

Impact evaluation – Stage 2

Conclusions and recommendations



SME
development



Sustainable
tourism



Green
technologies



Sustainable
transport



Skilled
labour force



Cooperation
capacity building



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Why we needed another evaluation?

- We were committed to perform the second Stage in accordance with the Evaluation Plan (art. 56 CPR) approved by MC in May 2017;
- Reached values of the specific result indicators set in the Programme had to be assessed (as of the end of 2022) in accordance with the methodology for indicators adopted at the beginning of the programming period
- The evaluation will make a significant contribution for the preparation of the Final Implementation Report.



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Main objectives of the study

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the **effectiveness** of the Programme and to analyze its **effects** and the **impact** on the socio-economic life of the inhabitants in the supported area. The study was supposed to answer the questions if the Programme has **reached its goals** and whether it has been running in the most efficient way.

The research assessed the degree of implementation of **horizontal principles** (promoting equality between men and women; equal opportunities and non-discrimination; sustainable development), as well as effectiveness and efficiency of **information and publicity measures** in accordance with the Communication Strategy of the Programme.

Finally, the Contractor **assessed the Programme specific result indicators** based on the professional assessment of the appointed experts.



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Division of tasks

The study was divided into **two parts** due to the need to update of the Programme specific result indicators at the end of 2022. The **works** within both parts were completed on time **by 28th February 2023**.

Part I:

- Task 1. Impact evaluation of the Programme
- Task 2. Implementation of horizontal principles
- Task 3. Evaluation of information and promotion measures

Part II:

- Task 4. Programme specific result indicators update

The evaluation cost was 33,600 EUR.



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The extent of achievement of specific objectives (1)

PRIORITY I (BUSINESS INNOVATION CAPACITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION)

Conclusion: The programme through its projects reached many green and blue sector companies starting to collaborate and gaining the ability to go to the international market together to promote themselves and create innovative offers. The connection of entities working in similar fields was a very important and valuable outcome in this axis.

PRIORITY II (NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE/GREEN TECHNOLOGIES)

Conclusion: The projects under the specific objective 2.1, related to tourism and natural heritage, were considered less innovative than in case of the specific objective 2.2. green technologies. Topic of natural heritage was very popular among the applicants due to the "ease" of developing a project proposal on this theme, as the assumptions for this specific objective fit very well with the ongoing activities in the South Baltic in this regard.

Thanks to this priority, more-than-expected joint blue and green solutions exploiting the environmental, natural and cultural potential of the area and tools were created, and the the institutions also improved their capacities of using green technologies, e.g. in waste management or adaption of new heating solutions.



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The extent of achievement of specific objectives (2)

PRIORITY III (TRANSPORT)

Conclusion: Transport and its infrastructure are very cost-intensive hence it was hard to enable the larger physical implementations. However, many innovative new solutions were created for modal shift and integration of road and water transport including good quality pilot investments. The conceptual work developed under this priority is strongly grounded in the assumptions of the Programme.

PRIORITY IV (BLUE AND GREEN SKILLS)

Conclusion: Projects required much creativity and innovation due to differences in labour markets of the 5 Member States, their constraints, regulations and institutions. Project partners saw great benefit in increasing their expertise through cross-border cooperation and exchange of knowledge and skills with partners who shared similar challenges and experiences

PRIORITY V (COOPERATION CAPACITY)

Conclusion: This priority axis is considered very important for the engagement of small organisations, which would not be able to connect with a larger number of potential partners without the Programme.



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The results of the finalised projects

