

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report

BSR INTERREG III B Activity Report

Dear Lead Partner,

Please take notice of the following when filling in the activity report:

1. Please do not change or delete the structure, page/section breaks or prefilled texts of the reporting form.
2. Please follow the instructions given in the turquoise fields or in cursive in the white fields. Please delete the cursive advise in brackets on the white fields before filling them in.
3. Please try to keep the descriptions clear and short. When appropriate, prefer bullet points and/or numbers to whole sentences.
4. We have developed a list of output indicators to help the monitoring of the outputs produced in the projects. In case you have named and quantified any output indicators in the project plan, please list and quantify the fulfilled ones in the WP reports. Please find an indicative list of output indicators on the next page.
5. The projects that originally have candidate countries as partners should still report the activities carried out in these countries in the table reserved for them (projects of the 1st – 4th rounds) with the exception of the upgraded partners of the 4th round projects. From the 5th round onwards the activities carried out in the New Member States are reported together with other EU Member States.
6. Please submit the “Summary description of the project” and “Achievements of the project so far” for the BSR INTERREG III B website also in case this was done in the previous reports as the current report will replace these two tables in our database.
7. This progress report is the final report to some of the projects. In this case we have attached two separate annexes to the final activity report for the project to fill in. The Annex A is common for all ending projects and the Annex A.1.1, A1.2 etc. is measure specific. Please submit the annexes together with the final progress report both in digital and paper version.

Further information is available on www.bsrinterreg.net in the section "How to implement". Please read carefully also the corresponding chapters of the Programme Manual.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Eeva Rantama at the BSR Interreg III B Joint Secretariat.

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Output indicators

1. Number of common spatial development visions
2. Number of concrete development concepts and strategies
3. Number of land-use and building plans based on transnational strategies
4. Number of technical concepts and feasibility studies
5. Number of economic expertise and business plans
6. Number of cases where environmental impact assessment has been used
7. Number of cases where territorial impact assessment has been used
8. Number of promotion and marketing strategies
9. Number of guidelines, manuals
10. Number of learning programmes
11. Number of training courses and number of trainees
12. Number of small-scale infrastructure investments and their amount
13. Number of all persons involved directly in project events
14. Number of information releases describing project results
 - Websites
 - Brochures
 - TV and radio broadcasts, movie clips
 - Presentations and lectures

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Progress Report – Activity Report (general information)

Project name:	Baltic Euroregional Network		
Reporting period:	01.01.2006 - 30.06.2006	Number of the report:	2

Summary description of the project Please provide a brief overall summary of the project to be published on BSR INTERREG III B webpage. (maximum 2500 characters)	
<p>The objective of the Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) is to promote spatial development and territorial integration in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) by strengthening Euroregions as competent partners with national authorities and international institutions, and by building a network of Euroregions for continuous capacity-building and sharing of experience. In order to achieve the objectives, the project aims at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the institutional capacity and strategic planning capabilities of the Euroregions through a structured exchange of knowledge and experience on best practices, • answering specific problems in specific Euroregions through targeted competence-building • deepening the communication between the Euroregions and their national, central authorities through specific forums, • establishing a permanent (but non-institutional) network among the Euroregions through a series of durability measures or tools. <p>The four aims are organized into four work packages. Activities within the packages consist mainly of seminars and roundtables, with supportive functions such as a website, a e-library and newsletters. The project has altogether 35 partners from the following countries: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The Lead Partner is the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) Office in Lithuania. Activities in Belarus and Russia, not eligible for INTERREG IIIB funding, are supported by the NCM and the CBSS.</p> <p>The project period is from July 2005 to December 2007. The project is expected to result in a strong network of Euroregions actively engaged in spatial development within the BSR, with increased and deepened institutional capacity and strategic planning capabilities. An increased dialogue between the Euroregions and the central authorities in their countries is expected to develop during the project and to continue permanently. Experience gained in cooperation between Nordic and Baltic Euroregions in this project is expected to be transferred on to the Russian and Belarusian sides of the participating Euroregions, and the interaction is expected to be beneficial to other participants as well. A number of specific follow-up projects in specific regions are expected as a result of targeted competence building.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(http://www.benproject.org)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Please add the home page of your project)</p>	

