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Ex-ante Evaluation and SEA of the draft South Baltic Cross-border Co- operation Programme

Report. Draft version

Client: Ministry of Regional Development in Poland

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1 Summary of the report

Scope and objective of the report

1. This summary describes main findings of the ex ante evaluation and strategic environmental assessment of the *South Baltic Cross-Border Co-operation Programme* presented to evaluators in two versions of February 23rd and March 21st 2007. The assessment was commissioned by the Ministry of Regional Development in Poland and conducted over the period of March – June 2007 by the consortium of ECORYS Polska and the Institute for Ecology of Industrial Areas.
2. The ex-ante evaluation was aimed at optimization of the allocation of budget funds within the Programme's framework and improving the quality of programming. The legal requirements for preparation of the ex-ante evaluation is derived from the Regulation of the Council (EC) no 1083/2006 dated 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) 1260/1999.
3. The subject of the assessment is the *South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme* - a new initiative implemented within the framework of the Objective 3 of the EU cohesion policy. The Programme is aimed at strengthening the sustainable development of the South Baltic area through joint actions increasing its competitiveness and enhancing integration among people and institutions. The eligible area of the initiative comprise the following NUTS III units:
 - ❖ Poland: Szczecinski, Koszaliniski, Slupski, Gdanski, Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot sub-regions and as adjacent (according to the "20% rule"): Elblaski sub-region,
 - ❖ Sweden: Kalmar, Blekinge, Skane Counties and as adjacent: Kronoberg County,
 - ❖ Germany: sub-regions of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Greifswald, Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, Bad Doberan, Nordvorpommern, Nordwestmecklenburg, Ostvorpommern, Rügen, Uecker-Randow,
 - ❖ Denmark: Regional Municipality of Bornholm and as adjacent: Zealand sub-region,
 - ❖ Lithuania: Klaipeda County and as adjacent: Taurage and Telsiai Counties.

Key findings and recommendations

Appraisal of SWOT and analysis

4. The study shows that both the socio-economic diagnosis and the SWOT analysis were prepared in a proper way. The images of the existing common potential of the area, as well as the needs were presented correctly and constitute a basis to formulate proper and realistic priorities of the cross-border co-operation.
5. However, in order to improve the content and structure of the Programme it was recommended to amend and arrange the structure of the part related to the socio-economic diagnosis starting the analysis with the presentation of a differentiated general level of the socio-economic development of regions, including the structure of their economies, and subsequently to present the demographic situation, information on the labour market, within the scope of entrepreneurship and innovativeness (including also telecommunication and IT technologies) and the availability of transportation. Next, the issues related to the condition of the natural environment and the related problem of tourism should be discussed.
6. It was also recommended to supplement and update statistical data (if available) constituting the basis of the socio-economic analysis for the purpose of a better comparison of the discussed phenomena (particularly with respect to the part focused on innovative quality).
7. It was also pointed out that the so-called *pro-development potential* of the whole area subject to the Programme, on which potential the formulated Programme priorities will be based should be clearly highlighted.
8. It was recommended to provide concise explanation of the criteria for separating the existing division of conclusions from the SWOT analysis.
9. In evaluators' opinion the structure of the SWOT analysis should be amended, either adjusting it to the structure of the diagnostic part or arranging conclusions included in it according to the level of their importance from the point of view of the area of development and the scope to promote cross-border co-operation.
10. The recommendation was also provided to supplement the part devoted to the history of co-operation with a synthetic presentation of the achievements resulting from the cross-border co-operation in the region. It was suggested to devote separate chapter to this specific area.

Rationale and internal consistency of the Programme

11. As far as rationale and internal consistency are concerned the assessment shows that the Programme has clearly defined objectives and priorities, and there is a clear link between the objectives, the priorities, the description of the rationale and the actions. The strategy was assessed as coherent and clear.
12. The main objectives were assessed as reasonable and corresponding to the identified needs and the indicated priorities as focused on the achievement of the main objective.

13. The strategy has been based on the diagnosis as well as on the opportunities developed in the SWOT analysis which assures that areas demanding support are accurate.
14. As far as areas of intervention and possible co-operation activities are concerned it was recommended to include example activities as this provides the potential beneficiaries guidance in designing their projects.
15. It was also strongly recommended to divide Priority 2 and separate actions reinforcing people-to-people contacts.

Coherence of the Programme with regional and national policies

16. The overall assessment of the external coherence of the Programme was very positive highlighting high coherence of the proposed strategy with respective regional and national policies.
17. It was recommended to supplement the description of the coherence with the information how the partnership principle will be implemented as well as with a short table summarising the most important differences between these similar programmes (types of actions, beneficiaries, budgets, eligible areas etc.).
18. The recommendation for managing authorities of all programmes was to assure close co-operation to avoid the risk of double financing and implement respective procedures in this respect.

Quantification of the strategy & expected results and impacts

19. As far as quantification of the strategy is concerned the assessment shows that the allocation of funds for particular priorities does not seem adequate in the context of achieving the main objective. The main objective of the Programme covers sustainable development of the SBA through increasing competitiveness and enhancing integration among people and institutions. In evaluators' opinion more important for development of the eligible area is competitiveness rather than the integration among people and institutions.
20. With respect to indicators it was recommended to redefine the result indicators. The assessment shows that they do not fulfill the condition of measuring the results of the Programme, as they measure only activities.
21. It was recommended to reconsider the indicators and in particular add outcomes indicators. In evaluators' opinion it would be useful to base at least some of the indicators on characteristics different from the number of projects.

Implementation system

22. The proposed implementation system was appraised as appropriate in terms of implementation of principles of the Programme in involved individual institutions as well as in terms of implementation of procedures, monitoring and evaluation system. In particular the participation of social and economic partners was assessed as very well preserved. The overall assessment was that the implementation solutions are appropriate to deliver the objectives of the Programme.

23. As far as possible improvements are concerned it was recommended for MA to carefully monitor the process of certification of statements of expenditures by controllers at national level to avoid the possible bottlenecks relating to financial flows.
24. It was also recommended to add to the list of JTS tasks point “formal assessment of applications”.
25. The evaluators suggested to envisage promotion of the Programme also through support of different types of institutions (for example NGOs) having good relations with specific target groups.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

26. As far as strategic environmental assessment of the Programme is concerned the research shows that according to the primary objective of strengthening the sustainable development the Programme may offer solutions which would give a possibility to create such forms of nature protection, which would ensure maintaining of natural and cultural heritage but on the other side would not confine development of local communities. In assessors' opinion the problem consists in completing the existing protected areas with areas of such forms of protection, which would be coherent with sustainable development idea. In the countries participating in the Programme there are already such activities undertaken. Creation of areas incorporated in the Nature 2000 network is one of the possible ways for realization of such an approach.
27. The SEA shows that the Programme should support solving problems which are very common at the point of junction between nature protection and local communities' development tendencies.
28. It was stressed within SEA, that strengthening and stimulation of development towards innovation, use of knowledge and development of information society in the framework of the Programme implementation will indirectly affect positively the environment to a considerable extent. Thus, in the light of environmental criteria, these types of actions are particularly important and should be treated as priorities in the Programme.
29. The analysis has also shown, that implementation of activities resulting from realization of the Programme may in some cases cause negative environmental impact which may occur in short-term and local scale. However, much more significant is occurrence of positive effects of long-term and regional character. This advantageous impact is connected both with environmental resources and/or environmental capacity and with the impact on ecosystem, biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage.
30. Since the negative effects may occur, it was recommended to implement the appropriate system of qualification of projects within the Programme in order to minimize these effects to a lowest possible degree.

2 Introduction

2.1 Preface

1. This document reports on the ex-ante evaluation of the draft *South Baltic Cross-Border Co-operation Programme* (“Programme”) presented to evaluators in two versions of February 23rd 2007 and March 21st 2007.
2. The assessment has been commissioned by the Ministry of Regional Development (“Ministry”) in Poland and conducted by the ex ante evaluation and strategic environmental assessment team (ECORYS Polska and the Institute for Ecology of Industrial Areas) in the period of March 8th – June 4th.
3. The draft report describes the outcomes of the ex ante evaluation and also covers results from the strategic environmental assessment in a version submitted to the Ministry on 4th June 2007.
4. The report presents results, conclusions and recommendations to the Programme and reflects all comments of stakeholders involved into programming process. In particular the recommendations presented in the report were consulted and most of them agreed with the Contracting Authority.
5. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of evaluators and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Ministry of Regional Development in Poland (Contracting Authority).

2.2 Scope of the study

Subject of the study

6. The ex-ante evaluation covers the *South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme* referring to cross-border cooperation between Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania and Germany in the 2007-2013 SF programming period. The cooperation will be carried out within the framework of Objective 3 of the EU cohesion policy – the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). The Programme will be co-financed with the funds of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) amounting to ca. EUR 60,7 million.
7. The Programme eligible area comprise the following NUTS III units:
 - ❖ Poland: Szczecinski, Koszalinski, Slupski, Gdanski, Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot sub-regions and as adjacent (according to the “20% rule”): Elblaski sub-region,

- ❖ Sweden: Kalmar, Blekinge, Skane Counties and as adjacent: Kronoberg County,
- ❖ Germany: sub-regions of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Greifswald, Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, Bad Doberan, Nordvorpommern, Nordwestmecklenburg, Ostvorpommern, Rügen, Uecker-Randow,
- ❖ Denmark: Regional Municipality of Bornholm and as adjacent: Zealand sub-region,
- ❖ Lithuania: Klaipeda County and as adjacent: Taurage and Telsiai Counties.

8. The Programme strategy focuses on the priorities presented in the Table below.

OVERARCHING PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE		
To strengthen the sustainable development of the South Baltic area through joint actions increasing its competitiveness and enhancing integration among people and institutions		
PRIORITIES		
1. Economic Competitiveness	2. Attractiveness and Common Identity	3. Technical Assistance
OBJECTIVES		
1. To stimulate convergence processes over the national borders towards a coherent economic market in the South Baltic area	2. To make use of natural, cultural and social resources for functional integration of the South Baltic regions and for recognition of the whole area in Europe and worldwide	3. To provide high quality service of managing and implementing institutions.

