

EUSBSR Report 2011

Priority Area 12

Tourism

Wolf Born, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Germany

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1. General progress

1.1. Status

Since the last report submitted to the European Commission in July 2010, the implementation structure in PA Tourism could be further developed. As to FP 12.8, AIDA CRUISES, a German cruise ship operator, is in contact with the PAC with regard to taking over the role of the FPL. One important point has been the question of resources that are needed to carry out this task which is apparently difficult for private company stakeholders. So far, no concrete activities have been undertaken in this FP that is why there is no further reporting on it in this report.

The FPLs for 12.9 and 12.10 have submitted project proposals to the INTERREG IV B South Baltic-Programme (12.9 re-submitted after a first rejection), FPL 12.7 currently prepares a project application in INTERREG IV B Baltic Sea Region Programme and awaits a decision for another project application in the Finnish ERDF programme. Decisions in these matters will be taken in April, respectively October 2011. It is evident that with additional financial means from projects, the pace of implementation in the FPs would accelerate.

The involvement of stakeholders in the implementation process develops steadily. Currently, about 60 stakeholders have registered their interest in PA Tourism via the PA Tourism homepage, representing local and regional authorities, universities, projects and marketing organisations. Most of them are involved in local or subregional activities. As to direct input and feed-back from stakeholder side, direct contacts to various EU-projects like BaltMetPromo, Parks&Benefits or Baltic Museums 2.0 and direct interaction during events plays an important role. PA Tourism was presented at several events like the

- General Assembly of the CPMR-Baltic Sea Commission on 27 May in Rostock-Warnemünde
- Turku Informal Round Table on Baltic Sea Cooperation with a special focus on the effective cooperation with Russian local and regional partners on 24 September 2010 in Turku / Finland,
- joint conference of the EU-Project AGORA 2.0 and the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission (BTC) on 8 October 2010 in Minsk, Belarus,
- Baltic Sea Tourism Forum on 4-5 November 2010 in Kaliningrad,
- Working Group meeting of the Southern Baltic Sea Parliamentary Forum on Tourism and Education on 31 January 2011 in Schwerin / Germany

The establishment of a governance structure for cooperation in the tourism sector in the BSR is underway but it might need some 2-3 years until it becomes fully effective. Also in the respect, the funding of structures and activities plays a crucial role.

1.2. Overall results

First intermediate results can be stated. An analysis of tourism-related EU-projects that was carried out in FP 12.9 indicates about 82 projects, most of them taking place under the umbrella of the INTERREG IV A -Programs. In principle, most of these projects are in line with the objectives of PA Tourism and also those of the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum (BSTF) which hints at a high potential of synergies in cooperation. The findings of the analysis will play an important role in the further activities in PA Tourism. In the framework of a workshop with representatives of seven EU-tourism related projects under the umbrella of FP 12.10 the next steps to develop a strategy for sustainable tourism in the BSR, supplemented by a practice manual were agreed on. Strategy and manual will be elaborated in the course of the year and should be adopted at the end of 2011.

It can be stated that because of the involvement of the PAC and the FPLs, the objective of developing tourism cooperation at BSR level has become more visible. Nonetheless, the objective as such is not self-evident to all the stakeholders as one might expect.

Conferences in Minsk and Kaliningrad (see above) have underlined the readiness of stakeholders also from outside the EU to participate in the implementation process of EUSBSR as to PA Tourism.

1.3. Process

At this point of the implementation, it has become clear that there are many tourism-related projects and networks in the BSR, most of them with a limited geographical or content-related scope. In order to motivate them to join in the Cooperative Actions and FPs, a decentralized and more targeted approach seems to be necessary, online communication and centralized events alone are not enough. Decentralised and smaller events might be more appropriate to validate the contents of the FPs and to discuss further steps. At the same time, an exchange with the key players to promote tourism on BSR level has been established like the Baltic Sea Tourism Commission or the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum as they may form the core of a future cooperation structure.

