

Baltic Science Network.

Connecting Through Science

Mobility Funding Instruments



Further details on the publication

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Author of the publication	Tomas Andersson (SE), Mari Leino (FI), Riitta Mustonen (FI), Christian Schäfer (DE), Nina Akrami-Flores (DE), Izabela Raszczyk (PL), Angelika Kedzierska-Szczepaniak (PL)
Institutional affiliation of the authors	Swedish Research Council (SE), University of Turku (FI), German Academic Exchange Service (DE), University of Gdansk (PL)

Project in brief

Baltic Science Network (BSN) serves as a forum for higher education, science and research cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR).

BSN is a policy network gathering relevant transnational, national and regional policy actors from the BSR countries. The Network is a springboard for targeted multilateral activities in the frame of research and innovation excellence, mobility of scientists and expanded participation. These joint activities are modelled with an overall aim to ensure that the BSR remains a hub of cutting-edge scientific solutions with the capacity to exploit the region's full innovation and scientific potential. The activities are modelled as examples of best practice which form basis of the policy recommendations drafted by the Network.

The platform is tailored to provide advice on how to enhance a macro-regional dimension in higher education, science and research cooperation. Recommendations jointly formulated by the Network members address the European, national and regional policy-making levels.

BSN is a flagship of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region under the Policy Area Education, Research and Employability, as well as one of two cornerstones of the Science, Research and Innovation Agenda of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Disclaimer: This Working Paper is based on input from stakeholders and BSN partners and does not necessarily reflect the views of all participating Member States and organisations.



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1. Introduction to the Suggested Mobility Tools

Within Baltic Science Network (BSN) Work Package (WP) 4 mobility tools for enhancing the cooperation within the Baltic Sea region (BSR) has been analysed with regard to needs (Activity (A) 4.1 and A 4.2). A description of the funding landscape as of today has been given (A4.2).

In the development of this report for A4.3, all members of WP4 have been continuously involved. Several meetings in person and telephone conferences have been performed. The final result has developed chronologically as described in the different sections in this report.

In the initial meetings the outcomes of A4.1 and A4.2 was discussed. Different routes to meet challenges given in these reports were analysed. A large table, with draft tools and important aspects for success was created, see appendix 1. Based on this table, six different funding tools for supporting mobility within the BSR was designed. After input in questionnaires from the BSN expert groups and the partners three of them were prioritised. The three suggested mobility tools are presented in the section 2, while the other three suggestions are found in the appendix 2.

In the description of the tools, there are some values that are implicit for all of them and therefore not described under each tool. These are excellence, transparency and continuity.

– **Excellence** should be the guiding criteria for selecting the best candidates for funding. It is important to start with areas of mutual BSR interest in order to be able to widen the research cooperation.

– **Transparency** with regard to call timeline, review and selection criteria is a baseline to build confidence within the research community with regard to any call and it will build trust for these initiatives.

– **Continuity** is also important for building up trust from the research community. No matter how large outreach efforts we bring together, some researchers will miss the first call. With calls every year the knowledge within the research communities will increase and with time the BSN tool will hopefully become a standard tool for supporting mobility within the BSR.

The step, with the feedback from the expert groups and the BSN partners and the choice of three mobility tools is described and discussed in section 3 of this report, while the feedback from the questionnaires is summarized in the appendix 3. In the section 4, alternative angles on the three chosen mobility tools, given in the answers from expert groups and the partners, is elaborated. Finally, the section 5 describes the recommendations from A4.3 to A4.4

Finally, we are using the term “the Baltic science region”. In the following we assume that the following countries can be considered: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden.



2. The Suggested Three Mobility Tools

2.1. Summer Schools with a Focus on Large Research Infrastructures

Introduction: The BSR has several large research infrastructures. There are many users, but the number of potential users is much higher. To increase the awareness about the use of the unique expensive equipment and to attract potential new users we propose to fund summer schools for PhD students and/or researchers from the BSR.

In the following, a *large research infrastructure* is defined as research instrument, so large that it is not a part of a laboratory, but rather it is a laboratory of its own. Further, these instruments are unique and are typically one of two or three of its kind in the world.

Further, a *summer school* is defined as a one week focused course with the aim to give a comprehensive knowledge about a specific subject generally not covered in the course plans. Here the summer school is supposed to teach potential new users about a specific large research infrastructure.

Proposed tool: The summer schools should be designed by the infrastructures and applied for in an open call. The funding will be provided by funders in the countries having the infrastructures, but the courses will be open for PhD students & researchers from the entire BSR. The funders will benefit from widened use of the infrastructure and a potential future interest in developing the infrastructure from more countries. The costs covered by the funding can be used for development of the courses or possibly support for funding of travels of the PhD students/researchers or for expert tutors if the course material already exist. It will be important to stress strategies for how the entire BSR can be reached in the applications.

Expectations: Initial estimation: 10 applications, where 3–4 might be funded with up to approximately 50 000 Euro each. Probable funders are the national funding agencies or ministries or possibly the EU.

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme: The tool is relevant for the WP3, which covers excellent research and infrastructures.

The tool is relevant for the WP4 in attracting new potential PhD students/researchers from different Baltic countries to the expensive infrastructures, with increased future mobility and cooperation.

The tool is also relevant for the WP5 with regard to widening the use of expensive unique equipment.