Ex-ante evaluation

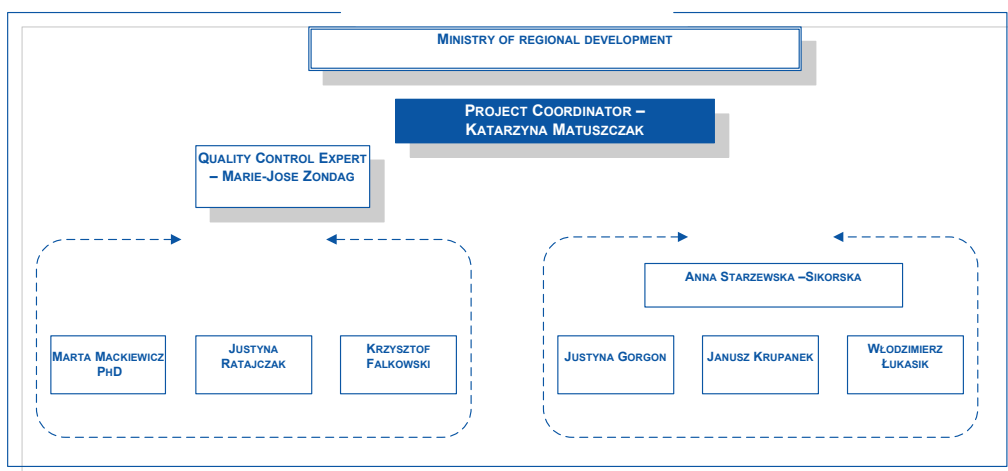
9. The obligation to perform an ex-ante evaluation is provided for by the Regulation of the Council (EC) no 1083/2006 dated 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) 1260/1999.
10. According to Article 48 of the Regulation the ex-ante evaluation is aimed at optimisation of the allocation of budget funds within the Programme's framework and improving quality of programming. In particular within evaluation process the following areas should be identified and subject to assessment:
 - ❖ Disparities, gaps and potential for development, the goals to be achieved ,
 - ❖ Results expected, the quantified targets,
 - ❖ Coherence, if necessary, of the strategy proposed for the region,
 - ❖ Community added value,
 - ❖ Extent to which the Community's priorities have been taken into account,
 - ❖ Environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC,
 - ❖ Lessons drawn from previous programming, and

- ❖ Quality of the procedures for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and financial management.
11. This ex-ante evaluation is aimed at providing answers to the following key evaluation questions which are specified for each evaluation area in Chapters no. 3 – 7:
- ❖ Does the Programme present an appropriate strategy to meet the needs and challenges that are faced by the area subject to the Programme?
 - ❖ Is the strategy properly defined, does it have transparent objectives and priorities? Is it possible to achieve the assumed purposes taking into account the planned allocation of funds for individual priorities?
 - ❖ Is the strategy proposed in the Programme coherent with the regional, national and Community policies? How does the strategy of the Programme contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy?
 - ❖ Were appropriate indicators defined for individual objects of the Programme? Is it possible to achieve such assumed indicators and will the planned effects be achieved by the end the Programme? Do the proposed indicators and their assumed value provide a base for the future system of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy implementation?
 - ❖ What will be the quantitative impact of the Programme strategy?
 - ❖ Was an appropriate system of implementation of the Programme proposed?

2.3 Organization and methodology

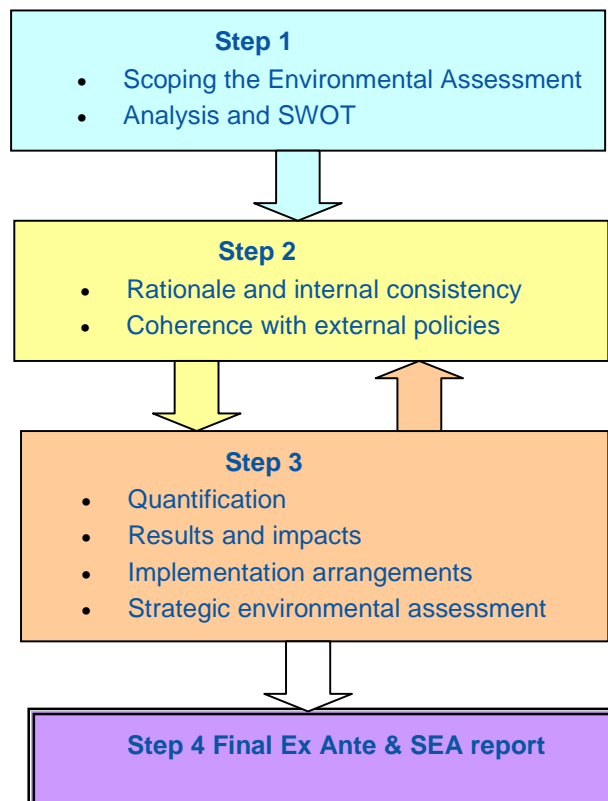
12. The ex-ante evaluation has been conducted in a period of March – June 2007 by the evaluation team comprising of experts specializing in evaluation, cross-border cooperation, regional development and competitiveness. The structure of project management is presented on the following picture.

Figure 1 Management structure of the Ex-ante and SEA project



13. The evaluation and SEA project started on March 8th 2007. The final version of the report was submitted on June 4th 2007.
14. Our approach to the evaluation of the draft Programme was based on the following elements:
 - ❖ Consent from the European Commission is an important goal;
 - ❖ Being a *critical friend* contributes to a higher quality of the Programme;
 - ❖ Independent experts enforces the Programme preparation group;
 - ❖ Ex ante evaluation can prevent bottlenecks in implementation;
 - ❖ Ex ante evaluation is an interactive and iterative process.
15. The evaluation has been carried out on the basis of the following criteria: relevance (strategy in relation to needs), successfulness (to what extent it is possible that the Programme's objectives are successful), coherence, and efficiency.
16. The following steps has been followed to provide answers to the key evaluation questions:

Figure 2 Steps of the study



17. Within *Step 1: Analysis* the following actions has been undertaken:

- ❖ Review of the ex-ante evaluation reports designed for the programming period 2007-2013 in order to identify good and bad practices in elaboration of diagnosis and SWOT analysis;
 - ❖ Benchmarking of diagnosis and SWOT analysis of all national operational programmes within scope of cross-border co-operation carried out within 2007-2013 programming period;
 - ❖ Benchmarking of diagnosis and SWOT analysis included into the programme documents of up to date cooperation INTERREG and Phare CBC referring to the eligible area;
 - ❖ Conducting interviews with MA representatives and the external expert checking the robustness of the analysis and SWOT;
 - ❖ Conducting interview with external expert specializing in international cooperation of Poland within Baltic Sea area;
 - ❖ Participating in panel of experts;
 - ❖ Assessing of the assumptions that underlie the order of the SWOT analysis elements (email survey addressed to the Programme preparation group aimed at provision of the ranking of conclusions of SWOT analysis in accordance with regions representatives' opinions);
 - ❖ Drafting of the report on the appraisal of the SWOT and analysis;
18. *Step 2* focused at assessment of the *Consistency and coherence of the Programme*. The following tasks were conducted:
- ❖ Providing the benchmarking analysis of the existing operational programmes for 2007-2013 SF programming period and respective ex-ante evaluations;
 - ❖ Providing the review of relevant community, national and regional policies aiming at assessment of external coherence of the Programme;
 - ❖ Participating in the logical framework session;
 - ❖ Conducting interviews with the external expert and the MA representatives;
 - ❖ Drafting of the report on the appraisal of the rationale and the internal consistency of the strategy;
 - ❖ Drafting of the report on the appraisal of the coherence of the strategy with regional, national and community policies.
19. Within *Step 3: Assessment, quantification and implementation* our actions focused at:
- ❖ Assessing the indicator sets provided against the SMART principles;
 - ❖ Providing the benchmarking analysis of the indicators suggested in the existing operational programmes for the 2007-2013 SF programming period. Assessing experience from other Programmes;

- ❖ Reviewing of the respective ex-ante evaluations with regard to recommendations referring to indicators;
 - ❖ Participating in the JPC meeting which took place in March aiming at assessing the programming process itself,
 - ❖ Participating in two public hearings which took place on 16th and 18th of April in Poland;
 - ❖ Participating in the mailing list of stakeholders involved into design of the Programme;
 - ❖ Assessing the targets set. The assessment of the targets set aims at finding a balance between ambition and realism. On the basis of the assessment providing concrete proposal for modifications of indicators;
 - ❖ Assessing of the assumptions and computations that underlie the quantification of expected impacts;
 - ❖ On the basis of the assessment and the working meeting with the MA representatives, concrete proposals for modifications were made.
20. Within Step 4 the final ex ante and SEA reports were elaborated and all comments and opinions of respective stakeholders were taken into consideration. The final report on ex-ante evaluation was submitted on June 25th 2007.

3 Appraisal of SWOT and analysis

Introduction

21. This section of the report focuses on an assessment of the social and economic diagnosis, SWOT analysis and the history of cross-border co-operation of areas covered by the *South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme*. The assessment refers to the Chapters 3 and 2 of the Programme (version from March 21st, 2007).
22. In particular this section seeks to answer the evaluation questions presented in the Table below.

No	Question
1.	Is the presented socio-economic analysis of the area included by the programme correct, and does it adequately describe the reality and does it characterize the area as a whole?
2.	Was the common potential of the South Baltic region identified in the socio-economic analysis in a way that could be exploited through cross-border cooperation?
3.	Do clear conclusions for the SWOT analysis and for formulation of priorities result from the selected method (analysis)?
4.	Does the construction of the SWOT analysis reflect the structure of socio-economic analysis and do the proposed priorities of the programme result from it?
5.	Is socio-economic analysis elaborated in a succinct and direct way?
6.	Does the analysis include statistical data for the entire region as well as for individual sub-regions indicating the regional diversity?
7.	Was the analysis supplemented with conclusions from the experience acquired during the preceding programming period?
8.	Does the sequence of conclusions of the SWOT analysis include the implications of the problems regarding the area's development?
9.	Are the socio-economic and SWOT analyses consistent with the operational Programme for cross-border cooperation?
10.	Is the analysis complete and includes all the key areas to formulate the strategy?
11.	Does the analysis include demographic and economic data that is gender differentiated?
12.	Is the diagnosis coherent with the accepted strategy?

