



Annex A to the Final Activity Report

All Measures

Baltic Sea Region

INTERREG III B

Title of the project:

Baltic Euroregional Network

Acronym of the project:

BEN

Project number:

98

Lead partner:

Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania

Form to be filled in and returned by post and e-mail to:

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EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme
Community Initiative Concerning Transnational
Co-operation On Spatial Planning 2000 - 2006

I. Outputs

Please state the number of the following outputs that your project has produced and describe these outputs briefly.

<p>1. Common spatial development visions</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>2. Concrete development concepts and strategies</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="2"/> Short description</p>	<p>1. "Recommendations for increase of the role of Euroregions/CBC structures in the spatial development process in the Baltic Sea Region" described the systems of spatial development in four selected countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia), and provided some recommendations for Euroregions. 2. "Strategy for the future of the BEN" contains a list of major challenges for the CBC in the BSR, and describes the model of how the BEN will function in the future.</p>
<p>3. Land-use and building plans based on transnational strategies</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>4. Technical concepts and feasibility studies</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>5. Economic expertise/assessments and business plans</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>6. Environmental impact assessment documents /Territorial impact assessment documents</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>7. Promotion and marketing strategies</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>8. New sustainable tourism products with transnational context</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	

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<p>9. Guidelines, manuals</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="22"/> Short description</p>	<p>During project activities 22 lists of recommendations or conclusions were developed corresponding to different topics discussed: tourism development, environment, legal status of Euroregions, business cooperation etc. Recommendations are published in the Best-Practice Handbook and are available on the project's website.</p>
<p>10. Learning programmes</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>11. Training courses</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p> <p>Number of trainees <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>12. Small-scale infrastructure investments</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p> <p>Please specify the amount in euro <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>13. Individuals involved directly in project events (seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.)</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="1754"/> Short description</p>	<p>During the project 32 different project events (conferences, seminars, roundtables, meetings, summer schools) were organized in 10 different BSR countries.</p>

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14. Information products describing results

<p>• Websites</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="1"/> Short description</p>	<p>Project website http://www.benproject.org was created in English with short version in Russian. The website contains all project related information, news, all project outputs, links and contacts.</p>
<p>• Brochures</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="2"/> Short description</p>	<p>A brochure informing about the project was published in English and Russian in the beginning of the project. The brochure was distributed to all project partners and also to participants of different project events. The Best Practice Handbook "For the BENefit of Cross-Border Cooperation in the Baltic Sea" was published in English and Russian and was distributed to project partners and different EU and BSR organisations, authorities and institutions.</p>
<p>• TV and radio broadcasts, films</p> <p>Number <input type="text"/> Short description</p>	
<p>• Presentations and lectures</p> <p>Number <input type="text" value="53"/> Short description</p>	<p>Presentations and lectures were presented during different project events: conferences, seminars, summer-schools and roundtables.</p>

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15. Has your project produced any outputs other than those listed above?
Please describe these outputs briefly and, if possible, quantify them

Output	
E-Library "Baltic Sea Area Cross-Border Cooperation Wiki"	Electronic database (http://www.nexdo.com/view.do?w=73) was created to provide experts, authorities and organisations involved in CBC with information and know-how on topics related to cross-border cooperation in BSR. It contains information on organisations involved in the BSR in cross-border cooperation; cross-border cooperation projects, and funding agencies and programmes that support CBC in Europe.
Number <input type="text" value="1"/>	Short description
Project's newsletters	Newsletters informed about BEN project, presented main news from the project, as well as CBC related events in the BSR.
Number <input type="text" value="6"/>	Short description
New projects developed	A complementary project "BEN-EAST" was granted TACIS financing under the 9th call of the BSR INTERREG III B program. Project "Promoting Local Component in Environmental Education in Transboundary Lakes ' Regions of Latgalia (Latvia) and Pskov Region (Russia)" received financial support from INTERREG A priority North in January 2007.
Number <input type="text" value="2"/>	Short description
Drafts of new project ideas	During two arranged summer-schools 6 drafts of new project ideas were prepared by participants and some of these ideas will be further developed into new projects by partner organizations.
Number <input type="text" value="6"/>	Short description
Number <input type="text"/>	Short description
Number <input type="text"/>	Short description
Number <input type="text"/>	Short description
Number <input type="text"/>	Short description

II. Results

Please evaluate the contribution of your project relating to the following objectives.

