

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT	
1.1. Project title	Baltic Sea Tourism Center - Sustainable development structures for ACTIVE TOURISM
1.2. Abbreviated project name (acronym)	Baltic Sea Tourism Center
1.3. Priority axis	2 - Exploiting the environmental and cultural potential of the South Baltic area for the blue and green growth
1.4. Specific objective	2.1 - Increased development of the South Baltic area's natural and cultural heritage assets into sustainable tourist destinations
2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT	
<p><b>2.1. Short project summary - background, rationale, aims, content and results (max. 2000 characters).</b> Your summary should clearly state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the main objective of the project and the expected change your project will make to the current situation (must link to the Programme results and outputs);</li> <li>- the main output(s) you will produce and who will benefit from them;</li> <li>- what is new/original about your approach</li> </ul> <p>Tourism, especially sustainable, maritime and international, is identified as an important factor for blue and green growth in the EU, however facing common challenges like seasonality. Moreover, the EUSBSR Action Plan states that tourism in the region is non-cooperative, especially due to "an asymmetric readiness to cooperate at transnational level". Strategic and political structures have been created with the EUSBSR PA Tourism and the Steering-Committee of national tourism ministries. However, a gap of operational services has to be closed ensuring the involvement of tourism organisations and businesses to realise the green and blue growth potential and to make the destination globally competitive. The aim of the project is the establishment of an improved cross-border tourism communication and cooperation facilitated by a permanent service unit – the Baltic Sea Tourism Center. It associates key tourism stakeholders and promotes sustainable and international tourism in and beyond the SBR as an intermediate on operational level. In the project a committed and experienced group of partners will (1) set-up operational structures for sustainable tourism communication and cooperation at transnational level (BSTC service unit); (2) investigate, develop and implement sustainable ACTIVE TOURISM products in the green and blue tourism market around cultural and natural heritage assets to extend the tourist season and (3) launch a smart international destination campaign in selected source markets to increase the number of international visitors to the SBR. The selected pilot services (ACTIVE TOURISM products and destination campaign) shall produce best-practices to demonstrate the capabilities of the BSTC service unit for future partners/members. As a flagship project, the BSTC directly implements the EUSBSR action plan and will have a considerable impact on sustainable and international tourism development in the region.</p>	
2.2. Project objective, main outputs and results	
Programme specific objective	Project objective (max. 250 characters)
2.1 - Increased development of the South Baltic area's natural and cultural heritage assets into sustainable tourist destinations	Improved durable tourism cooperation in the SBR catalyses and qualifies the continuous development of sustainable tourism around cultural and natural heritage assets - exploiting untapped potential of ACTIVE TOURISM to foster green and blue growth.
Programme expected result	Project results (max. 250 characters)
Increased popularity of natural and cultural heritage areas/sites as sustainable tourism destinations	Increased popularity, transparency and connection of natural and cultural heritage areas in the SBR by smart international destination marketing based on sustainable ACTIVE TOURISM products facilitated by the BSTC service unit



### 2.3. Description of initial situation / challenge or opportunity - why is the project necessary? (max. 2000 characters)

The EUSBSR Action Plan states that tourism in the region is non-cooperative, especially due to "an asymmetric readiness to cooperate at transnational level". Strategic and political structures have been created with the EUSBSR PA Tourism and the Steering-Committee of national tourism ministries. On operational level appeared a gap between the tourist industry and the strategic/political orientation and long term perspective for the region. A coordinative body like the BSTC service unit is required to better govern the variety of fragmented tourism activities and raise mutual interests (evaluation 2015).

