

Progress Review Report on the Implementation of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region

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Introduction

In October 2009 the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development in the Baltic Sea Region countries adopted a strategic document entitled 'VASAB Long Term Perspective for the Territorial Development of the Baltic Sea Region' (VASAB LTP).

The document highlights the current territorial development trends and challenges, and unveils a territorial cohesion perspective for the Baltic Sea Region in the year 2030. It also proposes a list of actions to stimulate territorial development potentials and to overcome existing gaps – for both the coming years and in a longer run.

The LTP document has been set in a few contexts. Firstly, it is intended to position the Baltic Sea Region in the European framework by introducing VASAB concepts and priorities into the ongoing discussion on the territorial dimension of the EU Cohesion Policy, and on the territorial context of the EU cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Secondly, it is meant to sustain a dialogue between the BSR stakeholders on connecting potentials across the borders and strengthening transborder synergies between national/regional plans, strategies and programmes in the Baltic Sea Region. Thirdly, it emphasises a need for the BSR countries to plan appropriate financial resources for the implementation of the guidelines and actions settled by the Perspective. Fourthly, it features a policy orientation towards maritime spatial planning, thus supporting Europe-wide effort in this matter of importance, as sea is an outstanding feature of the BSR. Fifthly, it may provide ground for the monitoring and evaluation of territorial development processes in the BSR.

The 22 specified actions address issues of transnational relevance in three designated thematic areas where the transnational cooperation in spatial planning provides a substantial added value, namely: urban networking and urban-rural cooperation; accessibility; and the management of the Baltic Sea resources. As stated in the LTP document, some of the actions may be addressed by spatial planning systems, tools and methods, with VASAB taking a leading role. In some other cases – a strategic dialogue and coordination between VASAB and relevant organisations is necessary. Therefore, as said in the Vilnius Ministerial Declaration, the actions can only be implemented in close co-operation with other pan-Baltic organisations, national and regional authorities and partners from the public as well as from the private sector.

Purpose and methodology of the Progress Report

The LTP document takes note of a dynamic environment where different policies, approaches and development needs – in reaction to the evolving natural and socio-economic trends – may affect the shape of actions pursuing the territorial cohesion perspective in the Baltic Sea Region. For that reason, the content and the implementation progress of the LTP has to be periodically reviewed.

This progress report, requested in the VASAB Vilnius Declaration, is expected to set a scene for discussion on implementing the LTP at the next VASAB Ministerial Conference to take place in September 2014. It may result in a refreshed and modified set of actions, better adjusted to the current policy framework pursued by the public and private actors in the Baltic Sea Region.

The general scope of assignments for the Progress Report includes:

- Assessing the depth and course of actions performed by VASAB and other BSR actors identified as potential stakeholders in the implementation of the policy guidelines and the specific activities described in the LTP document and the VASAB Vilnius Ministerial Declaration;
- Analysing trends and identifying further challenges associated with the implementation of the LTP since the VASAB Vilnius Ministerial Conference in connection to the changing regulatory and policy-related framework;
- Verifying the feasibility of fulfilling the LTP actions in the set time horizon;
- Evaluating the added value brought by the LTP to the activities of stakeholders in their work towards the territorial cohesion perspective in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Defining steps forward in the implementation of the LTP document.

In that respect, the Progress Report endeavours to address the following questions:

1. What are the new policy developments at the EU, macroregional and transnational level that affect the rationale and setting of the LTP guidelines and actions?
2. What is the impact of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) on the implementation of the LTP, bearing in mind that it has initiated sectoral and horizontal cooperation directly related to the three priority areas in the LTP document?
3. To what extent has the VASAB Committee on Spatial Planning and Development (CSPD-BSR) managed to motivate respective stakeholders for launching concrete actions and assisted in their implementation? In what way can the VASAB Committee make use of the accumulated results for the benefit of the territorial cohesion?
4. Are the LTP actions denoted a short time horizon (till 2015) on a good path to be completed on time? Should any actions be rescheduled due to either a difficulty in their realisation or a quicker progress?
5. How has the VASAB Committee succeeded in monitoring the territorial development of the Baltic Sea Region and in building the knowledge base on the Region's spatial planning and development processes, as articulated in the VASAB Vilnius Declaration?
6. What changes are needed in the content of the LTP document? What should be the thematic priorities of the VASAB Committee in the 2013+ period?

The Progress Report consists of several chapters.

The first chapter features a track record of the Long Term Perspective document right after its ministerial adoption in late 2009. It presents web-searched opinions of peer reviewers on the LTP subjects and ambitions, with particular emphasis on the LTP-EUSBSR correlations, and delivers information on the web references to the LTP document.

The second chapter looks into the working method of the VASAB Committee in implementing the LTP and discloses self-evaluation results on the changing LTP perception over time by the Committee members. It casts a light on the visibility of the VASAB work by the organisations and institutions identified in the LTP document as potential leading stakeholders for the specific actions. This specific chapter reflects also on the translation of the VASAB LTP to the national and regional spatial planning documents in the BSR countries.

The third chapter provides an overview of the policy processes of relevance for the LTP implementation that may determine changes in the scope and orientation of the actions specified in the LTP document.

The fourth chapter analyses the implementation progress of the all actions specified in the LTP document. Structuring the information in a consistent format, it briefly presents the ambition behind, the response from the identified stakeholder(s), the current work status, the policy framework impact, and then assesses the implementation feasibility by the set time horizon. Whenever applicable, the chapter lays down some suggestions for the modification of the scope and orientation of the actions.

The fifth chapter summarises the achievements and challenges with the implementation of the LTP after the Ministerial Conference in Vilnius in 2009. It highlights the domains with prominent VASAB impact as well as the areas where the realisation of actions faced certain problems.

The sixth chapter recommends the way forward for the VASAB Committee in the implementation of the LTP. It draws conclusions from the previous chapter and the perception of the VASAB role given by the inquired stakeholders. The chapter lists ideas for improving the visibility of spatial planning dimension in the strategic development initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region – as an input for the ministerial discussion in September 2014.

The Progress Report has been drafted based on:

- Analysis of references (policy documents, studies, evaluation reports etc.) relevant for the LTP;
- Analysis of internal VASAB documents (e.g. minutes and documentation from the VASAB Committee meetings between September 2009 and October 2013);
- Survey responses by the VASAB Committee members on the perception of the LTP actions and personal/organisational involvement in their implementation;
- Survey responses by the identified LTP stakeholders on their role in pursuing the LTP actions;
- Results of the consultation process with the policy makers, experts and practitioners from various sectors and governance levels interested in spatial planning and regional development concepts for the Baltic Sea Region, invited to the VASAB workshop on „Creating synergies for a well-integrated and coherent Baltic Sea Region”, Helsinki, 12 December 2013.

Chapter 1: Reception of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective – ambitious strategy with a complementarity potential

As the adoption of the VASAB Long Term Perspective document in late 2009 coincided with the launching of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, relations between the two strategic documents were immediately noted and analysed. A primary role in that respect was taken by the Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (Nordregio), which highlighted the complementary role of the two strategies in strengthening territorial cooperation around the Baltic Sea.

Schmitt (2010) observes that they both identify possible stakeholders who might take responsibility and promote specific actions. Also, they share the approach in not introducing any new legislation, instruments or institutions. The difference, however, lies in the territorial context.

In Schmitt's and Dubois's view (2011), the EU Baltic Sea Strategy gives almost no indications in what kind of territory the proposed projects and actions might have the strongest impact to fulfil the EU's strive for social and economic cohesion, as if the BSR was a homogenous place. The VASAB LTP, in turn, depicts some of the major challenges of the macroregion from a territorial perspective and proposes an explicitly 'territorial' approach to tackling the disparities.

The Nordregio researchers see a potential for good matching between the two strategies in the identification and prioritising of actions and projects. It is felt that the VASAB LTP may become an appropriate complement to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy as it highlights types of territories with urgent needs and where those incentives might have the greatest impact. It also includes a synthesis document on spatial trends in the BSR, which should – at least potentially – strengthen its weight due to the ongoing need for evidence-based policies. In this respect it shall provide the ground for monitoring and evaluation of territorial development processes in the BSR.

At large, the VASAB Long Term Perspective has been viewed by Nordregio as an ambitious strategy towards territorial cohesion in the BSR. However, it has been noted that - being a transnational strategic spatial planning document - it has to deal with a complex institutional architecture consisting of several national, regional and local level governments as well as numerous pan-Baltic and cross-border organisations. Therefore, the proposed actions need to be negotiated with a wide array of stakeholders with different, often conflicting interests and agendas. At the launching stage, no formal involvement commitments from the respective stakeholders were found to be agreed.

With the VASAB organisation having low budget and limited organisational capacity to alone implement all the LTP actions, the success of the LTP was determined upon an ability to: raise awareness about the promoted issues; initiate and channel policy discourse; and to coordinating existing programmes, agendas, and instruments towards a better functional division of labour among the stakeholders.

In that regard, the VASAB Long Term Perspective and the EU Baltic Sea Strategy could become synergetic. In the Nordregio opinion, the VASAB process may help the EU Strategy be more territorially efficient, while in the opposite direction the VASAB Long Term Perspective may use the EU Strategy to maintain the momentum.

The later part of this report will examine to what extent the Horizontal Action on Spatial Planning under the EU Baltic Sea Strategy helped mobilise the stakeholders in the LTP implementation process.

The LTP was uploaded to the VASAB website and homepages of the respective state authorities around the Baltic Sea as signatories of the Vilnius Ministerial Declaration. The references to the documents were made by a number of organisations, projects and cooperation platforms both within and outside the Baltic Sea Region (see below).



Chapter 2: Visibility and awareness of the VASAB Long-Term Perspective

The ministers responsible for spatial planning and development in the Baltic Sea Region countries mandated the VASAB Committee in the Vilnius Declaration to allocate adequate resources and establish appropriate structures for the implementation of the LTP. Further, they set certain implementation directions as to:

- discuss the perspective of urban networks and urban-rural relations towards a knowledge-based development of the Region with relevant stakeholders;
- disseminate experience of well-performing small and medium size cities of all areas;
- develop new forms of urban-rural partnership in view of the growing urban-rural divergence, making use of experience of respective countries and relevant projects;
- enter into a dialogue with the European Commission, relevant national ministries and stakeholders towards the implementation of the proposals on improving the external and internal accessibility of the region, taking into consideration aspects of transport demand, regional impact and expediency;
- promote the introduction and development of Maritime Spatial Planning in the Region;
- consider the Long-Term Perspective as a contribution to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region bearing in mind the importance given by this policy act to the land-based and maritime spatial planning.

In early 2010 a few hundred copies of the printed LTP document were distributed to the VASAB member countries the European Commission, ESPON and the relevant pan-Baltic networks with the purpose to be presented at public events. Also, a shorter brochure promoting the territorial cohesion perspective in the Baltic Sea Region and the LTP actions was released.

In January 2010 the VASAB Committee adopted an action plan for 2010, drawing from the LTP, the Vilnius Declaration and the EU BSR Strategy. The VASAB Action Plan 2010 was structured according to the LTP three thematic areas (promoting urban networking and urban-rural cooperation; improving internal and external accessibility; enhancing maritime spatial planning and management), supplemented with some horizontal actions. Following an agreed approach to concentrate on the own actions while only observing other activities, the action plan included only those actions which were under the responsibility of VASAB. Parallel, all identified action leaders and interested stakeholders were contacted to consider leadership/involvement in the LTP implementation.

The working method adopted for the year 2010 was sustained in the consecutive years. The limited organisational capacity of VASAB led to prioritising of 'own' actions (cf. action no. 9, 20, 21 and 22) where staff and budgetary resources were used to arrange conferences and thematic workshops or to establish a working group (on maritime spatial planning, in cooperation with HELCOM). Each specific task was assigned to the responsible country, with a set timetable, and progress reported in updates to the action plan document released once or twice a year.

In case of the other actions, envisaged to be led by external stakeholders, the approach was more modest, consisting in e.g.:

- forwarding LTP involvement proposals to the identified organisations,
- arranging presentations at internal meetings of the pan-Baltic networks or briefings with the Commission representatives to acquaint them with the LTP,
- drafting non-papers with VASAB opinion about the given policy process (e.g. on further development of the trans-European transport network in February 2012).

As admitted by the VASAB Committee members in the preparation process of the action plan 2011, the response from the identified stakeholders to the cooperation proposal was low. In some areas, the LTP used to be introduced to meetings agendas of the respective organisations, yet with no visible effect. In some other, the discussions would be cancelled or postponed due to pending policy development processes (e.g. on the TEN-T by the European Commission). Only in late 2011, after the VASAB integration into the network of the Council of the Baltic Sea States organisations, a change in the VASAB working approach was assumed, with a new strategic direction of energy cooperation with BASREC (cf. action no. 16, 17 and 18) approved for the action plan 2012 (under the German Presidency of the CBSS). This resulted in attending one of the Committee meetings by a BASREC representative to discuss feasible energy-spatial planning synergies.

The research on recognition of the LTP document among the stakeholders brings interesting results. Out of fifteen survey respondents (*as of 17 December 2013*), three are unfamiliar with the LTP on account of either no legal competencies in spatial planning at the regional level in Sweden or no earlier contacts with VASAB. One of those respondents argues that the document is not well known among BSR stakeholders; therefore, efforts should be made in this respect. An outstanding opinion was given by another respondent that while he is personally relative aware of the LTP, the general knowledge of VASAB and its strategic documents in a Danish context is vague.

Almost all inquired persons that claimed familiarity with the LTP read the document, either in the printed version or on the VASAB website (see Fig. 1 below). Every second respondent in this group used to attend interventions on the LTP by the VASAB representatives at various events, while five persons took part in the meetings organised by VASAB. Five respondents either discussed specific LTP implementation ideas with the VASAB representatives or joined the group of stakeholders who decided to implement the specific LTP action(s).

Fig. 1: Means of familiarity with the LTP document. Survey responses by the external stakeholders

Answer Choices	Responses
By taking part in the meetings/events organised by VASAB	41.67% 5
By hearing presentations/interventions on the LTP by the VASAB representatives at various events	58.33% 7
By reading the document (in the printed version or on the VASAB website)	91.67% 11
By discussing specific LTP implementation ideas with the VASAB representatives	33.33% 4
By joining the group of stakeholders who decided to implement the specific LTP action(s)	8.33% 1
Total Respondents: 12	

There seems a general interest in the LTP actions among the surveyed stakeholders, in particular those dealing with the implementation of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy or local development issues. The content of the document sounds relevant for the surveyed organisations and matches their development objectives (e.g. the CBSS long-term economic priorities, implementation of the CBSS Sustainable Development Strategy 2010-2015, cooperation with the EU neighbouring countries taken up by the EUSBSR Horizontal Action on Neighbours, the BONUS research agenda as well as actions suggested for BaltMet). Also, there

are a number of stated interrelations between the LTP and the development policies of the networks dealing with transport policies and maritime shipping, such as the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) and the Baltic Ports Organization (BPO). On the other hand, certain criticism is put on the LTP for focusing rather on national level tasks while in some countries competencies for spatial planning and connectivity issues (e.g. for municipal ports and airports) stay with the local governments.