		Project is neutral (has brought no effects for the objective)		No
		Yes		
		To some extent (e.g. project has brought positive effects for the objective)		
		Very much (this objective has been main focus of the project)		
a) Changing or developing institutions to improve their performance with regard to spatial development activities				
	• Local authorities in E-BSR ³	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Regional authorities in E-BSR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• National/sectoral authorities in E-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Private businesses in E-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	• In particular SME ⁴ in E-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Local authorities in W-BSR ⁵	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Regional authorities in W-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• National/sectoral authorities in W-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	• Private businesses in W-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	• In particular SME in W-BSR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	• Other in W-BSR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other in E-BSR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes in any of the above list, please explain **briefly** how, and give the list of institutions with their location (country)

(maximum 1000 characters)

Issues of spatial development were discussed in many of project events (seminars, roundtables), and the target group of these events have been representatives of local and regional authorities, secretariats of Euroregions, some few representatives of national authorities and SMEs. One of WP1 seminars (in Malmo) was especially devoted to this topic. Most of participants of different events came from E-BSR. As there have been many events and 35 project partners representing different authorities, the exact list can not be provided here. All lists of participants are available at the project coordinator. Issues of spatial development are as well presented in some of project outputs listed above ("Recommendations...", Best-Practice handbook, website etc.) and these have been distributed through all project partners to different target groups in their CBC regions.

		No	
Project is neutral (has brought no effects for the objective)			
		Yes	
To some extent (e.g. project has brought positive effects for the objective)			
Very much (this objective has been main focus of the project)			
b) Changing or improving methods of spatial planning and managing spatial development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain briefly how. Please report separately each case where TIA has been applied and use of EIA has been improved (e.g. in combination with TIA or other spatial planning instruments) (maximum 1000 characters)			
One of project's objectives was to increase the role of Euroregions or CBC structures in the process of spatial development. Project contributed, especially through roundtables arranged in WP3, to increase of understanding among central authorities that CBC regions should be more involved into process of spatial planning, and to increase of understanding among the CBC structures that they have something to deliver when these issues are being discussed on the central or transnational level.			
		No	
Project is neutral (has brought no effects for the objective)			
		Yes	
To some extent (e.g. project has brought positive effects for the objective)			
Very much (this objective has been main focus of the project)			
c) Building new or improving existing legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain briefly how, please specify the number of cases and countries affected (maximum 1000 characters)			
During the roundtable in WP3 suggestions for improvement of national legislation in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia were suggested (formulated in recommendations and conclusions).			

	Yes		No
	Project is neutral (has brought no effects for the objective)		
	To some extent (e.g. project has brought positive effects for the objective)		
	Very much (this objective has been main focus of the project)		
d) Establishing, strengthening or enlarging co-operation and strategic networks for reaching consensus on development measures and creating synergies			
• Transnational	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Vertical (between different levels, e.g. local, regional, national, supranational bodies)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Horizontal (between different sectors, e.g. spatial planning, regional policy, environmental policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Involving the general public in planning and decision-making processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Involving business sector in planning and decision-making processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please describe the geographical scale for network operation:			
Regional level	(maximum 500 characters)		
Regional authorities are one of main actors in the cross-border cooperation structures therefore they have been widely represented among project partners and target groups in the project. Representatives of regions have been participating in all project events. Through this they have had possibility to share experiences, increase their competences in CBC and establish contacts with similar regions in the BSR.			
National level	(maximum 500 characters)		
One national authority (the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior) was a partner in the project. Representatives of national authorities from different BSR countries have been participating in many project events. National authorities from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia have been actively participating in roundtables arranged within WP3 and this initiated and increased vertical dialogue between national, regional and local authorities in each of the countries.			
Macro-zone level (several regions from neighbouring countries constituting one macroregion)	(maximum 500 characters)		
Main participants and target group of the project have been Euroregions or similar CBC structures. These structures per se are macro-zone structures, including regions from two or several neighbouring countries. Therefore the project has clearly contributed to the further development of cooperation within Euroregions.			
Baltic Sea level	(maximum 500 characters)		
Representatives of 10 BSR countries from different authority levels have been participating in creation of the BEN. In addition two regional BSR organizations - the Council of the Baltic Sea Countries and the Nordic Council of Ministers have been represented among project partners, and also actively contributing to implementation of the project and monitoring of results. Through these organizations the BEN and issues of the CBC in general have been put high in the political agenda of the BSR.			
European level	(maximum 500 characters)		
The project have been keeping permanent contacts to the Association of European Border regions (AEBR) by inviting their representatives to project events, by providing information about the project to all members of the AEBR. In addition institutions of EU have been constantly informed about the project activities through invitations to project events and providing of information (newsletters, handbook etc.).			

