentation of first draft for SC;

January 2007 – second meeting of the group;

March 2007– second draft ready;

April 2007– presentation of second draft for SC;

September 2007 – final version of strategy ready;

October 2007 – adoption of strategy during the final SC meeting.