23. The evaluation was based on a review of the relevant literature (see Annex 1), interviews with the Ministry of Regional Development's representative and the expert responsible for elaboration of the evaluated parts of the Operational

Programme. Results of this assessment were also consulted within the panel of experts and commented by external expert specialising in international cooperation with Baltic countries. In particular, conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the following tasks:

- ❖ Review of ex-ante evaluation reports for the programming period 2007-2013 in order to identify good and bad practices in relation to the elaboration of the diagnosis and SWOT analysis;
- ❖ Benchmarking of the diagnosis and SWOT analysis of all national operational programmes within the scope of cross-border co-operation carried out within 2007-2013 programming period.
- ❖ Benchmarking of diagnosis and SWOT analysis included in programme documents of up-to-date cooperation through INTERREG and Phare CBC referring to the support area POWT PB.

Results

Evaluation of socio-economic analysis and SWOT

24. The assessed social and economic analysis of the area covered by the Programme is relevant and in a concise and factual way provides characteristics of the regions constituting the “eligible area” of the Programme. The social and economic analysis is mostly based on the characteristics of the selected, most important, or even critical areas determining the level of social and economic development of regions covered by the Programme.
25. It should be emphasized that in the aforementioned analysis attention is correctly drawn to the characteristics of the so-called *soft development factors*. This approach is compatible with the spirit of the current approach to the issue of social and economic development covering also regional development. It is worth stressing that under conditions of internationalization of state economies (including also regional), it is not the quantitative (hard) development factors that become more and more significant, but the importance of knowledge, innovativeness and the creation of co-operation networks (including also networks of cross-border co-operation).
26. On the basis of the presented analysis, disproportions existing in reality in the level of development of regions encompassed by the Operational Programme become evident. Those differences, paradoxically, could in the future determine the success of the whole adopted strategy, taking into account the fact of potential effects of synergy resulting from the co-operation of better- and poorer-developed regions. The above disproportions of development justify also the need to create such an Operational Programme and undertake cross-border co-operation between selected regions on the NUTS 3 level - Denmark, Lithuania, Germany, Poland and Sweden.
27. However, it needs to be recognized that the existing disproportions in the level of social and economic development may constitute a potential risk, especially in situations where proposed projects in wealthy regions are realized. Therefore the projects realized within the Operational Programme should automatically include the regions of different potential.

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28. Within the assessment of the social and economic analysis of the Operational Programme attention should be drawn to the lack of ordered and deliberate structure of this part of the Operational Programme. It seems right to start the analysis with the presentation of a differentiated general level of the social and economic development of the regions encompassed by the Programme, including the structure of their economies. The analysis should then go on to cover their demographic situation, the labour market, the level of entrepreneurship and innovativeness, as well as available transport infrastructure. The final part of the analysis should present the problems of the natural environment and related issues connected with tourism.

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29. In the subsequent part, with reference to the structure of the assessed analysis, the parts (characteristics) related to entrepreneurship and innovativeness, as well as telecommunications and IT technologies should follow. The reason for this order is that these parts are closely related. There is no doubt that the degree of innovation within economies depends on the level of the above-mentioned technologies. The possible clear solution to apply is to follow in the socio-economic analysis the order of the Programme strategy.

30. Taking into consideration that it was very difficult to acquire the statistical data necessary to conduct social and economic diagnosis at a NUTS 3 level, as well as because of specified difficulties referring to comparison of those data, the diagnosis has been prepared in a correct way.

31. Nevertheless, attention should be drawn to the different dates of statistical data used in the analysis (data related to demographic situation, labour market, education, and tourism refers to 2005, whereas the analysis of the level and dynamics of the economic development and the structure of economies is based on statistical data from 2003). Hence, it is suggested to supplement 2005 data where appropriate, in order to provide better comparisons of the discussed phenomena.

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32. In the case of analysis of certain phenomena - particularly the problem of innovation in terms of the level of development of telecommunication and IT technologies of the economies of eligible regions - no statistical data justifying conclusions reached are included. Although it may be difficult to obtain some detailed statistical data related to regions at the NUTS 3 level, the need to supplement data in order to support the legitimacy of the conclusions presented is very important. Some data related to the level of innovation of regions, at the NUTS 2 level, can be obtained from the EU report: *European Regional Innovation Scoreboard 2006*.

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33. In relation to statistical data used in the analysis (both demographic and economic) it should be noted that data distinguishing between women and men are not presented. However, from the point of view of presentation of a reliable, concise and clear social and economic analysis, which was subsequently used to create the SWOT analysis, on the basis of which the basic priorities of the assessed Operational Programme were formulated, such a gender breakdown of the statistical data on the Programme seems to be too detailed. Therefore it is suggested not to omit this kind of detailed data.

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34. On the basis of the prepared socio-economic analysis, it becomes evident (even though it was not clearly emphasised in this part) that the common so-called *pro-development potential of the South Baltic area* was identified. This potential (outlined in the next part of the Programme, namely in the SWOT analysis in form of strengths of the area) should constitute the basis for the cross-border co-operation covered by the Programme. Provision of a clear definition of *pro-development potential* is crucial to formulate basic priorities of the Operational Programme. The priorities should directly refer to this potential and be based on potential chances for development indicated through this pro-development potential.
35. It should be emphasised though that on the basis of the presented socio-economic analysis of the South Baltic area one can clearly see the most important conclusions of the SWOT analysis, as well as of the formulated, most important priorities of the Programme. Moreover, both the socio-economic analysis, and the SWOT analysis are appropriate from the point of view of the Operational Programme of the Cross-border Co-operation. Assuming that the whole co-operation strategy was prepared in an appropriate way, one can conclude that the assessed social and economic analysis is coherent.
36. It should be emphasised that the content of the SWOT analysis is well prepared as it presents strengths and weaknesses of the area encompassed by the Operational Programme, as well as related potential opportunities and threats, on the basis of which the basic objectives and priorities of the Operational Programme were formulated.
37. However, some relatively substantial weaknesses are present within the structure of the SWOT. First, since the division into two major groups of conclusions within the SWOT analysis was introduced, i.e.: 1) accessibility, competitiveness and innovativeness and 2) tourism and natural environment, then a justification of such grouping (instead of other possibilities) of those conclusions would improve consistency of this part of the Programme¹. Therefore it is suggested to provide a short and concise introduction to the analysis emphasizing that such a division into two major groups of conclusions is needed and useful from the point of view the priorities of the Operational Programme.
38. Our second observation refers to the structure of the SWOT conclusions. Currently the order of presented conclusions within the SWOT is not clear to the reader. It was also confirmed during interviews that this structure does not reflect the relative importance of the conclusions (unlike in some other operational programmes for the 2007-2013 period). It also seems that the order of the SWOT conclusions does not correspond with the order of subsequent parts of the socio-economic diagnosis from which they directly result. To improve the consistency of the socio-economic diagnosis with the SWOT analysis it is recommended to put the conclusions of SWOT analysis in a clear order.

¹For example in other Operational Programmes grouping of the SWOT part's conclusions was done in a different way. It is worth pointing out examples of Lithuania – Poland Cross-border Co-operation Programme or Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013).

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39. With reference to the above, it seems that there is a justified need to arrange conclusions in the SWOT analysis taking into account their importance in the future development of the region encompassed by the Programme. In the current version of the Programme in various parts of the SWOT analysis, conclusions related to the availability of transportation should be presented first. The order of the conclusions listed can suggest that their level of importance was settled (i.e. that the availability of transportation of regions from the point of view of their potential further development is more important than their competitiveness or innovativeness). An appropriate way of arranging conclusions in the SWOT analysis is shown for example in the *Ex-ante evaluation of Cross-Border Co-operation Programme Czech Republic – Poland 2007-2013*.

History of the cross-border co-operation in the eligible area

40. This sub-chapter of the assessment focuses on the history of cross-border co-operation in the South Baltic area. The assessment refers to the Chapter no. 4 of the Programme in a version from February 2007, then included in Chapter 2 of the Programme in a version from March 21, 2007.

41. During meetings with the working group responsible for preparation of the Programme the importance of such a chapter was discussed. Some respondents were of the opinion that this particular chapter is not needed. However, so far some preliminary notes on the history of the cooperation have been elaborated.

42. In the evaluator's opinion the information illustrating existing traditions of co-operation between regions from different countries and achievements of such co-operation is crucial from the point of view of internal consistency of the Programme. Therefore we share the opinion that such a chapter concerning the history of cross-border co-operation within the regions in the South Baltic area should be retained.

43. It is worth mentioning here that chapters on the history the cross-border co-operation are also presented in other cross-border co-operation programmes such as:

- ❖ *European Regional Development Fund 2007-2013, Cross Border Cooperation Programme Lithuania – Poland, January 2007;*
- ❖ *Operational Programme of Cross-border Co-operation 2007-2013: Czech Republic – Republic of Poland, February 2007;*
- ❖ *Operational Programme of Cross-border Co-operation 2007-2013: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Branderburg – Poland (Zachodniopomorskie region), January 2007;*
- ❖ *Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, March 2007.*

44. However, a serious drawback of the draft Programme is the fact that, unfortunately, neither the social and economic analysis, nor the whole Programme includes the conclusions of the experiences gained within cross border cooperation of regions covered by the eligible area. The notes on the history of the cooperation which have

been prepared at this stage are not very elaborated and do not present lessons learned from the cooperation carried out so far.

45. It seems sensible to supplement the Programme related to history and hitherto effects of the existing cross-border co-operation of regions. The notes which have been prepared so far cover only the specification of certain selected (but not all – *inter alia* an important co-operation within the framework of the so-called South Baltic Arch was omitted) co-operation platforms in the area of the Baltic Sea with the participation of the appropriate regions. It is important to present within the Programme the existing tradition of co-operation of Baltic regions, which were able to co-operate, create common priorities of operation and, crucially, achieve the synergy effect indispensable for socio-economic development. It needs to be stressed that the synthetic presentation of the achievements resulting from that co-operation would constitute a significant part justifying the general need to create and invigorate the Operational Programme. Therefore it is strongly recommended to improve this part of the Programme with relevant, clear and concise information on the lessons learned.