	No	
Project is neutral (has brought no effects for the objective)	Yes	
To some extent (e.g. project has brought positive effects for the objective)		
Very much (this objective has been main focus of the project)		
g) Integrating a gender equality perspective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please explain shortly how		<input type="checkbox"/>
(maximum 1000 characters)		
<p>The balance of men and women have been satisfactory both among participants of the events, speakers and the Steering Committee members. The only misbalance in majority of men was in the Coordination Group of the project. Gender equality was not addressed as a specific issue during the project events but it has been mentioned during discussions about social-economic development of concrete border regions.</p>		
<p>Please identify the impact your project has had on your daily work. Please indicate how many days (per month) you have saved in your monthly work and how many persons this concerns in the entire project.</p>		
How much time you have saved per month (days)?	Number of days:	30
How many persons concerned?	Number of persons:	3
<p>For further results please go to one of the Annexes according to the measure of your project:</p>		
Measure 1.1 = Annex A.1.1	Measure 2.1 = Annex A.2.1	
Measure 1.2 = Annex A.1.2	Measure 2.2 = Annex A.2.2	
Measure 1.3 = Annex A.1.3	Measure 2.3 = Annex A.2.3	
	Measure 3 = Annex A.3	

III. Dissemination and Durability

1. Please describe, how you have disseminated the project results.

Dissemination means and measures (maximum 500 characters)	Target groups (maximum 300 characters)
Project website http://www.benproject.org was created in English with a summary in Russian. Website provides all information about the project, project news, all project outputs and useful links. In addition a CBC E-Library based on Wiki technology was created as a separate internet resource, and it also provides some information about the project.	59 registered receivers of project news. Totally about 53700 visits were made to the project website. Target group: project partners, national authorities, regional organizations, NGOs and other institutions and organizations from the BSR and whole Europe interested in the CBC issues.
Our organization as well as most of other project partners has issued press releases informing about the project. From the LP side we have published press releases on www.norden.lt and on the common website of the NCM on www.norden.org . In addition partner no.6 has issued 38 so called CBC news sent by e-mail informing about BEN events and other CBC related information.	Recipients of press release on www.norden.lt - about 2000 persons in Lithuania and abroad; recipients of www.norden.org news - about 3800 in all Nordic countries and Europe.
Through 35 project partners the articles about different project events were published in different newspapers, internet-media resources, radio programmes. Copies of the article are available at the LP office or at different project partners. One article about the project was published in the magazine Regional Review of the European Parliament.	Public audience of the BSR and Europe. The regional Review which is distributed to all members of the Committee of the Regions, all Members of the European Parliament, Senior Members of the Commission, the Council and EU institutions in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg.
For better visibility of the project souvenirs were produced with logo of the project: 100 bags, 30 USB memory sticks and 30 T-Shirts.	Souvenirs have been distributed as presents during official meetings, for moderators and speakers at the project events T-Shirts were used during BEN basketball tournament at the final conference.
The Best-Practice Handbook in English (1500 copies) and Russian (1000 copies) containing most of project results have been produced and distributed to a long list of recipients in the BSR and whole Europe. Available on electronic format on the project's website. Recommendations on involvement of CBC structures in the spatial development have been produced and distributed via e-mail and placed on the project website.	Project partners, national authorities, regional organizations, EU institutions, NGOs and other institutions and organizations from the BSR and whole Europe interested in the CBC issues.
6 project newsletters were issued informing about the project and its results. They were sent via e-mail and placed on the website.	Project partners, receivers of the www.benproject.org news and selected group of receivers representing national authorities of the BSR, Pan-Baltic organizations and networks.