Strikingly, none of the inquired organisations ever considered to be directly leading the specific LTP actions, which – apart from the natural reasons of dedicating staff and budgetary resources primarily to coordinating development processes in the own thematic domain – may have to do with somewhat insufficient communication on part of the VASAB Committee. As stated by the NDPTL Director of the Secretariat, such a leading role has never been suggested to his organisation.

The VASAB Committee members, in turn, tend to be divided over the perception of the LTP four years after the adoption of the document. Some of the respondents still regard all the actions as relevant, while roughly half of the persons that replied to the survey (*as of 17 December 2013*) would induce some changes. One Committee member reflected that the relevance and feasibility of some actions might have been overestimated, while the limited organisational capacity of VASAB did not allow approaching all the specified actions with equal intensity. Also, all the Committee respondents see certain shifts between the LTP actions on the importance scale as a result of political attention given to certain thematic areas (e.g. maritime spatial planning) by the European Commission and the national governments. Another change driver in that respect is associated with socio-economic tendencies in the BSR (demography, urban-rural disparities) that require deeper mitigation measures.

All the responding Committee members have been involved in the implementation of the LTP actions. The majority took part in the meetings to have a general orientation in the given subject and joined the group of stakeholders who decided to implement the specific LTP actions (see Fig. 2 below). However, contacts with the organisations proposed to be leading the specific actions were rather sporadic.

Fig. 2: Involvement in the implementation of the LTP. Survey responses by the VASAB CSPD members

Answer Choices	Responses
taking part in the meetings to have a general orientation in the given subject	83.33% 5
making presentations/interventions on the issue at external events	50% 3
joining the group of stakeholders who decided to implement the action	66.67% 4
leading the group of stakeholders who decided to implement the action	16.67% 1
Total Respondents: 6	

Reference to the VASAB LTP in the national and regional spatial development plans

Latvia - LTP actions were taken into account in the drafting process of the Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy (reference to the LTP in the spatial development perspective part of the document). The LTP is also taken into account in a draft transport development strategy until 2030, but this document is not adopted yet.

Norway – such issues have been addressed in plans and policy documents but not necessarily as VASAB actions. Norway does not have a national spatial plan¹.

Finland - Regional Councils, which are in charge of drafting development plans, take into account also VASAB LTP actions. Baltic Sea area matters are included in the Finland's Regional Development Strategy 2020 by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

Sweden does not have a spatial development plan and spatial planning remains the legal competence of local authorities (municipalities).

Estonia – the LTP is addressed in new National Spatial Plan "Estonia 2030+" (endorsed in August 2012). Various LTP actions are addressed in Estonia 2030+, ongoing progress of thematic county plans of Rail Baltica (Harju, Rapla, Pärnu counties), county plans of Via Baltica (enacted in Pärnu County, ongoing in Harju and Rapla counties), ready designed county plans of wind energy (Hiiu, Saare, Lääne, Pärnu counties), ongoing maritime spatial planning in Pärnu and Hiiu counties.

Germany – the LTP was addressed in the National Spatial Planning Reports (LTP in last report of 2011), available only in German. It was also screened for the Vision for Spatial Development in Germany (latest update in progress 2013) but not explicitly mentioned there. The current focus is rather national; however, consultations are envisaged with the neighbouring countries until end of November 2013 (in BSR with DK and PL).

Poland – VASAB² and LTP issues (e.g. urban-rural relations) were underlined in two documents adopted by the Council of Ministers – the National Spatial Development Concept 2030' and in the National Strategy of Regional Development 2010–2020'.

Russia – LTP issues included in the Concept of social and economic development of Russian Federation till the year 2020 and in the Strategy of Social and Economic Development of the North-West Federal District until 2020.

¹ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

² Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

Chapter 3: New policy processes of relevance for the LTP implementation

The chapter makes an overview of various development policies and initiatives at the EU, macroregional and transnational level that have already and are still likely to influence the course of the LTP implementation after the adoption of the document in late 2009.

The identified processes are presented in a unified format, with a brief general description and analysis of an impact exerted on the scope and orientation of a specific LTP action or their grouping under the policy guidelines.

European strategies, policies and implementation frameworks

Title and approval/delivery date
Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (2010)
Rationale and content
<p>A comprehensive strategy for the year 2020 set by the European Commission to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.</p> <p>Europe 2020 puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation. • Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy. • Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion <p>The Commission defined the following targets to be achieved by the year 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed. • 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D. • The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right). • The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree. • 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty. <p>The Commission put forward seven flagship initiatives to catalyse progress under each priority theme:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Innovation Union' to improve framework conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs. 2. 'Youth on the move' to enhance the performance of education systems and to facilitate the entry of young people to the labour market. 3. 'A digital agenda for Europe' to speed up the roll-out of high-speed internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms. 4. 'Resource efficient Europe' to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources, support the shift towards a low carbon economy, increase the use of renewable energy sources, modernise our transport sector and promote energy efficiency. 5. 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era' to improve the business environment, notably for SMEs, and to support the development of a strong and sustainable industrial base able to compete globally. 6. 'An agenda for new skills and jobs' to modernise labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility. 7. 'European platform against poverty' to ensure social and territorial cohesion such that the benefits of growth and jobs are widely shared and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion are enabled to live in dignity and take an active part in society. <p>The implementation scheme consists of the Commission guidelines on the EU priorities and targets, and country-specific recommendations addressed to the Member States. The European Council will have full ownership and be the focal point of the strategy. The Commission will monitor progress towards the targets, facilitate policy exchange and make the necessary proposals to steer action and advance the EU flagship initiatives. The partnership approach should extend to EU committees, to national parliaments and national, local and regional authorities, social partners and civil society – involving everyone in delivering on the vision.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP

The Europe 2020 strategy addresses issues of demographic ageing, climate and resource challenges or competition from new global economic superpowers (China, India) that are reflected in the LTP. The set priorities and targets are said to benefit traditional sectors, rural areas as well as high skill, service economies (in urban areas), thus reinforcing economic, social and territorial cohesion across Europe.

At the EU level, the Commission intends, inter alia, to:

- facilitate and promote intra-EU labour mobility → **ACTION AGENDA 9**
- accelerate the implementation of strategic projects with high European added value to address critical bottlenecks, in particular cross border sections and inter modal nodes (cities, ports, logistic platforms) → **ACTION AGENDA 10, 11**
- upgrade Europe's networks, including Trans European Energy Networks, towards a European supergrid, "smart grids" and interconnections in particular of renewable energy sources to the grid (with support of structural funds and the EIB). This includes promoting infrastructure projects of major strategic importance to the EU in the Baltic, Balkan, Mediterranean and Eurasian regions → **ACTION AGENDA 17**
- promote internet access and take-up by all European citizens, especially through actions in support of digital literacy and accessibility → **ACTION AGENDA 19**

Title and approval/delivery date
Integrated Maritime Policy (2007) and a proposal on a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management (2013)
Rationale and content
<p>The Integrated Maritime Policy seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues through focusing on cross-cutting policies and issues that require the coordination of different sectors and actors. It is a governance framework initiated by the European Commission in order to: (1) maximise the sustainable use of the oceans and seas; (2) build a knowledge and innovation base for the maritime policy; (3) Deliver the highest quality of life in coastal regions; (4) Promote Europe's Leadership in International Maritime Affairs; and (5) Raise the visibility of Maritime Europe.</p> <p>In the context of Europe 2020 strategy, the Integrated Maritime Policy seeks to provide a contribution from the maritime economy to growth and employment. It covers four thematic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blue growth – featuring five areas with growth potential — maritime and coastal tourism, ocean renewable energy, marine mineral resources, aquaculture, and blue biotechnology, • marine data and knowledge, • maritime spatial planning, • integrated maritime surveillance, • sea basin strategies, including the Baltic Sea. <p>The proposed Directive on maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management argues for an integrated and coherent management to secure sustainable growth and preserve coastal and marine ecosystems for future generations. It perceives the maritime spatial planning as a public process for analysing and planning the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in sea areas to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives. The ultimate aim of maritime spatial planning is to draw up plans to identify the utilisation of maritime space for different sea uses.</p> <p>The draft Directive promotes an ecosystem-based approach in both maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management, in order to ensure that the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes is not compromised, while enabling the sustainable use of marine goods and services by present and future generations.</p> <p>It supports on-going implementation of sea-related policies in Member States through more efficient coordination and increased transparency. Member States will be required to develop and implement coherent processes to plan human uses of maritime space (maritime spatial plans) and to ensure the sustainable management of coastal areas (integrated coastal management strategies), and to establish appropriate cross-border cooperation among them. Planning details and the determination of management objectives are left to Member States.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP

The Integrated Maritime Policy addresses the challenges of globalisation and competitiveness, climate change, degradation of the marine environment, maritime safety and security, and energy security and sustainability, which shall be addressed also by the national integrated maritime policies.

It names the maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management as a horizontal planning tool that helps regulate the spatial deployment of economic activities in marine waters and coastal areas → **ACTION AGENDA 20, 21, 22.**

Following the *Road Map for Maritime Spatial Planning on achieving common principles in the EU* (Commission Communication from 2008), which was drawn based on accumulated experience throughout Europe (e.g. Plan Bothnia and BaltSeaPlan project), in 2012 a *directive of the European Parliament and of the Council* was proposed to *establish a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management*. The proposed framework has a form of a systematic, coordinated, inclusive and trans-boundary approach to integrated maritime governance. The draft version of March 2013 obliges Member States to carry out maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management in accordance with national and international law.

The Commission intends to implement the Integrated Maritime Policy also through a number of actions, including:

- support for the formation of multi-sectoral clusters and regional centres of maritime excellence, and a European network of maritime clusters → **ACTION AGENDA 6**
- a comprehensive maritime transport strategy until 2018, set in a broader context of the EU transport policy, with a view to: provide cost-efficient maritime transport services; ensure the long-term competitiveness of the EU shipping sector; and to create seamless transport chains for passengers and cargo across transport modes → **ACTION AGENDA 14**
- steps towards a more interoperable surveillance system to bring together existing monitoring and tracking systems used for maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment, fisheries control, control of external borders and other law enforcement activities → **ACTION AGENDA 15**
- pilot actions to reduce the impact of and adapt to climate change in coastal zones → **ACTION AGENDA 21, 22**

Title and approval/delivery date
EU Transport Policy (2011)
Rationale and content
<p>Through the White Paper on Transport, issued in 2011, the Commission adopted a roadmap to a Single European Transport Area. It contains 40 initiatives to build a competitive transport system that will increase mobility, remove major barriers in key areas and fuel growth and employment. At the same time, the proposals are expected to reduce Europe's dependence on imported oil and to cut carbon emissions in transport. By 2050, key goals will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more conventionally-fuelled cars in cities. • 40% use of sustainable low carbon fuels in aviation; at least 40% cut in shipping emissions. • A 50% shift of medium distance intercity passenger and freight journeys from road to rail and waterborne transport. • All of which will contribute to a 60% cut in transport emissions by the middle of the century. <p>The new TEN-T policy, adopted in 2012, intends to put in place a genuine European transport network across 28 Member States to promote growth and competitiveness. It will connect East with West and replace today's transport patchwork of isolated links and sections. The core network will be established by 2030.</p> <p>The new policy establishes, for the first time, a core transport network built on 9 major corridors: 2 North-South corridors, 3 East West corridors; and 4 diagonal corridors. The core network will transform East West connections, remove bottlenecks, upgrade infrastructure and streamline cross border transport operations for passengers and businesses throughout the EU. It will improve connections between different modes of transport and contribute to the EU's climate change objectives.</p> <p>Financing for transport infrastructure will triple for the period 2014-2020 to €26 billion. This EU funding will be tightly focused on the core transport network where there is most EU added value. To prioritise East West connections, almost half the total EC transport infrastructure funding (€11.3 billion Euro from the Connecting Europe Facility, CEF) will be ring-fenced only for cohesion countries.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP

Introduction of the new TEN-T policy implies reorientation of national transport infrastructure policies to concentrate on the core network and the nine core network corridors in particular. It means a likely acceleration of investment on cross-border links along these corridors (through earmarked EU funds from the CEF budget and Cohesion Funds) at the expense of funding for missing links and bottlenecks in other parts of the transport network – in case they do not feed the traffic into the ‘European’ corridors.

The Baltic Sea Region is crossed by three TEN-T core network corridors (see the extract of the map below):

- The **Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor** – linking Finland, Sweden, Denmark (through the Öresund Fixed Link), Germany (through the future Fehmarn Belt fixed link) with the Italian ports.
- The **North Sea-Baltic Corridor**, which connects the ports of the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea with the ports of the North Sea (Finland - Estonia by ferry - road and rail transport links between the three Baltic States, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium .g. through Rail Baltic).
- The **Baltic-Adriatic Corridor**, which connects the Baltic Sea (Gdynia-Gdansk) with the Adriatic Sea, through industrialized areas between Southern Poland (Upper Silesia), Vienna and Bratislava, the Eastern Alpine region and Northern Italy.

The core network corridors have also extensions to the EU neighbouring countries, like Norway (Oslo) and Russia.

The configuration of the primary axes affects the scope of → **ACTION AGENDA 10, 11, 14.**



Title and approval/delivery date
Legislative proposals for the EU funding instruments in the 2014-2020 programming period (2013)
Rationale and content
<p>The Commission prepared a package of legislative proposals for the Community Support Framework (CSF) Funds in the years 2014-2020 to facilitate the delivery of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, while promoting harmonious development of the Union and reducing regional disparities. They feature some novelties compared with the past programming period, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Common Strategic Framework at the level of the Member States and the regions, to facilitate sectoral and territorial coordination of Union intervention under the CSF Funds and with other relevant Union policies and instruments; • a Partnership Contract, to e.g. ensure an integrated approach to the use of the CSF Funds for the territorial development of urban, rural, coastal and fisheries areas and areas with particular territorial features; • involvement of partners to each Member State (regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners, and civil society bodies) in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes – in accordance with the multi-level governance approach; • a result-based approach and thematic concentration of programmes in order to maximise the impact of cohesion policy across the European Union, based on the catalogue of 11 thematic objectives and subsequent investment priorities; • opening up transnational cooperation to supporting the development and implementation of macro-regional strategies and sea-basin programmes (including the ones established on the external borders of the EU); • community-led local development, focusing on specific subregional territories and carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies; • support for sustainable urban development through strategies setting out integrated actions to tackle the economic, environmental, climate and social challenges affecting urban areas; • the concept of integrated territorial investment, denoting action involving more than one priority axis of one or several operational programmes as required by an urban or territorial development strategy; <p>The horizontal principles and cross-cutting policy objectives for the CSF Funds relate, inter alia, to addressing the demographic change, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The CSF Funds regulations make provisions for addressing territorial challenges. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of the Member State's or region's development potential and capacity, • assessment of the cross-sectoral, cross-jurisdictional or cross-border coordination challenges, particularly in the context of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies. <p>In order to take into account the objective of territorial cohesion, the Member States and regions shall ensure that the overall approach to promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflects the role of cities, rural areas, fisheries and coastal areas, areas facing specific geographical or demographic problems → ACTION AGENDA 1, 2, 5; • takes account of the specific challenges of the outermost regions, the northernmost regions with a very low population density and of island, cross-border or mountain regions; • addresses urban-rural linkages, in terms of access to affordable, quality infrastructures and services, and problems in regions with a high concentration of socially marginalised communities → ACTION AGENDA 7, 8. <p>As the territorial cooperation programmes have been regarded the well-tailored funding tool for the LTP implementation, an important implication for the 2014-2020 period is attributed to the regulated concentration of the European territorial cooperation on the thematic objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing an economy based on knowledge, research and innovation, • promoting a greener, more resource-efficient and competitive economy, • fostering high employment that delivers social and territorial cohesion, and • developing administrative capacity.

