



Euroregion Baltic

## FUTURE OF THE INTERREG SOUTH BALTIC PROGRAMME ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING THE EARLY INTRODUCTION OF A CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

Adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

With reference to

- the Position Paper of Euroregion Baltic on the Future of Cohesion Policy after 2020, adopted on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017
- the Position Paper of Euroregion Baltic on the Future of the Interreg South Baltic Programme after 2020, adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018
- The Position Paper of Euroregion Baltic on the Future of the Interreg South Baltic Programme – arguments supporting, adopted 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) takes the following position:

- To attract newcomers and smaller actors, and to ensure people-to-people and small-scale projects in the future South Baltic Programme, ERB wishes to advocate the continuation of programme's capacity building measures at the earliest possible stage in the programme lifetime.

Arguments

- ERB believes it is still crucial to enhance involvement of smaller organisations – local communities, non-governmental organisations, civil organisations, associations and clubs from the South Baltic Sea area in active international cooperation through projects supported under future South Baltic Programme.

- The challenge of reaching newcomers and smaller actors in the programme area has been recognised (also) in the South Baltic Programme, leading to the South Baltic Capacity Building project (2010-2011) and the UMBRELLA project (2018-2020), UMBRELLA led by the Euroregion Baltic.
- Competencies and experiences of targeting, involving and supporting newcomers and smaller actors are thus available within the programme area (detailed and up-to-date knowledge on the local level).
- By offering tailor-made support such as mentorship, training, rent-an-expert, training of trainers and targeted microactivities, capacity building initiatives can help newcomers and smaller actors, including NGO's, overcome barriers related to language, capacity and competencies, bureaucracy, networking and knowledge exchange, as well as help them better understand benefits and the added value of cross-border cooperation.
- Reaching newcomers and smaller project beneficiaries would bring the added value of yet more intensive cooperation and new networks and clusters, bringing Europe closer to its citizens.
- Involvement of small, local actors would build up trust between citizens and institutions, thereby helping to diminish cross-border obstacles we still face in the Region.
- ERB considers capacity building initiatives, like the example "Umbrella" project, success and believes that they should be replicated at the early stage of the programme period 2021 – 2027 so that their results could be of use in the same programme period.
- Capacity building initiatives will be complementary to the work of the regional Programme Contact Points. They will be able to support and strengthen the Contact Points' role, as they will involve the beneficiaries in concrete projects and trust-based partnerships.