2. Please describe how the outputs and results produced by your project will be further used and by whom.

Output/result (maximum 140 characters)	Users in the future (maximum 250 characters)	Description how the outputs/results will be used (maximum 350 characters)
All recommendations and conclusions produced by the project	CBC structures and their members in the BSR and whole Europe; national governments in the BSR; regional organizations and networks in the BSR; EU institutions, academic/research institutions and all other organizations involved in the CBC issues.	Recommendations might be used for development and reformation of CBC structures or institutions; for formulation of policies and implementation of the CBC by national, regional and EU institutions and for future projects. The BEN network will use them in planning of future activities.
Future strategy of the BEN	BEN partners, local, regional, national and Pan-Baltic organizations and institutions	The Strategy defined challenges for CBC in the BSR, and this will be used in the planning of the content of future BEN projects and activities. The document will make the basis for forms and methods of the future work of the network. The NCM has already in response to this document granted financing of the network in 2008.
Best-Practice Handbook	CBC structures and their members in the BSR and whole Europe; national governments in the BSR; regional organizations and networks in the BSR; EU institutions, academic/research institutions and all other organizations involved in the CBC issues.	Recommendations might be used for development and reformation of CBC structures or institutions; for formulation of policies and implementation of the CBC by national, regional and EU institutions. Materials of the book might be used in training and for research purposes. The BEN network will use them in planning of future activities.
Website	CBC structures and their members in the BSR and whole Europe; national governments in the BSR; regional organizations and networks in the BSR; EU institutions; academic/research institutions and all other organizations involved in the CBC issues.	As defined in the strategy the NCM office in Vilnius will be responsible for updating the website. It will be used for implementation of future projects and activities of the network.
E-Library	CBC structures and their members in the BSR and whole Europe; national governments in the BSR; regional organizations and networks in the BSR; EU institutions; academic/research institutions and all other organizations involved in the CBC issues.	The Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation (partner no.6) will be responsible for management of the E-Library and it might be used as a database for different studies or information on the CBC in the BSR.

Which outputs or results of your project are transferable to the other areas of the Baltic Sea Region or other regions in Europe and need very broad dissemination beyond the project capacity?

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3. Please briefly describe these outputs and results and how they are transferable.

Output/result (maximum 140 characters)	Methods of transferring (maximum 340 characters)	Target groups (maximum 300 characters)
Best-Practice Handbook	Book exists in electronic format and it might be distributed either electronically or in the new printing edition.	CBC regions, national governments, research/academic institutions, regional networks in Europe, and in some cases outside Europe, especially in the case of countries in transition.

4. Please indicate how you want to continue the co-operation beyond the project horizon (to ensure durability of the results of your project).

	Overall project area	East-West direction
Ad hoc exchange of information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional structures for maintaining of the project results (if yes, please indicate what structures for maintenance of the project results were established, which partners will support them financially, what will the tasks be for such structures) (maximum 500 characters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Nordic Council of Ministers appointed the NCM Office in Lithuania to establish a position of BEN coordinator and provided financing for this position. The coordinator will be responsible for updating of the website and initiation of new project proposals. Partner no.6 will be responsible for further development and management of E-Library. The BEN-EAST project will continue coordinate contacts with Russian and Belarusian partners of the network until the end of 2008.		
Long run action plan for maintaining the project results (if yes, please indicate by whom an action plan has been agreed and what is its time horizon) (maximum 300 characters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy on the future of the BEN was adopted by project partners at the end of the project and it has a time horizon of three years after the end of the project.		
Adjustment of the regional/national strategic documents or/and planning procedures for maintaining the project results (if yes, please indicate the nature of such adjustments and names of documents and procedures affected) (maximum 300 characters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The national roundtables established by the project will be continued in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia with support of different partners. During these meetings the national strategies and procedures concerning the cooperation between national authorities and CBC structures will be discussed		
Follow-up projects (if yes, please indicate the type and number of the follow-up projects and possible funding sources e.g. INTERREG, national public funds, national private funds, other EU funds) (maximum 500 characters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEN-EAST is continuing until the end of 2008. The project between two CBC lake regions will continue for two years. Two new project proposals (one to the Baltic Sea Program and other one to to the INTERREG IVC program) are being developed.		
Other (please specify) (maximum 500 characters)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CBSS will during spring 2008 make a decision about financing of at least one annual BEN event.		