Title and approval/delivery date
RURBAN – Partnership for sustainable urban-rural development (2010)
Rationale and content
<p>RURBAN is a preparatory action agreed by the European Parliament in 2010 and managed by the European Commission aiming to create a bridge between regional policy and rural development policy. Its main objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to identify formal and informal partnership practices for towns/cities and rural areas; • to assess the role that these partnerships can play in regional sustainable development and in bridging the coordination gap in policies form urban and rural dwellers; • to analyse the form and the functions of these partnerships to promote territorial multilevel governance. <p>The main RURBAN actions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A preparatory study building up on existing bibliography • A comprehensive study with cases of urban-rural partnerships (Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain) • Analytical framework for defining functional regions • Final conference (Warsaw, April 2013) and two regional workshops.
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The comprehensive study financed by RURBAN (OECD: Partnerships and Rural-Urban Relationships) offers a methodological framework to assess rural-urban linkages in three categories of functional areas (large metropolitan regions; network of small and medium sized cities; sparsely populated areas with market towns).</p> <p>The presented cases and worked out solutions to achieve better cooperation between different actors in developing and implementing urban-rural initiatives are referential for the VASAB work with specific LTP actions → ACTION AGENDA 5, 7, 8.</p> <p>The study may also serve as guidance in translating the territorial cohesion objectives to national and regional programmes, taking into consideration urban-rural linkages.</p>

European territorial agendas, visions and concepts

Title and approval/delivery date
Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (2011)
Rationale and content
<p>Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (TA 2020) is an action-oriented policy framework to support territorial cohesion in Europe as a new goal of the European Union introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. TA 2020 was adopted by the ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development, in cooperation with the European Commission and with the endorsement of the Committee of the Regions.</p> <p>TA 2020 addresses challenges of the core-periphery division, external EU borders, ageing and depopulation, social exclusion, climate change and environmental risks, or loss of biodiversity. It also reflects on the coordination of EU and national sectoral policies as well as on implementation mechanisms for territorial cohesion.</p> <p>The document contains six territorial priorities for the development of the European Union:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development 2. Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions 3. Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions 4. Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies 5. Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises 6. Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions. <p>Roadmap towards promoting and enhancing an integrated territorial approach based on the TA 2020 proposes concrete actions for enhancing integrated territorial approach at different levels of management. A survey on how countries integrate place-based approach into public policies on national, regional and local level has been carried out³.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The territorial priorities promoted by the TA 2020 closely correlate with the policy guidelines of the LTP.</p> <p>The TA 2020 document encourages cities to form networks in an innovative manner, which may allow them to improve their performance in European and global competition and promote economic prosperity towards sustainable development → ACTION AGENDA 1, 2.</p> <p>It advocates that in order to avoid polarisation between various-rank urban centres, small and medium sized towns can play a crucial role at regional level, being motors of smart, sustainable and inclusive development. Urban-rural interdependence should be recognised through integrated governance and planning based on broad partnership → ACTION AGENDA 5, 7, 8.</p> <p>Territorial integration and cooperation can better utilise potentials such as valuable natural, landscape and cultural heritage, city networks and labour markets divided by borders. Attention shall be paid to areas along external borders of the EU in this regard → ACTION AGENDA 3, 6.</p> <p>TA 2020 emphasises importance of securing access to road, rail, water-based and air transport, and to other infrastructure facilities such as broadband and trans-European energy networks. The ministries encourage the improving of linkages between primary and secondary and the accessibility of urban centres in peripheries → ACTION AGENDA 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19.</p> <p>Decentralised, efficient, secure and environmentally-friendly production and use of renewable and low carbon energy are supported → ACTION AGENDA 17, 18.</p> <p>A survey on how countries integrate place-based approach into public policies on national, regional and local level by presenting good practices contributes to → ACTION AGENDA 5, 7, 21, 22.⁴</p>

Title and approval/delivery date
ESPON TA 2050 - Territorial scenarios and visions for Europe (2011-2015)
Rationale and content

³ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

⁴ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

An ESPON project developing a future oriented and integrated vision on the development of the European territory. It is expected to answer the following key research questions:

- What is the current state of the European territorial structure?
- What will be the future state of the European territorial structure (horizon 2030 and 2050) based on the hypothesis that development trends and policies remain stable?
- What can be feasible future states of the European territorial structure (horizon 2050) in three territorially extreme scenarios (Global Flows; Creative Cities; and Balanced Regions & Self-sufficient Towns)?
- What is the room of manoeuvre to politically steer (the development of) the future state of the European territorial structure and what is the range in which a realistic territorial vision for the year 2050 can be formulated?
- What could be sensible midterm targets (2030) in order to steer territorial development into the direction of the desired long-term vision? And what policy actions and interventions are required to meet these midterm targets?
- What is the robustness of the results for major changes in the assumptions?

The project is now in the mid-term stage. Results are expected in June 2014.

Impact on VASAB LTP

The TA 2050 project analyses baseline trends in a wide variety of socio-economic aspects, including: depopulation, ageing, migration, territorial disparities in economic performance, labour markets, long-distance traffic, accessibility changes, urbanisation and land consumption etc. The trends are presented in subregional subsets, where the Baltic Sea and Arctic areas form one subregion. The 2030 horizon coincides with the territorial cohesion perspective 2030 promoted by VASAB in the LTP document.

The final project results shall therefore be reviewed in the context of possible changes in the approach towards the territorial cohesion perspective 2030 (modification of the rationale and scope of the relevant LTP actions, any new actions etc.).

Macroregional strategies, studies and action plans

Title and approval/delivery date

European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (2009)

Rationale and content

In the policy framework, macroregional strategies are regarded as broad-based integrated instruments covering several Member States and regions, and focusing on the alignment of policies and funding to increase policy coherence and overall impact of public spending.

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) - the first macro-regional strategy in Europe - aims at reinforcing cooperation between 8 EU Member States (Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) and the EU neighbouring countries in order to jointly address several challenges and coordinate appropriate policies to achieve a sustainable development.

The latest Strategy Action Plan from February 2013 distinguishes four objectives (Save the Sea; Connect the Region; Increase the Prosperity; Better Cooperation) with altogether 17 priority areas and 5 horizontal actions. Each of these contains actions and flagship projects as well as a set of targets and indicators to measure implementation progress.

The roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Strategy are distributed to the European Commission, the Member States and respective organisations at the operational level.

The Strategy is a living document that may be modified over time in effect of the implementation progress and the changing policy environment.

Impact on VASAB LTP

Mutual connections between the LTP actions and the actions/flagship projects of the EU Strategy were researched by the VASAB Secretariat already in late 2009. There is a direct reinforcing potential between the EUSBSR and the VASAB LTP. In the Nordregio opinion, the VASAB process may help the EU Strategy be more territorially efficient, while in the opposite direction the VASAB Long Term Perspective may use the EU Strategy to maintain the momentum (cf. Chapter 1).

Links and synergies between the LTP actions and respective parts of the EU Strategy are presented in Chapter 4.

Title and approval/delivery date
CBSS Strategy on Sustainable Development (2011) and CBSS political declarations
Rationale and content
<p>In 2010, the Heads of Government and other high-level representatives of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the President of the European Commission gathered for the 8th Baltic Sea States Summit endorsed the so called Vilnius Declaration with 'A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020'. The Declaration accentuates the potential of the BSR to become one of the most prosperous, innovative and competitive regions in the world, using the strengths of the CBSS and other existing Baltic Sea regional cooperation frameworks.</p> <p>The strategy adopted by the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and developed through involvement of members of the Expert Group and partners in Baltic 21 Lighthouse Projects as well as other relevant stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region. It composes four strategic areas of cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change, • Sustainable urban and rural development, • Sustainable consumption and production, • Innovation and education for sustainable development. <p>The strategy will be implemented through stakeholder cooperation and so called Baltic 21 Lighthouse Projects, which shall be highly visible and provide a value-added contribution to regional sustainability. The CBSS Expert Group on Sustainable Development – Baltic 21 will monitor the progress of the implementation of the Strategy, also working closely with other relevant Expert Groups and bodies within the CBSS, including the Expert Group on Maritime Policy. The implementation of the strategy will be assessed in 2015.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>'A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region by 2020' contains some elements of relevance for the LTP, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • investment-friendly economies and innovation driven production → ACTION AGENDA 2, 5, 6 • integrated maritime policy and well-interconnected transport networks → ACTION AGENDA 10, 11, 12, 20 • integrated energy markets, improved energy efficiency and extended use of clean and renewable energy → ACTION AGENDA 16, 17 • unemployment, social exclusion and inequality in the labour market → ACTION AGENDA 8 <p>Also, several high level declarations and statements endorsed at the CBSS Summits provide political backup to the specific LTP actions. This applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of the High Level Conference on the Protection of the Environment of the Baltic Sea Region (Saint Petersburg, 5-6 April, 2013) - maritime spatial planning as a basic mechanism for the application of the ecosystem approach in the management and sustainable use of marine resources → ACTION AGENDA 20 • 9th Baltic Sea States Summit, Stralsund, Germany, 31 May 2012 - Presidential Communiqué – impact of demographic change in the future → ACTION AGENDA 9 • 5th CBSS Conference of Ministers of Transport – Moscow Joint Ministerial Declaration (Moscow, Russian Federation, December 5, 2012) - integrated, safe, sustainable and efficient transport system in the BSR (→ ACTION AGENDA 10, 11) and maritime governance & cross-sectoral maritime training (→ ACTION AGENDA 20, 21, 22) • Declaration on Energy Security in the Baltic Sea Region - Adopted by the 17th Extraordinary CBSS Ministerial Session, Schloss Ploen, 5 February 2012 - effective energy systems, promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy → ACTION AGENDA 16, 17, 18) • Declaration of the 16th CBSS Ministerial Session, Oslo, 7 June 2011 - maritime spatial planning (→ ACTION AGENDA 20, 21) and extension of transport corridors to the neighbouring countries (→ ACTION AGENDA 11) <p>The strategic cooperation areas addressed in the CBSS Strategy relate to the VASAB LTP activities. As part of the climate change domain, the CBSS Strategy promotes the sustainable production and use of bioenergy via e.g. the Baltic Sea Bioenergy Promotion Project → ACTION AGENDA 18.</p> <p>The CBSS Strategy objective of Improving quality of life in both urban and rural settings, and strengthening urban-rural linkage is implemented e.g. through the projects promoting better management of urban-rural interactions → ACTION AGENDA 5, 7, 8.</p>

Title and approval/delivery date
BDF State of the Region Report series (yearly editions since 2004, the latest in 2013)
Rationale and content
<p>The State of the Region reports issued and presented at the Annual Baltic Development Forum Summits, cast a light on the global market circumstances of the socio-economic development in the Baltic Sea Region. They provide information on the competitiveness of the Region as a whole (vis-à-vis its peer competitors) and the individual national economies, based on an analysis of a number of indicators for economic activity (e.g. trade intensity, foreign direct investment, innovation outcomes, clusters and internationalisation, company sophistication, SMEs performance etc.).</p> <p>Specific reports dwell also on the quality of collaboration networks and initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The BDF State of the Region reports deliver an important evidence for LTP actions dealing with entrepreneurship, industrial clusters and cooperation of the metropolitan areas and larger urban centres of all the BSR countries, including Russia → ACTION AGENDA 1, 2, 4.</p> <p>They may also serve the purpose of facilitating foreign direct investments into smaller urban centres outside the metropolitan areas → ACTION AGENDA 8</p>

Title and approval/delivery date
Macroregional Transport Action Plan (2012) and the Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 (2011)
Rationale and content
<p>The Macroregional Transport Action Plan (MTAP) is a strategic document developed by the TransBaltic project (co-funded by the BSR Programme 2007-2013) in cooperation with other transnational and cross-border projects in the Baltic Sea Region. It attempts to facilitate the development of a sustainable multimodal transport system in the Baltic Sea Region by setting a vision for such a system in the year 2030, proposing an optimum scenario (path) to achieve it and laying down a number of so called policy actions, instrumental in following this path.</p> <p>The MTAP emphasises that the path to attain this vision must reflect the specific geographical and socio-economic situation of the Baltic Sea Region. One of the analysed scenarios, named green scenario, seems to best suit this purpose. The green scenario promotes well-coordinated public policies, positive market response and public acceptance in an attempt to improve sustainable growth as well as to increase socio-economic and territorial cohesion of the Baltic Sea Region. One of the instruments to achieve it is a network of green and efficient multimodal transport corridors, which shall connect, cross and integrate different parts of the Region's territory.</p> <p>The core part of the document features a policy framework for sustainable multimodal transport system in the BSR. It is composed of a number of specific policy actions based on concrete investigation and demonstration work by TransBaltic and the cooperating projects, done together with transport and logistics business stakeholders. Thereby, the policy actions convey work results based on real needs and tested approaches.</p> <p>The final chapter of the document concludes on the implementation process of the Macroregional Transport Action Plan, with an emphasis on further updating, contribution to the EU Baltic Sea Strategy, EU policy and financial tools, and multilevel governance arrangements.</p> <p>The MTAP is designed to serve as a pro-active and future-oriented policy support instrument for a sustainable multimodal transport system in the Baltic Sea Region. The Action Plan is primarily addressed to the public authorities at various governance levels whose decisions may facilitate achievement of that goal, but it also requires active involvement of various stakeholders in the transport and logistics market.</p> <p>The MTAP is a rolling document, open to changes and modifications to accommodate future market and policy trends.</p> <p>The Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 (BTO 2030) was an EU funded project (TEN-T Programme) and a flagship project of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy that was adopted by the European Council in October 2009. Its main aim was to achieve better prerequisites for national long term infrastructure planning in the Baltic Sea region to make it more accessible and competitive.</p> <p>The BTO project delivered a study mapping the current transport infrastructure situation and goods and passengers flows in the year 2030 perspective. Apart from visualisation of flows, the study delivered four priority recommendations on the process of joint infrastructure planning for the so called BSR Strategic Transport Network, the transport model, better efficiency of cross-border movements of cargo; and a forum for increased cooperation and interaction between the different stakeholders in the BSR.</p>

Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The MTAP and the BTO 2030 study mark two development processes at the macroregional level, led by the regional and national authorities, respectively. Although run parallel, they managed to achieve complementarity. Their stakeholders (also in a dialogue with the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics) managed to identify three so called synergy areas: (1) infrastructure investment pipeline; (2) greening of transport corridors; (3) transport model for the BSR.</p> <p>Results of the two initiatives correspond to the accessibility dimension of the territorial cohesion perspective 2030 and some specific actions → ACTION AGENDA 10, 11, 14</p>