Seasonal fluctuations affect coastal areas to a great extent according to the European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism. It is therefore necessary to develop themes and products that have positive effects on extending the season. According to the Reiseanalyse FUR 2016 travellers get more active during their holidays. Active tourism becomes a philosophy that combines adventure, ecotourism and cultural aspects of a tour; reflecting the trend of a healthy, sportive lifestyle combining recreation and education. Particularly in the SBR the conditions for active tourism to discover natural and cultural heritage assets in off season are promising as the region cannot be considered as an exclusive sun and sea destination but disposes unique sights and attractions. Attract more international visitors to the regions is one of the major objectives for all participating regions. E.g. in Germany (3%), Poland (20%) and Lithuania (10%), the share of international tourists in rural areas is considerably low compared to e.g. Norway with 50% (dwif, 2014). SMEs in the SBR need technical support to internationalise their services and they need assistance to promote tailored products and services on the global tourism market. The limited international awareness of the SBR destination and its sustainable tourism offer has enormous untapped potential.

### 2.4. Summary of the work plan - how the activities will lead to achievement of the projects objectives and results (max. 3000 characters)

To attract international visitors to the region and its natural and cultural assets in an extended season, a strong interaction between tourism stakeholders is required - set up and maintained by an operational service unit (WP3). To achieve a maximum outreach and transferability, the project develops a universal product development methodology around sustainable ACTIVE TOURISM with natural and cultural heritage assets at its heart (WP4). Major potential is seen in attracting tourists from joint external source markets, to benefit from united resources while at the same time to prevent mutual drain of tourist potential from national markets between partner regions. An analysis in the project "Enjoy South Baltic!" revealed UK and Austria (A) as major joint source markets of the partner regions, that will be addressed by a joint smart destination campaign (WP5). The establishment of the BSTC service unit (WP3) is the umbrella for the project. In the beginning, WP3 creates the regional and international contacts needed to implement WP4 / WP5. WP3 provides market insights as input to the product development (WP4) and the promotion (WP5). In the end, WP3 incorporates the findings of WP4 and WP5 into the BSTC service profile thus ensuring the long-term use of the outcomes and sets up a durable structure for continued cooperation. The activities of WP4 and 5 serve as examples to demonstrate the capability of the BSTC service unit to future BSTC members. To support green or blue growth sectors in tourism, WP4 provides marketable products from all participating countries to WP5, meeting the same quality requirements for joint marketing. The products follow rules for sustainability, with a UNWTO workshop on sustainability as a kick-off to the product development process. The partners work with regional assets (chosen according to defined standards e.g. heritage, green tourism, maritime tourism - ATT5) and surrounding tourism service providers in developing products with an off-season selling proposition in the Active Tourism segment, attractive in international source markets. Following the planning cycles of TOs, the partners will start the campaign for B2B and B2C in UK and A in the middle of year 2, with activities both in the external markets, but also with study training trips at the supported sites and product online marketing elements striving to attract more visitors to the assets. All partners participate in all work packages, due to expertise and no cost sharing, partners take responsibility and budget for specific activities on behalf of the total project, however with staff support of the other partners. WP1, WP3 are coordinated by LP, WP2 by PP5, WP4 by PP3, WP5 by PP2 (focus UK), supported by the LP (focus A) on behalf of the project. PP4 supports across all WPs in analytic measurement to provide market data and evaluate quality. National tourist boards and PA Tourism are engaged as APs to become an integral part of the project process.