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Conclusions and recommendations

46. Although some of the above-mentioned issues require changes or additional input, both the socio-economic diagnosis, and the SWOT analysis were prepared in a proper way. The image of the existing common, even though territorially differentiated (which was clearly presented in the prepared social and economic analysis) potential of the area, as well as the needs were presented correctly. Therefore they constitute a basis to formulate proper (resulting directly from the social and economic analysis), and realistic priorities of the cross-border co-operation in the area subject to the Programme, which, while based on strengths, entail the possibility to use common potential future opportunities for the development of eligible regions.
47. The analysis in Chapter 2 gives a sound background to the strategy of the Programme and the challenges mentioned in SWOT are well identified. The evaluators hold the opinion that analysis forms a solid base for a successful Programme.
48. In order to improve the content and structure of the Operational Programme, the following improvements are recommended:
- Amend and arrange the structure of the part related to the socio-economic diagnosis (current Chapter 2 of the OP) from the point of grouping some issues and ordering their presentation differently. It is suggested to start the analysis with the presentation of a differentiated general level of the socio-economic development of regions subject to the Programme, including the structure of their economies, and subsequently to present the demographic situation, information on the labour market, within the scope of entrepreneurship and innovativeness (including also telecommunication and IT technologies) and the availability of transportation. Next, the issues related to the condition of the natural environment and the related problem of tourism should be discussed.

- b) Supplement and update statistical data (if available) constituting the basis of the socio-economic analysis for the purpose of a better comparison of the discussed phenomena and supporting the formulated theses related to the level of development of the analysed regions with relevant statistics (particularly with respect to the part focused on innovative quality).
- c) Clearly highlight the so-called *pro-development potential* of the whole area subject to the Programme, on which potential the formulated Programme priorities will be based. In the present version one can only guess that this common potential consist in strengths of the area presented in the SWOT analysis.
- d) Explain concisely (in the form of a short introduction to the SWOT analysis) the criteria for separating the existing division of conclusions from the SWOT analysis.
- e) Amend the structure of the SWOT analysis, either adjusting it to the structure of the diagnostic part or arranging conclusions included in it according to the level of their importance from the point of view of the area of development and the scope to promote cross-border co-operation. We share the opinion that the second approach seems more reasonable from the point of view of justifying the selection of priorities of the Programme. For the purpose of defining the importance of SWOT conclusions the survey addressed to region's representatives provided some additional arguments which supported relevant adjustments. The survey was carried out by evaluator's group. Assessment of the collected answers allows ascertaining that the SWOT conclusions generally reflect the level of their importance from the point of view of the regions constituting the "eligible area" of the Programme. However, it should be also emphasised that there are significantly differences between collected answers, which show the existing differences in priorities in each region.
- f) Supplement the part devoted to the history of co-operation with a synthetic presentation of the hitherto achievements resulting from the cross-border co-operation in the region, within the framework of different kinds of networks of the cross-border co-operation. If relevant and concise information is to be gathered it is suggested to devote separate chapter to this specific area and change its current place out from the Chapter no 2: "Description of the social and economic situation in the eligible area" into a separate new Chapter no. 2 (it would mean that the diagnostic part would constitute a new Chapter No. 3).

4 Rationale and internal consistency of the programme

Introduction

1. This chapter focuses on an assessment of the socio-economic development strategy of the Programme. The assessment refers to Chapters 4 and 5 of the Programme (in the version of March 21st, 2007).
2. In particular this part of the assessment seeks to answer the evaluation questions presented in the Table below.

No	Question
1	Is the strategy correctly defined, are its objectives and priorities clear? Is the attainment of objectives feasible taking into account the allocation of financial means to particular priorities?
2	Will the proposed priorities contribute to attainment of the strategy/Programme objectives?
3	Are the priorities of the Programme coherent/complementary?
4	Is the strategy coherent with the adopted diagnosis?
5	Do the proposed priorities follow from SWOT analysis / socioeconomic analysis?
6	Are the proposed Programme objectives measurable?
7	Is the proposed allocation of financial resources to particular priorities adequate to the scope of intervention?
8	Is it possible to propose a set of different (alternative) priorities which would contribute to the attainment of Programme objectives?
9	Were the external factors (assumptions) which have an impact on Programme implementation correctly identified?
10	Are the objectives of particular priorities complementary?
11	Are the objectives of particular priorities comprehensible and clear?
12	Is the allocation of resources to particular priorities adequate, in the context of their impact on the attainment of the main goal as well as specific goals?
13	Is the strategy based on the opportunities for the area in a straightforward way?
14	Is the strategy targeted at strengthening the competitiveness of the area?
15	Is the separation of the priority of technical assistance well-motivated?
16	Does the strategy make use of the experience gathered during the previous programming period (pre-accession aid)?

3. The evaluation was based on a review of relevant literature (see Annex 2) face-to face interview with the Ministry of Regional Development's representative and the

telephone interview with the Ministry's expert responsible for elaboration of evaluated parts of the Programme (see Annex 1).

Results

4. The Programme is well-thought through and logically described. It correctly identifies the most important problems of regions, their potential as well as the development directions. The diagnosis of the current situation as well as the indication of the needs and areas demanding support is relevant. The proposed solutions are sensible and seem to correspond to the identified problems.
5. The scope of the Programme, its priorities and the corresponding activities (see Table below) were determined, to a large extent, appropriately, although some improvements could be made with respect to their clarity and the precision of description. The main objectives are reasonable and are described clearly and logically, thus corresponding to the identified needs. The relation between the objectives, priorities and activities is also relatively coherent and logical, the main areas of activities being related to the indicated priorities and focusing on the achievement of the set objectives. In general the Programme is consistent, systematic and comprehensible.
6. The overall objective of the South Baltic Area Programme is to strengthen the sustainable development of the South Baltic area through joint actions increasing its competitiveness and enhancing integration among people and institutions. The two proposed priorities are coherent with the objective – the first one focuses on increasing competitiveness and the second on integration enhancement. In general terms, both priorities contribute to the strengthening of sustainable development. However, the priorities are very capacious which limits its transparency and may influence the understanding of their content. Therefore it may mislead the beneficiaries submitting the projects.
7. It is worth mentioning that the theory of economic development and the empirical research confirm the link between economic competitiveness and the factors listed in Priority 1 (*European Competitiveness Report, 2004*). However, it is not obvious how the actors responsible for implementation of the Programme want to stimulate the integration of economic and labour markets. As far as the liberalisation of labour market is concerned, is a national policy matter and intervention is not possible at a regional level without the political will at the central level. In this context the expected results of the actions under Priority 1 are unlikely. However some other instruments may be implemented to facilitate the mobility of workers which would influence the integration of local labour markets.

Table 1 Logic of the Programme

OVERARCHING PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE		
To strengthen the sustainable development of the South Baltic area through joint actions increasing its competitiveness and sustainability and enhancing integration among people and institutions		
PRIORITIES		
1. Economic Competitiveness	2. Attractiveness and Common Identity	3. Technical Assistance
OBJECTIVES		
1. To stimulate convergence processes over the national borders towards a coherent economic market in the South Baltic area	2. To make use of natural, cultural and social resources for functional integration of the South Baltic regions and for recognition of the whole area in Europe and worldwide	3. To provide high quality service of managing and implementing institutions.
INDICATIVE ACTIONS		
1. Entrepreneurial development 2. Integration of higher education and labour markets 3. Transport accessibility	1. Management of the Baltic Sea environment 2. Energy saving and renewable energy 3. Sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage for regional development 4. Local community initiatives	1. Preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of projects; 2. Meetings of Monitoring and Steering Committee; 3. Promotion and information actions concerning the Programme (e.g. seminars, South Baltic Area Programme website and publications); 4. Supporting, consulting, coordinating beneficiaries and institutions involved in implementing the Programme; 5. Analysis, surveys, researches, evaluations and reports essential for implementing and managing the Programme; 6. Translations
UNIVERSAL RESULTS		
1. Higher political appreciation of the cross-border co-operation 2. Increased stability of cross-border networks 3. Unlocked public and private investments		
SPECIFIC RESULTS		
1. Intensified cross-border relations between small and medium size enterprises in the South Baltic area	1. Improved institutional capacity in the management of the Baltic Sea environment 2. Increased commitment to	-

<p>2. Strengthened liaisons between higher education and labour market institutions of the South Baltic regions</p> <p>3. Improved quality and interoperability of transport connections and services in the South Baltic area</p>	<p>renewable energy sources and energy saving patterns</p> <p>3. More efficient & sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage of the South Baltic area for regional development</p> <p>4. Intensified intercultural dialogue and better involvement of broader public in cross-boarder activities</p>	
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8. Priority 2 is very wide-ranging, mixing actions that do not have much in common – environmental issues with cultural heritage and tourism, energy saving and people-to-people contacts. This breadth affects the cohesion of the priority. Sustainable use of natural resources is also typically thought to also cover energy saving and it is therefore unclear why this topic is presented separately.
9. From the point of view of consistency and clarity it is recommended to split priority two into two parts and separate the environment-related matters (management of environmental threats, sustainable use of resources, energy saving) and actions increasing contacts and relations (tourism, cultural heritage protection and people-to-people contacts), or at least to separate the actions connected with the integration of the area and strengthening of relations. Actually, the development of the people-to-people contacts may be achieved by actions described in priority one, like integration of labour markets and co-operation in the field of education. This indicates that the priorities are complimentary. Better transport connections (priority one) should also affect tourism and people-to-people contacts.
10. However it also needs to be pointed out that division into only 2 priorities has its important advantages. In this case the possible shifts of allocations within given priority would be easier to introduce as no acceptance of the EC would be required. The more priorities included into the strategy the more difficult would be to reallocate money within priorities if needed. Therefore the flexibility of the Programme would be threatened. Despite this important argument the evaluators hold the opinion that Priority 2 should be split up to assure high consistency and transparency of the Programme for the potential beneficiaries.
11. The strategy has been derived from the diagnosis of the situation and is coherent with SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis has been presented in a way that shows a very close connection with the two priorities. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats refer to:
 - a) accessibility, competitiveness and innovativeness and
 - b) tourism and natural environment.