National strategies, studies and action plans

Title and approval/delivery date
Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2012)
Rationale and content
<p>Finland's updated strategy for the Arctic region is built on a vision that Finland is an active Arctic player with the ability to reconcile the limitations imposed and business opportunities provided by the Arctic environment in a sustainable manner while drawing upon international cooperation. As stated in the document, in effect of global warming and increased economic activity, the conditions in the Arctic have changed in a way that will have implications for health, well-being and the living environment. When a well-functioning infrastructure, the Arctic experience accumulated in Lapland and the network of operators is combined with the bright economic prospects offered by the development of the Arctic and Barents regions, Lapland has every chance of providing an attractive living environment in the future.</p> <p>The Strategy has four pillars of policy: an Arctic country, Arctic expertise, Sustainable development and environmental considerations and International cooperation. These are divided in specific objectives and actions, with assigned leading ministry.</p> <p>The Strategy will be implemented through sector-specific measures through state budget funding, EU funding, projects and a combination of private and public financing.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The Strategy can be regarded a pro-active instrument tackling the increased significance of the Arctic Region as regards mining, maritime industry and shipping, with due consideration kept for sustainable development. The document addresses adaptation actions and ways to exploit the territorial potential of the northernmost parts of the country, which may be referential for the VASAB LTP, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communications and collaboration between research institutes and universities offering Arctic research → ACTION AGENDA 2 • partnerships between SMEs, companies and umbrella organisations to improve access to international business projects within Arctic expertise branches → ACTION AGENDA 3 • availability and free mobility of labour and businesses → ACTION AGENDA 9 • the foreseen new transport routes in the Arctic Region (new northbound railway lines, Northern Sea Route) → ACTION AGENDA 10, 11 • power transmission lines and local decentralised production of renewable energy (e.g. low thermal flow and northern bedrock) in the Arctic region → ACTION AGENDA 16, 17, 18 • ICT connections for the information-intensive industry in the North → ACTION AGENDA 19 • environmental risks and damages, and maritime safety along Arctic navigation lines → ACTION AGENDA 21

Title and approval/delivery date
Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 (2010-2011)
Rationale and content
<p>Main goal of the Strategy, adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation, is to define strategic priorities and development measures for the transport, energy, industrial and social infrastructure in North-West Federal District.</p> <p>Action plan of the NWFD Strategy 2020 contains the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic development; • removal of limitations and barriers in transport, energy, information and other infrastructure; • social development of the NWFD; • tackling environmental problems. <p>It is accompanied by a list of priority investment projects, with appointed lead organisation and completion time.</p> <p>The Strategy specifies over 286 investment projects divided into three groups: federal and national programmes; projects that already started yet need to be further developed (Shtokman, Belkomur, Indiga port, etc.); and regional projects.</p>
Impact on VASAB LTP
<p>The Strategy, in view of many experts provides for synchronisation of development actions with the EU Member States implementing the EU Baltic Sea Strategy as demonstrated with the interrelations between the four thematic areas as compared with the four EUSBSR objectives.</p> <p>Some specific measures and investment projects in the NWFD Strategy 2020 are closely related with the VASAB LTP actions, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation for high technological innovative products between NWFD universities and enterprises; institutionalisation of inter- and intraregional clusters → ACTION AGENDA 3, 6 • creation of conditions for development and improvement of transit gateways between Europe and Asia; development of transport hubs and international transport corridors → ACTION AGENDA 11 • development of a strategy and programmes in the field of renewable energy development → ACTION AGENDA 18

Chapter 4: Progress assessment of the LTP actions

The chapter attempts to evaluate the progress in implementation of the 22 actions specified in the LTP document. The information is presented in a consistent format to allow for easy comparison of the realisation stage.

The action template contains the following fields:

- heading, possible leading stakeholder and time perspective – as given in the LTP document;
- implementation space – presenting the work progress by the given stakeholder(s) and/or parallel and relevant initiatives in the thematic area encircled by the LTP action;
- feasibility of the LTP action – assessing the progress depth and manageability in the set time perspective (high – medium – low);
- correlation with the policy framework - specifying the policies and strategies that influence the implementation course of the LTP action;
- recommended steps/changes – proposing concrete measures for the VASAB Committee to maintain/improve the implementation progress of the LTP action.

ACTION AGENDA 1
Develop and implement a BSR cooperation strategy for the metropolitan areas from the whole Region and involving relevant urban cooperation actors (e.g. business support organisations, investment agencies, marketing agencies and national/regional authorities etc.)
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2010 - letter sent to the Baltic Metropolises Network Secretariat (BaltMet) about the Action Agenda 1, 2, 4 and 5. No specific response is deemed to have been received. • 2011/2012 - promoting city networks and urban-rural co-operation as one of the focal issues for the German Presidency of the CBSS. • In 2007 (Open Days, Brussels) the Tallinn City Office initiated and conducted a BaltMet Inno seminar on boosting innovation through metropolitan partnership, aimed to present generic solutions to promote innovativeness by engaging cities, decision-makers, academic and business partners. This event liaises very well with the scope of Action 1. • Baltic Metropolises Network Action Plan for 2011-2012 names the promotion of a cohesive and competitive innovation environment within the BSR as one of the activity areas, with the following activities that suit the purpose of Action 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – facilitation of joint cluster development and supporting the promotion of science-based entrepreneurship through cooperation between business incubators, the transfer of tools and the exchange of expertise; – fostering foster the building up of an entrepreneurial and creative environment in the metropolitan areas by sharing best practice on support mechanisms; – joint actions to foster the development of creative industries in the metropolises. • As a general principle, the BaltMet Network operates through initiating and co-ordinating particular co-operation projects between the member cities. Through the project co-operation the network develops innovative approaches to involve actors especially in the fields of science, business and city administration. The relevant projects for Action 1 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BaltMet Inno – regional innovation policy framework and creation of platform for transnational cluster developing – Creative Metropolises – strengthening public policies and support instruments for developing the economic potential of creative industries – Joint SME Finance for Innovation (JOSEFIN) – developing and improving financial instruments with combined coaching programmes in order to promote access to finance for innovation and internationalisation of SMEs. – Baltic Sea Challenge – a municipal level challenge project including all countries around the Baltic Sea – the cities encourage each other in positive competition in improving the state of the Baltic Sea together with other actors
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM +
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA SME - actions: Building platforms for growth - facilitate the establishment of macro-regional platforms for strategic collaboration within areas that hold a high potential for growth and innovation; Global opportunities - promote more internationalisation of SMEs in the BSR and cross-border cooperation between business organisations, local, regional, national authorities and trade and investment promotion bodies in the BSR • BDF State of the Region Reports – for evidence base on competitiveness of the BSR metropolitan areas
Recommended steps/changes

- Screen activities/results by the relevant BaltMet Network projects in terms of territorial development implications
- Analyse synergies with the Public-Private Partnership Cooperation Network for the BSR (P3CN) - a two-year network project proposed by the CBSS Secretariat on regional cooperation in the field of PPP as a practical tool to strengthen global competitiveness as well as regional sustainability of the BSR
- Contact the BaltMet Secretariat to present the LTP and discuss ways the policy guideline accompanying Action 1 (partnership for growth, stronger international services) may be incorporated in the BaltMet work

ACTION AGENDA 2
Implement transnational networking actions to connect research and development potentials of the eastern and western BSR metropolises and thereby to enhance the innovation potential of the Region
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet)
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2010 - letter sent to the Baltic Metropolises Network Secretariat (BaltMet) about the Action Agenda 1, 2, 4 and 5. No specific response is deemed to have been received. • 2011/2012 - promoting city networks and urban-rural co-operation as one of the focal issues for the German Presidency of the CBSS. • Baltic Metropolises Network Action Plan for 2011-2012 names the promotion of a cohesive and competitive innovation environment within the BSR as one of the activity areas, with the following activities that suit the purpose of Action 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – strengthening of cooperation among cities and partners in the development of existing – and the establishment of new – science and technology centres; – explore the possibilities of public procurement in introducing and using new, innovative products and services. • As a general principle, the BaltMet Network operates through initiating and co-ordinating particular co-operation projects between the member cities. Through the project co-operation the network develops innovative approaches to involve actors especially in the fields of science, business and city administration. The relevant projects for Action 2 are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BaltMet Inno – regional innovation policy framework and creation of platform for transnational cluster developing – Baltic Sea Innovation Network Centres (BaSIC) – identification, selection and training of fast-growing, innovative SMEs – Public Procurement for Innovation – an initiative to raise awareness on advantages of public procurement for innovation in increasing competitiveness of the metropolitan regions. • A possible cooperation in that field may also be initiated with the Northern Dimension Institute (NDI), which conducts research for the Northern Dimension Area in close collaboration with the ND partnerships and the ND Business Council
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM +
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Innovation - Action: Establish a common Baltic Sea region innovation strategy with an aim to (1) reduce existing innovation barriers, including the harmonisation of different legal and regulatory environments for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); and (2) facilitate trans-national cooperation for the development and commercial exploitation of joint research projects • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 • BDF State of the Region Reports – for evidence base on innovation capacity of the BSR metropolitan areas
Recommended steps/changes

- Screen activities/results by the relevant BaltMet Network projects in terms of territorial development implications
- Analyse synergies with the Balticlab programme, launched in cooperation between the CBSS Secretariat and the Swedish Institute, designed for young emerging talents in creative industries and project start-ups in the BSR
- Contact the BaltMet Secretariat to present the LTP and discuss ways the policy guideline accompanying Action 2 (innovation performance, stimulation of cluster development to less-developed metropolitan areas in E-BSR) may be incorporated in the BaltMet work
- Contact the NDI and EUSBSR HAL Neighbours for possible cooperation in implementing Action 2

ACTION AGENDA 3
Map territorial cluster potentials of non-metropolitan areas in North-West Russia and Belarus and develop measures facilitating knowledge and technology transfer to these territories
Possible leading stakeholder
Nordic Council of Ministers, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Agenda 3 expected for inclusion in the meeting of Nordic Cooperation on Development Policies in the end of February 2011. No specific feedback received. • Certain research bits on territorial cluster potentials in the North-West Federal District of Russia might be retrievable from the Leontief Centre activities, incl. presentations from the All-Russian Forum «Strategic Planning in the Regions and Cities of Russia and the BaltMet cooperation (e.g. the Baltic Sea InnoNet Centres project in 2008-2012, which had St Petersburg Government (CEDIPT) and the St. Petersburg Foundation for SME Development as associated partners). • Clustering in transport and logistics remains in the interest area of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL).
Feasibility of the LTP action
LOW
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Innovation - action: Establish a common Baltic Sea region innovation strategy with an aim to (1) reduce existing innovation barriers, including the harmonisation of different legal and regulatory environments for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); and (2) facilitate trans-national cooperation for the development and commercial exploitation of joint research projects • EUSBSR HA Neighbours - action: Promotion of higher education and professional networks with innovative enterprises, aiming at create knowledge networks (higher education institutions, local administrations and businesses) based on the triple helix principle through expertise sharing and dissemination of best practices between EU country representatives and third-country actors • BDF State of the Region Reports – for evidence base on innovation capacity of the BSR metropolitan areas, incl. St. Petersburg • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020
Recommended steps/changes

- Screen the measures/investment projects featured in the Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 and initiate contacts with administrative structures at the federal district level (North-West Strategic Partnership and the Innovation Centre of the Associations of North-West Russia Institutions Economic Partnership)⁵ to assess the feasibility of implementing this action;
- Contact the BaltMet Secretariat and HA Leader (EUSBSR HA Neighbours) to obtain information on the scope of activities of relevance for Action 3
- Contact the NDPTL Secretariat for possible cooperation in implementing Action 3
- Discuss in the VASAB CSPD-BSR on a possible application to the CBSS Project Support Facility for a project mapping territorial cluster potentials of non-metropolitan areas in North-West Russia and Belarus
- Possibly merge Action 3 with Action 6 bearing in mind the range of suggested activities

ACTION AGENDA 4
Develop measures to harmonise the investment plans of Saint Petersburg with the macroregional economic integration needs
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet)
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2010 - letter sent to the Baltic Metropolises Network Secretariat (BaltMet) about the Action Agenda 1, 2, 4 and 5. No specific response is deemed to have been received. • 2011/2012 - promoting city networks and urban-rural co-operation as one of the focal issues for the German Presidency of the CBSS. • Baltic Metropolises Network Action Plan for 2011-2012 names the competitiveness and cohesion, accessibility and logistics as well as sustainable development among the activity areas, with the following activities that suit the purpose of Action 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – support for events that build the identity of the Baltic Sea Region locally and internationally, as well as promoting city cooperation in the area of marketing, including joint representation at international and global forums; – promote cooperation and the exchange of best practices among the city administrators in the development of modern infrastructure; – promote cooperation in the sustainable planning of city infrastructure, incorporating environmental concerns. • The BaltMet Info Forum – established in 2007, aims to increase the quality of the information services in the BaltMet cities by seeing and learning, by making use of the technical knowledge and experiences in using different channels in the information work, in partner cities. Meetings have taken place in Oslo, Helsinki, Riga, Tallinn and St. Petersburg, and will continue in 2011-2013 depending on interest in partner cities.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Promo – action: Boosting joint promotion of the region, feat. annual/bi-annual events to bring together organisations from a broad range of BSR interests (state, region and city actors, NGO's, businesses, BRS networks) in order to discuss BSR issues but also find cooperation possibilities • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020
Recommended steps/changes

⁵ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

- Contact the BaltMet Secretariat to discuss results of the BaltMet Info Forum events in terms of information exchange on investment plans between the metropolitan cities in the BSR, incl. St. Petersburg
- Take dialogue with the city government of St. Petersburg to analyse the harmonisation of the city investment plans (in the context of the Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020) with the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- Possibly discontinue Action 4⁶

ACTION AGENDA 5
Create and spread within the BSR a model solution on using a stakeholder approach in enhancing a potential of small and medium size cities and towns within the metropolitan areas as international centres of innovation and specialised services
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Metropolises Network (BaltMet), Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC)
Time perspective
MEDIUM (2020-25)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2010 - letter sent to the Baltic Metropolises Network Secretariat (BaltMet) about the Action Agenda 1, 2, 4 and 5. No specific response is deemed to have been received. • 2011/2012 - promoting city networks and urban-rural co-operation as one of the focal issues for the German Presidency of the CBSS. • UBC (Commission on Business) functions as a platform for mutual initiatives in the fields of business development and matchmaking activities between the member cities (politicians, experts, entrepreneurs). It focuses, inter alia, on science parks, creative cities and city branding, industrial transformation and economic development. • Results of the transnational projects (e.g. in the area of innovation capacity and diffusion) when put together with outcomes of the earlier Interreg IIIB projects (e.g. Metropolitan Areas+, MECIBS, Defris, SEBCo, Baltic Palette II etc.), as well as case studies delivered by the VASAB working group on urban networking and urban-rural partnership (WG1) in the East West Window project, may provide an interesting material for generalising recommendations and developing model solutions • Recently BaltMet, as the co-leading organisation of EUSBSR HA Promo, supported a seed money application to boost the innovation and SME development potential in rural areas
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA SME - actions: Building platforms for growth - facilitate the establishment of macro-regional platforms for strategic collaboration within areas that hold a high potential for growth and innovation; Global opportunities - promote more internationalisation of SMEs in the BSR and cross-border cooperation between business organisations, local, regional, national authorities and trade and investment promotion bodies in the BSR • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 & CBSS Strategy on Sustainable Development • RURBAN • Smart specialisation initiatives
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the UBC Business Commission and the BaltMet Secretariat to discuss experience of the two network organisations in addressing development needs of small and medium size cities and towns located in the vicinity of Baltic metropolises