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2.2. Research Internships for Students within the Baltic Sea Region

Introduction: Due to differences in research infrastructure, funding and salaries in countries the exchange between these countries is not balanced and it is necessary to raise the awareness of future researchers for research and science resources in countries which are not the most obvious choice when planning a high level international research cooperation. Addressing students has the advantage that they are usually more adventurous and less focused on immediate returns than more advanced scientists. Having a positive research experience abroad during their studies will help greatly increase their motivation to return to the respective country when their research career is more advanced. It is suggested to adapt DAAD's funding scheme RISE (www.daad.de/rise) which was extremely successful in reducing the exchange imbalance between Germany and the USA to the BSR.

Proposed tool: The funding scheme matches PhD students (hosts) in one country with students from another country based on the specific scientific interests of both groups. PhD students (together with their supervisor) in the host country make suggestions for internship projects. These are advertised in the sending countries. Interested students submit their application (motivation letter, information on their expertise/scientific interest, certificates/grades, letter of reference). The host PhD student reviews the applications and identifies the suitable candidates. The final ranking is done by the funding agency based on the PhD student's preselection, the applicants' grades and the project's quality.

Working jointly on a research project of mutual interest will foster personal ties between different nationalities as well as the interest in research and in scientific cooperation. Additionally, the PhD students gain valuable people management skills. There are no comparable EU programs available.

Expectations: The program is freely scalable, depending on funds, and can be easily combined with strategic investments by institutions and governments. In DAAD's RISE-Program the costs are 3.200 Euro/scholarship of 2 - 3 months (in 2018: 1694 applications and 308 scholars).

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme: The tool is highly relevant for Work package 4 (foster mobility within the BSR). In the long-run it will contribute significantly to WP 5 (increase participation of researchers/research institutions from low-performing countries/ regions in joint activities of BSR countries) and it is a useful instrument in WP 3 (foster jointly research and innovation excellence in the BSR.)



2.3. Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students

Introduction: Over the course of a doctoral project specific scientific questions arise which cannot be answered at the best with the resources on-site (knowledge, instrumentation etc.). This is a good opportunity to strengthen international cooperation between research groups which work on related topics. Together with his/her supervisor the doctoral student could identify appropriate universities/research institutions in other BSR countries and join them for a limited period in order to work on a specific research question. The preconditions for a quick integration are very good due to the match of research interests, the applicant's qualification in the specific research area and the easy administrative integration (no enrolment, no employment necessary). The risk of a brain drain is low (the thesis must be finished at home institution) and the research stay may help to initiate a long-term cooperation of the participating institutions.

Proposed tool: Short-term (1 – 6 months) scholarships. Individual application by doctoral students with invitation letter from the host institution, research proposal (+time schedule), certificates, reference letter (supervisor), publications, CV. Application is due at specific deadlines (selection committee meeting).

The number of scholarships is easily scalable, e.g. by focusing on EU15, EU13 and non-EU countries exchange or on specific research areas or university consortia. Co-financing by home or host institutions can be used to increase the number of scholarships or to compensate for differences in cost of living.

This funding scheme can easily be combined with other funding schemes. This funding scheme is very flexible and can easily be combined with other funding schemes. The program will help to achieve the research objectives of the individual PhD students. It will strengthen their organisational skills, their confidence and their interest in international cooperation – a good starting point for future cooperation with the BSR.

Expectations: Demand will depend on the knowledge about the program, motivation by the supervisors and the general openness towards international exchange and cooperation. Costs in DAAD's program: about 1.500 Euro/month + travel costs + insurance

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme: The tool is highly relevant for the WP4 (foster mobility within the BSR). It contributes significantly to the WP5 (increase participation of researchers/research institutions from low-performing countries/ regions in joint activities of BSR countries) and the WP3 (foster jointly research and innovation excellence in the BSR.)



3. Input from the Expert Groups and the Baltic Science Network Members: Result, Discussion and Conclusion

The six mobility tools described in section 2 were designed in June 2018 by the WP4 working group. In the next step, by the end of June 2018, these suggestions were sent to the BSN Expert Groups for comments¹. Further, in August 2018, an inquiry with similar questions was sent to the BSN partners. A short summary of the answers from the expert groups and the BSN partners is given in the appendix 3.

In summary, the answers and the overall scores from the BSN Expert Groups and the BSN members were surprisingly aligned. Three of the proposed mobility tools in section two singled out as favourites. These were:

- Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures (section 2.1);
- Research Internships for Students within the Baltic Sea Region (section 2.2);
- Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students (section 2.3).

Before analysing the overall answers, it is also worth addressing the width of the proponents. Already among BSN members the spread of competence is wide. The partners include Ministries, funding agencies, universities and non-governmental expert organisations promoting exchange within the BSR. That is to say everything from policy making, through research and education to facilitation of exchange. In addition to this, the BSN consortium are from different BSR countries with different challenges to tackle and thus with different needs. The expert panels consist of a blend of BSR experts and top-researchers from the three areas: Life Sciences, Welfare State and Photon and Neutron Science. It is thus not surprising when the proposals face critics from some, while they are praised from others. Even though this creates a difficulty in analysing the answers, the great advantage is that the proposed tools have been analysed from many angles.