This makes the document clear and understandable.

12. The first priority refers to the strengths of the region, especially the establishment of a structural system supporting the development of small and medium enterprises, particularly those implementing innovative technologies, which is coherent with the diagnosis that the economic growth is generated mostly by small and medium enterprises. This is coherent with the research findings widely described in literature (e.g. Acs, Audretsch, 1990, Feldman 1994).
13. The diagnosis shows significant disparities in competitiveness, innovativeness and entrepreneurship within the SBA and the proposed strategy indicates a solution to this problem – co-operation in the field of technical and higher education. The transfer of knowledge is a very important factor fostering regional competitiveness (OECD, 2002, European Commission 2001, 2004). In this context this priority should also stress transfer of knowledge between regions and between enterprises

not only of transfer of knowledge between public and private institutions. However, the advantage of openness of the educational institutions for co-operation with the public and private sectors may be also used for this purpose.

14. The first priority also concentrates on the integration of labour markets, which is important if we take into account problems of high unemployment and decreasing population in most parts of the region caused by the generally scattered urban system and vast rural areas. The advantage of having well-developed educational infrastructure with a high number of universities and high schools with an extensive array of educational and research programmes covering nearly all aspects of sciences and humanities may be well used in the field of co-operation in technical and higher education.
15. Due to the fact that one of the identified weaknesses of the area is insufficient transport infrastructure in many parts of the SBA, the strategy refers to better transport connectivity.
16. To sum up, the strategy has been based on the diagnosis of the situation and on the opportunities arising from this analysis. What could be more strongly stressed in the strategy is the common potential of the region – existing despite the disparities in the economic development.
17. External factors that could influence the implementation of the Programme have not been specified in the programme, but there are several risks indicated, most of them related to environmental protection. In general, they seem to be on target. It is pointed out in the strategy with Priority 2 focussing on the management of environmental risks.
18. There are also external factors influencing the implementation of the strategy related to other areas. The following factors could be identified:
- ❖ duplication of financial support within the programme and other cross-border programmes;
 - ❖ lack of motivation for co-operation of the local authorities, business and scientific communities; and
 - ❖ a risk of oil spillages that could damage the coastline.

However, the third one has not been justified (and actually is rather unlikely).

19. One of the threats indicated in the SWOT analysis concerns the expansion of the transport and energy sector – which contradicts the priorities of the Programme (development of transport connections and development of renewable energy sources).
20. The objectives of particular priorities, although generally clear, do not contain sufficient details. The detailed description of Priority 1 – economic competitiveness – tends to affect the regional disparities listed in the programme and stimulate convergence processes over the national borders towards a more integrated functional market, while there is no focus on it in the general description of priority

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aims. It would be also useful to explain the term “functional market”. Also, the explanation of the term “attractiveness” would make the priority more comprehensive – whether it refers to tourist attractiveness, investment attractiveness or to the living conditions for the citizens. We would also suggest to move the last action under “integration of higher education institutions” within priority one to the “Entrepreneurial development”.

21. The need to build a common identity has not been justified. It is not clear what objectives can be achieved within this priority and that aim it would serve. In several statements it would be useful to indicate the main actors or stakeholders. For example: by preparing particular investments the Programme may contribute to a decrease in the differences in using the renewable energy or “exchange of knowledge, preparation and implementation of joint action plans”.
22. The development strategy has obviously been based on the identified opportunities of the region. The table below links the opportunities with priorities specified in the Programme.

Opportunities	Priority
crossborder and pan-Baltic cooperation facilitated by more intensive European integration	1
due to its more central location following the EU enlargement, the South part of the Baltic Sea may become an important transfer centre for cargo and passengers, attracting investments in logistics, transport infrastructure, railways, etc.	1
establishment of a structural system supporting the development of small and medium enterprises, particularly those implementing innovative technologies	1
support to science parks, technical parks, incubators, clusters and innovative centres, pursuing cooperation within the triple helix concept	1
promoting the development of life-long learning and new forms of learning	
growing importance of human resources and labour force mobility	1
development of the ‘human services’ sector (healthcare, well-being, elderly care, education, entertainment) in the SBA catering for the entire population of the area and the EU	
promoting crossborder tourism and developing trans-regional tourism products, with particular emphasis placed on water and inland-water tourism	2
developing crossborder tourism infrastructure, with special focus on improving region’s tourism accessibility and intra-regional transport links	2
inclusion of the region’s environmental benefits into the tourist offer, with strict adherence to the rules of sustainable tourism	2
increasing investments in the renewable sources of energy, promoting the efficient use of available energy, pressure on industry and agriculture to reduce emissions to the atmosphere and water, building new and more effective sewage treatment works and programmes for sorting and recycling of all waste	2

23. In the preparatory phase the experience of Phare CBC, Tacis and Interreg 2004-2006 has been used. It concerns especially the assumptions of strategic projects and local community actions. The programme assumes also the continuation of some actions under Interreg IIIB. Therefore it would be advisable to develop the references with the former programmes.

24. The target groups are not presented in the text of the Programme describing the priorities and indicative actions. However, they are listed in Chapter 12 on *Project selection procedure*, and the list of potential beneficiaries is exhaustive

Conclusions and recommendations

25. In general the Programme has clearly defined objectives and priorities, and there is a clear link between the objectives, the priorities, the description of the rationale and the actions. The strategy is coherent and clear.
26. The main objectives are reasonable and correspond to the identified needs and the indicated priorities focus on the achievement of the main objective.
27. Also the areas of intervention and possible co-operation activities are defined. The evaluators hold the position that it is positive to include example activities as this provides the potential beneficiaries guidance in designing their projects.
28. The strategy has been based on the diagnosis as well as on the opportunities developed in the SWOT analysis which assures that areas demanding support are accurate.
29. It is strongly recommended to divide Priority 2 and separate actions reinforcing people-to-people contacts.
30. It is also recommended to add to the Programme a list of acronyms used in the document.

5 Coherence of the Programme with regional and national policies

Introduction

31. This part of the report focuses on a general assessment of coherence of the Programme with community policies, objectives as well as national strategies and programmes.
32. In particular this chapter seeks to answer the evaluation questions presented in the Table below.

No	Question
1	Is the proposed strategy coherent with policies at a regional and national level (including National Strategic Reference Framework)? How does the SB OP strategy contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy objectives?
1.1	The coherence with community policies:
	❖ Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion
	❖ Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005–08)
	❖ Renewed Lisbon Strategy
	❖ Complementarity between activities financed from European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Fisheries Fund (EFF)
1.2	The coherence with principles and horizontal community policies:
	❖ Partnership principle
	❖ Sustainable development
	❖ Equal opportunities principle and principle to prevent discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation
	❖ European Charter for Small Enterprises
	❖ Development of information society
	❖ Community principles and horizontal policies
1.3	The coherence with national policies:
	❖ National Strategic Reference Framework
	❖ National competitiveness policies
	❖ OPs of regions, which are supported by SB OP and other regional strategic documents

33. The evaluation results presented below are based on an analysis of SB OP, community, national and regional policies and strategies.

Results

34. The Programme presents a detailed analysis of external coherence. Possible overlaps are identified and solutions to avoid them are described. The Evaluator fully agrees with the statements, that the programme is coherent with community policies (the *Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, Renewed Lisbon Strategy* and other documents which specify statements presented in both). SB OP is also fully coherent with *National Strategic Reference Frameworks* of Poland, Germany, Denmark, Lithuania and Sweden.





35. *Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005–08)* include *inter alia* the measures and policies that the Member States should carry out in order to boost knowledge and innovation for growth and to make Europe a more attractive place to invest, work and live. As shown below, SB OP is coherent with these Guidelines, more in microeconomic than “employment” part. However the Programme is not at variance with the Guidelines.

Table 2 Coherence of the Programme with the *Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005–08)*

TYPE OF GUIDELINES	Priority 1: Economic competitiveness	Priority 2: Attractiveness and common identity
MICROECONOMIC GUIDELINES		
❖ To increase and improve investment in R & D, in particular by private business.		
❖ To facilitate all forms of innovation.		
❖ To facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society.		
❖ To strengthen the competitive advantages of its industrial base.		
❖ To encourage the sustainable use of resources and strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth		
❖ To extend and deepen the internal market.		
❖ To ensure open and competitive markets inside and outside Europe and to reap the benefits of globalisation.		
❖ To create a more competitive business environment and encourage private initiative through better regulation.		
❖ To promote a more entrepreneurial culture and create a supportive environment for SMEs.		
❖ To expand, improve and link up European infrastructure and complete priority cross-border projects.		
EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES		
❖ Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.		
❖ Promote a life-cycle approach to work.		
❖ Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive.		
❖ Improve matching of labour market needs.		

❖ Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners.		
❖ Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms.		
❖ Expand and improve investment in human capital.		
❖ Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.		

Legend:





	coherent
	partially coherent
	not contradictory
	incoherent

36. Actions financed through the Programme within its priorities are in line with *the Renewed Lisbon Strategy* and should have positive impact on the achievement of its objectives (see table below).

Table 3 Coherence of the Programme with *the Renewed Lisbon Strategy*

	Priority 1: Economic competitiveness	Priority 2: Attractiveness and common identity
Renewed Lisbon strategy of the European Union focuses on:		
1. Knowledge and innovation for growth		
2. Making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work		
3. Creating more and better jobs		

Legend:

	coherent
	partially coherent
	not contradictory
	incoherent

37. It is also evident that the Programme ensures implementation of equal opportunities, sustainable development and competition principles. The Programme also covers actions aimed at developing the information society. However there is no information about how the partnership principle is included into the Programme. Therefore it is recommended to add information how the partnerships principle will be implemented.

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38. The Programme is in line with four of six strategic guidelines for rural development, which are:

- ❖ Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors,
- ❖ Improving the environment and the countryside,
- ❖ Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification,
- ❖ Complementarities between Community Instruments.