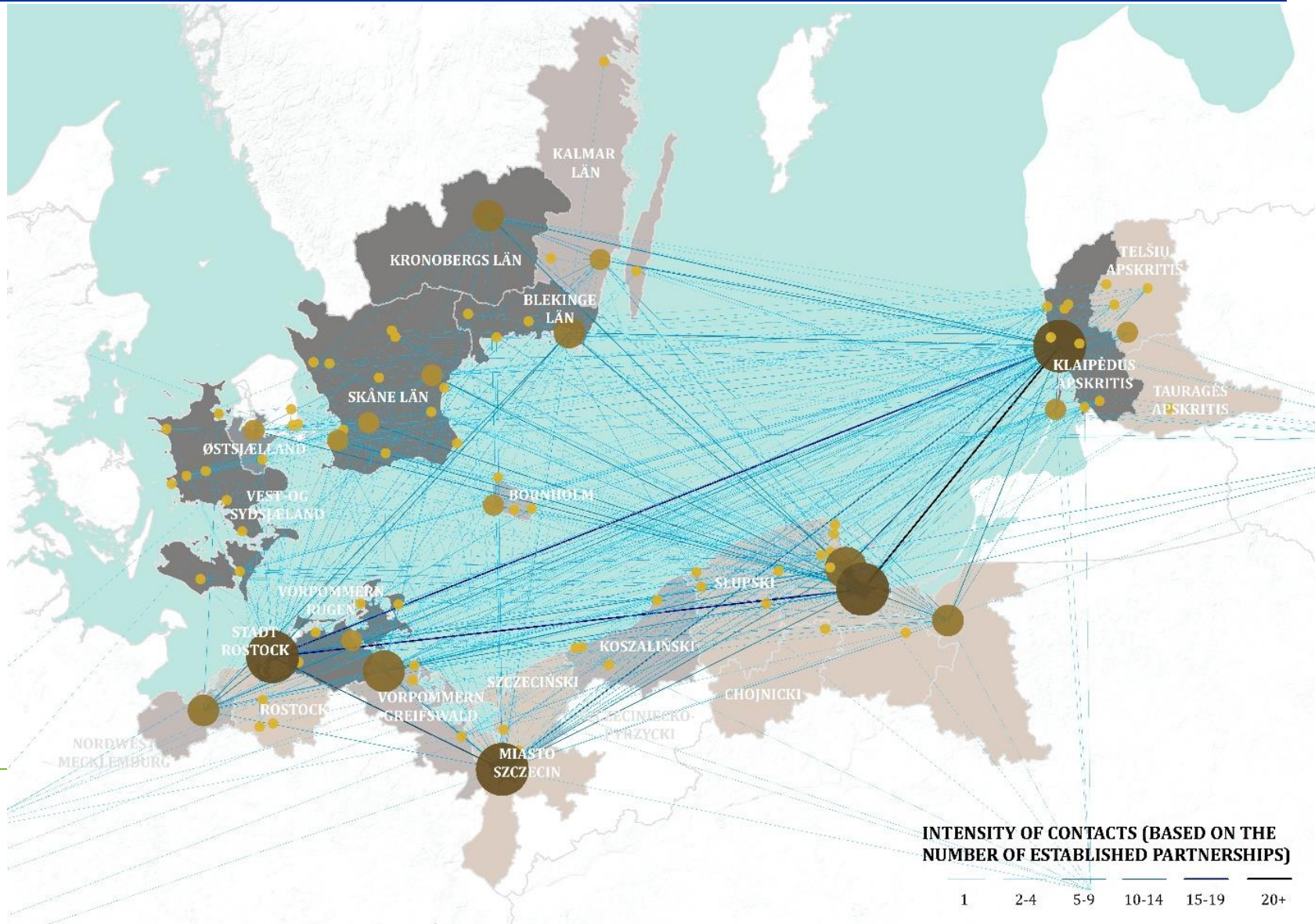
Soft results

- collaborations (great value in themselves),
- encouragement to try EU cross-border project with all administrative procedures,
- 'mental leap' (an openness to cooperation, a huge strengthening of human capital, exchange of experience, exchange of knowledge)
- belief in the essence of soft results among local politicians
- Poland, Germany and Lithuania given a chance to catch up with the gap separating them from regions of Sweden or Denmark
- contact with the international community

Hard results

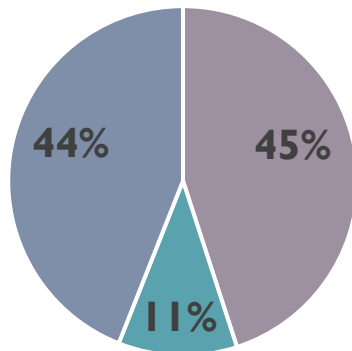
- new technological solutions for environmental protection, new solutions for transport etc.
- a number sustainable tourism products
- creation of industry networks and database
- pilots of new technologies and new solutions, developed strategies, developed business and training models.

Network analysis of relations between partners



Comparison with other Interreg "maritime" Programmes implemented in the Baltic Sea Region

Is the Program distinguished from other "maritime" Interreg programs implemented in the Baltic Sea Region (Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg Central Baltic, Interreg Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak)?



- doesn't stand out
- stands out in a decidedly positive way
- stands out in a rather positive way

- The South Baltic Programme stands out from other „maritime” Interreg programmes due to strong focus on local level.
- South Baltic is closer to beneficiaries and allows small organizations to participate.
- The Programme is also valued for its regional character and its concentration on rural areas.
- It is foreseen as programme to test different technologies and solutions.



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Implementation of horizontal principles

- In the scope of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, the most positive impact of submitted (regular) projects was noted in the projects from the 1st Call.
- In terms of the principle of equality between men and women, the share of applications claiming the positive impact was considerably lower than in the case of other horizontal principles.
- Principles of promoting equality between men and women and equal opportunities, and non-discrimination are considered rather obvious to implement today. No one questions the necessity of their inclusion, but some projects still treated them as a “box to check” and maintained a neutral attitude towards them.
- The principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination were considered in arranging meetings and staff employment. The project activities were planned and realized while considering various groups of potential users.
- Gender equality was provided by the employment of both men and women and a good balance of their involvement in the projects. Project activities undertaken were aimed at stakeholders regardless of a gender group.
- The principle of sustainable development was significantly easier to implement. Specific actions were identified in concrete projects due to the fact that the entire Programme focused on blue and green growth.



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Effective forms of promotion and communication

Multimedia presentation and network meetings during the dedicated for EU Programmes or Baltic Regions conferences, fairs, lectures, etc.