⁶ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

- Consider issuing a joint VASAB/BaltMet/UBC brochure on success stories in attracting industrial and real estate investment and highly skilled labour to such urban centres based on results of the transnational projects
- Trace the progress in implementation of the seed money project on boosting the innovation and SME development potential in rural areas and its possible transformation to a fully-fledged project proposal in the next programming period

ACTION AGENDA 6
Consider launching cross-border cluster cooperation initiatives with North-West Russian entities in the economic branches of high BSR integration potential
Possible leading stakeholder
Regional authorities, science and academic sector, business support structures and business representatives (triple helix partnerships) from the territories along the Russian border
Time perspective
SHORT (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of possible stakeholders (no clear leadership and no single assignee) makes it difficult to track transnational networking actions for cluster development and cooperation, which make use of the location proximity between respective enterprises and business support structures • No one consistent source of information on ongoing clustering processes across the borders between Russia and the EU countries in the BSR (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland) • A guide on doing business in St. Petersburg available on: http://doingbusiness.ru/guide/uncategorised/guide-for-expoters-investors-and-start-ups-doing-business-in-st-petersburg-2012. The guide, developed by Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) - St. Petersburg, in collaboration of professional legal, human resources, certification, research and real estate firms, aims at providing start-ups, potential exporters and investors with the relevant information • Similar business network structures in other BSR locations could eventually be a source of information; same way as secretariats of the CBC programmes on the EU external borders • A possible cooperation in implementing Action 6 may also be initiated with the Northern Dimension Institute (NDI), which conducts research for the Northern Dimension Area in close collaboration with the ND partnerships and the ND Business Council
Feasibility of the LTP action
LOW
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA SME - actions: Building platforms for growth - facilitate the establishment of macro-regional platforms for strategic collaboration within areas that hold a high potential for growth and innovation; Global opportunities - promote more internationalisation of SMEs in the BSR and cross-border cooperation between business organisations, local, regional, national authorities and trade and investment promotion bodies in the BSR • EUSBSR HA Neighbours - action: Promotion of higher education and professional networks with innovative enterprises, aiming at create knowledge networks (higher education institutions, local administrations and businesses) based on the triple helix principle through expertise sharing and dissemination of best practices between EU country representatives and third-country actors • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020
Recommended steps/changes

- Screen the measures/investment projects featured in the Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 and initiate contacts with administrative structures at the federal district level to assess the feasibility of implementing this action;
- Contact the HA Leader (EUSBSR HA Neighbours) to obtain information on the scope of activities of relevance for Action 6
- Discuss in the VASAB CSPD-BSR on a possible application to the CBSS Project Support Facility for a project mapping territorial cluster potentials of non-metropolitan areas in North-West Russia and Belarus and cross-border clusters in branches identified in the LTP document as potential drivers of economic integration within the BSR. This activity may also be supported by the Northern Dimension structures, e.g. the Northern Dimension Institute (NDI)
- Possibly merge Action 6 with Action 3 bearing in mind the range of suggested activities

ACTION AGENDA 7
Launch joint transnational and cross-border initiatives to better combine the development of metropolitan areas and their rural surroundings
Possible leading stakeholder
Project 'New Bridges' (co-funded by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013) in communication with relevant national, regional and local authorities around the BSR,
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Bridges project (led by the UBC Commission on Environment) was finalised in 2012. It sought to develop new approaches to the integrated management of urban-rural interaction with a view to improving the quality of life across the BSR. • The project focused on three key elements impacting residents' quality of life in an urban-rural setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – residential preferences – mobility and accessibility – the provision of services • The implementation was based on the creation of new management models and methods for integrated regional planning corresponding to the needs, values and lifestyles of the people living in the BSR. These models and methods were tested during the project by the eight NEW BRIDGES partners in seven city-regions around the BSR through concrete pilot actions. • The project developed new methods and tools to facilitate the active involvement and engagement of inhabitants and local stakeholders in planning processes and to bridge the gap between individual needs and policy and planning goals. The project showed that Integrated Management System – IMS can be beneficially applied to regional planning in the wider city-regional context. It helps going through common planning and development processes in a more structured way. • The project results show that in order to build attractive city-regions, cooperation across municipal borders but also across sectorial borders is necessary including both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, involving local actors in the planning process helped the NEW BRIDGES partners to better understand the different perspectives on quality of life and the value of planning together with the goal of creating better living environments. The concept of quality of life should be included in spatial planning and political decision making at all levels of government – EU, national, regional and local. • Final outputs of the New Bridges project include: 'Planning together for Better Quality of Life – Guide for Integrated Management of Urban Rural Interaction' and the final report: 'Managing Quality of Life in the Context of Urban-Rural Interaction – Approaches from the Baltic Sea Region'. • Urban-rural cooperation and partnership have been an issue for VASAB Committee discussions in the period of 2010-2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – VASAB round table discussion in the 2013 "All-Russia Forum Strategic Planning in Regions and Cities of Russia" in St. Petersburg – Analysis of recommendations of the RURBAN action and drawing of conclusions for the BSR countries in order to better integrate urban-rural issues into the Structural Fund programmes, with a possibility to launch a transnational project in the new programming period – Reference to urban-rural partnership in the VASAB position paper on the structural funds regulation and strategic reference framework – VASAB Expert Workshop "Urban-Rural Partnerships in the Baltic Sea Region" (Minsk, 21 September 2010) organised in cooperation with the Belarus Ministry of Architecture and Construction and the Institute for Regional and Urban Planning
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning – to encourage the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation • CBSS Strategy on Sustainable Development • RURBAN • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020
Recommended steps/changes

- Process the policy recommendations included in the reports by the 'New Bridges' project and results of the (1) RURBAN study on 'Partnership for sustainable rural-urban development' and the OECD report on 'Rural-urban partnerships' for a purpose of a possible new transnational project
- Analyse linkages to the urban-rural cooperation and partnership in the Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020
- Take contact with the secretariats of the territorial cooperation programmes in the BSR on the means to include the theme of urban-rural cooperation in the content of programme documents in the 2014-2020 period
- Reaffirm with the European Commission a possibility to implement actions on urban-rural partnership as a part of the Horizontal Action Spatial Planning in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy
- Launch preparation for a new transnational project following up on the results of the New Bridges project, e.g. under the heading of multi-level governance (if manageable), in cooperation with BSSSC, UBC and BaltMet.

ACTION AGENDA 8
Activate transnational networking initiatives to facilitate foreign direct investments into small and medium-sized cities outside the metropolitan areas, based on documented success stories in the BSR and other macroregions
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to Action 8 at the VASAB Expert Workshop "Urban-Rural Partnerships in the Baltic Sea Region" (Minsk, 21 September 2010) where demonstration projects on urban-rural partnership from different transnational spaces were presented • BCCA, being involved in the digital agenda for Europe initiative, seems having no capacity to invest in Action 8 • There is a potential to liaise with UBC Business Commission (cf. Action 5) on account of its activities in the area of economic development in the BSR cities
Feasibility of the LTP action
LOW
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning – to encourage the use of maritime and land-based spatial planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation • EUSBSR PA SME - actions: Building platforms for growth - facilitate the establishment of macro-regional platforms for strategic collaboration within areas that hold a high potential for growth and innovation; Going green - support eco-innovation and resource efficiency in the BSR • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 & CBSS Strategy on Sustainable Development • RURBAN • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 • Smart specialisation initiatives
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the UBC Business Commission to discuss experience in addressing development needs of small and medium size cities and towns located outside Baltic metropolises • Consider the issue of foreign direct investment (FDI) a component of a new transnational project referred to in Action 7 • Possibly merge Action 8 with Action 7 bearing in mind the range of suggested activities

ACTION AGENDA 9
Organise a pan-Baltic conference to work out measures to counteract impact of the demographic trends and labour market developments on the urban-rural polarisation and social cohesion in the Region
Possible leading stakeholder
VASAB in cooperation with relevant stakeholders
Time perspective
Short (2010)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VASAB expert and stakeholder meeting on demographic trends and labour market development, arranged in Kaunas, Lithuania, on 8 June 2010, as a first step towards identification of main topics and proposing the policy recommendations at the Baltic Sea Region level. • The meeting was attended by pan-Baltic, regional and local policy makers, national experts from the Baltic Sea Region countries and representatives of relevant transnational projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DEMIFER (ESPO project) - on demographic and migratory flows affecting European cities – DC NOISE (Interreg IVB North Sea Region project) – dealing with consequences of demographic changes – NSPA Foresight 2020, Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) of Norway, Sweden and Finland - which deals with the future predictions for a substantial potential for growth and development – HINTERLAND (Interreg IIIB Baltic Sea Region project) – to manage the processes of decline in the hinterland region by modern, innovative spatial development approaches • The country contributions and project presentations gave birth to conclusions, which – in the first place – address a need to increase awareness of politicians and general public on the territorial disparity trends in population and migration figures as well as a necessity for long-term policy approaches at all planning levels based on appropriate monitoring mechanisms as a part of development strategies • Instead of a genuine pan-Baltic conference, VASAB agreed to have a section at the final conference of the Baltic Sea Labour Network (BSLN) project, in order to promote and discuss our work on demographic, labour and migration issues started during the last years VASAB workshops. The conference was held in Hamburg on 15-16 November 2011 • The BSLN project, finalised in 2011, continues the cooperating process through a new initiative called Baltic Sea Labour Forum. It is a cooperation body where trade union, employer organisation parliament and governmental organisation representatives work together to create sustainable regional labour markets within in the Baltic Sea Region. To date, the BSLF has 28 member organisations from 8 countries, involving the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Secretariat (BSPC) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat (CBSS). • The current working areas of the BSLF are: youth employment and mobility of labour. • Labour market and demographic change are also tackled by e.g. the Best Agers project (finished in November 2012)
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Education – actions: Social inclusion; Closer integration and cooperation of youth policy structures • EUSBSR HA Neighbours - action: Fostering labour market related activities especially in the cross-border context • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 • CBSS high level declarations and statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with the Baltic Sea Labour Forum representatives the territorial dimension (urban-rural polarisation, social cohesion etc.) of labour mobility activities to decide upon a need and rationale for the pan-Baltic conference

ACTION AGENDA 10
Address the obstacle of cross-border deficits in primary (TEN-T) and secondary (interregional connections) transport networks of the BSR countries for developing transborder labour markets in the Region
Possible leading stakeholder
Leaders of strategic transport development actions at the pan-Baltic level; VASAB to initiate dialogue with relevant stakeholders, such as the European Commission
Time perspective
Medium/ long (2020-2030)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VASAB arranged an accessibility workshop as the side event to the Baltic Sea Programme Conference “The Power of the Baltic Sea macro-region” on 29 November 2010, Jyvaskyla, Finland. • A planned meeting with DG MOVE and DG REGIO based on an outcome of the workshop was not accomplished (cf. Action 11) • A number of transnational projects co-funded by the BSR Programme have dealt with the accessibility issues (sustainable regional growth along transnational transport corridors, green transport solutions etc.). Some of them decided to set up a more regular cooperation scheme (BSR cluster of transport projects), incl. TransBaltic, EWTC II, Scandria, Rail Baltica Growth Corridor, Bothnian Green Logistics Corridor, Amber Coast Logistics, BSR InnoShip and Balt.AirCargo.Net • The regional development and accessibility context is also visible in the Baltic Transport Outlook 2030 study (BSR Strategic Network).
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Transport – action: Facilitate efficient and sustainable Baltic passenger and freight transport solutions • TEN-T policy • Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics • Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020 • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the progress in transnational cooperation initiatives (projects) and avail briefing at VASAB Committee meetings • Establish a close dialogue with the coordinators of PA Transport in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy and the NDPTL Secretariat for inclusion of accessibility aspects in the EUSBSR Action Plan and the NDPTL work

ACTION AGENDA 11
Consider during the revision of the EU transport policy and follow-up work on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region the [LTP specification] of road and rail links, the current state of which poses the challenge for the integration of transport networks in the BSR from the macroregional perspective
Possible leading stakeholder
EU Commission (DG TREN, DG REGIO) in cooperation with Northern Dimension Transport and Logistics Partnership
Time perspective
Medium/ long (2020-2030)
Implementation space

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport and accessibility included in the work programme of the German Presidency of the CBSS 2011/2012 • Planned meeting between VASAB and DG MOVE scheduled for 2011 was cancelled due to work on TEN-T policy review • VASAB drafted a non-paper on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network • A study was prepared to compare the EC proposal for development of TEN-T network with the VASAB LTP • The recently adopted (November 2013) package of transport policy instruments, with the TEN-T core and comprehensive network and – in particular – TEN-T core network corridors, becomes a new point of reference for VASAB efforts to better integrate the transport networks from the macroregional perspective • The NDPTL Regional Transport Network, developed by the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics, connects to the TEN-T network and ensure easier planning of infrastructure improvements on the most important routes for international traffic in Belarus, EU Member states, Norway and Russia. Furthermore, the development of the NDPTL Network will include both infrastructure links improvement and harmonisation of soft measures to facilitate passenger and freight flows among the partner countries.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Transport – actions: Cooperate on national transport policies and infrastructure investments; Improve the connections with Russia and other EU neighbouring countries • TEN-T policy • Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the tracing of the TEN-T core network corridors vs. location of the road and rail links specified in Action 11 to assess a coverage degree • Consider preparing an evidence material for DG MOVE and coordinators of the EUSBSR PA Transport with regional growth implications resulting from the implementation of the TEN-T core network corridors • Establish a close dialogue with the NDPTL Secretariat to discuss the integration of EU and eastern neighbours' networks in the accessibility context • Discuss in the VASAB Committee an approach to include the outstanding links in the new generation of transnational projects (as feeding connections to the core network corridors) • Encourage further implementation of the Rail Baltica/Baltic project

ACTION AGENDA 12
<p>Consider in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its follow-up work the following air transport issues of relevance for the BSR territorial cohesion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East-West connections in the northern and eastern parts of the BSR (including the city of Murmansk), the scarcity of which reduces the potential for interaction between peripheral regions • low connectivity of Hamburg and Berlin to other BSR metropolises • low frequency of services between metropolises in the eastern part of the BSR, including Kaliningrad
Possible leading stakeholder
EU Commission (DG TREN, DG REGIO)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)

Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action deals with a development of airports in peripheral or disadvantageous areas, with a system with regional airports linked to BSR capital cities and metropolitan areas as a stimulator for sustainable regional development of these areas Description of PA Transport in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy mentions air connections in the context of links to remote islands, EU neighbouring countries and the periphery, yet with no specific actions The completed ESPON 'ADES' project ('Airports as Drivers of Economic Success in Peripheral Regions') dealt with a better understanding of the opportunities and perspectives of regional airport investments in peripheral areas from a European and national perspective, as well as its contribution to regional economic development. The recent (September 2013) Joint Barents Transport Plan (made by an expert group mandated by national governments of Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway) contains proposals for development of transport corridors. The document makes a feasibility analysis on east west flight connections in the Barents Region and sets proposed new lines in medium time perspective.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUSBSR PA Transport – action: Facilitate efficient and sustainable Baltic passenger and freight transport solutions Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the air connectivity level of BSR metropolises and other cities specified in the LTP document, based inter alia on results of the ESPON projects (e.g. ADES) Establish a close dialogue with the NDPTL Secretariat to discuss the applicability of aviation development measures proposed in the Joint Barents Transport Plan Take contact with the coordinators of the EUSBSR PA Transport on possible elaboration of air connectivity challenges in the next edition of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy Action Plan