39. Therefore the Programme partially contributes to the fulfillment of all three objectives of EAFRD, which are:
- ❖ Improving competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation;
 - ❖ Improving environment and the countryside by supporting land management;
 - ❖ Improving quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity.
40. The Programme also contributes to the fulfilment of two of the seven objectives of EFF, which are:
- ❖ Strengthening competitiveness of operating structures and the development of economically viable enterprises in the fisheries sector;
 - ❖ Encouraging sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life in areas with activities in the fisheries sector.
41. It needs to be stressed that no industrial or commercial bodies can be a beneficiary of this Programme. It means that enterprises cannot benefit from the Programme directly. However, the first priority of the Programme (“economic competitiveness”) aims at creation of good environment for entrepreneurial development. The activities covered within this priority are in line with the *European Charter for Small Enterprises*.
42. Chapter 9 of the Programme which is devoted to *Complementarity with territorial co-operation programmes and other EU programmes implemented in the SB area* provides clear and exhaustive comparisons of relevant programmes and initiatives. The evaluators share the opinion that complementarity of the Programme with respective programmes is high although some overlaps could be also identified. Although, the general distinction between these programmes is settled, it may not be clear enough for potential beneficiaries. Therefore it is recommended to add to this Chapter a short table summarising the most important differences between these similar programmes (types of actions, beneficiaries, budgets and eligible areas). In particular, this table should cover comparisons of OP SBA, the trans-national Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 and other cross-border programmes: the *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – Zachodniopomorskie, Öresund – Kattegat – Skagerrak*, and *Latvia – Lithuania programmes*.
43. For all programmes, which will be implemented in the same Baltic area the potential risk of double financing can be identified. It is therefore recommended for managing authorities of all programmes to closely co-operate to avoid the risk of double financing and implement respective procedures in this respect.

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Conclusions and recommendations

44. The proposed strategy is coherent with policies on regional and national level (including National Strategic Reference Framework).
45. The following three amendments are recommended:

- a) to add information how the partnership principle will be implemented,
- b) to add to this Chapter a short table summarising the most important differences between these similar programmes (types of actions, beneficiaries, budgets, eligible areas etc.), and
- c) for managing authorities of all programmes to closely co-operate to avoid the risk of double financing and implement respective procedures in this respect.



6 Quantification of the strategy & expected results and impacts

Introduction

46. This chapter focuses on the assessment of the evaluation of financial allocations for particular priorities of the strategy as well as on an assessment of result indicators. The assessment refers to the Chapters 5 and 6 of the Programme (version of March 21st, 2007).
47. In particular this chapter seeks to answer the evaluation questions presented in the Table below.

No	Questions
1	What will be – in quantitative terms – the impact of the strategy?
2	What will be the community added value?
3	What will be the impact of the Operational Programme on the support of entrepreneurship and development of knowledge-based economy? (Priority 1)
4	What will be the impact of the Operational Programme on the improvement of quality of cooperation in the area and strengthening social and cultural integration? (Priority 2)
5	Do the allocations of the financial resources allow for attaining the assumed target values?
6	Were the indicators related to particular Programme objectives correctly defined? Is it feasible to achieve the indicator values and will the planned values be achieved by the end of the programming period? Do the proposed indicators and their values constitute a basis for the future system of monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation?
7	Are the proposed product/result indicators for particular priorities coherent?
8	Do the proposed indicators allow for measuring the progress with respect to the initial situation?
9	Is it feasible to achieve the target values?
10	Is there any comparable data (source of data) for the areas covered by the Programme and the created assessment indicators?
11	Does the set of indicators make use of the experience gathered during the previous programming period (pre-accession aid)?
12	Are the proposed indicators definite, measurable, accessible and adequate and was the time perspective clearly defined?
13	Are the indicators coherent with the indicators included in the National Strategic Reference framework?

Results

48. The objectives of the programme are not easily measurable (intangible). The increase in competitiveness of the area covered by the Programme may be measured and evaluated *ex-post* on the basis of regional statistics and may be characterised by processes like increase in investments, growth of employment etc, while the measurement of integration among people and institutions is complicated, time consuming and costly. Similar remarks may be made as far as the priorities are concerned: economic competitiveness may be assessed (there is a developed methodology), changes in the attractiveness may also be evaluated basing on the increase of number of tourists, FDI, number of companies etc., while it is difficult to assess the common identity. Moreover, the expected result of Priority 1 – integration of labour markets, may not be achieved at the local level.
49. It is impossible to assess the added value of the programme in terms of quantitative effects at this stage. Such an assessment will only be possible within the *ex-post* evaluation of the programme.
50. The planned results of priority one within Operational Programme include:
- a) intensified cross-border relations between small and medium size enterprises in the South Baltic area;
 - b) strengthened liaisons between higher education and labour market institutions of the South Baltic regions;
 - c) improved quality and interoperability of transport connections and services in the South Baltic area.
51. The planned results of priority two include:
- a) improved institutional capacity in the management of the Baltic Sea environment;
 - b) increased commitment to renewable energy sources and energy saving patterns;
 - c) more efficient use of natural and cultural heritage of the South Baltic area for regional development;
 - d) intensified intercultural dialogue and better involvement of broader public in cross-border activities.
52. The planned results are mostly of a qualitative and intangible character and should be evaluated in these terms. The indicators should be related to the expected results rather than to the actions undertaken within the Programme.
53. All the indicators have been based on the number of projects. The risk related to indicators based solely on the number of projects is that it is possible to reach the assumed values not approaching the objectives at the same time, since such indicators measure the activities, not the results. The adopted indicator structure suggests that the more scattered the projects are, the higher the indicator values and, consequently, the better the project results. This assumption is obviously wrong and therefore indicators based on the number of projects cannot serve the

purpose of measuring Programme outcomes and effects. With a fixed amount of resources allocated to a given Programme, by means of simple redefinition, the indicators can be converted in such a way that the average project value will not allow for exceeding a certain fixed value.

54. With the proposed indicator structure there is no point in assessing their coherence. Progress measurement with respect to the initial situation is impossible, as the indicators allow only for measuring the undertaken activities, not the results of project's implementation. There is no way to define the impact of the activities on the situation in the region.
55. As far as the possibilities of reaching the target values are concerned, the attainment is undoubtedly feasible and it depends on the size of the project. It is enough to implement small projects in order to achieve the indicator values fixed beforehand.
56. The indicators are measurable, definite, available and their time perspective was determined. However, due to the reasons enumerated above, they are not adequate. The proposed indicators are not coherent with those suggested in the National Strategic Reference Framework. The measurement idea, the indicator structure and the units applied are different.
57. Cause-and-effect relations between the products and outcomes of activities were not properly defined because on the basis of the proposed indicators it is impossible to assess the results (only the activities).
58. It is clear that on determining the indicators, experience from the previous programming period was used. However, it would be recommended to make use of some of the indicators proposed in other programmes e.g.:
 - a) European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013: Operational Programme for Central Europe;
 - b) ERDF European Territorial Cooperation: Interregional Cooperation Programme (INTERREG IVC) ;
 - c) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Czech Republic – Republic of Poland;
 - d) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Republic of Slovakia – Republic of Poland;
 - e) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Poland (Lubuskie region) – Brandenburg;
59. It is impossible to determine whether the envisaged financial allocations will allow for achieving the target values set beforehand, as no target values were assigned to the envisaged results, and the proposed indicators are inadequate.
60. According to the interviewed representative of the Ministry of Regional Development, the allocations (see table below) to particular countries proposed in the Programme, as well as their distribution in time, are a consequence of general

obligations and cannot be subject to decision-making processes at the level of the regions taking part in the Programme. The only matter that can be further discussed is the question of the allocation of the resources among two (or three) separate priorities and the assumed amount of co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund. The present structure of the budget stresses the importance of natural environment on the area covered by the Programme. However, the proposed allocation of funds (37% for priority one and 57% for priority two) is not sufficiently justified. Taking into account that priority one seems to be more important for the economic development of the SBA and the priority two indicates initiatives supporting people-to-people contacts (that hardly require investment outlays) and promotional activities, one would expect rather the opposite allocation. The current division of funds raises a question – why priority two is not replaced by priority one? Following this idea a division of priority 2 (specified above) would be a good solution with respect to funds allocation.

Priority	ERDF	National co-financing		Total funding	Co-financing rate
		National public	National private		
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)=(a)+(b)+(c)	(f)=(a)/(d)
Priority 1	22.472.194	5.271.255	-	27.743.449	81%
Priority 2	34.619.326	8.120.583	-	42.739.908	81%
Priority 3 (TA)			-		

61. The estimated share of co-financing from ERDF, which reaches 81%, results from the assumption that some part of the projects implemented within the programme will receive co-financing from the national resources at the level of 15% (in the new Member States and Germany) and some - at the level of 25% (Denmark and Sweden). At the stage where the programme is being prepared it is impossible to estimate the share of the projects from the new regions and from the old member states, which will be accepted for implementation. Therefore the assumed average seems reasonable – as there is no basis to adapt a different assumption.
62. There is some inconsistency concerning the number of priorities described in the Programme. Chapter 4 does not announce Priority 3 while it appears later in the financial table. In consequence, there lacks a justification for the separation of technical assistance.
63. Technical Assistance seems essential for the implementation of the Programme. The total funds earmarked for TA constitute 6% of total funds under the programme and will cover the necessary expenditure related to selection of projects, monitoring etc.

Conclusions and recommendations

64. The allocation of funds for particular priorities does not seem adequate in the context of achieving the main objective. The main objective of the Programme

covers sustainable development of the SBA through increasing competitiveness and enhancing integration among people and institutions. What seems to be more important for development is competitiveness rather than the integration among people and institutions.

65. The result indicators proposed in the Operational Programme do not fulfil the condition of measuring the results of the programme, they measure only activities. They are not adequate and should be redefined.

66. It is recommended to reconsider the indicators and in particular add outcomes indicators. It would be useful to base at least some of the indicators on characteristics different from the number of projects. They could be designed on the basis of the following patterns:

67. Universal results:

- a) Number of entities cooperating in networks created within projects;
- b) Number of sustainable initiatives/networks resulting in cross-border investment or cooperation activity.

