

Strategy for Euroregion Baltic 2007-2008

ERB was established 22nd February 1998 in Malbork, Poland.

Sweden (Blekinge) represented by Mr Bernt Johnsson will take over the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) presidency in March 2007, which in February 2008 will be continued by Denmark (Bornholm), represented by Mr Per Ole Petersen.

This two-year strategy aims to strengthen the strategic management of ERB, and to create the best possible basis for celebrating ERB's 10th Anniversary 22nd February 2008.

Since the establishment in 1998 ERB has undergone a significant development:

- Since the very beginning hundreds of projects and activities have been organised and implemented, involving thousands of people: children, youth and adults, in the social, cultural, educational, sport, business and other areas,
- Between 2002 and 2005 the Joint Development Programme (JDP) was elaborated and adopted,
- In July 2004 a joint Secretariat was established in Elblag,
- From 2005 till the end of 2007 the institutional capacities of ERB will be improved in order to implement the JDP,
- After 3 years of lobbying activities ERB has finally got access to an EU cross-border cooperation programme covering the South Baltic Area between 2007 and 2013.

Naturally, these are already good reasons to celebrate the ERB 10th Anniversary.

At the same time however, ERB realize that there is still room for improvement, having in mind the main aims of the ERB cooperation, namely to:

1. Improve the life conditions of the people inhabiting the area of ERB,
2. Promote mutual contacts,
3. Tighten bonds among local communities,
4. Eliminate historical prejudices,
5. Plan activities aimed at providing sustainable development among the Parties of the Agreement,
6. Promote actions aiming at co-operation between regional and local authorities.

VISION

The vision for ERB is formulated in the Joint Development Strategy adopted in Klaipeda 28th November 2005:

"In 2015 the ERB will be a region characterised by growing prosperity and good living conditions for the citizens. The region is internationally recognised as a front runner in sustainable growth and the integration of old and new market economies, characterised by real social and regional cohesion."

THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE

During 2007 and 2008 the strategic management, visibility and institutional capacities will be improved, based on result oriented actions to implement the JDP and to further broaden the people-to-people cooperation, with a particular focus on youth.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Successful implementation of the Seagull II project, resulting in sufficient institutional capacities and well-functioning networks to implement the JDP,
2. Strategic and visible management, characterised by clear, result oriented objectives and based on good governance principles,
3. Broader anchoring of the cooperation and an increased feeling of ownership, especially at the political level in all the member regions,
4. More involvement of the youth in the decision-making processes, and through more youth-to-youth cooperation activities,
5. Improving the social and economic integration, as well as the intercultural dialogue and understanding, based on increased people-to-people cooperation.

Objective 1: Improving the institutional capacity

"Successful implementation of the Seagull II project, resulting in sufficient institutional capacities and well-functioning networks to implement the JDP".

- The ERB Council:
The political impact of the Council meetings must be improved, which will demand more resources in the preparation of the Council meetings.

To each Council meeting will be added a conference focusing on a main subject of special importance for ERB, participation of at least one high-ranking national and/or EU representative and concluded in a written political declaration.

March 2007: Karlskrona, Border Crossing issues
 November 2007: Gdansk, The role of Euroregions in the BSR development
 February 2008: Malbork, 10th Anniversary and Growth and Jobs
 November 2008: Bornholm, Social Dimension and labour market issues
 February 2009: Elblag, Environment and Energy

▪ The Executive Board:

Strategic management, visibility and lobbying activities will be the main responsibilities of the Board.

The Board meetings will during the two years be spread with a meeting in each of the 8 member regions, as well as annual meetings in Brussels combined with the Open Days week in October each year.

In the member regions the Board will meet leading local and regional politicians in order to anchor the ERB cooperation more and to improve the feeling of ownership at the local and regional political level.

January 2007: Warmia-Mazury Region
 April 2007: Online
 May 2007: Vilnius, Lithuania
 August 2007: Kalmar Region
 October 2007: Brussels (Open Days)
 January 2008: Kronoberg Region
 April 2008: Bornholm
 August 2008: Klaipeda Region
 October 2008: Brussels (Open Days)
 January 2009: Kaliningrad Region

▪ JDP related networks:

Before the end of 2007 as a result of the Seagull II project all 8 reference networks related to the JDP must be well functioning and able to have delivered concrete results.

Strong leadership, regional/local patronage and the assistance of regional ERB secretariats will be crucial for each of the networks.

At the first Council meeting each year a time and activity plan must be presented by each of the networks, including concrete indicators of what the network expects to achieve during the year.

At the second Council meeting in the same year a written report will be presented by the network, giving an account of their work, achievements, etc.

SME/Innovation	Elblag City
Rural Development	Bornholm/Warmia-Mazury Regions
Tourism Development	Pomerania Region
Transport infrastructure	Blekinge Region
Social dimension	Pomerania Region

Environment	Kalmar Region
Energy	Kronoberg Region
Kaliningrad environment	Kaliningrad Region

- Other ERB networks:

A Youth Network should be established before the end of 2007.

The Europe Direct information relays in the ERB regions including the ERB Secretariat in Baltijsk have already formed a network, which in April 2007 will organise a Youth Conference, and assist in strengthening the role of Youth in the ERB cooperation.

A network to promote and facilitate people-to-people cooperation should be established before the end of 2007, too. The Association of Polish Communes will be asked to initiate such a network, based on their years of experience managing PHARE CBC programmes aiming especially at people-to-people cooperation.

