

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: have your say!

The European Commission is inviting comments on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

The EUSBSR was launched in 2009. It aims to make the Baltic Sea Region cleaner, more connected and more prosperous. The Strategy is a pilot initiative where the Macro-regional concept is tried and tested in a specific geographic area. The EUSBSR was followed by the introduction of a Strategy for the Danube Region.

Over the last couple of years, there has been continuous learning in respect of new and improved ways to ensure sustainable implementation. There are both very successful parts, and areas that can be improved.

The main lessons were outlined in the report written by the Commission in June 2011 and in the Communication of March 2012. These assessments have also been discussed in the Council during both the Polish and Danish Presidencies.

The EUSBSR [Action Plan](#) is also being reviewed, to be completed by the end of 2012. The most important elements of this review are to introduce objectives, indicators and targets, at Strategy level and for each Priority Area of the Strategy. These should measure the success of the Strategy, but also focus efforts on the most urgent challenges.

There will also be an assessment of the number and content of the Priority Areas, to decide if they could be merged or reinforced. There is a need for greater focus, and to concentrate efforts on actions that respond to the indicators and targets selected. The end result should be a more compact Action Plan, with Flagship Projects and actions in more specific, to increase impact.

In addition, there is a need to strengthen the capabilities of the key implementers of the Strategy. New and clarified descriptions of roles and expectations have been developed, as well as set out in a handbook with examples.

An overall analysis is currently being prepared by the Priority Area Coordinators and the Horizontal Action leaders. We also need input from other stakeholders for example at the Annual Forum in Copenhagen 17-19 June.

We therefore urge all stakeholders with views on the Action Plan to send us their comments, as well as to take the floor during the discussions at the Forum. There will be a plenary session and a break out session dealing specifically with the review process. Your ideas on focus, on efficiency and on added value would be particularly welcome. For written comments please send them to REGIO-EU-BALTIC-SEA-STRATEGY@ec.europa.eu. This stakeholder consultation on the new Action Plan will remain open until the end of July.