When a tool was criticized it was generally due to:

- This tool already exists;
- Difficulties in finding sustainable funding in certain countries;
- Only gaining certain countries or certain areas of research;
- The general idea is good, but do not believe in the tool.

For the first three types of critique the proposed tools can in most cases be adjusted in order to explain their uniqueness and width. Some of critique can further be attributed to the short format descriptions of one page which limited the possibilities to give the full picture. In these cases, the text needs to be revised that take care of shortcomings and misunderstandings, if the proposal should go further.

¹ BSN Expert Groups are temporary groups of scientific experts, whose main task is connected to BSN A3.2 Development of joint transnational strategies for specific areas of scientific excellence.



4. The three prioritised mobility tools – needs for further clarifications

4.1 Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures

One criticism was that the proposal was too much directed towards the large infrastructures. This limitation was introduced deliberately from the beginning since the desire was to design a call of appropriate format for a pilot and if all types of instruments should be regarded, the tool would be very much oversized with regard initial funding. It is however one criticism to bear in mind when developing the tool further.

Another criticism was that the tool would probably benefit the countries who have the infrastructures. This was however not the aim with the tool. Of course, the large infrastructures are well-known and unique instruments in their host countries. The aim is rather to widen the user base to researchers from those countries being less familiar with the opportunities of the tools and include them in the user communities. The summer school money can possibly be used for supporting the travelling of the students. Attracting new users will, of course, be one of the main criteria for selecting the best proposals.

With regard to student travels, study visits and other forms of exchange proposed, this is welcome examples. The tool is thought to be a bottom-up possibility for the infrastructure to propose how an addition of extra money can make existing summer schools better or to propose new summer schools with unique possibility to widen the user-base within BSR. There is no prerequisite to focus merely on students. This could probably also be summer schools for new researchers.

4.2 Research Internships for Students within the Baltic Sea Region

One comment relates the question whether this is research funding or rather education. The program concerns direct research funding insofar as it provides technical support of the ongoing research project of a PhD student. More importantly, it is an investment in the future as the research motivation of both PhD students as well as research-interested students is boosted, and the seed is sown for a generation of researchers who are motivated to cooperate internationally with partners in the whole BSR.

Another comment asked for the added value as compared to ERASMUS. The main advantage is that this mobility tool has a very lean structure. It does not need agreements between institutions and can be implemented with high or low numbers of internships, depending on the available resources. It represents an efficient bottom-up process, driven by the joint interests in research and international cooperation and creating a win-win situation for the mobile students and their PhD hosts.

There were some doubts whether the tool is attractive, but the fact that the established program in Germany (host country) with the sending countries U.S.A., Canada, U.K. and Ireland in 2018 alone generated 550 internships offered by the German PhD students and



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1.694 applications for internships in Germany, documents that this format is very attractive.

4.3 Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students

One comment expresses the view that arranging the mobility of PhD student should be the responsibility of universities and not of the PhD students. However, both are valuable approaches: University agreements make it easier for students to realize a research stay abroad. Developing a project on one's own, identifying a suitable host and arranging one's travel is more challenging but also much more rewarding. Having demonstrated this perseverance is certainly an asset when applying for jobs.

One comment addresses the question whether the focus on excellence may limit many BSR destinations under this tool. However, with this tool the competitive advantage of highly developed countries is much less pronounced, because not the overall resources of the institution are decisive, but whether there is one researcher available who can provide the knowledge, the material or the methodology to answer a specific scientific question. Such people should be present in all countries and this program makes it possible to target them directly.

One comment points out that all three suggested tools are rather similar and could be combined. Such a combination might indeed enhance their effectiveness considerably as it would enable a lot of networking and interaction between the scholars, as well as synergy effects. Hence, by combining different approaches in one comprehensive agenda the initiative can be more efficient than the uncoordinated application with many different funders and unpredictable success rates.



5. Recommendations to the A4.4

BSN strategy is to enhance each BSN member's involvement into the sustainability of the outcomes and implementation of measures. BSN Action Plans are a tool supporting the process to reach this goal. National or institutional Action Plans are the responsibility of the particular partners representing BSR. To support the partners, the action plans is suggested to provide:

- 1) a project output summary report, which will target national and international stakeholders and decision makers (policy makers, funders, university authorities). The report will have an online and print version and used by the partners during their negotiation processes of action on national ground after the BSN project to implement the outputs. The report is planned to be published in February 2019.
- 2) Guidelines supporting the planning of the BSN national and institutional actions,
- 3) English template for the summary of envisaged actions by the BSN project partners. There will be one record for each country. Outputs will be included in the project summary report.

The prioritized BSN mobility tools will be included in the documents mentioned above and the BSN members will be encouraged to directly refer to them in their respective BSN action plan development on national and institutional grounds. It is to be stressed that the recommendation of the WP4 team focuses on an implementation of a joint pilot action of a mobility tool as collaboration of several, if not all, countries represented or covered by the BSN membership.