5. If you do not plan to continue the cross-sectoral partnership established by the project please indicate the main reasons:

Cross-sectoral problems have been solved within project time frame

Partnership has not turned out to be very successful

Partners not representing spatial and regional planning (e.g. sectors, business etc.) have no interest to continue

Other (please specify)

(maximum 500 characters)

All CBC structures are per se cross-sectoral institutions working with several sectors simultaneously, therefore the BEN will continue dealing with cross-sectoral issues all the time.

6. In case your project has laid ground for large scale investment/s (≥10M euros), please describe shortly its/their nature. Please describe briefly how your project contributed to this investment so far. Name the investors who participated in the project events.

(maximum 1000+1000 characters)

No large scale investments were planned by the project

7. Please give more details concerning the large scale investment described in the question above. Please be as realistic as possible.

- | | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Real estate (housing and offices) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • IT | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Energy saving | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Others (please specify below) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(maximum 250 characters)

If yes in any of the the above list, please provide details on:

Total amount of expected investment in thousand EURO	<input type="text"/>	.000 EUR
Amount of expected investment in thousand EURO in new Member States	<input type="text"/>	.000 EUR
Amount of expected investment in thousand EURO in Russia and Belarus	<input type="text"/>	.000 EUR
Expected time of investment start-up	<input type="text"/>	
Expected time of investment completion	<input type="text"/>	

8. Please indicate how (if any) you plan to continue the large scale investments beyond the project horizon

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Investments will be implemented directly by project partners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Project partners will lobby vis-à-vis public authorities and private sector to implement the investment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Number of potential investors contacted so far (e.g. invited to the project events) | <input type="text" value="25"/> | |
| • Project partners will introduce (have introduced) investments to relevant strategic documents | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Project partners will wait for some window of opportunities to implement the given investment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Investment has been implemented in the project time frame | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Other forms of follow-up (please specify below) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(maximum 250 characters)

The BEN did not plan any direct investments but all partners are planning such investments in their regions. Implementation of the project have contributed to increase of their capacity to plan and implement investment projects.

IV. Experience gathered upon the project implementation

1. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with regard to the aspects of the project implementation listed below:

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Project outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support from the Joint Secretariat during the project implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Co-operation with other partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
INTERREG III B rules concerning project management (excluding financial principles)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
INTERREG III B rules concerning financial management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please describe shortly the performance of your project management and financial management systems (major principles, centralised or decentralised system, auditing system etc.). What were the main advantages and disadvantages of your management system? What recommendations would you give to future projects?

(maximum 1000+1000+500 characters)

Project management was quite centralized in the hands of LP, and especially in the hands of the full position project coordinator employed by the NCM Office in Lithuania. As consultative body the Coordination Group was established (5 persons) but it did not have separate meetings, meetings were combined with project events or performed in the form of e-mails. The Steering Committee (one representative from each partner) was established and met 5 times during the project. Financial management was outsourced to one company based in Lithuania. Project used decentralized financial management system. Audits of partners reports were performed by partners themselves, and the accumulated report was audited by one auditing company in Lithuania (at the time when the project started audit of INTERREG projects was not yet centralized in Lithuania).

The advantage of centralized project management is that there always is as a person having full control and information about the project. The disadvantage is the vulnerability of the project if something happens to the project coordinator. In addition it is a bit too big work load for one person. Disadvantage of outsourcing of financial services is that financial documents and financial manager are placed separately from the project coordinator, and it is not so well integrated into daily routines of the office. Main advantages are: the office avoids certain costs, which would appear if a new person would be hired; contracted company is guaranteeing the service even in case of illness, change of job or other cases of absence of the financial manager.

Think carefully about number of partners you can handle. Choose carefully your partners, and give each partner a concrete function in the project. Create good system for development of the project budget. Let each partner develop their own budget but check it carefully before including into joint budget. Agree with partners in the beginning about measures against partners who do not fulfill their obligations, for example are too late with information, do not participate in events etc.

3. Did you have any difficulties in following your financial plan? If yes, please provide some details. Which costs were higher/lower than planned?