## 2.5. Added value of the cross-border approach (max. 2000 characters)

The very heart of the project is cross-border cooperation to set up the Baltic Sea Tourism Center. It targets a permanent structure to ensure such transnational cooperation beyond projects and funding programmes and brings the EUSBSR to life. The set-up of the BSTC will reflect a cross border approach, involving tourism organisations from various countries, jointly working on solving common challenges at transnational level. In this first step, the project concentrates on joint development of structures, strategy and pilot services in a limited geographical scope with a committed, trusted and experienced group of partners in the South Baltic Region. The partners will jointly work on common solutions. In the planned activities various partners participate from different SBR countries, to gain a maximum of exchange of knowledge and best practices. The center will provide services and act as an information hub for the SBR, and in a later roll-out for the entire Baltic Sea Region. Distinguishing features of the project are the continuous exchange with organisations and businesses, in and outside the SBR. All activities will be shared either through direct cooperation and communication. The concept for ACTIVE TOURISM product development leads to a common understanding of standards in the SBR and will have positive effects on the existing difference in quality of tourism products and services. The methodology will be developed jointly involving all partners, led by PP3. For SMEs, international exchange will be facilitated by experts reporting on best-practices from the SBR and engaging the SMEs in a cross-border dialogue on challenges in green and blue growth sectors like seasonality and internationalisation. Tour operators will be involved to detect international business opportunities. The destination campaign provides an umbrella for different regions, products and services and creates a joint spirit to create a more effective impact in international source markets.

## 2.6. Durability of project results and transferability of outputs (max. 2000 characters)

All outputs and results of the project shall emerge into the service set up of the Baltic Sea Tourism Center. The BSTC shall be an international network borne by tourism organisations in the region. The project develops a long-term business model for running the Baltic Sea Tourism Center. Involving both local and national organisations, authorities, institutions and SMEs in the tourism sector of the SBR and beyond during the project, ensures the setup of a value-adding service profile for successful member acquisition. Some organisations are directly integrated as PPs and APs, additional ones will be involved by activities, like workshops and personal contacts, facilitated by the PAC Tourism (AP1). To convince future members or financial supporters of the BSTC, pilot services will be conducted during the project to gain best practice examples and success stories demonstrating the capabilities of the BSTC (WP4,5). By engaging relevant organisations from BSR as APs and regional and national organisations as supporters, the project ensures a financial and structural concept for the BSTC to be maintained and enlarged after the project. The exact structures and financial mechanisms of the BSTC Service Unit are subject of development, mainly as part of WP3 in the project. The project will lay the ground for an operational service unit in the SBR for further expansion to the entire Baltic Sea Region. An additional prerequisite to make the BSTC sustainable is to anchor it right from the beginning to an international network. The project consortium addressed the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) already in the development stage. The UNWTO, the United Nations agency to promoting responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, supports the project and will promote this initiative with all its means (ATT 1). To gain on synergies in the Baltic Sea region, the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) and the CBSS expressed their support for the BSTC (ATT 2 and 4).

## 2.7. Cross-border criteria for the project

### Joint development - in what way an initial project idea was shaped into a project proposal (max. 500 characters)

The project proposal was developed in a joint approach by the partners during the seed money project BSTC in the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility. Several meetings to prepare the proposal have taken place in locations in Denmark, Germany and Poland. The project idea was also presented to cross-border audiences e.g. during the Steering Committee Meeting of PA Tourism in October 2015 at the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum 2015 and at the EUSBSR seminar in December 2015.

### Joint implementation - in what way active collaboration between the different participating institutions is ensured (max. 500 characters)

The project will be implemented by all partners contributing to the activities in a joint effort. Corresponding to expertise the partners take on different responsibilities in the project e.g. as coordinating partners. Care was taken to involve all partners in the different work packages respectively. Continuous project communication will provide an equal level of information between all partners and supporting organisations.

### Joint staffing - in what way responsibilities are divided among project partners (max. 500 characters)

All partners will involve their staff into project activities, thus anchoring the project into their organisation. The project strongly supports an active exchange of the participating organisations and their staff through strategic meetings and capacity building activities.

### Joint financing - in what way partners are expected to contribute financially to the project budget (max. 500 characters)

All partners contribute with own contribution to the project and are responsible for their respective budget. The budget varies due to various responsibilities of the partners and differing labour costs by country. The LP will next to responsibility for overall project coordination and administration also take responsibility for WP3, the development of the BSTC, thus resulting in a proportionally higher budget than other PPs.