68. Priority 1 Specific results:

- a) Number of enterprises cooperating (based on a survey)
- b) Number of education entities having cross-border partners

Additional suggestions that could be used:

- c) Number of institutions participating in the supported cooperation schemes and networks;
- d) Number of enterprises participating in the created networks and cooperation schemes in the field of R&D and innovations;
- e) Number of academic, research and technology-related institutions participating in the created networks and cooperation schemes, in the field of R&D and innovations;
- f) Number of ventures aimed at cooperation in the field of R&D, innovations, entrepreneurship or the labour market (number of contracts, agreements etc.);
- g) Number of persons who took part in joint initiatives for employment;
- h) Number of projects supporting meetings and cooperation in the fields of higher education;
- i) Number of staff members with increased capacity (awareness / knowledge / skills) resulting from the exchange of experience at interregional events;
- j) Number of persons covered by the activities aimed at up-skilling and qualifications development;
- k) Number of persons who underwent training (men/women).

69. Priority 2 Specific results

- a) Number of joint initiatives regarding the management of the Baltic Sea environment;
- b) Ratio of energy from renewable resources used (reaching higher than average growth rate);
- c) Number of initiatives addressing energy saving and renewable resources;
- d) Number of people partaking in initiatives concerning heritage of SBS or intercultural activities.

70. Additional suggestions that could be used:

- a) Number of partnership contracts transgressing the framework of the project;
- b) Number of users of the new / modernized infrastructure related to environmental protection;
- c) Number of persons participating in the training / workshops / ecological fairs / related to threat prevention;
- d) Number of persons participating in cultural and recreational-educational events;
- e) Number of institutions offering education services in cooperation;
- f) Number of persons participating in educational ventures;
- g) Number of products and tourist services;
- h) Number of new and modernised objects related to tourism.

7 Implementation system

Introduction

71. This chapter focuses on a general assessment of the implementation system as well as identification of possible bottlenecks.

72. In particular this chapter seeks to answer the evaluation questions presented in the Table below.

No	Question
1	Was an appropriate system of implementation of the Programme proposed? (implementation principles of Programme in individual institutions participating in the implementation system; implementation procedures; monitoring and assessment system; participation of social and economic partners; potential risks in the Programme's implementation system).
1.1	Is there an appropriate implementation system, monitoring and assessment procedures and financial management?
1.2	Is the proposed description of financial flows transparent? Does it take into account the specific nature of the Programme?
1.3	Was cross-border partnership of the regional/ local authorities and other entities ensured in the preparation of the Programme's proposals?
1.4	Do the proposed solutions guarantee the promotion of the Programme?
1.5	Is the institutional capacity enough for implementation of the Programme?
1.6	Is the division of implementation competences clear and proper?
1.7	Does the system benefit from experiences from previous programming period (pre-accession programmes), in particular from recommendations formulated during the evaluations conducted so far?
1.8	Were foreign experiences used in programming?
1.9	How is the support for creation of projects planned? (activities to increase the absorption ability)
1.10	How will the procedure of choosing and approving projects be proceeded?
1.11	How is the structure of application designed?
1.12	Does implementation system guarantee flexible reactions to change of needs or EU or national policies?

73. The evaluation results presented below are based on analysis of programming documents as well as interview with representatives of the MA.

Results

74. It needs to be stressed that the implementation system for SB OP is based on experiences gained from the 2004-2006 programming period and pre-accession

programmes. The most important change, which helps to avoid important problems relating to financial flows, is that implementing authorities won't be involved any more into the system. Currently implementation responsibility lies with the MA which is supported by the JTS in carrying out its tasks.

75. The division of implementation competences described in the Programme is clear and proper. The monitoring and evaluation systems are also well defined.

76. The implementation arrangements are in line with the Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 and with the Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

77. It is generally known that financial flows create difficulties for beneficiaries within every programme. A proper cash flow within the project ensures its effective implementation. Delays with payments transferred to beneficiaries could destroy even very well designed and implemented project. In case of the Programme the financial flows to beneficiaries could potentially constitute an important bottleneck for implementation of projects. The process of certification of statements of expenditures of project's partners carried out by controllers at the national level is under the responsibility of each country and probably every country will apply different solutions. The certification process could be time consuming and entail difficulties with further implementation of the projects. Therefore it is recommended for the MA to carefully monitor the process of certification of statements of expenditures by controllers at national level to avoid the possible bottlenecks relating to financial flows.

R

78. The Programme is very well prepared in terms of involvement of different regional/local authorities and other entities involved in programming (transborder partnership). In April 2007 the Programme has been subject to public hearings which have been taking place in all eligible countries. In particular two regional conferences were held in Poland in April. It was also envisaged to carry out three public hearings in Bornholm (within Regional Growth Forum, public hearing and within Regional Municipality Council). It is also worth stressing that all partners involved in the design of the Programme have been working within three groups: Implementation Working Group, Joint Programming Committee and Core Group. These groups comprise representatives of respective regions as well as ministries from all eligible countries and their tasks are very clearly defined at all stages of the preparation process. Their work and regular meetings are organised by the Ministry of Regional Development in Poland which is responsible for the preparation of the Programme. The process of preparation of the Programme has also been strengthened by support of external experts which were responsible for provision of significant input into different parts of the Programme.

79. The solutions aimed at promotion of the Programme are well designed. In particular, the Contact Points acting in co-operation with the JTS and under its direction will be responsible for promotional activities. In addition, the JTS and MA are responsible for the promotion of the Programme. The MA is responsible for providing information and publicity of the whole Programme and will be supported in fulfilment of this task by the JTS. At a later stage it will be important to clearly divide tasks of these bodies

in respect to promotional actions. Funds allocated for the promotional actions within TA budget are adequate.

80. In the evaluators' opinion, the institutional capacity of MA is also adequate to fulfil its tasks. The Territorial Cooperation Department set up in the Ministry of Regional Development in Poland has broad experience in implementation, management and co-ordination of different INTERREG III programmes. It is also envisaged to finance additional jobs.

81. It is impossible to assess at this stage the institutional capacity of JTS as it does not yet exist (the JTS will be probably chosen through a public procurement procedure). Funds for the JTS are guaranteed in the TA budget.

82. Within the project preparation process a serious bottleneck can be identified. It refers to finding of suitable foreign partners. However already the following activities aimed to increase the absorption ability have been planned:

- ❖ Establishing Contact Points in each eligible country as well as JTS in Poland. The tasks of JTS and Contact Points will *inter alia* include an advisory role for potential beneficiaries,
- ❖ Organising joint international meetings, thematic seminars, workshops conducted by CP and JTS as well as other regional/national institutions involved in the programme implementation,
- ❖ Setting up partners search platforms and programme website.

R

83. It is recommended to utilize "good practice" implemented within other OPs aimed at promoting the programme with support of different types of institutions (for example NGOs) which have good contacts with specific groups of beneficiaries.

84. The procedure of choosing and approving projects is in general clearly described:

- a) project applications are collected by JTS;
- b) the formal assessment is conducted by JTS; it could ask CP for additional information if it is necessary;
- c) the content-related assessment is conducted by SC; it could use experts if it is necessary; the application package is prepared;
- d) MC approves the application package;
- e) MA signs contracts with lead beneficiaries.

R

85. It is recommended to add to the list of JTS tasks point "formal assessment of applications".

86. In Evaluator's opinion the role of SC during the selection procedure should be stressed. Currently within the point 11 "*project selection procedure*" only information that "*detailed list of project selection criteria will be approved by the MC and SC*" is covered. However, one of the SC tasks is "*selecting operations for funding*" (point 10, "Steering Committee").

87. The projects' application will be carried out in English. Although the English language still constitutes a serious barrier for potential applicants the MA envisaged different actions to support beneficiaries in this area. The structure of the application form has been currently under development. First draft has been prepared by MA and will be consulted with partners in May 2007.
88. It is worth stressing that the Programme has been designed in a proper way to assure its flexibility to possible changes in eligible area in the 2007-2013 period. Therefore only general rules have been described within the Programme assuring introduction of possible amendments in case when needs or EU/ national policies or other factors are changed. Taking into consideration the fact that every change in the Programme has to be approved by the EC the flexibility of the Programme is crucial. The Programme would be specified in details in a "Beneficiary manual" which should be approved by MC. As MC could take decisions also within written procedure the approval process could be accelerated. In evaluators opinion the implementation system guarantee flexible reactions to change of needs or EU or national policies.

Conclusions and recommendations

89. The proposed system of implementation of the Programme is appropriate in terms of implementation of principles of the the Programme in individual institutions participating in the implementation system as well as in terms of implementation of procedures; monitoring and evaluation system. It needs to be highlighted that in particular the participation of social and economic partners was properly preserved. The evaluators hold the opinion that the implementation solutions described in the draft Programme are appropriate to deliver the objectives of the Programme.
90. Three general recommendations have been identified to improve implementation of the Programme:
- a) The MA should carefully monitor the process of certification of statements of expenditures by controllers at national level to avoid the possible bottlenecks relating to financial flows.
 - b) To add to the list of JTS tasks point "formal assessment of applications".
 - c) To envisage promotion of the Programme also through support of different types of institutions (for example NGOs) which have good relations with specific target groups.

8 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Introduction

91. The legal requirements for preparation of the strategic environmental assessment of the South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme are derived both from the European directives and from national environmental laws of the individual countries, whose territorial units lie within the Programme Area.
92. European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment", adopted on 31 May 2001 by European Parliament and on 5 June 2001 by the Council, requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Authorities which prepare and/or adopt such a plan or programme must prepare a report on its likely significant environmental effects, consult environmental authorities and the public, and take the report and the results of the consultation into account during the preparation process before the plan or programme is adopted. They must also make information available on the plan or programme as adopted and how the environmental assessment was taken into account.
93. The Programme document from the 9-th of March was a subject of SEA. The main assessment was preceded by the analysis, to what extent the priorities, objectives and actions included into the Programme will support realization of objectives written in other strategic documents relating to environmental and sustainable development problems.