1.4. Organisation

Since the last report, the Joint Committee has met twice, in Gdansk on 6 July 2010 and in Berlin on 13-14 December 2010. Cooperation and exchange among the partners is well-established by now. Financial matters have absorbed some of the capacities of the partners. Project applications were elaborated and partly have been refused. The announcement of providing technical assistance to the PAs is welcomed. It should help to focus on the development of concrete action. With the factual end of many INTERREG-Programs in the BSR being close, it should be considered to grant technical assistance also in the years to come. The cooperation with the NCPs has been mostly constructive. When asked to provide tourism contacts in the administration, the majority of the NCPs answered. The EUSBSR team in DG Regio has been very supportive and responsive.

1.5. Next steps

Building on what has been said in the paragraphs above, the contacts with the tourism stakeholders will be further developed. The next event on the agenda is the "Nature Tourism Conference" in Riga, 21-24 March 2011, organized by the Latvian Country Tourism Association "Lauku Celotajs", where the FPLs of 12.7, 12.9 and 12.10 organize a joint workshop on PA Tourism. Further meetings with stakeholders are planned to take place in the course of the year. These meetings shall be held in different parts of the BSR, where possible with the support of the INTERREG IV A JTS. The target groups are national tourism ministries, tourism-related projects, local and regional tourism marketing organisations and other public authorities. PA Tourism is also involved in the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2011 that will take place on 17-18 May in Sopot, Poland. The involvement of third country stakeholders, especially from Russia will be on the agenda of the follow-up "Turku Round

Table” that will take place on 27 May 2011 in St. Petersburg and for which the attendance of a representative of PA Tourism is planned. Towards the end of 2011, a stakeholder conference for PA Tourism is planned in which progress will be presented and the next steps discussed.

2. Progress for each action

PA Tourism comprises two cooperative actions that - by their contents - are strongly interrelated with each other and the activities of the FPs. The objective of the first CA is to highlight and optimize the sustainable tourism potential by establishing an environmentally-friendly tourism strategy for the BSR, including Russia. The development of a strategy for the region and a manual for sustainable tourism are on the agenda of FP 12.10. The results shall be confirmed by a PA Tourism stakeholder conference at the end of 2011. As to the involvement of Russia, tourism is not on the list of common interest that is currently talked about by the Russian government and the European Commission. Nonetheless, Russian involvement is pursued on a regional basis. Additionally, a contact to the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture will be established.

According to CA 2, aspects to be mentioned in the strategy are a joint marketing of the region or the cooperation on similar projects. The mapping exercises and the building-up of a network, especially in FP 12.7 and 12.9, are a first step to identify the different actors and their objectives. In the next step, the common denominators of the various activities will have to be identified. Next to that, issues like a common marketing for the BSR are also discussed in the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum and individual projects like BaltMetPromo involving the Baltic Development Forum. A first step in this direction could be the presentation of the BSR at the 43. *boot* fair in Düsseldorf in January 2012. Through a continuous dialogue, these issues will be further elaborated.

The aforementioned activities also relate to the second CA targets which are the development of networks and clusters of the stakeholders of the tourism industry and tourism education bodies in the BSR. Reference is being made in the Action Plan to the „Baltic Sea Tourism Forum“. As one result of the Kaliningrad Forum in November 2010 a draft action plan was formulated that targets the joint development of products and services and their marketing in the fields of cultural and nature tourism, maritime tourism, events, wellness and health related tourism. The PAC accompanies these activities. Next to that, FPL 12.7 and 12.8 are also directly involved in the organization of the work of the BSTF which promotes the close cooperation with PA Tourism. The objective of CA 2 is also supported by the activities in FP 12.8 which aims at setting up a tourism network. The result of these activities will be strongly influenced by the outcome of the project application of FPL 12.8 in the INTERREG IV B Baltic Sea Region Program in spring 2011.

As the implementation of both CAs is related to the FPs 12.7, 12.9 and 12.10, it has to be counted that they will be finished only after 2012.

3. Progress for each flagship

FP 12.7: Attract tourists to rural areas, esp. coastal ones

FPL: Regional Council of Southwest Finland and Turku Touring, Mrs. Päivi Oliva, Finland

1.1. Brief account of the aims of the project

FP 12.7 concentrates on the development of environmentally friendly coastal and rural tourism. The objective is closer cooperation among the Baltic Sea region tourism actors, as well as providing competence and the best practices for the actors and companies in the tourism industry. The goal is to create an innovation network of tourism for the Baltic Sea region, the know-how and development resources of which benefit tourism in the entire region. The aim is also to attract tourists to rural areas especially the coastal ones by promoting joint sustainable rural and coastal tourism packages (e.g. farm, food tourism, hiking, winter sports, nature based tourism) and by increasing the cooperation between the actors from the tourism sector, research and education, local and the public sector in order to share and disseminate best practices and knowhow with regard to products, services and their accessibility.