Appendix 1. Initial table from the A4.3 defining the six mobility tools

	Seed money for networking	Information Centre	Summer Schools	Mobility	Mobility	Mobility
	<p>Mobility in the BSR is a tool to increase macroregional collaboration and scientific excellence and provides an opportunity for the development of the region. There is a variety of programmes and schemes that can be used but the information has to reach the target group and clearly show the benefits of BSR collaboration. Therefore, the proposed tool is a network of BSR MOBILITY AMBASSADORS. The Ambassadors would be scientists at different levels of their professional career with a 'success story' of BSR science cooperation via a mobility tool and the ability to raise interest among their peers to discover BSR potential off their research.</p> <p>Seed money supports in the Baltic Sea Region the cooperation of research networks by increasing the critical mass of existing and new networks and by identifying new research topics relevant for the region.</p> <p>The advantage is that the seed money strengthens the work of the networks so that they start generating cooperation and making new national/international research funding applications.</p> <p>Possible challenges and risks include not reaching applicants from all countries in the region, receiving applications which are not thematically balanced (e.g. too many applicants on biosciences), the seed money funding not being used to build the network in sustainable manner. Sustainability issues include lack of quality, applications are not clear and well planned nor functioning, and there is no impact on the area.</p>	<p>Mobility in the BSR is a tool to increase macroregional collaboration and scientific excellence and provides an opportunity for the development of the region. There is a variety of programmes and schemes that can be used but the information has to reach the target group and clearly show the benefits of BSR collaboration. Therefore, the proposed tool is a network of BSR MOBILITY AMBASSADORS. The Ambassadors would be scientists at different levels of their professional career with a 'success story' of BSR science cooperation via a mobility tool and the ability to raise interest among their peers to discover BSR potential off their research.</p> <p>showing the potential of BSR in terms of scientific collaboration as an output of mobility schemes, giving the possibility to be 'up-to-date' for researchers in BSR with mobility programmes</p> <p>all programs in one place, up to date, leads how to go through, helps an interested person to navigate through the variety of programmes</p> <p>A challenge is that English will be the scientific language and to find the appropriate level. Another challenge is to define which infrastructures we aim at (what size). There is a risk that the tool will mainly match the requirements of the infrastructure (as compared to those who should get educated), so a challenge is careful design.</p> <p>The research infrastructures. They should propose according to needs.</p> <p>10-20 infrastructures.</p> <p>The research infrastructures. They should propose according to needs.</p>	<p>The Baltic region has several large research infrastructures. There are many users, but the number of potential users is much higher. To increase the awareness about these expensive instruments we propose to fund educational tools to be used at universities or to be held at the infrastructures in order to educate young and experience researchers. Educational tools can be summer schools or packages of educational material to be used for educational purposes.</p> <p>More educated future users and efficient use of the infrastructures. To increase the awareness of the potential of the infrastructures.</p> <p>Even if participating countries (with regard to money) would be those housing these infrastructures, the benefit (the educational tools) would be for the entire Baltic region.</p> <p>A challenge is that English will be the scientific language and to find the appropriate level. Another challenge is to define which infrastructures we aim at (what size). There is a risk that the tool will mainly match the requirements of the infrastructure (as compared to those who should get educated), so a challenge is careful design.</p> <p>The research infrastructures. They should propose according to needs.</p> <p>10-20 infrastructures.</p> <p>The research infrastructures. They should propose according to needs.</p>	<p>ABC-scheme: Raising the awareness of future researchers for research and science capabilities of countries which are not the most obvious choice when planning a high level international research cooperation. The offer could be focussed on exchanges between EU15 and EU13 countries</p> <p>Win over future scientists for a future research stay in/a cooperation with a research institution in another Baltic sea state (an EU13 state?)</p> <p>low cost instrument, which will move a lot of people, overcome the reluctance to choose less research intensive countries. Return to home country is supported (continuation of studies)</p> <p>administrative work is considerable (high number of applications, matchmaking process), risk of brain drain for PhD thesis, balanced exchange EU15-EU13 might not be easy to achieve</p> <p>students before doctoral studies</p> <p>high</p> <p>research institutions (offering research internships) and students (applying for research internships)</p> <p>home country</p> <p>Research Councils; EU</p> <p>To be solved when the instrument is designed.</p>	<p>Short-term doctoral scholarship scheme: open up access to optimum research facilities to PhD students in order to enable them to investigate specific aspects of their PhD thesis with resources which are not available at their home institution. The offer could be focussed on exchanges between EU15 and EU13 countries</p> <p>Enhance the level of research work and the scientific quality of doctoral education at the sending institution (in Baltic sea state or in EU13 state?) by making use of the optimum research facilities in other states</p> <p>medium cost instrument to compensate deficiencies in a specific research area. 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<p>Mission? Description of the added value of the funding instrument for the BSR cooperation?</p> <p>Description of the goal/aim of the funding instrument</p> <p>Description of the advantages of the funding instrument?</p> <p>Estimation of the possible challenges/risks of the funding instrument?</p> <p>What is the target group of funding?</p> <p>Estimation of the size of the target group?</p> <p>Who is an applicant?</p> <p>Who is applicable for funding? Individual applicant/research teams/consortium?</p> <p>Eligibility criteria?</p> <p>Who is funding? Who are funders? Estimation of the funding agreements needed?</p> <p>How the funding is collected from the funders? Common pot/virtual common pot?</p>	<p>Mobility in the BSR is a tool to increase macroregional collaboration and scientific excellence and provides an opportunity for the development of the region. 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Sustainability issues include lack of quality, applications are not clear and well planned nor functioning, and there is no impact on the area.</p> <p>Old / new research networks</p> <p>New/old research networks from BSR. Each network should include partners from minimum 4 (or 5?) BSR countries.</p>	<p>Mobility in the BSR is a tool to increase macroregional collaboration and scientific excellence and provides an opportunity for the development of the region. There is a variety of programmes and schemes that can be used but the information has to reach the target group and clearly show the benefits of BSR collaboration. Therefore, the proposed tool is a network of BSR MOBILITY AMBASSADORS. 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The offer could be focussed on exchanges between EU15 and EU13 countries</p> <p>Enabling the development of top-level research profiles while strengthening international institutional cooperation under conditions which reduce the risk of brain drain</p> <p>higher cost instrument to enable top level research of up and coming future scientists. Return to home country is supported (mandatory return period)</p> <p>rather low number of scholars (due to high costs), brain drain after reintegration period, balanced exchange EU15-EU13 might not be easy to achieve</p> <p>postdocs</p> <p>depending on country, low to medium</p> <p>(future) postdocs (must provide invitation letter by home institution in home country and by host institution). Home institution must take care of administration (positions instead of scholarships)</p> <p>Third party funding, home institution? (should host institution contribute?)</p> <p>Common pot for top candidates, Virtual common pot for candidates who fulfil the quality criteria, but cannot be funded with the available common pot resources</p>	