Achievements of the project so far Please describe the main achievements of the project so far to be published on BSR INTERREG III B webpage. (maximum 1500 characters)	
<p>Project is implementing activities as planned, and the network of institutions working in the field of cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region has been established. Network includes Pan-Baltic organizations, Euroregions, national authorities, regional and local authorities, Euroregions and non-governmental organizations. Contacts between existing Euroregions and national authorities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia has been established and procedures for further contacts agreed. Concrete activities implemented so far:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting conference and four network seminars on different issues related to CBC arranged; • Three WP2 seminars for specific CBC regions arranged; • Six WP3 roundtables of Euroregions arranged (in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia); • Homepage of the project launched (http://www.benproject.org); • Info-sheet of the project in English and Russian published; • Two newsletter of the project issued; • First version of the E-Library launched; • Work on development of the network strategy started 	

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (general information)

Are there any changes on the general project conditions/project set-up? (e.g. partnership, key persons, schedules ...)

- WP2.1 seminar “Sustainable tourism development in transboundary Peipsi lake region” which was scheduled to take place in Pskov (Russia) in November 2005, was arranged 1-2 February 2006;
- Decision on the working group for development of strategy for future of network was scheduled to the first Steering Committee meeting in September 2005 but was taken during the second SC meeting in April 2006 in Hiiumaa.
- The second Russian roundtable was planned to be arranged during the 2nd milestone. But organizers have received a proposal from the President Office of Russian Federation to arrange a roundtable together with large CBC conference, which is planned for September 2006 in Petrozavodsk. In order to avoid duplication and achieve best possible participation of Russian central authorities, decision was taken to postpone arrangement of 2nd Russian roundtable to the third milestone (September 2006).

Please describe the main co-ordination activities that have taken place during the reporting period. (e.g. partnership contracts, organisational arrangements, meetings...)

Internal area for all project partners in projects website has been improved by adding several new functions, which would improve communication among partners.

The first meeting of the Coordination group of the project took place during seminar in Roshtchino (Russia) in February 2006. The group discussed issues related to the first reporting of the project and implementation activities in the second milestone.

The second Steering Committee meeting was arranged in April 2006 in Hiiumaa (Estonia), where results of the first milestone of the project were discussed, certain measures for improvement of project implementation were adopted. Evaluation of project implementation during the MS1 among project partners was performed before the SC meetings. Results of this evaluation were presented during the SC meeting. Majority of answers demonstrated good evaluation of the project.

Process of signing of partnership agreement has been almost finished. This process was delayed because the Subsidy contract was signed later than planned.

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Title of WP1	Thematic exchange of knowledge and experience	
Strategic focus of WP1	To increase and to deepen the institutional capacity of Euroregions through exchange of best practices in CBC issues	MILE-STONE
Planned results of WP1	Best practice information and experience passed on from those who have it to those who don't, implementation of the best practices in the participating Euroregions, ignition of discussions for further development of the best practices for all.	2

Planned activities and outputs	Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period	Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators
<p>WP1.4 seminar “Public Relations and Information strategy in a CBC region”; in Hiiumaa Island, Estonia. Responsible partners 7 and 2. Participants: representatives from all interested partners. 1,5 days, in English and Russian. Main goal – to discuss how to make activities and results of Euroregions more visible, what kind of tools can be used for spreading of information about activities? The best practices of different partners will be presented. Part of the second day will be devoted for 2nd SC meeting.</p> <p>WP1.5 seminar “Euroregions and management of CBC funds”. in Vaasa, Finland or Umea, Sweden; responsible partner 24. Participants: representatives from all interested partners. 1,5 days, in English and Russian. Main goal – to discuss the role of Euroregions in the management of CBC funds (Interreg IIIA programs or micro funds). Best practices of different partners will be presented.</p>	<p>WP1.4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27-28 April 2006 the seminar "Public Relations and Information Strategies in CBC Regions" took place in Hiiu Island, Estonia. Seminar was organized by the Partners 5 and 2. Representatives from different Euroregions and CBC regions around the Baltic Sea attended the seminar and shared experiences about how to improve PR and information policies in order too make activities of CBC regions better known. • 26 April, the second Steering Committee meeting of the BEN was organized in Hiiumaa. Representatives of 28 partners attended the meeting. SC has discussed results of the project in the first milestone, and measures for improvement of implementation in following milestones. <p>WP1.5. 31 May-1 June 2006 the seminar “Euroregions and management of CBC funds” was arranged in Umea, Sweden. Seminar was organized by the Partner 24. Representatives from different Euroregions and CBC regions around the Baltic Sea attended the seminar and shared experiences about how Euroregions or other CBC</p>	<p>WP1.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 seminar organized, attended by 97 persons from 10 countries; • 9 examples of best-practises from different CBC regions and institutions in the BSR exchanged; • List of recommendations adopted; • Communication strategy template prepared; • 1 meeting of the Steering Committee of BEN was organized, attended by 36 persons representing 9 countries; <p>WP1.5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 seminar organized, attended by 39 persons from 7 countries; • 11 examples of best-practises from different CBC regions and institutions in the BSR exchanged; • List of recommendations adopted; <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentations and programs from the seminars available on the project website; • 2 list of recommendations and one strategy template available on the project website; • Articles in media about the events available through the main project