1.2. Results so far/State of play

Funding to coordinate the flagship project 12.7 was applied from the Region of Southwest Finland and was admitted for the staff and travelling costs. Since August 2010, Mrs. Päivi Oliva started as coordinator of the flagship project. The kick-off meeting of FP 12.7 ("Attract tourists to rural areas, especially coastal ones") took place in Turku on Sept. 8, 2010. About 40 persons participated in this event where different aspects of rural and coastal tourism were discussed, accompanied by some networking activity. During autumn, other national networking events were organized. Furthermore, the FPL participated in many Baltic Sea tourism related events and promoted the FP. The mapping of the regional tourism actors of the Baltic Sea Region has started and the formation of a Baltic Sea coastal and rural tourism network was initiated. About 50 participants have signed in the network.

1.3. Problems encountered and solutions found and financing matters, if relevant

Because of its limited resources the lead partner is seeking new funds for the implementation. The regional funding (69 300€) is not enough to cover the proposed promotion of joint packages neither for any extra events or actions. The lead partner has had to cover many of the costs of the flagship from its own sources, annual budget of the organization. The involvement of the network members and stakeholders is challenging in terms of the lack of funding. For the year 2011, funding from the regional "Cohesion and Competitiveness programme" ("COCO") was applied for by the FPL. The Participation in two other European Regional Development Fund project preparations was taken. Currently, the FPL (here: Centre of Expertise for Tourism and Experience Management at Turku Touring) prepares a project application for the 4th call under INTERREG IV B Baltic Sea Region Program that will be closed at the end of March 2011. The application is coordinated by Turku Science Park. The objective of the proposed project is to set up an Innovation network for the BSR area, piloting on tourism, which will strongly support the goals of the FP. The approval of the project would greatly support and speed up the implementation of the FP. The decision will be taken in October 2011.

1.4. Next steps and expected finalisation

On 22-23 March 2011, the FPL will co-organize a workshop together with the FPL of 12.9 and 12.10 in the Baltic Nature Tourism Conference in Riga / Latvia. Under the condition that funding

under the “COCO” is approved, the FPL intends to organize two seminars in co-operation with regional organizations. The first event with a focus on future foresight and trends for tourism in the BSR would take place in Turku on 12 May 2011. The second a two-day seminar on 14-15 September 2011 will concentrate on sharing best practices, e.g. with regard to service design and sustainable methods, common marketing and joint product development. During autumn, a national rural tourism seminar will be organized together with the Finnish rural tourism theme group. FPL will be also involved in a series of meetings around the BSR planed by the PAC. Exchange with the stakeholders in the coastal and rural tourism network will be further deepened with the aim of setting up a draft agenda for the development needs and ideas for the promotion of joint tourism packages though a lot will depend on the outcome of the project application in the INTERREG IV B BSR Program. A progress review will be submitted in June 2011 to the PAC.

FP 12.8: Facilitate environmentally sustainable cruise vessels in the Baltic Sea

FPL: AIDA CRUISES, Mr. Thorsten Guhr, Germany

Currently, no activities under this FP can be reported (see paragraph 1.1)

FP 12.9: Promote the cultural heritage and the unique landscapes

FPL: Pomorskie self-government and Pomorskie Tourist Board, Mrs. Marta Chelkowska, Poland

1.1. Brief account of the aims of the project

The FP aims at mapping projects and initiatives in the BSR focusing on cultural and natural heritage tourism. Detailed, multi-level analysis will help to identify directions of the development of the tourist offer as well as the integration of local initiatives.

1.2 Results so far/State of play

A study on projects of initiatives and projects that relate to this FP has been finished in December 2010. This multilevel analysis identifies 82 projects that are being implemented within 12 INTERREG IV A programs. Quite a lot of the analyzed projects are concurrent with principles of the Strategy. The concurrence is, in many cases, "passive", because the projects are oriented in accordance with priorities of the programs, not the Strategy. At the same time, in many cases lack of a broader attitude to the strategy subject is visible, especially in the case of projects oriented to investments. Nevertheless the concurrence level with particular area of the four "Flagship Projects" is diverse and is from 2% to 68% in particular areas.