<p>Estimation of the costs / individual application and/or costs / call for funding?</p>	<p>Funding could be used for travel costs, costs of arranging a meeting, the duration of the network could be 1.5 – 2 years. Lump sum / network could be 20 000 € (for 2 years), or related to the size of the network, e.g. 4000 € / network? If 20 networks are funded, one call for funding would cost approx. 200 000 €.</p>	<p>to be discussed / personnel costs will differ from country to country, one bigger event per year, and several smaller regional / national info events per year in each country)</p>	<p>To be analysed but maybe 100 000 euro per grant. Administrative costs will be extras.</p>	<p>Scholarship costs: Depending on host country, for students coming to Germany: 750 EUR / month, total costs 3,200 EUR / Fellow (2-3 months stay, including travel allowance, insurance, scholarship holder meeting etc.)</p>	<p>monthly allowance about 1.500 Euro/month + Travel costs + insurance, funding period 1-6 months</p>	<p>home institution during the whole funding period - payments are continued during stay at host institution (+ expatriate allowance?) - home institution receives funds from funding agency by funding agreement - salary depending on home country salaries for postdocs. - estimates for gross salaries e.g.: 4150 EUR/month (Germany), 3400 EUR/month (Sweden)</p>
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Appendix 2 The three mobility tools not prioritized

Seed Money for Networking

Introduction: The reports from WP3 shows that there are several areas where all BSR countries have research excellence. The cooperation in large research programs between the BSR countries is however limited. In order to stimulate new cooperation projects of excellence, a programme for seed money support of research networks is proposed. The aim will be to stimulate new and old research networks to design new ideas for mutual research that by the end of the funding of the networks is mature for applying to EU or different national initiatives. This is highly expected to stimulate future mobility and exchange in the Baltic region.

Proposed tool: An open call for BSR science networks will be designed. The networks will be for two years and granted projects will get money for travels, workshops and other networking related costs. Each application should contain partners from at least 4–6 countries in the BSR. One partner will be the coordinator, but each partner need to name an administrative and one scientific partner. Selection criteria will be:

- The networks ability to start new initiatives
- Added value to BSR (not doing something that already exists).
- Clearly formulated plans for activities
- Concreteness of future actions
- Visions
- Feasibility with regard to budget and implementation
- CVs of the applicants.

Expectations: The aim is to have a success rate of approximately 20%. Initial estimation: 10 funded networks. The grant size will be up to 20 000 Euro, dependent of the size and extent of the network. Expected funders will be universities.

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme:

The tool will be relevant for the WP3 (regard to cooperation areas and excellence).

The tool is relevant for WP4 in stimulating exchange and creating a base for mobility.

The tool is also relevant for the WP5 in the respect of widening.



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Baltic Sea Region Mobility Ambassadors

Introduction: In the report of AP4.2 it is shown that there are several programmes supporting mobility within the BSR. Since the information about these programmes is distributed over several webpages, the knowledge about these opportunities is generally low among the researchers. One solution would be to create an information centre. Another way, which is proposed here, is to, on a national level, use experienced researchers who already have a success story within BSR cooperation as inspirers.

Proposed tool: Each BSR country fund national part-time BSN Mobility Ambassadors who have the responsibility to during their mandate period spread information about BSR science cooperation options and inspire by giving good examples of success stories. The ambassadors should be from one of the expertise fields of BSN given in the WP3 reports.

Selection criteria will be:

- Proven and broad experience in the BSR science cooperation;
- Good knowledge of existing programmes;
- Research excellence;
- Mature and viable plan for knowledge distribution.

Expectations: One to two national BSN Mobility ambassadors should be funded by each country. These part time positions will be announced publically simultaneously in the different countries. The support will not be a part of their current salary but an extra support and will typically be about ten percent extra on their salary. The programme would also include funding for local smaller promotion activities/ events organized by the Ambassadors for raising visibility. The national funding sources needs to be determined by each country.

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme

The tool will be relevant for the WP3 (regard to cooperation areas and excellence).