(maximum 1000+500 characters)

The main problem during the project was underspending. At the end the spending improved but still we have spent about 82% of planned costs. This was mainly caused by too high estimations of travel and accommodation costs, and the fact that especially flying became much cheaper. Another reason is that during the planning of the project it was planned that LP will cover all travel of Russian and Belarusian participants but at the final stage of the implementation of the project, when the BEN-EAST project started, their travel and accommodation was financed through BEN-EAST project, so some of the planned LP expenditures remained unused. Coordination costs were expected to be higher but due to outsourcing of financial management they became lower.

4. Did you have other problems in the project implementation? If yes, please provide some details. What kind of solutions did you find? What would you do in a different manner next time?

(maximum 1000+500 characters)

The biggest problem the project experienced was connected to late reporting by partners caused by the centralized auditing systems, especially in Estonia and Latvia. This caused the constant lag of project reports behind the schedule. In general reporting procedures were developing all the time. Some of methods of collecting information from partners were not effective, then other methods were used. It was difficult to demand from all partners to fulfill their commitments in time - information was by many provided too late, some partners were not enough active in participating in project events. Situation when Russian and Belarusian partners had to be financed through one of EU partners resulted in very complicated financial procedures for accountability of costs. Not sufficient integration of INTERREG and TACIS financing sources was a general problem.

It would be probably better to appoint some partners to be responsible for implementation of separate work packages, so not everything is concentrated in the hands of one LP. This would release workload from the LP and increase commitment by the partners. The Coordination Group was not used much in the project management so it was probably not necessary to have in the project.

5. Has your project met all your intended goals? If your project has not achieved or only partly achieved the planned results, please provide some details and explain the possible reasons.
 (maximum 1000+500 characters)

The main goal of the project was to create a network of CBC structures in the BSR. This goal has been achieved, the network was established and measures for its sustainability have been taken. Another important goal was to increase capacity of CBC structures so they could more actively participate in the process of sustainable development of the BSR. This was achieved through meetings and seminars. It is still difficult to measure if participation of the CBC structures in spatial planning process will significantly increase, it might take time, but the broader perspective of their work has been anchored. Project has also increased and intensified the dialogue between CBC structures and national authorities in selected four countries, which will hopefully increase involvement of local and regional level into general development of the BSR.

6. If your project gathered some non-EU partners, please describe their role, involvement and benefits they gained through the project.
 (maximum 1000+1000 characters)

Project had 10 partners from Russia and Belarus representing different CBC structures. These non-EU partners were fully integrated into implementation of the project - they have been participating in all project events, their representative were represented in the Steering Committee of the project. All together 9 project events were arranged in the territory of Russia and Belarus. The only difference was that non-EU partners were not financed through the ERDF funding but the financing was provided by the Nordic Council of Ministers through LP. In May 2007 the complementary BEN-EAST project started providing TACIS financing for participation of Russian and Belarusian partners. The project has received very positive reaction from regional and federal authorities of Russian Federation, and roundtables we organized together each year proved this because they gathered large number of representatives from local, regional, federal levels, academic and business sectors.

One important objective of the project was to transfer experience and knowledge accumulated in the Nordic and Baltic cooperation across the borders to their counterparts in Russia and Belarus, and this was achieved through constant exchange of best-practice examples. During all project events project tried to follow the approach of mixing experiences from East and West. For many Russian and Belarusian participants it was difficult to participate in events with only English language, therefore we have in the most of cases managed to arrange bilingual events in English and Russian.

7. What kind of feedback would you like to give to the Joint Secretariat (offices in Rostock, Karlskrona and Riga) about the Secretariat's work at the different stages of your project's lifetime? How useful and user-friendly have you found the BSR INTERREG III B homepage?

(maximum 1000+500 characters)

We have had a lot of contacts both with Secretariat in Rostock and in Riga. We always received friendly and professional service. We have met quite flexible and non-bureaucratic approach as far as the program framework allowed it. The website of the program was useful and user-friendly.

Dossier number: 98 Acronym: BEN Title: Baltic Euroregional Network LP: Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania

V. Signature

V.1. Signature of the Lead Partner		V.2. Official stamp of the Lead Partner	
V.3. Name and title of the Signatory	Teppo Heiskanen, director		
V.4. Lead Partner	Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania		
V.5. Place, Date of submission			