The report will be given to the stakeholders/institutions responsible for tourist promotion and development as a source of current and reliable information about undertaken initiatives. Pursuant to the performed analysis, conclusions and recommendations concerning directions of the Strategy implementation were prepared for the years to follow, especially in a perspective after the year 2013 that will be also made available to the European Institutions. Suggested directions for further cooperation between entities implementing particular projects were also indicated.

1.3 Problems encountered and solutions found and financing matters, if relevant

So far, the FPL has not received any external funding for its activities. A project application in the INTERREG IV A South Baltic Program was refused in September 2010. Since then, a revised

application has been re-submitted under the 5th call of this program with a decision to be expected in mid-April 2011.

1.4 Next steps and expected finalisation

Recommendations contained within the report offer a good orientation and know-how for future thematic cooperation within the field of action of this FP and beyond. The second step and challenge will be to establish cooperation structures with regard to cultural and natural heritage tourism in the BSR and define the most proper tools and ways for implementation.

The perspective of obtaining funds within INTERREG IV A South Baltic Program will give real opportunities for cross-border cooperation with tourist products creation and implementation. On 22-23 March 2011, the FPL will take part in a PA Tourism workshop in the framework of the Nature Tourism Conference in Riga / Latvia. Currently, the FPL is also directly involved in the preparations of the IV. Baltic Sea Tourism Forum that will be held in Sopot on 18 May 2011.

A progress review will be submitted at the end of 2011.

FP 12.10: Develop Strategies for Sustainable Tourism

FPL: University of Greifswald, Institute of Geography, Prof. Wilhelm Steingrube, Germany

1.1 Brief account of the aims of the project

Develop strategies for sustainable tourism by using available sources of information. In addition, within the AGORA 2.0 project, partners from the Baltic Sea Region (including Belarus) will start implementing pilot projects to improve the accessibility to the natural, cultural and historical heritage for tourism and to identify common features of the Baltic Sea Region.

1.2 Results so far / State of play

The project AGORA 2.0 held its 2nd project meeting in Minsk / Belarus (Oct 2010) and prepares the 3rd meeting in Tallinn / Estonia where draft solutions shall be introduced, as:

- BASTIS (web based Baltic Sea Heritage Tourism Information System)
- Heritage Scout (web based heritage panel)
- BSR wide online questionnaire survey – What do we have in common in the whole Baltic Sea Region?
- BSR wide online ranking: 6 Baltic Sea Wonders and others.

Greifswald University continued the cooperation with other INTERREG IV A and B projects. During a workshop in Greifswald, 26-27 Jan 2011 leaders of 7 ongoing tourism related BSR projects decided about a work plan to develop a “Manual on sustainable tourism in the BSR” - also involving BSR wide / European umbrella organisations.

The Leader of FP 12.10 is a member of the CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21. The content of this FP is also included in the new Baltic 21 strategy.

1.3 Problems encountered and solutions found

To act as a lead partner of an INTERREG IV B project and as a FP coordinator at the same time is a challenging task – but at present it is the only source to finance activities for the FP by projects. Unfortunately, these projects require lots of time for extensive administrative tasks which could be better used for work on contents.

1.4 Financing matters, if relevant

FP 12.10 gets financial support by the project AGORA 2.0 (INTERREG IV B Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013). Flagship projects need technical assistance by the EC also for staff costs.

Next steps and expected finalisation

- Participation in the Baltic Nature Tourism Conference in Riga / Latvia, 21-24 March 2011 and organisation of a joint workshop of FP 12.7, 12.9 and 12.10
- 3rd AGORA 2.0 Project Meeting in Tallinn / Estonia, 24-26 March 2011
- Development of a “Manual on sustainable tourism in the BSR” corresponding to the workplan decided on by BSR projects 27 March 2011
- Start of the online questionnaire survey “What do we have in common in the whole BSR?”
- Preparations for online ranking “6 Baltic Sea Wonders”

The project AGORA 2.0 will be finished in December 2012. We expect to finish FP 12.10 at the same time. A progress review will be submitted at the end of 2011.