The tool is relevant for the WP4 in stimulating exchange and creating a base for mobility.

The tool will probably widen research along the lines of the WP5 aims.



International Postdoctoral Research Projects within the Baltic Sea Region

Introduction: At the postdoctoral level it is important for up-and-coming scientists to develop an individual research profile and an adequate output in a promising research area. Economic security is becoming more relevant as well as the anchoring in institutional structures. The proposed funding scheme considers these needs and opens-up new opportunities for international institutional cooperation. The research stay abroad is combined with a mandatory reintegration period in the scholar's home country, thus reducing the risk of brain drain. The home and the host institution can use the project as starting point for a new/more intensive cooperation. If the program is focussed on mobility between EU-15 and EU-13 countries it has an even greater effect on the widening process within the EU.

Proposed tool: Individual researchers are supported with 18-month work contracts with their home institution (plus an expatriate allowance). The first 12 months of the funding period are spent abroad, followed by a 6 months reintegration period. During the whole funding period the researcher is in close contact with his/her home institution making it easier for him to prepare a smooth return. The selection criteria are the previous academic achievements, the quality of the research project and the fit of the chosen institutions. The scholars are chosen by an international selection committee, based on the written proposals and two reviews by international experts in the specific research area. The program is freely scalable, depending on funds, and can be easily combined with strategic investments by institutions and governments.

Expectations: The similar DAAD program (P.R.I.M.E., www.daad.de/prime) is very attractive, resulting in a high selectivity and in particularly promising scholars. Estimates for gross salaries are e.g.: 4150 EUR/month (Germany), 3400 EUR/month (Sweden)

Relevance for different WPs of the BSN programme:

The tool is highly relevant for the WP4 (foster mobility within the BSR).

It contributes directly to the WP3 (foster jointly research and innovation excellence in the BSR).

It can be used as an instrument within the WP5 (increase participation of researchers/research institutions from low-performing countries/ regions in joint activities of BSR countries).



Appendix 3 Summary of feedback from BSN Expert groups and Partners

Summary of feedback to WP4 Suggested mobility tools

Mari Leino
10.9.2018



Background

- BSN has studied challenges in researcher mobility in the BSR, and makes suggestions for mobility tools in the BSR
- WP4 gathered feedback of the proposed tools to see if they are relevant and needed
 - Feedback from the expert groups and the BSN partners and associates
- Next step is to design a pilot programme for the most supported mobility tool(s), and to plan for implementation of the pilot
 - Pilot would be implemented in the 3 selected areas of research of BSR
 - Implementation of pilot programme in possible BSN Extension Stage
- Important values in mobility tools
 - Excellence as guiding criteria for selecting candidates
 - Transparency
 - Continuity
- Target audience for mobility tools is mainly researchers (PhD students →)



Feedback to proposed mobility tools



- Expert groups
 - Life Sciences discussed feedback in their meeting
 - Photon/Neutron Science and Welfare State expert group feedback via feedback forms
- Partner/Associate feedback
 - Feedback via online survey to ensure comparability
 - 9 responses to online form by 10 September

Disclaimers



- WP4 understands that it is difficult for many partners and associates to evaluate the tools
- But WP4 can not plan for all 6 proposed mobility tools to become pilot programmes
 - we think it's important that BSN partners and associates can have a say at which we choose
- Numeric scores are indicative, but they were needed to indicate general feedback about the tools
 - Numeric feedback in this version based on responses left by 10 September
- The real need and relevance will be tested in the pilot
- Many questions concerning administration and funding of the programmes remain to be resolved

General comments received

- “This exercise should be user driven, i.e. reflecting what the potentially relevant researchers and knowledge institutions/individual faculties deem as the most fit and value-adding tools for support of specific mobility needs.” (DAFSHE)
- It is important for DAFSHE that the tools, once prioritized, are voluntary and – as mentioned above – user-driven. And – as a starting point - that funding for the schemes should be provided by the relevant knowledge institutions
- Disappointing that Russia and Belarus are not mentioned in tools 4-6
- To get funding out of regular national/regional budgets the added value must be very clear, therefore a thematic focus of the tools should be inline with the respective national/regional strategic areas For getting long-term funding a Pilot Phase will be helpful, therefore selection of above tools, should bear in mind their potential to be funded in the BSN Extension stage. Criteria are here the total lengths (only short term tools possible) and the Focus on BSR Inttereg priorities i.e. Innovation/ interconnection of Research infrastructures.

General comments received

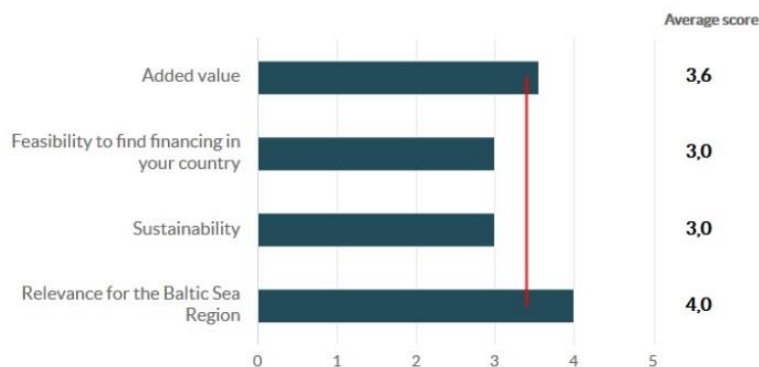
- “It should be a priority to make sure any new tools do not overlap with existing ones. Communicating already existing options for BSR-wide mobility, e.g. in Horizon 2020 and COST, could be a mobility tool in itself.” (DAFSHE)
- “Most of the suggested activities to increase mobility can already be found within current mobility instruments and programmes, like the EU framework programmes Horizon2020, and Erasmus+, the Nordic/Baltic education programme Nordplus, the Nordic research programme Nordforsk, the MoU between the Ministry of Science of the Russian Federation and the Nordic Council of Ministers on cooperation in education and research and other bilateral instruments that include mobility within the network” (Norway)