ACTION AGENDA 13
Monitor trends in airborne connectivity of the BSR metropolises and report prevailing shortcomings on the transnational political agenda together with possible improvement measures
Possible leading stakeholder
VASAB
Time perspective
Long (2030)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airborne connectivity of the BSR metropolises seems a natural sphere of interest for the BaltMet network but was not included in the latest action plan for the organisation No monitoring mechanism has been so far established by VASAB and requires decision of the VASAB Committee as well as a stable funding source The ongoing ESPON 'BSR TeMo' project may provide a basis for the systematic review of the trend
Feasibility of the LTP action
LOW
Correlation with the policy framework

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Transport – action: Facilitate efficient and sustainable Baltic passenger and freight transport solutions • Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider setting up a monitoring basis for the air connectivity of the BSR metropolises through the GIS being developed by the ESPON 'BSR TeMo' project • Take contact with the BaltMet Secretariat on a possible inclusion of the issue in the action plan agenda • Consider merging this action with Action 12 bearing in mind the range of suggested activities

ACTION AGENDA 14
Develop the Motorways of the Sea in the Baltic Sea Region as a systemic solution to enhance cross-border scale integration and a transfer of goods between the EU, the eastern neighbours, Central Asia and the Far East. Consider in the revised EU transport policy the extension of the Baltic Sea Motorways system to include further short-sea links between EU ports as well as connections from the EU ports to Kaliningrad and Saint Petersburg
Possible leading stakeholder
EU Commission (DG TREN)
Time perspective
Medium/ long (2020-2030)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the new TEN-T guidelines, Motorways of the Sea (MoS) are defined as a maritime dimension of the TEN-T network covering the whole European Maritime Space. They provide a platform for the development of key activities: ships and ship operations; ports & access to hinterland; human element (training for MoS) and organisational systems and procedures. • In the 2012+ perspective, the MoS become a maritime component of the core network, connecting corridors, core network ports and the comprehensive network. They will have to feature streamlined logistics (e.g. single window) and clean fuels (e.g. LNG, CNS, Hydrogen, etc.) • MoS are also a subject of interest for the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics as this component is currently missing in the NDPTL Regional Transport Network • The network of MoS on the Baltic Sea has been addressed by some transnational projects, including TransBaltic, Scandria, EWTC II and Rail Baltica Growth Corridor. The follow-up initiatives may take up this issue again. • The Baltic Ports Organization intends to produce a report on the Baltic MoS perspective in the TEN-T network.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Transport – action: Increase the role of the Baltic Sea in the transport systems of the region • TEN-T • Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics
Recommended steps/changes

- Analyse the tracing of the TEN-T core network corridors vs. location of the road and rail links specified in Action 11 to assess a coverage degree
- Consider preparing an evidence material for DG MOVE and coordinators of the EUSBSR PA Transport with regional growth implications resulting from the implementation of the TEN-T core network corridors
- Establish a close dialogue with the NDPTL Secretariat to discuss pre-requisites for inclusion of the Baltic Sea MoS in the NDPTL Regional Transport Network
- Contact the BPO Secretariat as well as the BSSC and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for possible cooperation on MoS issues
- Monitor the progress in transnational cooperation initiatives (projects) dealing with the MoS on the Baltic Sea and avail briefing at VASAB Committee meetings

ACTION AGENDA 15
Initiate work on the intelligent sea transport corridors in the BSR (separated and electronically monitored traffic routes) by activating at least one pilot project for a corridor with high traffic volumes in an environmentally sensitive area
Possible leading stakeholder
Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent sea transport corridors in the BSR are an instrument to allow for electronic monitoring of specially designated sea traffic lanes in order to prevent ship accidents and appropriate actions in case of such incidents • Activating at least one pilot project for a corridor with high traffic volumes in an environmentally sensitive area was put on the agenda of BONUS (Science for a Better Future in the Baltic Sea Region) - multidisciplinary and transnational research programme in support of knowledge-based decision-making and management action in the BSR. It is in line with one of the BONUS strategic objectives, namely: <i>Developing improved and innovative observation and data management systems, tools and methodologies for marine information needs in the Baltic Sea region.</i> • The new TEN-T guidelines elaborate on the MS concept, which shall allow for: safety of navigation, environmental performance of ships and ports (e.g. LNG), traffic management and navigation services (e.g. e-maritime), optimised ship operations, and ICT for ports and logistics. • Maritime surveillance is one of the key interest areas in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (PA Safe on maritime safety and security). • One of the MoS projects in the Baltic Sea area, called MONA LISA, a flagship under PA Safe, aims at development, demonstration and dissemination of innovative e-navigational services to the shipping industry, incl. dynamic and proactive route planning (Activity 1). • No specific action by CBSS in this area has been detected.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Transport – action: Increase the role of the Baltic Sea in the transport systems of the region • EUSBSR PA Safe – action: Improve the coordination of systems relating to ships’ routing and monitoring of the vessel traffic and consider establishing new systems • TEN-T • Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics
Recommended steps/changes

- Establish a close dialogue with the coordinator of EUSBSR PA Safe for information on the work progressing in the area of maritime surveillance and launching pre-requisites for intelligent sea transport corridors
- Check results of the relevant transnational projects in the area of intelligent sea transport corridors
- Review outcomes of application call under the BONUS Programme to detect any project on intelligent sea transport corridors
- Contact the NDPTL Secretariat to discuss common interests
- Decide on further steps and any needed VASAB intervention on the subject e.g. in connection to the maritime spatial planning in Action 20 and/or 21

ACTION AGENDA 16
Analyse territorial development implications of more East-West connections to secure a fully integrated BSR transmission grid
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC)
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communiqué adopted at the Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) Meeting of Energy Ministers in Berlin (14-15 May 2012) emphasises that for well-functioning energy markets a common understanding of all aspects of efficient and secure energy supply is of high importance. Stable and secure supplies of energy as well as competitive energy markets require efficient transport routes for electricity and natural gas, which can be ensured by regional co-operation. • The energy ministers recognised the progress in implementing the Baltic Energy Market and Interconnection Plan (BEMIP). The parties confirmed the need for continued work on identification of solutions for and removal of barriers of market integration and development of energy infrastructures in the Baltic Sea Region. • Connecting the three Baltic States to neighbouring EU countries and the internal market is the main priority of the BEMIP Action Plan. The 4th BEMIP progress report (June 2011 – May 2012) contains the roadmap towards an integrated power market between the Baltic Member States and the Nordic Countries by 2015. • Analysis of options for the development and integration of energy infrastructure in the region, in particular regional electricity and gas markets, including legal frameworks is one of BASREC priorities for the period 2012-2015. • Cooperation with BASREC became a strategic direction of VASAB work in Action Plan for 2012, with a BASREC representative attending one the VASAB Committee meetings.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Energy – action: Towards a well-functioning energy market • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss regular meetings between VASAB and BASREC Committee representatives, with possible participation of coordinator for EUSBSR PA Energy, to discuss regional development implications of BEMIP and other energy transmission investments • Consider conducting a study, in cooperation with BASREC, combining elements of Action 16, 17 and 18

ACTION AGENDA 17
Consider a BSR Energy Supergrid to interconnect power plants producing renewable energy in the BSR sea areas as a possible component of actions towards a fully integrated BSR transmission grid
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC)
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communiqué adopted at the Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) Meeting of Energy Ministers in Berlin (14-15 May 2012) addressed the low-carbon energy policy issues and emphasised that continuation of their close co-operation is essential for efficient and sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region. Stable and secure energy supply and predictable demand, with respect for the interests of all members of BASREC and combined with efficient use of energy resources and low-carbon technologies are important for economic growth and welfare in the region. • The BASREC report (2009) on 'Energy perspectives for the Baltic Sea Region' demonstrates how the energy sector of the entire Baltic Sea Region could become much stronger through better coordination. The analysis included two overall scenarios on how to implement the EU energy and climate targets within the energy and transport sectors by making better use of the region's energy mix. The report shows that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Joint planning for wind farms will entail many benefits and provide the best utilisation of electricity grids; – Biomass used as a regional resource on an integrated biomass market for energy purposes will make the whole region better off. – Many old power plants in the region with low efficiency should be replaced with new technology in order to ripe all the benefits. <p>The report concludes that technologies available today can meet the targets for reducing CO2 emissions and increasing the share of renewable sources.</p> • Analysis of conditions for wind power in the Baltic Sea Region was one of the BASREC key activities in the period 2009-2011. The issue of an increased use of renewable resources available in the region, including integration of fluctuating wind power into the electricity system, will be a topic for cooperation period 2012-2015. • The BASREC report (2012) on 'Conditions for Deployment of Wind Power in the Baltic Sea Region' is aimed to serve as a key input for strategic actions to promote wind power in the Baltic Sea Region, i.e. through regional co-operation within BASREC, and hereby optimise the contribution of wind power to fulfil the EU 20-20-20 target (20% less CO2 emissions, 20% more energy efficiency and 20% of energy from renewable sources in 2020) for the Baltic Sea Region and other energy policy targets for the Region, incl. Russia • Cooperation with BASREC became a strategic direction of VASAB work in Action Plan for 2012, with a BASREC representative attending one the VASAB Committee meetings. As discussed, conclusions from the aforementioned BASREC reports may serve as a reference for decision-making when preparing maritime spatial plans.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Energy – action: Increase the use of renewable energy sources and promote energy efficiency • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange regular meetings between VASAB and BASREC Committee representatives, with possible participation of coordinator for EUSBSR PA Energy, to discuss regional development implications of BEMIP and renewable energy investments • Contact the BSSSC and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for possible cooperation in implementing Action 17 • Consider conducting a study, in cooperation with BASREC, combining elements of Action 16, 17 and 18

ACTION AGENDA 18
<p>Analyse and demonstrate solutions for better utilisation of renewable resources in the pan-Baltic scale and thus a higher energy independency of the Region; exemplary topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible investments in offshore wind power installations along the Baltic Sea coast, with an emphasis to raise the potential of Poland and the Baltic States in that field • Possible investments to better use the potential of municipal and industrial wastes to produce energy in the Baltic States • Territorial development implications for biomass, solar and geothermal energy use in the BSR
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC)
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communiqué adopted at the Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) Meeting of Energy Ministers in Berlin (14-15 May 2012) addressed the low-carbon energy policy issues and emphasised that continuation of their close co-operation is essential for efficient and sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea Region. Stable and secure energy supply and predictable demand, with respect for the interests of all members of BASREC and combined with efficient use of energy resources and low-carbon technologies are important for economic growth and welfare in the region. • As one of the key activity areas for the 2012-2015 period, BASREC carries out a project in the area of transportation and CO2 storage solutions for the Baltic Sea Region. It consists of three activities: (1) a BASREC carbon capture and storage (CCS) pre-study; (2) BASREC CCS Conference (held in March 2012), and (3) a possible new BASREC CCS Study on specific issue based on the findings and outcome of the BASREC CSS Conference. • Cooperation with BASREC became a strategic direction of VASAB work in Action Plan for 2012, with a BASREC representative attending one the VASAB Committee meetings. The discussion led to disclosing interesting topics for cooperation, e.g. areas suited for CO2 storage to be looked upon from the regional development perspective; or issues of storage, biomass or geothermal energy in the context of maritime and land-based spatial planning. • The project addresses an issue of how a regional joint solution could lead to a rapid and more cost-effective implementation of carbon capture and storage projects in the BSR - indication/description of possible (joint) solutions for the Baltic Sea Region with regards to cost and economy, handling of risk elements, possible upside/down side as well as transboundary issues. • An early idea for the VASAB-BASREC cooperation in that respect, discussed at the VASAB meeting in 2012, is to develop a storage atlas of the Baltic Sea onshore and offshore most suitable areas.
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Energy – action: Increase the use of renewable energy sources and promote energy efficiency • EUSBSR HA Sustainable Development and Bio-economy – action: Climate change and mitigation • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange regular meetings between VASAB and BASREC Committee representatives, with possible participation of coordinator for EUSBSR PA Energy and CBSS Baltic 21, to discuss regional development implications of BEMIP and renewable energy investments • Consider conducting a study, in cooperation with BASREC, combining elements of Action 16, 17 and 18

ACTION AGENDA 19
Map the coverage status for ICT services in the BSR cross-border territories and develop joint initiatives to address the detected disparities
Possible leading stakeholder
Local and regional authorities in mapped areas, CBC programme authorities
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of possible stakeholders (no clear leadership and no single assignee) makes it difficult to track the status of ICT coverage in the BSR cross-border areas and actions addressing the disparities. • There is no single source of information on ongoing measures across the borders in that respect. • The Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA) continues promoting the vision of a seamless digital market in the BSR. In June 2012 BCCA released a report on 'Priorities towards a Digital Single Market in the Baltic Sea Region'. • The report identifies four issues as key drivers for initiatives within the BSR: e-procurement; public sector information and open data; roaming; and online intermediaries. The BCCA Policy Advisory Group targets no difference between roaming fees and national tariffs as one of the means to achieve a single market for telecommunication in the Baltic Sea Region. • Similar business network structures in other BSR locations could eventually be a source of information; same way as secretariats of the CBC programmes on the EU external borders
Feasibility of the LTP action
MEDIUM
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR PA Energy – action: Increase the use of renewable energy sources and promote energy efficiency
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact secretariats of CBC programmes in the BSR requesting information any cross-border projects addressing disparities in ICT services across the administrative borders • Check results of the relevant transnational projects, e.g. Baltic Rural Broadband, as regards the diagnosis on provision of ICT services in the cross-border areas and the worked out solutions • Decide on further steps and any needed VASAB intervention on the subject

ACTION AGENDA 20
Arrange a BSR conference together with relevant stakeholders in order to develop a common approach for Baltic Sea Maritime Spatial Planning
Possible leading stakeholder
VASAB and HELCOM
Time perspective
Short (2015)
Implementation space

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VASAB Expert and Stakeholder Workshop on Maritime Spatial Planning Challenges in the Baltic Sea (Vilnius, on 15 October 2009) proposed further steps towards maritime spatial planning (MSP) in the BSR in dialogue with experts and stakeholders. • In 2010 a joint HELCOM-VASAB Working Group on MSP was established to better use knowledge and expertise of both organisations in maritime spatial planning. The Working Group promotes the development of maritime spatial planning in the region and follow up its implementation as outlined in VASAB Long Term Perspective as well as HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and relevant HELCOM Recommendations, including supporting the setting-up of governing structures, legislative basis, transboundary consultations as well as developing concepts for common Maritime Spatial Planning Principles. • The Baltic Sea broad-scale MSP principles, drafted by the Joint Working Group, were adopted by the VASAB CSPD/BSR and the HELCOM Heads of Delegations in December 2010. They contain ten principles as guidance to achieve better coherence in the development of MSP systems in the Baltic Sea Region. • In line with the given mandate, the Joint Working Group applies the adopted MSP principles; collects information about MSP practice in the BSR countries; investigate the international legislative basis for MSP; identifies data gathering and mapping processes; explores possibilities for the Spatial Vision of the Baltic Sea; initiates and follows MSP projects etc. • Results of expertise work (studies on 'Identification of maritime spatial planning best practices in the Baltic Sea Region and other European Union maritime regions' and Necessary common minimum requirements for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Baltic Sea') were published at presented at publicity events (e.g. at the workshop 'Towards coherent maritime Spatial Planning in the Baltic Sea' organised by HELCOM, VASAB, Maritime Institute in Gdansk and Hydrographic Agency in Hamburg during the EU Maritime Day, Gdansk, on 20 May 2011. • As part of knowledge exchange on good practices in MSP, a leaflet on MSP cooperation was prepared by the VASAB Secretariat in 2013. • Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Road Map 2013-2020, developed by the Joint HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group was adopted as a part of the HELCOM Ministerial Declaration 2013
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning – Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation • EU Integrated Maritime Policy - a draft directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to establish a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management • CBSS – A Vision for the Baltic Sea Region 2020 and high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with the Joint HELCOM-VASAB Working Group on MSP to coordinate implementation of the MSP in the Baltic Sea Region in line with the framework directive as to assist the Member States in establishing maritime spatial plans • Take into account results of relevant ESPON projects (e.g. ESaTDOR – dealing with territorial development, opportunities and risks for the European seas, including the Baltic Sea) • Contact the BSSSC and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for possible cooperation in implementing Action 20 • Pursue the implementation of the Regional Baltic Maritime Spatial Planning Road Map 2013-2020 to come up - throughout the Baltic Sea Region by 2020 - with maritime spatial plans, which are coherent across borders and apply the ecosystem approach.