Programme objectives and priorities

94. The South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme is aiming at strengthening the sustainable development of the South Baltic area. It means that the Programme in particular will concentrate on promotion of joint efforts to provide favourable conditions for growth and job creation over the national borders and to safeguard good social, cultural and natural environment for the residents, tourists and investors in the South Baltic area.
95. To achieve these objectives the Programme set two priorities:
 - a) **Economic competitiveness**, where the focus is on actions promoting integration of economic and labour markets in the area, transfer of knowledge and know-how between public and private actors and better transport connectivity.

Sub-priorities: Entrepreneurial development, Integration of higher education and labour markets, Transport accessibility.

- b) **Attractiveness and common identity**, where the focus is on actions promoting sustainable economic use of natural resources and cultural heritage, with particular attention to tourism, development of renewable energy sources and energy saving, management of environmental threats as well as local initiatives supporting people-to-people contacts.

Sub-priorities: Management of the Baltic Sea environment, Energy saving and renewable energy, Sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage for regional development, Local community initiatives.

Sub-priorities have been developed into groups of indicative actions which indicate the scope of the Programme.

Procedure and method of assessment

96. Strategic environmental assessment is usually dealing with documents containing information of qualitative character. The assessment may relate to the level of objectives, priorities or actions. The lower level, the more detailed analysis and assessment can be. In case of the South Baltic Programme the SEA was considering groups of indicated actions. The general question was: if and to what extent implementation of the programme will cause negative impact on:

- natural resources management and environmental efficiency,
- ecosystem, biodiversity as well as natural and cultural heritage.

97. Also sustainable development criteria have been taken into account in the assessment especially from the view-point of sustainable use of natural resources.

98. The assessment is also relating to the other documents to check the consistency of the Programme with other programmes and their objectives. In particular the question was to what extent environmental objectives written in other strategic documents will be supported or threatened by implementation of the Programme.

99. Strategic environmental assessment procedure was of an interactive character. It constituted a process, in which the final version of the basic document is created as a result of among others interactive work of two teams:

- Joint Programming Committee working together with the experts on the basic document and
- Team of experts on assessment of this document from the view point of environmental and sustainable development criteria.

Coherence of the Programme with other documents

100. Analysis was made of the coherence of the Programme with strategic documents at the international level – Baltic 21 Agenda, at the national level – sustainable development strategies and environmental policies of countries covered by the Programme and at the regional level – strategies and documents connected with the development of the individual regions. No discrepancies or conflicts were

identified at the level of objectives and priorities. On the contrary, the coherence was found of the Programme objectives with these documents in the field of renewable energy development and improvement of environmental safety. Besides analysis of these documents allowed determining the importance of the individual assessment criteria.

State of the environment

101. Baltic Sea is characterized with significant changes of the state of the environment caused by the pressure of human activities. In the analysis of the South Baltic Sea the following problems were taken into consideration which are potentially connected with implementation of the assessed Programme:

- Industry and transport pressure in urban areas,
- Pollution caused by fertilizing in coastal zones,
- Direct discharge of waste water in coastal zones,
- Priority pollution, dangerous substances (generated during marine transport, in ports and by the industry), removal of chemical substances from post-military areas,
- Eutrophication (caused by high loads of nitrogen and phosphorus),
- Change of ecosystems,
- Bathing water quality.

102. It has been found that the state of the environment in the Programme area is in most cases satisfactory due to advantageous changes taking place in the environment, resulting from actions undertaken in the framework of realization of ecological policy. However important problems are still connected with eutrophication and with growing transport activities.

Results of the SEA

103. The analysis has shown, that implementation of activities resulting from realization of the Programme may in some cases cause negative environmental impact. Such disadvantageous impacts may occur in short-term and local scale – both in the aspect of impact on environmental resources and/or environmental capacity and in the aspect of impact on ecosystem, biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage. However much more significant is occurrence of positive effects of long-term and regional character. This advantageous impact is connected both with environmental resources and/or environmental capacity and with the impact on ecosystem, biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage.

104. Since the negative effects may occur, the appropriate system of qualification of projects within the Programme should be implemented in order to minimize these effects to a lowest possible degree.

Monitoring

105. The proposed range of monitoring concerning the environmental requirements is directly connected with types of actions specified in the assessment

table. In particular monitoring will have to answer whether the measures recommended in the SEA for individual actions were undertaken, in case of these which are likely to cause environmental effects.

Conclusions and recommendations

106. The southern part of the Baltic Sea with the coastal regions of countries surrounding the sea is presenting a unique picturesque and valuable from nature view-point area. According to the primary objective of strengthening the sustainable development of the South Baltic area the Programme may offer solutions which would give a possibility to create such forms of nature protection, which would ensure maintaining of natural and cultural heritage but on the other side would not confine development of local communities. In other words, the problem consists in completing the existing protected areas with areas of such forms of protection, which would be coherent with sustainable development idea. In the countries participating in the Programme there are already such activities undertaken. Creation of areas incorporated in the Nature 2000 network is one of the possible ways for realization of such an approach.
107. It should support solving problems which are very common at the point of junction between nature protection and local communities development tendencies. On the one side the traditional protective activities aim at limitation of anthropopressure upon protected objects, on the other the local community endeavours after gaining most benefits from having such type of objects.
108. It should be stressed, that strengthening and stimulation of development towards innovation, use of knowledge and development of information society in the framework of the Programme implementation will indirectly affect positively the environment to a considerable extent. Thus, in the light of environmental criteria, these types of actions are particularly important and should be treated as priorities in the Programme.

9 Conclusions

109. The South Baltic Cross-Border Co-operation Programme presents a consistent and coherent programme for cross-border cooperation. The programme is consistent with a clear logic, clear and well structured objectives, priorities and indicative actions. The implementation system is also clearly described. The document was prepared with very good co-operation between the participating countries and has been subject to public hearings. The external consistency of the Programme with European, national and regional policies is also very high.
110. In the opinion of the evaluators, the South Baltic Cross-Border Co-operation Programme constitutes a very good tool enabling the South Sea Region to strengthen its weaknesses through cross-border co-operation.

10 Annexes

10.1 Annex 1 List of literature

Community documents

- 1) Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999;
- 2) Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999;
- 3) Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). EU Official Journal L 277/1 dated 21.10.2005;
- 4) Council Decision on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion. Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, on 13.7.2006, KOM (2006) 386 final version 2006/0131 (AVC);
- 5) Communication to the Spring European Council - Working together for growth and jobs - A new start for the Lisbon Strategy COM (2005)24, Brussels, on 2 February 2005;
- 6) Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008), COM (2005) 141;
- 7) European Charter of Small Enterprises, adopted by the Member States at the Meeting of the European Council in Feira, 19-20 June 2000;
- 8) i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions . Brussels, on 1.6.2005, COM (2005) 229 final;

Operational programmes

- 9) European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013: Operational Program for Central Europe;
- 10) European Regional Development Fund 2007-2013. Cross Border Cooperation Programme Lithuania – Poland, January 2007;

- 11) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Czech Republic – Republic of Poland;
- 12) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Poland (Lubuskie region) – Branderburg;
- 13) Operational Programme of Cross-Boarder Cooperation 2007-2013: Republic of Slovakia – Republic of Poland ;
- 14) Operational Programme of Cross-border Co-operation 2007-2013: Czech Republic – Republic of Poland, February 2007;
- 15) Operational Programme of Cross-border Co-operation 2007-2013: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Branderburg – Poland (Zachodniopomorskie region), January 2007;
- 16) Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, March 2007;
- 17) South Baltic Cross-boarder Co-operation Programme. Draft version from 21 March 2007;
- 18) South Baltic Cross-boarder Co-operation Programme. Draft version from 23 February 2007;
- 19) ERDF European Territorial Cooperation: Interregional Cooperation Programme (INTERREG IVC);
- 20) Transnational Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013;

Strategic documents

- 21) National Strategic References Framework for Poland for 2007-2013;
- 22) Lithuanian Strategy for the use of European Union Structural Assistance for 2007-2013;
- 23) National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment in Sweden 2007-2013;
- 24) Regional Competitiveness and Employment Strategy in Denmark 2007-2013. National Strategic References Framework;
- 25) Nationalen Strategischen Rahmenplan (2007-2013);
- 26) National Strategy for Regional Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Employment 2007-2013;
- 27) Regional Development Programme for Skåne;
- 28) Regional Growth Forum of Bornholm;
- 29) Business Development Strategy (Growth & Jobs strategy);
- 30) Bornholm I/S – a Tourism Strategy;
- 31) Regional Municipality Plan, June 2006;
- 32) Danish Regional Growth Strategy;

- 33) Strategy Action Plan for Pomerania Voivodeship;
- 34) Strategy Action Plan for West Pomerania Voivodeship;
- 35) Strategy Action Plan for Warminsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship;

Ex-ante and SEA reports

- 36) Ex-ante evaluation of Cross-Border Co-operation Programme Czech Republic – Poland 2007-2013;
- 37) Ex-ante evaluation of Cross-Border Co-operation Programme Slovakia – Poland 2007-2013, z dn. 27.09.2006;
- 38) Ex ante Evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the North Sea Programme 2007-2013. Final text to be included in the programme document submitted to the European Commission, Rotterdam, 16 January 2007;
- 39) Strategic Environmental Assessment of South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme, April 2007;

Rother reports

- 40) Acs Z., Audretsch D.B. (1990), Innovations and Small Firms, Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press;
- 41) Benchmarking Industry-science Relationships (2002) OECD;
- 42) European Competitiveness Report 2003, (2003), European Commission;
- 43) European Competitiveness Report 2004, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004;
- 44) Feldman M. P. (1994) The geography of innovation, Dordrecht: Kuwer;

Guidelines on evaluation

- 45) New Programming Period 2007-2013. Indicative Guidelines on evaluation methods: Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators. Working Document No. 2;
- 46) New Programming Period 2007-2013. Indicative Guidelines on evaluation methods: evaluation during programming period. Working Document No.5;
- 47) New Programming Period 2007-2013. Commission methodological paper giving guidelines on the calculation of public or equivalent structural spending for the purposes of additionality. Working Document No. 3;
- 48) Evaluation of the Socio-Economic Development – the Guide, London, Tavistock Institute in association with GHK and IRS, London, December 2003;

Other documents

- 49) Minutes from JPC meetings from 2 March 2007.