1. Seed Money for Networking

- **Aim:**
 - to stimulate new and old research networks to design new ideas for mutual research that by the end of the funding of the networks is mature for applying to EU or different national initiatives
- **Proposed tool:**
 - Seed money for new/old networks
 - Starting a new network or introducing a new element to existing network
 - Granted networks get money for travel, workshops and other networking related costs
 - Partners from 4-6 BSR countries
 - Selection criteria e.g. ability to start new initiatives, added value to BSR, feasibility of the plan (budget and implementation)

1. Seed Money for Networking BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score for Seed Money for Networking: 3,7





1. Seed Money for Networking BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- In Hamburg we have seed money facility in place, therefore there is not too much added value, for our Region (cf to other mobility tools in question) as the project size/ length is also not larger.
- This is a field specific theme. 20 000 € for the projects might be too little especially for STEM field, but might be suitable for social sphere.
- Sounds as the most relevant of all proposals. Sustainability is proved by similar scheme used by Jean Monnet program.
- We are not sure if this generates new networks, since the partners are probably known before. To ensure sustainability, it should be combined with another tool (e.g. summer schools). We have to be careful that this won't create artificial networks (which won't last long).
- The problem for us is to see the sustainable funder in Sweden.



1. Seed Money for Networking Expert group feedback

- Overall score: 3,7
 - Life Sciences 4, Welfare State 3,8, Photon/Neutron Science 3,3
- Anything to create connections is good, it is important to meet and talk. The COST network is in place already, and the financing for COST is planned to double in the next Framework Programme. Maybe it would be best to reach first to the already existing networks and opportunities.
- “Science drives networking, not nationality. This suggested tool requires many countries to be coordinated, with rather little money to gain. I think this would be more admin than outcome, and I don't think many would be interested in applying.”
- “Could have added value for social sciences and humanities, which have been underprivileged for a long time, in these fields there is a great interest and very limited resources for networking.”
- Very important, can be a good push for a promising network based on the perspective new concept.

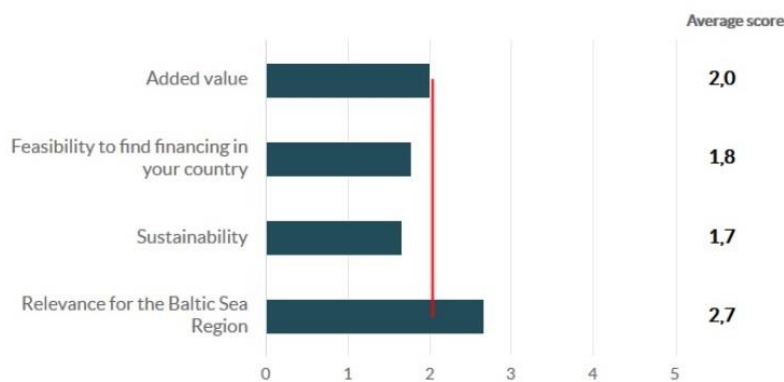


2. BSR Mobility Ambassadors

- **Aim:**
 - There are many mobility tools in the Baltic Sea Region (BSN: 86)
 - Aim is to increase information about available mobility options and about BSR as a mobility target area
- **Proposed tool:**
 - BSN Mobility ambassador network
 - Each BSR country finances 1-2 part-time mobility ambassadors
 - Researchers with experience in BSR cooperation
 - Ambassadors from the fields of expertise identified by BSN

2. BSR Mobility Ambassadors BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score for BSR Mobility Ambassadors: 2,2



2. BSR Mobility Ambassadors BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- **There might be an added value in combination with information centres.**
The real challenge will be to convince excellent researchers, because they are already very much involved in research and often members of other board. Difficult to find s.o. who really goes for BSR interests.
- **A part-time job is not sufficient**, additional staff needed (higher costs); advising job is very complex, high qualification/enthusiasm and continuous training are necessary; can adequate grant writing training be provided?
- **Impact of abassadors is difficult to foresee and to evaluate** later on. This will make it difficult to get funding for piloting and also for long-term perspective.
- added value difficult to estimate - **risk of low impact of ambassadors work** regarding i.e. remuneration; difficulty in funding sources as a result of low importance; risk of poor sustainability after project's ending
- there is a risk that each country does not comply with this idea, and the question is - how proceed in such situation. It could also be difficult to find interested scholars to take this task at a national level (home country).

