



Guidelines for setting up a steering committee/coordination group in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

'A steering committee/coordination group should be set-up and chaired by the policy area coordinator(s)/horizontal action coordinator(s). A group should be composed of representatives of all Member States and other Baltic Sea region states, when relevant, as well as experts in the area concerned. It's up to members of group to decide on internal rules of the steering committee/coordination group. The group should meet at least twice a year and support policy area coordinator(s)/horizontal action coordinator(s) in implementation of the tasks referred'.

Action Plan of the EUSBSR, SWD (2015) 177 final, 10 September 2015, p. 13-14

1. Steering committee/coordination group: key principles

- should be for each policy area (PA)/horizontal action (HA);
- should be set-up and chaired by the policy area coordinator(s)(PAC(s)/horizontal action coordinator(s)HAC(s);
- only one steering committee/coordination group should be set-up for each PA/HA; upon need a steering committee/coordination group may establish and terminate sub working structures, such as task forces or working groups to deal with a specific task;
- where relevant, existing frameworks/platforms should be used to serve as a steering committee/coordination group in order to avoid duplication or overlapping with activities and responsibilities of already existing bodies; however, they should adapt/adjust their functioning/focus, etc. if required by the EUSBSR needs;
- good coordination of actions between the existing frameworks/platforms and the steering committee/coordination group should be ensured.

2. Role of steering committee/coordination group

Steering committee/coordination group should support PACs and HACs in implementing their tasks defined in the Action Plan of the EUSBSR. The steering committee/coordination group should act as a facilitator in implementing the respective PA/HA, in order to reach the corresponding targets. It's up to the steering committee/coordination group to decide on its role/status: it can be an advisory board/group, or a coordinating group, steering committee, etc., depending on the model that works best to reach the targets, and on the mandate that its members have received. This mandate should be clearly defined and stated in the terms of reference.

3. Composition of steering committee/coordination group

3.1 Core composition

Steering committee/coordination group should be composed of all relevant PA/HA focal points (cf. description of their role p. 12-13 of the EUSBSR Action Plan), appointed by EU Member States participating in implementation of the EUSBSR - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden - and representatives of the relevant Directorates-General of the European Commission.

Members of steering committee/coordination group should be:

- appointed on functional basis and not on personal basis;
- representatives of national ministries/agencies operating in the field of the respective PA/HA, which implies that all members have similar level of expert knowledge which is necessary to have substantial discussion.

In case the permanent member of the steering committee/coordination group cannot participate in the meeting his/her replacement should be ensured.

3.2 Other actors in the steering committee/coordination group

Depending on agenda, topic to be discussed, when relevant, and if a specific contribution is needed, national coordinators (NCs) of the EUSBSR, representatives of other macro-regional strategies, experts, regional organisations, associations, representatives of civil society, etc. in the area concerned might be invited by PAC(s)/HAC(s) to participate in steering committee/coordination group meeting upon the decision of steering committee/coordination group.

Flagships leaders of the respective PA/HA, other PACs/HACs, interested ministries/agencies, managing authorities of EU programmes, financial institutions, etc. could be invited by PAC(s)/HAC(s) to participate in steering committee/coordination group, when relevant.

3.3 External dimension of Steering Committee

Members of steering committee/coordination group might invite non-EU Member States from the Baltic Sea region and decide on their role (ad hoc/permanent or observer/regular member) in the steering committee/coordination group upon the agreement of steering committee/coordination group. Representatives of non-EU member states should be invited when it is relevant and their participation might help to better reach the objectives of the EUSBSR.

4. Procedures and rules

Members of steering committee/coordination group shall decide on internal rules and procedures of the steering committee/coordination group or term of reference. Decisions within the steering committee/coordination group should be taken by consensus among members. However, non-EU members are not in the position to block cooperation among EU members in a given field, but may instead choose to opt out of a particular field of cooperation. Members of steering committee/coordination group might take decisions concerning respective PA/HA or provide advice to PAC(s)/HAC(s) (including policy discussions).

If there is more than one PAC/HAC for the respective PA/HA, the chairmanship of the steering committee/coordination group should be rotated between PACs/HACs or a co-chairmanship might be established.

The Chairman of steering committee/coordination group is responsible for preparing agenda, relevant documents, drafting notes of meetings and disseminating the material to members of steering committee/coordination group. The Chair is also responsible for preparing decision making if and when necessary, in accordance with the rules of procedure.

Meetings of the steering committee/coordination group should be organised regularly (at least twice a year), modern communication means might be exploited (e-meetings) etc.

Meetings of steering committee/coordination group should be held in English (as translation costs a lot of money).

5. Tasks of steering committee/coordination group

Steering committee/coordination group supports PACs/HACs in implementation of their tasks referred in the Action Plan of the EUSBSR, in particular by discussing and proposing/providing advices/taking decisions on those (according to internal rules or term of reference adopted by members of steering committee/coordination group).

The steering committee/coordination group should support and advise PACs/HACs in implementing the following:

- facilitating policy discussions in the Baltic Sea region regarding the PA/HA;
- recommending further policy changes at appropriate level to facilitate the achievement of the EUSBSR objectives;
- assisting in conveying relevant results and recommendations from the flagships to the policy level;
- serving as liaison at national level on all matters regarding the PA/HA concerned;
- facilitate implementation and follow-up the PA/HA towards targets and indicators, actions and flagships defined;
- reviewing relevance of the description of the PA/HA in the Action Plan of the EUSBSR (including targets and indicators, actions and flagships), when relevant, proposing changes to it;
- facilitating development and implementation of actions and flagships defined under the PA/HA;
- contributing to dialogue with bodies in charge of implementation of programmes/financial instruments on funding possibilities for the PA/HA and its flagships;
- assessing the applications for the EUSBSR seed money facility;
- cooperating with other relevant PACs/HACs;
- ensuring information and communication on the PA/HA concerned in the home country and to NC(s)/PAC(s)/HAC(s).