

**NDPHS Working Group on Expert Groups' Terms of Reference  
First Meeting  
Oslo, Norway  
23 November 2009**

<b>Reference</b>	EGTOR 1/3.2/Info 3
<b>Title</b>	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Guidance to the priority area coordinators
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat
<b>Summary / Note</b>	This document has been developed by the European Commission services in the follow-up of a meeting of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region priority area coordinators, held on 20 October 2009 in Warsaw, Poland. The NDPHS Secretariat, which attended the meeting at the invitation of the Swedish EU Presidency, informed the meeting about the outcome of the CSR 16 discussions about the NDPHS contribution to the EU Strategy, and foremost that the NDPHS “agreed that, if invited, the NDPHS will take the Lead Partner role for the Health priority sub-area of the Strategy. To that end, it should be recognized that whereas the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is an internal EU strategy, the NDPHS includes both EU member states and non-EU states, and is a partnership of equals.”
<b>Requested action</b>	For reference

## EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

### *Guidance to the priority area coordinators*

This guidance responds to requests from Priority Area Coordinators for advice on the role they are expected to play in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. They are key actors in its implementation. Committed and effective coordinators will make the Strategy a success.

The advice below comes from discussion between all those involved: the European Commission; national administrations; the coordinators themselves and other involved parties. Since the strategy is an innovative approach, the guidance is very much the result of work together, and should be developed in the light of experience.

#### **1. What result is expected from the Coordinators?**

The Coordinators' primary role is to take the appropriate measures so that, as far as possible, the actions and projects mentioned in the Action Plan are implemented as foreseen and on time. Additional projects in line with the Priority Area are welcome (not necessarily designated as flagship). Coordinators also report on progress to the Commission.

#### **2. What work is expected from the Coordinators?**

To achieve these objectives the discussion to date suggests that the following is necessary and/ or helpful:

- (a) **Find the relevant contact persons in all the Member States concerned by the actions** (different Member States, Regional and Local Authorities, Inter-Governmental and Non-Governmental Bodies, project leaders,...), with the assistance of the National Contact Points if necessary. In addition, the Coordinators should, in cooperation with the Commission, seek to identify flagship project leaders for those which do not yet have one.
- (b) **Agree on a programme of work among the parties involved, and take appropriate steps to be able to measure progress.** The approach can be flexible, to take into account the different nature of the priority areas. Through a kick-off meeting or other arrangement decided by the Coordinator, in which the Commission could participate, those involved should establish the best way of working together. Setting-up a Steering Group is one practical approach.
- (c) **Facilitate the implementation of the actions.** The partners and project leaders should implement the actions and projects while the Coordinator monitors progress (e.g. through meetings or teleconferences), reviews co-ordination of the work and seeks to ensure that problems / delays are resolved as they arise. A pro-active and supportive approach to problem-solving is highly recommended.
- (d) **Provide advice in respect of sources of financing:** The financing sources are numerous, such as national and regional authorities, international financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank, private banks, European Union instruments (European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, LIFE programme,...). The INTERACT programme (financed by the European Commission and supporting implementation of cooperation) has set up a group to assist in the identifying of funding sources. This could be further developed into a one-stop shop approach. In particular, attention should be paid to the possible contributions of the Structural Funds programmes in the region. These may finance projects linked to the Strategy if such projects satisfy the criteria of the programme in question. The Managing

Authorities will be asked to report regularly on the elements of their programmes which fall within the scope of the Strategy.

- (e) **Report to the Commission:** As the Commission will have to report regularly to the Council, the Coordinators should report back to the Commission once a year (the dates are still to be defined). A draft template is annexed.

### **3. What support will the Coordinators have?**

.It is clear that the Commission cannot implement the strategy through its own resources. The system of Priority Area coordinators/ flagship leaders offers an approach that allows responsibility for implementation of the strategy to be where it should be – in the region. However, the coordinators can expect the following assistance:

- Guidance from DG Regional Policy and policy DGs in the relevant area on policy issues, including participation in kick-off meetings where possible;
- Assistance from National Contact Points in identifying partners for the specific actions and flagship projects;
- Support from INTERACT on identifying sources of funding and addressing other technical issues;
- Support from DG Regional Policy in identifying potential contributions from Structural Funds programmes.
- Support from the Commission in respect of information flows, especially via good use of available websites, documentation and EC Representations in the region.

### **4. To what extent can Priority Area coordinators and flagship project leaders modify the Action Plan?**

The Action Plan adopted by the Commission and of which the Council takes note, has been extensively discussed with Member States, Stakeholders, and the relevant services of the Commission itself. Any changes should therefore be made with caution. However, when starting the implementation phase, certain adjustments may inevitably be necessary.

These adjustments may typically be of three types:

1. clarification/correction of the details of an action or project in a way that does not change its scope or purpose;
2. addition of a new action or flagship project, or modification to the extent that the scope or purpose of the action is significantly changed;
3. Deletion of an action or flagship project.

In the case of (1) above, which is effectively correcting errors that may be present or become apparent, the Priority Area coordinator can, in agreement with the flagship project leader where appropriate, make the necessary changes and inform the Commission (DG Regional Policy). In the absence of a rapid reaction, it will be assumed that the changes are accepted and the Commission will include them in the next release of the Action Plan.

In the cases of (2) and (3), however, where the change implies a change of policy, at least to some extent, DG Regional Policy should be informed of the reasons for the proposed

change, which will not be effective until the High Level Group has offered its advice (and also other parts of the Commission if necessary). These reasons should be substantial: in particular it should be remembered that there is no need for a project to be added to the action plan for it to be implemented – the action plan is only a selection of the myriad activities taking place for the benefit of the Baltic Sea Region. Nonetheless, if it is clear that a given project will directly contribute to the objectives of the Priority Area in question, and that it is ready to be implemented, the High Level Group and the Commission should have the opportunity to consider it. Typical cases may arise from the successful development of some of the Actions to a stage where specific projects can be identified and implemented.

Actions and flagship projects should only be deleted if it is clear either that they are no longer necessary, for example because of changed circumstances, or if there is no prospect of finding competent partners or sufficient funding within a reasonable time (in principle by the time of the first official report in 2011). In either case the deletion must be proposed to the Commission which will then decide with the High Level Group.

#### **5. What happens if there are different Coordinators for the same priority area?**

Some priority areas have more than one Coordinator. These cases are opportunities for cooperation and the Coordinators should work together in the way best suited to the situation. There should, however, only be one report to the Commission for each priority area (except for priority area 12 'To maintain and reinforce attractiveness of the Baltic Sea Region in particular through education, tourism and health' for which the policy areas are clearly distinct).

**[Name of the priority area]**

[Date of the report]

*Name of the coordinator*

**1) General progress of the priority area**

*1 page explaining the general progress*

**2) Progress for each action**

*For each action, the following structure is suggested.*

- **“Action”**:
  - Partners involved in the implementation
  - State of play
  - Problems encountered and solutions found
  - Next steps
  - Expected finalisation

**3) Progress for each flagship project**

*For each project, the following structure is suggested.*

- **“Flagship project”**:
  - Description of the project
  - Leader of the project
  - Financing, if relevant (total cost out of which EU contribution split by source)
  - State of play
  - Problems encountered and solutions found
  - Next steps
  - Expected finalisation

The section for a particular action or project should not exceed half a page.