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Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

<u>Planned activities and outputs</u>	<u>Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period</u>	<u>Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators</u>
	structures can participate in the management of different EU CBC programs.	coordinator; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• evaluation forms;• 136 persons attended events;• Presentations by the main project coordinator and representatives of other partners about BEN maid in different seminars/conferences.

Deviation from the planned activities and outputs as well as their reasons/justifications

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BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Title of WP2	Targeted capacity building for specific regions	
Strategic focus of WP2	To increase the knowledge and capacity in specific Euroregions on issues arising directly from specific needs	MILE-STONE
Planned results of WP2	Specific solutions to specific problems in a specific region; follow-up project activity; increased capacity of institutions involved in CBC.	2

Planned activities and outputs	Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period	Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators
<p>WP2.2 seminar “Improving mutual policy learning across the Gulf of Finland”. In Tallinn, Estonia;. Participants: about 100 representatives from local and regional authorities in Estonia and Finland, participating in Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio. Among speakers – representatives from other CBC regions. Topics of the seminar are: the role of social attitudes towards renewal, invention and discovery; how opinions of politicians of both sides affect scientific, innovative and entrepreneurial activity; the role of social capital, social innovation and the knowledge society in improving mutual urban planning on both sides of the Gulf of Finland.</p> <p>WP2.3. Study visit of the delegation (6 persons) from Euregio Pskov-Livonia (EE,LV,RUS) to Euroregion Pomerania. In order to study Pomerania’s valuable experience in the management of a CBC micro fund within Interreg IIIA program. A 3 days program of lectures and field trips will be arranged by the hosting region.</p>	<p>WP2.2. Seminar “Renewal of Local Governance and Services in CBC Context” took place in Tallinn and Viinistu on 30-31 of May 2006. Responsible - partner no.7. The seminar was devoted to development of regions and especially common metropolitan region and its governance. The second large topic covered the next EU programming period and especially the Central Baltic Programme which is relevant for Estonia and Finland border area.</p> <p>WP2.3. Study visit of the delegation from Euregio Pskov-Livonia was arranged to the Polish secretariat of the Euroregion Pomerania in Szczecin. During the visit a program of lectures and field trips was organized, where Euroregion Pomerania presented its experience in the management of a CBC micro fund and different CBC projects.</p>	<p>WP2.2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 participants from 4 countries; • Best-practice examples from different local and regional authorities exchanged; <p>WP2.3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 participants from three countries; • Examples of different CBC activities and projects exchanged between two Euroregions <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration forms of participants; • Presentations available on the website; • Programs and reports available on website; • Press releases available at project coordinators.

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Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Deviation from the planned activities and outputs as well as their reasons/justifications

The title and partly content of the WP2.2 event has slightly changed. Since the time when application was written there has been a natural process of adjustment of the topic accordingly to needs and interests of the parties involved. But the main aims and issues remained the same.

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Title of WP3	Strengthening the dialogue between Euroregions and central authorities	
Strategic focus of WP3	To increase the dialogue between the participating Euroregions and their central authorities for the development of the border areas	MILE-STONE
Planned results of WP3	Deeper understanding of the role of the Euroregions for their representatives and central authorities, increased communication between the two, permanent changes in the ways these two work together for the development of border areas	2