ACTION AGENDA 21
Prepare and implement demonstration projects for some Baltic Sea areas of severe use conflicts (e.g. Gulf of Finland, Gulf of Riga, Norra Kvarken, southern part of the Gulf of Bothnia including the archipelagos, Danish straits, and offshore areas south and east of Öland and Gotland as well as other appropriate Baltic Sea locations)
Possible leading stakeholder
VASAB and HELCOM

Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the tasks of the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group is to follow, examine and make use of outcomes and findings of cross-border pilot activities in MSP for the specific Baltic Sea areas. • The BaltSeaPlan project (2009-2012, BSR Programme) supported the introduction of Integrated Maritime Spatial Planning and preparation of national maritime strategies within the BSR. It developed, inter alia, a common BSR spatial vision 2030 and 8 pilot maritime spatial plan cases: Pomeranian Bight and Arkona Basin; the Middle Bank; the Western Gulf of Gdansk; the Danish Straits; the Pärnu Bay; partly the Saaremaa and Hiiumaa Islands; the Lithuanian Sea; and the Western Coast of Latvia. It also contributed to capacity building in MSP. • VASAB Committee considers the BaltSeaPlan Vision 2030 an important input towards common understanding of MSP in the Baltic Sea Region and a basis for political vision for ministerial discussion. • Plan Bothnia (2010-2012) was coordinated by the HELCOM Secretariat as a Baltic Sea MSP 'preparatory action funded by EU Commission DG MARE under the EU Integrated Maritime Policy. The project tested transboundary MSP in the Bothnian area between Sweden and Finland, and developed a number of MSP-related studies. The summary book has also been used outside the BSR. • VASAB contributed to the Plan Bothnia project by disseminating the project results and contracting two experts to elaborate specific topics: 1) minimum requirements for maritime spatial planning systems in the Baltic Sea Region and 2) identification of the best practices of the Baltic Sea Region and other EU maritime regions in maritime spatial planning. Outcomes of the two studies are to be used for commenting an upcoming EU legislative proposal on MSP as well as for the next VASAB ministerial conference (minimum requirements for MSP in the Region as a possible background document). • The PartiSEApate project (2012-2014, BSR Programme) deals with multi-level governance in MSP. It builds on results of BaltSeaPlan and Plan Bothnia, and develops methodologies for carrying out multi-level maritime spatial planning processes in three concrete pilot cases: Lithuania, Middle Bank and the Pomeranian Bight. • The PartiSEApate project intends to prepare a concept for a MSP institutional framework and governance model which shall provide input to policy decisions at the upcoming VASAB Ministerial Conference. The HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group serves as an advisory body for the project.
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning – Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation • EU Integrated Maritime Policy - a draft directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to establish a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management • CBSS – high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with the current scheme to initiate, monitor, follow and use results of cross-border pilot implementation of maritime spatial plans across the BSR • Contact the BSSSC and CPMR Baltic Sea Commission for possible cooperation in implementing Action 21 • Take into account results of relevant ESPON projects (e.g. ESaTDOR – dealing with territorial development, opportunities and risks for the European seas, including the Baltic Sea) • Arrange a meeting forum for experts and practitioners to share and exchange experience in designing and implementing the maritime spatial plans

ACTION AGENDA 22
Initiate joint capacity building actions in maritime spatial planning to ensure exchange of experience, promote education availability and to increase competence in that field at the BSR level
Possible leading stakeholder
Baltic University Programme (BUP)
Time perspective
Short/ medium (2015-2020)
Implementation space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUP is a regional university network, founded in 1991 and coordinated by Uppsala University. It gathers more than 200 institutions of higher education in the area of sustainable regional development. • In 2011 a planning group with VASAB, HELCOM and BUP representatives was established to identify potential for maritime spatial planning education in the Baltic Sea Region (inquiry circulated to BSR universities). • In November 2012 the planning group decided to open a 2-weeks fast track course on MSP for professionals, aiming to: convey basic information on MSP and the 'state of the art' and to create informal professional network(s) among the MSP planners. The course is open for professionals from agencies responsible for MSP in the Baltic Sea Region NGOs and consulting companies active in this field and also to master students with special interest in MSP. • The course, as a joint venture of BUP; Åbo Akademi University, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Maritime Institute in Gdansk, SIDA, VASAB, World Maritime University, NordForsk and Swedish Institute for the Marine Environment, was launched in September 2013 with altogether 21 students from 9 countries, and ended in October 2013. • VASAB and HELCOM prepared input to the Strategic Research Agenda 2011-2017 of BONUS - the joint interdisciplinary research programme supporting the knowledge-based decision-making and management action in the BSR. Maritime spatial planning issues (theme 4.3) were included to the second call in December 2012, with projects starting up in January 2014. • Several MSP capacity building actions were also conducted by the past and ongoing projects (cf. Action 21).
Feasibility of the LTP action
HIGH
Correlation with the policy framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning – Encouraging the use of Maritime and Land-based Spatial Planning in all Member States around the Baltic Sea and develop a common approach for cross-border cooperation • EUSBSR PA Education – action: Develop new methods for training entrepreneurship and innovation • EU Integrated Maritime Policy - a draft directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to establish a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management • CBSS - high level declarations & statements
Recommended steps/changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate outcomes of the first course in MSP for professionals for sustained competence building actions • Monitor the implementation of transnational and cross-border projects dealing with MSP in the context of joint competence building actions • Establish a regular meeting platform for MSP experts and practitioners (cf. Action 21) • Track the progress in research projects on MSP launched within the framework of the BONUS Programme

Chapter 5: Key achievements and key challenges in implementing the LTP

The chapter summarises the progress in implementing the VASAB LTP by highlighting the domains with prominent VASAB impact as well as the areas where the realisation of actions faced certain problems.

Out of 22 LTP actions, six have received the highest assessment. These actions, performed in the area of urban-rural issues, demographic/labour market trends and the maritime spatial planning, saw the deepest engagement of VASAB staff and budget resources. Here, the VASAB used to lead or co-lead the specific action, or to directly inspire the action leaders.

On the other end, four LTP actions have been assessed low in terms of implementation, whereof one with the VASAB leading role. This may have resulted from:

- inadequate operational capacity of the VASAB Committee and the Secretariat to tackle the wide array of topics addressed in the LTP document;
- insufficient resources of the organisation(s) specified as possible leading stakeholders of the specific LTP actions as they chose to concentrate, first and foremost, on realisation of the statutory tasks;
- ineffective communication between VASAB and the stakeholder suggested to lead or to be deeply involved in the LTP action (cf. the NDPTL Secretariat);
- too broad list of possible leading stakeholders for the given LTP action that made it difficult to identify one or two specific organisations to turn to;
- new policy circumstances (e.g. the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region) that influence the course of the LTP actions (which e.g. need to be updated, revised or modified).

It is worth noting that three actions, namely: number 3, 6 and 8, have been designated either the short or short/medium time horizon in the LTP document. A VASAB decision is thus necessary whether to accelerate their implementation following the ideas presented further below (under the key challenges) or to merge them with some relevant actions as proposed in Chapter 4.

Key achievements

1. Recognised frontrunner role (together with HELCOM) in the Baltic Sea Region maritime spatial planning

Following the Vilnius Declaration guidance from the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development in 2009, VASAB established a close co-operation with HELCOM and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. the Baltic University Programme, the BONUS research programme, partnerships in maritime spatial planning projects and pilot actions etc.), in order to:

- Discuss a common Baltic approach for maritime spatial planning towards developing the consistent planning methods and tools;
- Conduct capacity building actions to ensure exchange of experience, promote education and to increase competence in maritime spatial planning.

Parallel, the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan committed the HELCOM Contracting Parties to jointly develop by 2010 as well as test, apply and evaluate by 2012, in cooperation with other relevant international bodies, broad-scale, cross-sectoral MSP principles based on the ecosystem approach that reflect the specific conditions and needs in the Baltic Sea Region.

The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group, operational since October 2010, puts together expertise in spatial planning and environmental protection of two intergovernmental organisations, and thereby strengthens the activities performed by each of them in the respective competence area. The Working Group acts on the official mandate from the executive bodies of the two organisations, binding for three-year long periods, and serves as a platform for the Baltic Sea Region countries in discussing maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management issues – across the countries and across the sectors.

Through the years of operation, the Working Group has actively promoted the maritime spatial planning in the Baltic Sea Region as a method to mitigate sea use conflicts through a wise management and a transparent exchange of information. By rendering access to practitioners and experts (with an observatory status), it has become a coordination forum for transnational and cross-border demonstration activities in the maritime spatial planning, e.g. by fulfilling role of an advisory and consultation body for a number of joint pilot projects. By disseminating the project outcomes at the pan-Baltic level (e.g. a spatial vision of the Baltic Sea) and introducing them to ministerial discussion, the Working Group adds to their durability.

Following the anticipated adoption of the MSP Directive by the European Parliament and the European Council, VASAB and HELCOM, through the established Working Group, should assist the EU Member States in developing maritime spatial plans and integrated coastal management strategies (cf. also a detailed proposal in Chapter 6).

2. Installed framework of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region for executing the specific LTP actions

The EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy, endorsed by the European Council in 2009, created a coherent macroregional framework to help the Member States identify joint development needs and coordinate appropriate policies, matching them with the available resources. As stated in the latest Action Plan (February 2013), a key success factor for the Strategy is the integrated and coordinated governance of the Baltic Sea Region, between sectors of society as well as between regional and local authorities in the respective countries.

In the governance framework for the Strategy, VASAB (together with HELCOM) has been given a prominent role. The two organisations lead the Horizontal Action on Spatial Planning (HA Spatial Planning), which aims to draw up and apply of trans-boundary, ecosystem-based maritime spatial plans throughout the Region in 2020. The joint HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group has a role of the steering committee.

The Horizontal Action Leader (HAL) position strengthens the authority of the two organisations in realising the LTP actions related with the maritime spatial planning (ACTION AGENDA 20, 21, 22). On one hand, it imposes certain administrative obligations specified in the Action Plan of the Strategy, on the other – it provides a mechanism to ensure a better consistency of activities by relevant MSP stakeholders, their commitment to the defined targets and indicators for the Horizontal Action (through a commonly agreed road map), and to convey collaboration results to the policy level.

Furthermore, the HA role:

- improves communication and visibility of the MSP actions;

- allows for upgrading the ranking of specific MSP demonstration activities (cf. ACTION AGENDA 21) by granting them a status of flagship projects (in other words – pilot examples for desired action);
- facilitates the planning and information exchange on various MSP deployment activities (by initiating and reviewing seed money project applications).

Another important aspect is the overall obligation put on the Horizontal Action Leader to liaise and cooperate with priority area coordinators and other horizontal action leaders in order to ensure coherence and avoid duplication work on the EUSBSR implementation. This enables VASAB to better promote the overall task of the HA Spatial Planning – as to achieve territorial cohesion perspective of the BSR by 2030, and – for that reason – turn to coordinators of other priority areas with a request to address the territorial disparities (divides) in the BSR when addressing spatial objectives, conditions and impacts of their actions. One of specific VASAB missions in that respect is to propagate the need of better city-region functional planning, currently missing in the EUSBSR activities. Another one – to collect experience from different planning systems in the BSR, in order to show ways to optimise decision making based on combination of democracy and expertise.

3. Pushed forward macroregional transport development perspective and implementation of crucial transport infrastructure projects

The launched new TEN-T policy put infrastructure investment on the core network, set for the year 2030, in the centre of attention. The three core network corridors crossing the Baltic Sea Region contain sections that were listed in the VASAB LTP document as necessary for the integration of transport networks in the BSR. Among them are:

- Rail Baltica – as a part of the TEN-T North Sea-Baltic Corridor connecting the ports of the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea with the ports of the North Sea and forming the backbone for the integrated railway system in the eastern part of the BSR;
- North-South routes from Scandinavian countries via Central Europe (eastern Germany, Poland) to the Adriatic Sea – included in the TEN-T Scandinavian-Mediterranean and the TEN-T Baltic Adriatic Corridors, which support more efficient transport services between the Baltic Sea Region and other European macroregions and stimulate sustainable regional development.

In case of Rail Baltica, referred to also as ‘Rail Baltic’, on 8 June 2010 the ministers of transport of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland signed a memorandum expressing their political intent to continue with the implementation of the project. The intention of the Rail Baltic project is to fully integrate Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in a track gauge of 1,435 mm railway transport system widely used in Europe. Further guidelines for the development of Rail Baltic have been established in the joint declaration signed in November 2011. In effect, Estonia included the high speed railway project in the national spatial plans.

As the TEN-T core network corridors are intended to reach the external EU borders in order to connect to the networks of the neighbouring countries, this gives a premise to also anticipate investment on links and border crossings with Russia and Belarus, which would enhance the connectivity in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

The macroregional transport development perspective has been put high on the agenda of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (PA Transport) by means of initiatives carried out by the national transport ministries (Baltic Transport Outlook) and the territorial cooperation projects (e.g. TransBaltic, cluster of transport projects under the BSR Programme etc.).

In these processes the VASAB Committee members have taken an active role stimulating discussion on connecting territorial potentials through efficient and reliable transport infrastructure. The further VASAB activity in that respect should help sustain the macroregional transport perspective and resulting strategic actions in the further implementation of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy.

4. Activated commitment to solving some urgent development issues in the Baltic Sea Region

In several thematic areas featured in the LTP VASAB succeeded in liaising with broad partnerships representing various governance levels and sectors to jointly address the identified problems and work out possible solutions.