2.8. List of partners			
Number	Partner's name in English	Country	NUTS 3 Region
1 lead partner	<b>Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board</b>	Germany	Kreisfreie Stadt Rostock DE803
2	<b>Pomorskie Tourist Board</b>	Poland	Gdański PL634
3	<b>Danish Tourism Innovation - Visit East Denmark</b>	Denmark	Vest-og Sydsj DK022
4	<b>Stralsund University of Applied Sciences School of Business Studies - Baltic Management Studies</b>	Germany	Landkreis Vorpommern-Rügen DE80L
5	<b>Association "Klaipėda region"</b>	Lithuania	Klaipėdos apskritis LT003
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2.9. List of associated partners		
Number	AP's name in English	Country
1	<b>Ministry of Economics, Construction and Tourism Mecklenburg-Vorpommern</b>	Germany
2	<b>VisitDenmark</b>	Denmark
3	<b>Lithuanian State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy</b>	Lithuania
4	<b>Polish Tourist Organization</b>	Poland
5	<b>German National Tourist Board</b>	Germany
6	<b>Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic</b>	Poland
7		
8	<b>Self-Government of the Pomorskie Voivodeship</b>	Poland
9	<b>Visit Finland</b>	other
10	<b>Region Blekinge</b>	Sweden

2.10. Justification on partner's involvement (to be filled in should the partnership exceed 10 partners)	
<p>It is strongly recommended that partnerships are not too big (7- 8 project partners). It is the relevance of the partnership and not its size that is being assessed during the evaluation of project ideas. Please provide justification should the partnership exceed 10 partners.</p>	n/a

2.11. Project timetable of project implementation		
Planned date of project start	YYYY-MM-DD	2017.01.01
Planned date of project completion	YYYY-MM-DD	2019.12.31
Project duration (in months)		36



2.12. Project budget				
Total budget by partner				
	ERDF co-financing	Own contribution	Total budget per partner	
			EUR	%
Lead partner	515.656,75	90.998,25	606.655,00	40%
Project partner 2	128.350,00	22.650,00	151.000,00	10%
Project partner 3	238.173,75	79.391,25	317.565,00	21%
Project partner 4	190.153,50	33.556,50	223.710,00	15%
Project partner 5	173.404,68	30.600,82	204.005,50	14%
Project partner 6	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 7	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 8	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 9	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 10	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 11	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 12	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 13	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 14	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
Project partner 15	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.245.738,68</b>	<b>257.196,82</b>	<b>1.502.935,50</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2.13. Location of activities outside eligible area

Outside eligible area	yes
<p>What activities will take place outside Programme eligible area and where will they be located? Please justify their relevance to project objectives (max. 1000 characters)</p>	<p>Activities outside programme area: implement WP5 by promoting products and the SBR destination in the defined source markets UK and A (stakeholders from Switzerland are invited, no events directly in Switzerland) (part of A5.3, A5.4, A5.5 (costs for location, agency, part of programme, media cooperation – in budget spent outside eligible area); travel costs of partners (not in budget figure spent outside eligible area); participate in the BSTF in 2017 - 2019 (BSR, location to be defined), to promote the idea of the BSTC and meet potential beneficiaries of the BSTC e.g. national offices in the partner countries or institutions in other Baltic Sea states (A3.2, 3.6); participate/present at meetings/conferences in the EU for dissemination purpose (concrete EU destinations to be determined according to opportunities that can be gained during the project) (A2.5); exchange with projects of further Interreg Programmes e.g. Central Baltic Programme may require travel outside the SBR (A4.4).</p>

### 2.14. Project eligible budget spent outside the eligible area

Total eligible budget	1.502.935,50
out of which to be spent outside the Programme eligible area	62.000,00

### 2.15. Seed money

Has this application received seed money from the South Baltic Programme or another seed money instrument?	yes
If yes, please provide the name(s) of the project(s), and Programme if other than South Baltic (max. 500 characters).	Seed Money Project - S67 BSTC   Baltic Sea Tourism Center, EUSBSR Seed Money Facility