Planned activities and outputs	Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period	Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators
<p>Two roundtables arranged in Estonia and Latvia. In Estonia: arranged in Tallinn, event coordinated by partner 3, hosted by partner 7 (Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio); participants: representatives of at least three Estonian Euroregions, representatives from relevant national ministries, invited speakers. In Latvia: arranged in Riga, event coordinated and hosted by partner 4; participants: representatives of at least four Latvian Euroregions, representatives from relevant national ministries, invited speakers. Before each roundtable evaluation forms will be distributed to all involved partners, evaluating progress since the last roundtable. During the meetings current issues of CBC development in relevant country will be discussed. After each roundtable a list of new recommendations for national development of Euroregions prepared.</p>	<p>WP3:EE2 Second Estonian roundtable was arranged 8 May in Tallinn. Event was organized by Partners 7. Roundtable was attended by representatives of four Estonian Euroregions / CBC regions and two ministries. Main themes of the meeting were coming INTERREG programs, reporting and auditing problems and exchange of information about CBC in Estonia.</p> <p>WP3:LV2 Second Latvian roundtable was arranged 7 June in Riga. Event was organized by Partner 4. Representatives of five Latvian Euroregions and one ministry attended roundtable. Main themes of the meetings were: support to Euroregions from the national level and possible involvement of Euroregions in the management of EU CBC programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two roundtables arranged; • System of contacts between Euroregions and national authorities in Estonia and Latvia strengthened; • Two lists of recommendations produced; <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two lists of recommendations and programs available on the projects website; • Evaluation forms; • 41 participants (21 EE, 20 LV)

Deviation from the planned activities and outputs as well as their reasons/justifications

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Title of WP4	Network durability tools	
Strategic focus of WP4	To ensure the smooth flow of activities in WPs 1-3 during the project, and to guarantee the continuity of the network after the project	MILE-STONE
Planned results of WP4	Information support to work packages 1-3; continuous assessment of continuation possibilities during the project period through a working group; continuation of the network after the project period within existing institutions,	2

<u>Planned activities and outputs</u>	<u>Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period</u>	<u>Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators</u>
<p>WP4.1: Result documents from WP 1,2,3,4 placed on the projects website.</p> <p>WP4.4: The second edition of the project's electronic newsletter will be issued. Responsible partner – 6. The newsletter will provide news about the BEN project and general issues related to the CBC in BSR. It will be distributed via e-mail and placed on the project website.</p> <p>WP4.5: The first draft of the strategy for the future of Euroregional network will be presented by the working group during the second SC meeting in Hiiumaa. Report will be evaluated and recommendations for further development of it proposed. Responsible partner – 1. Draft of the strategy will be made available on the projects website.</p>	<p>WP4.1 A website http://www.benproject.org for the BEN project further developed. Responsible partner – Lead Partner. All documents produced in WP1, 2, 3 and 4 placed in the "Outputs" chapter of the site. The Russian version of the website created. Certain functions such as calendar of events and news have been improved.</p> <p>WP4.2 A first draft of the E-library has been developed and placed on the web (http://www.nexdo.com/view.do?w=73). Responsible – Partner no.6. The e-library is created using the innovative WIKI technology.</p> <p>WP4.3 An outline of the handbook has been further developed. Responsible partners 2 and 16.</p> <p>WP4.4 The second edition of electronic project newsletter was issued. Newsletter informs about BEN project and presents main news from the project, as well as CBC related events in the BSR.</p> <p>WP4.5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian version of the project's website launched; • Calendar and News functions on the website improved; • First draft of the E-library launched on the internet • Second newsletter of the project issued; • Mandate for the Strategy Working Group adopted. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project's homepage http://www.benproject.org • E-Library available on the internet • Second newsletter available on the website; • Mandate of the SW available at Project Coordinator • 8318 visits to the project website.

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Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

<u>Planned activities and outputs</u>	<u>Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period</u>	<u>Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators</u>
	<p>The Strategy Working Group (five persons) has been elected by the Steering Committee of the project, and the mandate for the group has been adopted. The group will be responsible for preparation of the future strategy of the BEN project.</p>	

Deviation from the planned activities and outputs as well as their reasons/justifications

Decision of the working group for development of strategy for future of network was scheduled to the first Steering Committee meeting in September 2005. Due to the late approval of updated project application there was too little time to prepare all necessary documents for SC decision (mandate and composition of the working group), therefore this decision was postponed to the second SC meeting in April 2006 in Hiiumaa, Estonia.

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Progress Report – Activity Report (activities and outputs)

Title of WP5	.	
Strategic focus of WP5	.	MILE- STONE
Planned results of WP5	.	2

<u>Planned activities and outputs</u>	<u>Main activities that have taken place during the reporting period</u>	<u>Outputs produced during the reporting period and related output indicators</u>
.		<p><i>(Outputs are the immediate products of project activities. They are tangible goods and services that the activities produce, e.g. reports, written concepts, policy tools, strategies, new products, websites, databases, seminars, training sessions.)</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>(Output indicators measure the achievement of the outputs of project activities. In case some output indicators are named and quantified in the WP plan, please list and quantify the ones related to the achieved outputs. Please see the indicative list given, but you can also report additional ones.)</i></p>

<u>Deviation from the planned activities and outputs as well as their reasons/justifications</u>

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Progress Report – Activity Report (project implementation status)

Please describe the accumulated results of the project from the start of the project until now. If you have defined result indicators, please use them in this description.