In the urban networking, urban-rural relations or demographic and labour market trends activities conducted by the respective pan-Baltic cooperation networks as well as transnational and cross-border projects, VASAB managed to raise political awareness on the territorial disparities in the in the evolving tendencies and to communicate a need to see long-term policies in all planning levels based on appropriate monitoring schemes.

VASAB role in that respect has also been to stimulate and support specific projects co-funded by the territorial cooperation programmes (e.g. 'New Bridges') to develop and demonstrate cross-sectoral approaches and policy recommendations. In the future, VASAB should strive to communicate the project cooperation results to a broader public and embed them in the decision-making processes, in particular at the national and intergovernmental (pan-Baltic) level.

Key challenges

1. Policy response to emergent natural and socio-economic opportunities and threats

Four years after the adoption of the LTP document, the Baltic Sea Region has seen changes in the magnitude and range of factors affecting the territorial development.

As argued in the latest territorial research work (e.g. in the ESPON BSR TeMo project), the East-West divide, although still existent, is shifting the form. From being a primarily economic gap sharpest along the former Iron Curtain, it has now transformed into a multifaceted divide, where social differences play the most important role.

At the same time, the urban-rural polarisation has gained on strength, in particular between adjacent regions inside the BSR countries. The interplay of geographical location and urban hierarchy has pushed the capital and second-ranked urban regions in the eastern part of the BSR to be catching up with sparse remote regions in the W-BSR in terms of economic wealth, while peripheral rural regions in the E-BSR are on decline path.

Other important global, European and macroregional tendencies still to be tackled by coordinated policy response include:

- social and demographic processes, with ageing of the BSR population and labour migration movements of mostly young, well-educated and qualified people;
- continued growth of metropolitan areas and urban sprawl, resulting in the increasing long distance commuting;

- new configuration of global superpowers, with BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) gaining importance as both producers and consumers of goods due to a fast growing middle class;
- rising energy prices vs. the need of maintaining and improving mobility as the basic service provided by transport;
- diversification of energy sources;
- growing pressure on sea resources and increasing sea use conflicts (e.g. transport, seabed mining, production of renewable energy, tourism, fishing, environmental protection etc.);
- climate change phenomena affecting the living and working conditions of the BSR communities and opening up new global transport alternatives (e.g. the Northern Sea Route).

In effect, VASAB could envisage designing new or modifying the existing actions to better address the emergent trends.

2. Functional integration of Russia and Belarus

Several LTP actions associated with the macroregional economic integration involving Russia and Belarus (e.g. fostering of cross-border clusters, mapping of territorial potentials, harmonising metropolitan development plans) have failed to be directly implemented. Even though a research work to detect and analyse the ongoing socio-economic development processes in the two countries shall be feasible by means of grants and dedicated projects (e.g. under the CBSS), a firm governmental support for any developed policy recommendations sounds difficult to achieve for VASAB alone.

3. Entering the new sectors world

The progress assessment of the LTP implementation (Chapter 4) proves a modest impact of VASAB in certain sectoral areas (e.g. ICT, energy, air transport or foreign investment policy). They appeared in the LTP document through a conviction that they build an important component of territorial capital and their spatial distribution brings significant effects for the sustainable regional growth. Although the proposed actions to a large extent originate from the outcomes of territorial cooperation projects followed by the Committee members and the Secretariat, the experience of VASAB in addressing such sectoral issues was at that time rather low.

The limited organisational capacity of VASAB and the lack of established contacts with stakeholders in those sectors led to a situation that the dialogue was either not initiated at all or just commenced in effect of the revised political priorities (cf. the energy issues). Therefore, a principal question arises how to lead discussion on territorial dimension of such sectoral development processes where the VASAB footprint has been very minor to date.

As some territorial projects used to address such sectoral issues from the perspective of sustainable regional growth, analysing and processing of their outcomes could be a good starting point for VASAB.

Chapter 6: The way forward. Recommendations for the VASAB Committee

The chapter recommends the way forward for the VASAB Committee in the implementation of the LTP. It draws conclusions from the previous chapters and from the perception of the VASAB role reflected by the inquired external stakeholders and the Committee members.

There is a general opinion (shared by external stakeholders attending the meeting on the VASAB LTP implementation, held in Helsinki on 12 December 2013), that VASAB needs to be more visible and pro-active in pursuing the territorial development issues in the BSR. Manifold expectations placed upon VASAB in the recognition of its position as a reputable macroregional network, include the following areas:

- Provide assistance and promote territorial planning at the landscape level and landscape governance approaches at the national and international levels;
- Offer a meeting platform for cooperation between the projects and institutions from the BSR-EU member states, the North-West Russia and Norway⁷;
- Deliver spatial planning expertise in specific network initiatives (e.g. on city networks, innovation policies or last mile transport investments in e.g. transnational transport corridors);
- Take care of the knowledge accumulated by the territorial cooperation projects in the relevant fields;
- Help develop vision and strategies for the BSR⁸ neighbourhood areas;
- Provide a meeting place for spatial planners in maritime spatial planners;
- Come up with a vision for development of rural areas and provide expertise on sustainable development to other macroregions (e.g. Mediterranean);
- Monitor trends in territorial development (Is the convergence happening? What is the status of the territorial divides? Which geographical areas in the BSR scale perform poor and require special policy attention?).

Improving the LTP performance

The screening of progress in the respective LTP actions leads to the following generalised groups of activities suggested for improving the effectiveness of the LTP implementation:

1. Better communicate the LTP to external stakeholders

- Be more efficient in using the forums of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (as the co-leader of HA Spatial Planning) to promote the territorial cohesion perspective of the BSR by 2030, functional city-region development and the role of other priority areas in tackling the territorial disparities;
- Organise a seminar within any of the upcoming events under the auspices of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region to present the perspective of the members of VASAB⁹ - external EU¹⁰ neighbours (Russia, Norway¹¹, Belarus) in achieving the territorial cohesion perspective of the BSR by 2030 as the overall goal of the HA Spatial Planning;

⁷ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

⁸ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

⁹ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

¹⁰ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

¹¹ Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

- Contact secretariats and/or executive bodies of the respective pan-Baltic organisations to initiate/strengthen dialogue on incorporation of the LTP aspects in their strategic work and lessons learned from the carried out projects and initiatives, whenever the given action is assessed as feasible for implementation (ACTIONS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18);
- Establish dialogue with the relevant PACs and HALs in the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy to discuss possible input from VASAB (ACTIONS: 3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15);
- Initiate discussion with the Secretariat of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) for a possible leadership and support in the relevant actions (ACTIONS: 3, 11, 12, 15);
- Release brochures documenting success stories in the VASAB competence domains (ACTIONS: 5).

2. Track the policy and market processes of relevance to the LTP

- Prepare an information material for decision-makers to present territorial development implications of the high level policies (ACTIONS: 11);
- Establish a meeting place for relevant ongoing territorial cooperation and research projects to discuss their findings and contribution to the LTP (ACTIONS: 5, 10, 11, 14, 21, 22);
- Consider further thematic studies in some relevant fields (ACTIONS: 12, 16, 17, 18).

3. Stimulate new projects based on the gathered evidence

- Review outcomes of completed cooperation projects in the areas that have a clear potential for further joint activities (ACTIONS: 1, 2, 7, 12, 15, 19);
- Analyse measures/investment projects included in the 'Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020' as a departure point for any joint work with the Russian partners (ACTIONS: 3, 6, 7);
- Initiate/encourage new projects under the auspices of the CBSS and/or Northern Dimension and in cooperation with other relevant pan-Baltic organisations (ACTIONS: 3, 6, 7, 8, 20, 21) as possible flagship or strategic projects under the EUSBSR HA Spatial Planning.

The way forward

Pursuing the all abovementioned activities requires a discussion with the VASAB Committee and the Secretariat on the optimum operational model that would allow for execution of the LTP-related tasks at a limited organisational capacity.

The proposed approach departs from generalising the activities in the three groups specified above to three main directions: **IMPLEMENT – COMMUNICATE – MONITOR**.

Evidently, the personal and budget resources are insufficient to deploy them on equal basis. Therefore, for each of the directions a different set of instruments is recommended.

IMPLEMENT

This direction relates to the actions 20, 21, 22 that have been assessed the highest in terms of maturity, have received a firm backup and support from other stakeholders, are essential for implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (HA Spatial Planning), and which developed clear targets and a road map to achieve them. Leading (or more properly – co-leading) of these actions through the Joint MSP Working Group shall see a priority allocation of funds and staff attention.

A number of activities are recommended for take-up by VASAB and HELCOM, following also expectations by external stakeholders:

- Providing guidance on a coherent ecosystem approach to resolving sea use conflicts, drawing from the Baltic Sea maritime spatial planning principles, adopted by the executive bodies of VASAB and HELCOM in December 2010;
- Organising and animating a network of experts and practitioners in maritime spatial planning,
- Arranging BSR-wide events on maritime spatial planning to ensure effective trans-boundary cooperation between Member States, and between national authorities and stakeholders of the relevant sector policies in fulfilling the requirements of the Directive and the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation to the year 2020;
- Issuing regular state-of-the regions reports on the implementation progress of maritime spatial plans in the BSR (resembling State of the Region reports by the Baltic Development Forum);
- Facilitating the mapping processes and enabling access to data collection on the activities leading to the development of maritime spatial plans.

COMMUNICATE

This direction has a more horizontal character and addresses a postulate for a better visibility of the LTP document, the strategic process behind, and of the responsibility for its execution to be shared by other stakeholders. It entails a more active role of the VASAB members, alongside the Secretariat, in approaching the specific organisations, discussing any potential synergies and suggesting means to incorporate the territorial dimension in the strategic work. There is a potential to see such synergy sessions attended by invited representatives of the relevant bodies to be more systematically featured in the agenda of the VASAB Committee meetings. This would open up the Committee proceedings to external actors and thereby break the perception of being 'exclusive'.

Further, the 'communicate' direction entails measures to promote success stories and results of the spatial planners' collaboration in a form of written publications (e.g. on good practise in shaping sustainable urban-rural relations).

A new field of possible VASAB engagement, as postulated in the stakeholders meeting on the LTP document (Helsinki, 12 December) is the territorial planning at the landscape level (as the lowest reference level in spatial planning). Here, VASAB could assist the projects, which investigate the subject and put forward solutions on local landscape governance, to promote policy recommendations at the national and international forums

MONITOR

This direction results directly from the Vilnius Declaration of the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development of the Baltic Sea countries who instructed VASAB to monitor the territorial development of the BSR and to report periodically to the national governments, the European Commission and relevant stakeholders. The monitoring should take into account a need of collecting the existing evidence on territorial development processes, impacts of policies with a territorial dimension and outcomes of cooperation initiatives (e.g. territorial cooperation projects of relevance for the LTP). Apart from various evidence gathering activities as exemplified by some thematic studies to deepen the understanding of interrelations between the given sector and territorial development (e.g. on energy issues or TEN-T core network corridors), which might be outsourced from the VASAB budget or funded through the grants (cf. the CBSS), the direction implies that the VASAB Committee creates a meeting place for relevant ongoing territorial cooperation and research projects to discuss their findings and contribution to the LTP. Thereby, a more balanced outlook of situation geared by top-down (European policies) and bottom-up

(projects) approaches may be attained. In effect, VASAB may become a catalyst of new initiatives to be supported, promoted and progress-tracked in the next turn.

As stated in the LTP document, a progress towards achieving the territorial cohesion perspective of the Baltic Sea Region in the year 2030 should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. This is a clear role of VASAB to act as an observatory of trends and processes related to the territorial cohesion in the Region and to provide evidence either proving a right development of the taken initiatives and actions or flagging necessary changes. One important aspect of the observatory role to be potentially assumed by VASAB is a possibility to analyse correlations between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the 'Strategy of social and economic development of the North-West Federal District of Russia until 2020' in the specific thematic fields and propose solutions (together with HA Neighbours) how to better synchronise the two coordination instruments.

Last but not least, there is a profound belief among the external stakeholders to the LTP that VASAB assumes a leading role in the monitoring and evaluation of territorial development processes in the Baltic Sea Region. As illustrated in the diagram below (Fig. 3), almost half of the surveyed respondents attributed the highest grade (one) to this function. Interestingly, none of the VASAB CSPD members that answered the surveys ranks the monitoring role that high (see Fig. 4 further below).

The question arises if VASAB may become a prime user of the monitoring system being developed in the ESPON BSR-TeMo project, in order to apply it to the tracking of changes in the territorial development in the BSR towards the territorial cohesion perspective? As affirmed by the BSR-TeMo expert team in the stakeholder meeting on the LTP (Helsinki, 12 December 2013), the project delivers a set of 10 indicators capable of measuring the state of territorial cohesion. The work is acknowledged by the ESPON Coordination Unit who is likely to maintain the system and replicate it to other European macroregions. If so, the potential role of VASAB would be to commission an expertise work to update and process the statistical data featured in the monitoring system, including the expertise of in solving the task of data collection and findings of relevant indicators in Russian Statistics¹², and formulate policy observations to the decision-makers in a form of periodical reports (e.g. prior to respective ministerial conference in spatial planning and development). Particular attention could then be paid to the issues of convergence, changes in the territorial divides or the geographical areas, which in the BSR scale perform poor and require special policy attention.

On request, the monitoring system may be further adjusted to – e.g. help follow the air connectivity situation (e.g. between the metropolises and in the northernmost BSR areas).

As part of the monitoring responsibilities, VASAB should also check the progress in implementing the LTP actions and – upon the need – decide on the new ones, responding to the new or magnified challenges. Already at this stage, some merging of the actions is recommended as their execution may be pursued in the same manner (e.g. action 3 and 6; 8 and 7).

¹² Amended by VASAB CSPD/BSR

Fig. 3: Perception of the future role of the VASAB Committee in implementing the LTP (1 – highest; 6 – lowest). Survey responses by the external stakeholders

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Promoting the LTP at external forums, networking activities and thematic events	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	38.46% 5	7.69% 1	13
Organising a meeting ground for stakeholders of relevance for the specific LTP actions	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	0% 0	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	13
Stimulating territorial cooperation projects to implement the LTP actions	0% 0	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	13
Providing a forum for the stakeholders involved in the specific LTP actions to discuss an implementation progress	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	15.38% 2	7.69% 1	13
Leading territorial cooperation projects to implement the LTP actions	0% 0	7.69% 1	15.38% 2	23.08% 3	15.38% 2	38.46% 5	13
Conducting the monitoring and evaluation of territorial development processes in the Baltic Sea Region	46.15% 6	7.69% 1	7.69% 1	23.08% 3	0% 0	15.38% 2	13

Fig. 4: Perception of the future role of the VASAB Committee in implementing the LTP (1 – highest; 6 – lowest). Survey responses by the VASAB CSPD members

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Promoting the LTP at external forums, networking activities and thematic events	50% 3	0% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0% 0	6
Organising a meeting ground for stakeholders of relevance for the specific LTP actions	50% 3	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	6
Stimulating territorial cooperation projects to implement the LTP actions	0% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	50% 3	0% 0	0% 0	6
Providing a forum for the stakeholders involved in the specific LTP actions to discuss an implementation progress	0% 0	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0% 0	6
Leading territorial cooperation projects to implement the LTP actions	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	33.33% 2	66.67% 4	6
Conducting the monitoring and evaluation of territorial development processes in the Baltic Sea Region	0% 0	16.67% 1	16.67% 1	0% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	6

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