- The ERB Secretariats:

There needs to be a stronger division of roles and tasks between the International Permanent Secretariat (IPS) in Elblag and the regional ERB secretariats in the member regions.

The overall coordination of ERB activities, servicing Board and Council, and leading the ERB institutional building will be the main role of the IPS.

Assistance to the ERB networks and to the concrete ERB activities should mainly be the responsibility of the regional ERB secretariats.

- -Information, communication and technical capacities:

The Information and Communication Strategy adopted in September 2004, should be updated and revised during the second half of 2007.

More efforts should be put into developing and updating the ERB homepage. During 2007 a statistical database and a benchmarking system should be set up, connected to the ERB homepage.

Use of the Marratech on-line meeting system should be extended and be the main communication tool for the ERB secretariats and networks, as well as an important tool to be used in the people-to-people cooperation.

- Financial capacities:

The current membership fee system was formed in order to provide a financial basis for establishment of the joint ERB Secretariat (IPS) and to attract external financing for the further development of ERB (Seed Money project 2004-2005 and Seagull II 2005-2007).

Before the end of 2007 the current membership fee system should be reviewed considering the opportunities to attract external funding after 2007, especially considering the financial opportunities in the new CBC and ENPI programmes related to ERB and the priorities given in this Strategy as well as the JDP.

Objective 2: Strategic and visible management

"Strategic and visible management, characterised by clear, result oriented objectives and based on good governance principles".

Strategic management:

- The Executive Board will for each year set up concrete indicators of expected outputs for the cooperation, having in mind the ERB vision and main priorities such as implementation of the JDP.
- At each Board meeting the ERB President will report on improvements since its last meeting and initiate a discussion on areas where progress is not in line with the expected output.
- Board and Council meetings will be well prepared with agenda sent out on time and with a consultation process among main stakeholders on major issues before a decision is made.
- The ERB cooperation will be characterised by openness and transparency, not at least based on a well developed and updated homepage.
- An ERB lobbying strategy will be prepared for each ERB presidency, pointing out the main issues, the main institutions and structures to address the lobbying activities, how and when to address them etc.

Visibility:

- Promotional material in all ERB languages will be published before October 2007 through the homepage. As for printed material it will be up to each member region to provide the financing for printing costs,
- An information package for schools will be produced before February 2008, based on involvement of teachers and the Youth Network to be established,
- A plan for celebrating the EUB 10th Anniversary during 2008, including public activities in all ERB member regions, will be made before October 2007.

Objective 3: Broader anchoring of the cooperation

"Broader anchoring of the cooperation and an increased feeling of ownership, especially at the political level in all the member regions".

During 2007-2008 the Board will meet in all the 8 ERB member regions, including meetings with leading politicians at the local and regional level to inform about the situation and achievements within the ERB cooperation, and to discuss future directions.

Before the end of 2007 a plan for a closer cooperation between political leaders at the local and regional level in ERB will be prepared, as well as a higher involvement of members of national parliaments, European Parliament, EU Committee of Regions and the EU Economic and Social Committee.

Objective 4: More involvement of the Youth

"More involvement of the youth in the decision-making processes, and through more youth-to-youth cooperation activities".

Before the end of 2007 an ERB Youth Network should be established, including representatives from all the 8 ERB member regions.

The Youth Network will be actively involved in the decision making in ERB, and will be responsible for promotion and facilitation of youth-to-youth activities.

From 2008 the Youth Network should be provided with a budget allocation from the ERB budget, to co-finance youth projects applied under the EU and/or Nordic Council Ministers programmes.

Objective 5: Social and economic integration

"Improving the social and economic integration, as well as the intercultural dialogue and understanding, based on increased people-to-people cooperation"

Before the end of 2007 a network to promote and facilitate people-to-people cooperation will be established. The Association of Polish Communes will be asked to initiate such a network, based on their years of experience managing PHARE CBC programmes aiming especially at people-to-people cooperation.

The network will especially in its activities address to and apply for funding from the EU CBC South Baltic programme, the EU ENPI programme for Kaliningrad Region and neighbouring regions in Lithuania and Poland, and the EU Active Citizenship programme 2007-2013 including support to town twinning activities among other measures.

Activity and time plan:

29 January 2007	Board meeting in Warmia-Mazury Region
14 March 2007	Council meeting in Blekinge Region
15 March 2007	Border Crossing Conference II in Blekinge Region
19 April 2007	Board meeting (online)
20 - 21 April 2007	Youth Conference, in Elblag or Olsztyn, organised by Europe Direct Network in ERB
28 – 30 May 2007	Board, study visit to Vilnius, Lithuania
13 August 2007	Board meeting in Kalmar Region
10 October 2007	Board meeting in Brussels
11 October 2007	Open Days event in Brussels

- 5 December 2007 Council meeting in Pomerania
6 December 2007 Seagull II final conference, including focus on Euroregions role in the BSR development
- 28 January 2008 Board meeting in Kronoberg Region
- 22 - 23 February 2008 Council meeting/10th Anniversary in Malbork
Conference on Growth and Jobs issues
- 25 April 2008 Board meeting on Bornholm
- 1 August 2008 Board meeting in Klaipeda Region
- 6 October 2008 Board meeting in Brussels
7 - 10 October 2008 Open Day activities in Brussels and meetings
- 19 November 2008 Council meeting on Bornholm
20 November 2008 Conference: Social dimension and labour market issues
- 22 January 2009 Board meeting in Kaliningrad Region
- 25 February 2009 Council meeting in Warmia-Mazury Region
26 February 2009 Conference: Sustainable Development