A wide-range network of institutions and organizations involved in the formulation and implementation of the cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region has been established. Network includes all main levels of authorities guaranteeing wide representation of different actors: Pan-Baltic organizations, national ministries, local and regional authorities, Euroregions and non-governmental organizations. During the project activities partners are exchanging best practices of CBC and developing new ideas and recommendations for best solutions. These new solutions strengthen Euroregions as one of the main institutes implementing CBC policy. Especially important is that experience gained in cooperation between Nordic and Baltic Euroregions is transferred on to the Russian and Belarusian sides of the participating Euroregions. The project has already contributed to increase of attention to the problems of CBC in Russian Federation on all levels.

Project has initiated an increased and deepened dialogue between the Euroregions and the central authorities in four countries: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. This systematic dialogue is developing during the project and is now taking a shape of a permanent structure. Euroregions and national authorities have discussed different issues important for development of CBC: next programming period of EU, and the role of Euroregions in territorial cooperation; spatial development and the role of Euroregions; recent problems of CBC etc. Euroregions acting in one country has got possibility to formulate common opinion, which is then submitted to the national ministries in order to take decisions, belonging to responsibility of national or international level.

The homepage of the project provides information, which is important not only for project partners but also for wider audience interested in CBC in the BSR. Here it is possible to find contacts of many organizations involved in the cross-border cooperation, information about Euroregions acting in BSR, useful links, and all outputs of the project. The E-Library which is being developed during the project is supposed to become one of the basic collection of research papers and studies on the CBC in the BSR.

Is there anything else you would like to report (problems, highlights etc.)?

In the clarification of the application form BEN project has promised to establish contacts with another relevant BSR INTERREG III B project - "SEAGULL II". Representative of the SEAGULL II project has participated with a presentation in the BEN starting conference, and the main project coordinator of BEN has made a presentation at the kick-off conference of SEAGULL II. Link to SEAGULL project is published on BEN project website. Two project coordinators keep permanent contacts and plan further coordination of implementation of both projects. BEN project has established relations to another relevant project – "EXLINEA", financed by the Fifth Framework Program (<http://www.exlinea.org>)

The main BEN project coordinator has made numerous presentations of the project at national and international seminars and conferences. Presentations are available in the LP office. Project has been widely presented through information channels of several international organizations in the BSR and EU – the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Association of European Border Regions.

BSR INTERREG III B Progress Report – Activity Report (CEEC/NIS activities)

Please describe the activities that have been carried out in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (1st – 4th round projects with the exception of upgraded projects), and in Russia and Belarus.

Project has 10 partners from Russia and Belarus, representing different levels of authorities. As the upgrading application for TACIS funding submitted for 8th round of BSR INTERREG III B program was not approved, all costs of participation of Russian partners are financed from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Russian and Belarusian partners are actively involved in implementation of the project:

- representatives of Russian and Belarusian partners have attended all arranged WP1 events both as speakers and as participants;
- WP1.3 seminar „Cooperation of regional and national authorities and institutions on the border of EU and neighbouring states” was arranged 21-22 February in Roshtchino, Leningrad region, Russia. Seminar was organized by the Partners 17 and 28. Seminar was attended by 60 participants from 6 countries. During the seminar experience of different border regions at the external EU- border was presented, as well as examples of cooperation between border guard, custom and rescue authorities on Finnish-Russian border. At the end of the seminar recommendations for future development of CBC on EU external borders were developed.
- WP2.1 seminar “Sustainable tourism development in the transboundary Lake Peipsi region” was arranged on 1-2 February in Pechory district (Pskov region, Russia). Seminar was dedicated to tourism related cooperation between Russian and Estonian regional and municipal authorities. The seminar was organized by partner no 27, NGO "Lake Peipsi Project, Pskov". 40 participants from three countries have attended the seminar, where experiences of some other members of BEN network in the tourism sector was presented.
- Two representatives of Russian partners (partners 28 and 31) are included into Strategy Working Group responsible for preparation of the future strategy of the BEN network.