### 3. COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES

#### 3.1. Strategic documents

##### 3.1.1. National/ regional/ other strategies (max. 2000 characters)

By addressing coastal and sustainable tourism the project supports the potential already revealed in the "2012 Blue Growth - opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth" communication of the EU (COM(2012) 494 final p.9/10), stating „that most growth-generating initiatives will inevitably be on a local or regional scale“ and demanding „to improve the tourism offer for low-season tourism“. Based on that the 2014 - Sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region (SWD(2014) 167 final) demand that „efforts to strengthen the associated advantages of closer cooperation should be increased, in particular with regard to promoting the region as a whole and to addressing seasonality issues.“ (p. 8) This is supported by the project, as well as the recommendation to member states, to “developing ... a platform of authorities and tourism operators.“ (p. 11/12) Also on regional political level, the 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference has decided to establish a Working Group on Sustainable Tourism – with focus e.g. maritime and coastal tourism as well as ecological aspects, confirming a need for intensified cooperation in this area. (point 56. Of the documentation 24th Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference 30th August - 1st September 2015 in Rostock, Germany – BSPC in a Nutshell). The European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism (COM(2014) 86 final) has identified four pillars to unlock the potential of coastal tourism: Stimulate performance and competitiveness, Promoting skills and innovation, Strengthening sustainability and Maximize the effect of available EU funding. The project will address these pillars and support the EU key actions of smart cooperation by territorial clustering and the promotion of sustainable and international tourism. In the strategy (p.4) the Commission states to 4. Support the development of trans-national and interregional partnerships, networks, clusters and smart specialisation strategies.

3.1.2. Is the project connected with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its Action Plan?

yes

3.1.2.1. To which policy area/ horizontal action of the EUSBSR is the project connected?

PA - Tourism – Reinforcing cohesiveness of the macro-region through tourism

3.1.2.2. Does the project contribute to a flagship(s)?

yes

3.1.2.3. How the project's objectives, activities and outputs contribute to the EUSBSR in the specific policy area / horizontal action (max. 1000 characters)

The project is an ongoing flagship project (Action Plan, SWD(2015) 177 final). As an AP, the PAC declares to actively participate in and contribute to the implementation of the project. Given the strategic importance of the project considering its networking efforts, umbrella structure and focus on ACTIVE TOURISM development on international level to extend the season, the successful establishment of the BSTC and the development and promotion of products and services constitutes a decisive pillar of sustainable tourism cooperation in the SBR and beyond. Being an ongoing flagship the project will be a substantial part of the strategic implementation and communication activities of the PAC. More specifically, the coordinator has offered advice and help to disseminate the project's results and achievements. Monitoring will be provided as regards the contribution to the EUSBSR Action Plan in PA tourism, in particular action 1 "facilitate networking and clustering of stakeholders".

3.2. Sustainable development			
The project has an impact on sustainable development	positive	Description (max. 500 characters)	In 2017, the year of sustainable tourism, UNWTO will kick-off the projects' product development creating a joint knowledge of sustainability in tourism development. The set-up of the BSTC will include a common understanding of sustainable tourism, incorporated in the long-term tourism cooperation structure. Themes like ACTIVE TOURISM have a clear focus on seasonality issues. Extending the season will have significant impact on the economic, ecological and social value added of the SBR.
3.3. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination			
The project has an impact on equal opportunities and non-discrimination	neutral	Description (max. 500 characters)	The project respects equal opportunities and non-discrimination in its project efforts.
3.4. Equality between men and women			
The project has an impact on equality between men and women	neutral	Description (max. 500 characters)	The project respects the equality between men and women. Partner representatives participating in all activities is a blend of men and women.
3.5. State aid			
Depending on their nature some of the project activities may fall under the state aid rules. Activity is regarded as state aid relevant if all the below criteria are met. Please consider individual project activities and confirm if any of them meet the following criteria:			
1. Does any of the project activities result in a <b>product/ service</b> being offered to the market?			yes
If yes, please list the activity(ies) and the work package(s) they belong to:		WP4: product development: 12 touristic products are to be developed around ACTIVE TOURISM, however, offered on the market by non-partners (assets, SMEs)	
2. Does any of the project activities results in an <b>economic advantage to the partner/project</b> (a benefit) which would not have been obtained without support from the Programme?			no
If yes, please list the activity(ies) and the work package(s) they belong to:		n/a	
3. Does any of the project activities result in <b>distortion effect</b> on competition and trade within the EU?			no
If yes, please list the activity(ies) and the work package(s) they belong to:		n/a	