Workshops, Trainings and Seminars

Material promotion in digital version

Videoclips

Newsletter

Social media profiles (only for limited group of people)

Advertisement and articles on the internet

TV or press interview with Contact Officer, Mayor of the municipality

Webinar

Base of projects

Base of best practises

Base of contact to beneficiaries



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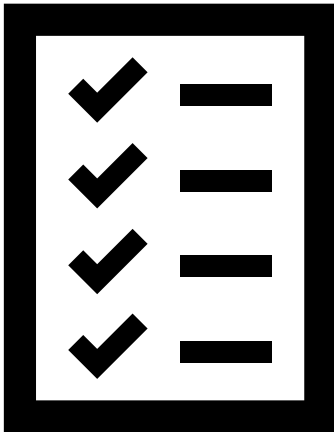


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Conclusions and recommendations on communication

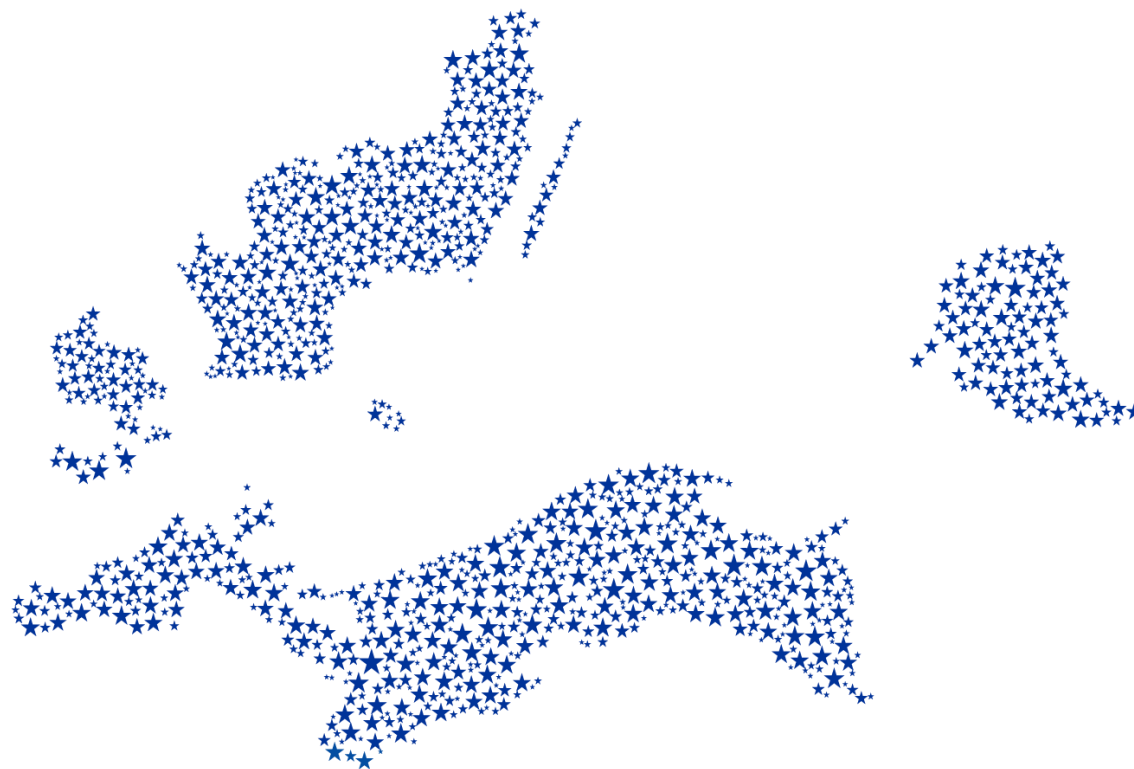


- Printed materials due to the high-cost of production and an outdated form of presentation should be limited.
- The promotion of Programme should still take place at the fairs, exhibitions or conferences but only during thematically related to South Baltic Programme.
- The COVID-19 pandemic was a period without face-to-face meetings. It is expected to bring back stationary trainings, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- LP's and PP's should be more active in promoting projects and the South Baltic Programme.

Assessment of Programme specific result indicators

Indicators	Base value 2014 (%)	Value for 2018 (%)	Value assumed for 2023 (%)	Actual value (2023 - estimated by experts) (%)
Performance in the South Baltic area with regard to the presence of blue and green sector SMEs in international markets	62	64	65	65
Performance in the South Baltic area in the transfer of innovation for the benefit of blue and green sector SMEs	60	63	63	72
Performance in the South Baltic area in the use of natural and cultural heritage assets as sustainable tourist destinations	63	65	68	74
Performance in the South Baltic area in the uptake of green technologies in order to decrease the pollution discharges	70	73	75	69
Performance in the South Baltic area in the provision of transport services of high quality and environmental	72	75	76	75
Performance in the South Baltic area to ensure skilled labour for the blue and green economy	68	71	71	72
Performance in the South Baltic area to engage local actors in cross-border activities	68	69	70	76





Thank you!

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