#### 4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (max. 3000 characters)

The term ACTIVE TOURISM is understood in the project as:

(1) a philosophy that combines adventure, ecotourism and cultural aspects of a tour; reflecting the trend of a healthy, sportive lifestyle by combining recreation and education. Hence, the travel experience does not only have a physical character but also a clear intellectual dimension. Learning, experiencing and discovering are major attitudes next to the physical exercise. Therewith, ACTIVE TOURISM complements ecotourism by discovering apart from natural assets also the diverse cultural creativity in the SBR.

(2) an excellent connecting TOURISM theme that links regions of the SBR by the same subject. In addition, it calls authorities, organisations, institutions, entrepreneurs and partners to ACTIVELY participate in sustainable cross-border tourism cooperation. ///

Application abbreviations: BSTC = Baltic Sea Tourism Center, BSTF = Baltic Sea Tourism Forum, DMO = Destination Marketing Organisation, TO = Tour Operator, United Kingdom = UK, Austria = A, B2B = Business to Business (e.g. Tour operators), B2C = Business to Consumer (potential visitors), ATT = Attachment, WP = Workpackage, A1.1 = Activity, PP = Project Partner, AP = Associated Partner, PA = Policy Area, PAC = Policy Area Coordinator, SBR = South Baltic Region, BSR = Baltic Sea Region, EUSBSR = EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, SME = Small and Medium sized enterprise / Source market = where tourists originate from; Target market = where tourists travel to ///

Additional budget explanations: Next to WP1 and WP2, both the development of the BSTC (WP3) and the product development process (WP4) require a substantial amount of staff commitment due to extensive cooperation with external organisations and businesses to ensure qualitative results. Specifically in WP5, external expertise is required to realise the smart destination campaign in source markets. In regard to budget split between partners, the LP will dedicate 2 Full Time Equivalent posts to the project to handle major responsibilities for WP1, WP3 and part of WP5 and WP2 in addition to responsibilities for activities requiring external expertise. Due to its proportional size of organisation it has capacity and experience to take on these responsibilities on behalf of all partners.

#### 4.1. Relation to other international and/or national/regional projects (ongoing or completed) dealing with the topic in the South Baltic region (max. 1000 characters)

Seed money project – S 67 Baltic Sea Tourism Center – cooperation with e.g. PAC to prepare the present project application. Research results will be used to set up the BSTC service unit (profile, partnership, etc.).

Project Enjoy South Baltic! – research results will be used regarding internationalisation and source markets; the web page balticsea.travel will be renewed and provides attractions that can become part of the product development process.

Projects and Initiatives – The BSTC project will provide a platform for further organisations and projects to exchange best-practices and promote international products/services developed, like planned in e.g. CATCH, Hardwoods.

National projects – will respectively serve as inspiration to govern international marketing and the product development process (like e.g. 'Landart' - goal of the project was to support and further develop rural networks in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)

Number of pages of other attachments / documents	5
Title of the 1st document	ATT1_LoS_UNWTO
Title of the 2nd document	ATT2_LoS_UBC
Title of the 3rd document	ATT3_LoS_PL_Ministry
Title of the 4th document	ATT4_LoS_CBSS
Title of the 5th document	ATT5_Green_and_blue_assets