2. BSR Mobility Ambassadors Expert group feedback

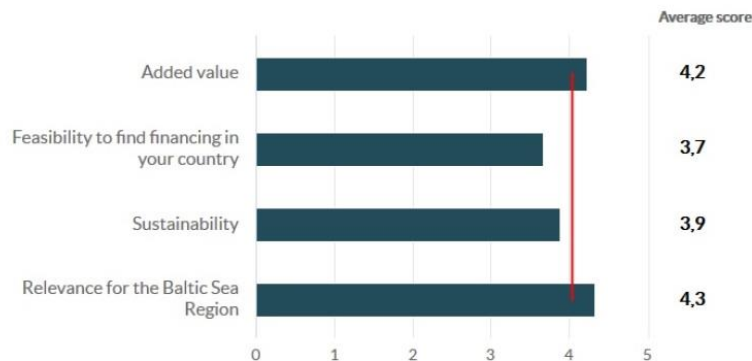
- Overall score: 2,4
 - Life Sciences: 2, Welfare State: 2,7, Photon/Neutron Science 2,5
- Could be useful, but not the tool with the highest priority. There are national coordinators already, added value is not clear.
- Life Sciences expert group did not see added value in the BSR Mobility ambassadors: There are already National Contact Points (NCPs) in place, but they seem not to work. The ambassadors must know the research very well and be active in matchmaking to make real impact – not just forward emails!
- Idea is good, but it is difficult to see the practical value of ambassadors without some other supporting measures.

3. Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures

- **Aim:**
 - Baltic Sea Region has several large research infrastructures.
 - Aim is to increase awareness about the use of the unique expensive equipment in BSR and to attract potential new users.
- **Proposed tool:**
 - One-week summer school is supposed to teach potential new users about a specific large-scale research infrastructure.
 - Goal is to inform about the possibilities, not to conduct actual research
 - Summer schools to be organised by the large-scale research infrastructures

3. Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score: 4,1



3. Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- This is a sensible tool to gain hands-on experience with the latest scientific breakthroughs within the BSR. However, it should focus too much on scientific research facilities (laboratories); We need more arguments for the added value to convince potential funders.
- Clearly reflects the BSN original idea. Helps both large infrastructure owners and small research communities to work together.
- This theme is good but might be in this format too restricted, as there are only few eligible infrastructures and maybe not so many doctorate students in basic research(?). (Research projects funded by industry excluded?). There might be a risk that we create a new target for scientific tourism (cf. CERN).
- added value will only be discernible in the long-term
- might favour EU-15 due to more developed research infrastructure

3. Summer Schools for Large Research Infrastructures Expert group feedback

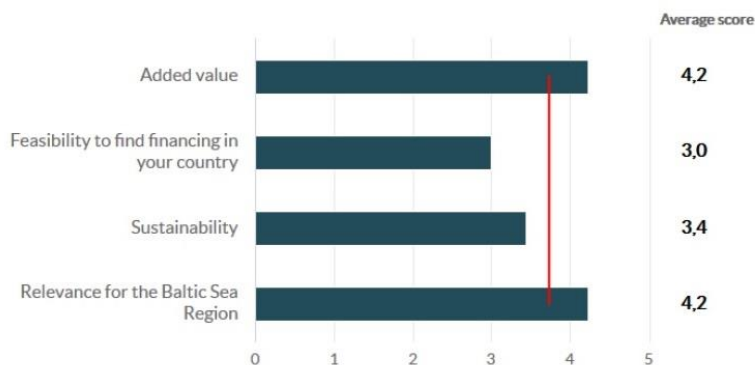
- Overall score: 4,1
 - Life Sciences: 5, Welfare State 4, Photon/Neutron Science 3,3
- Summer schools are very good and important. The summer schools could include also experiment design, as this would support the students' work and creating understanding on what can be done with the infrastructure. This would make a very good pilot project.
- Summer schools are extremely effective. However, there are currently many summer schools in place. Redirect this suggestion to support the current schools: expand their scope, expand their number of students, support student travel, add study visits or hands-on opportunities to curriculum, etc.
- Not relevant for social sciences and humanities.

4. Research Internships for Students within the BSR

- **Aim:**
 - Due to differences in research infrastructure, funding and salaries in EU-15 and EU-13 countries the exchange between BSR countries is not balanced.
 - Aim is to attract young researchers to mobility periods in PL, LT, LV, EE
- **Proposed tool:**
 - matching PhD students (hosts) in one country with summer interns from another country based on the specific scientific interests of both groups
 - Hosts make suggestions for internship projects, these are advertised in sending countries, and interested students apply for the internship positions
 - Master / PhD students can apply
 - Adaptation of DAAD's funding scheme RISE (has been successful in reducing the imbalance between Germany and USA)

4. Research Internships for Students within the BSR BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score: 3,9



4. Research Internships for Students within the BSR BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- This is an attractive tool since it addresses the problem from the other side: offer a project and attract researchers. The main problem is to convince the host of the added value to attract only students from the BSR.
- This is education. If instead cooperation between researchers is stimulated, this will also benefit student at all levels and excellence and sustainability will be more emphasised. Whats the added value compared to ERASMUS?
- Requires large amounts of funding but seems to be the most productive proposal of three individual mobility tools. Russia and Belarus are even not mentioned and this is a very disappointing fact.
- flexible tool, easy to implement, opportunity for long-term cooperation, chance for students to get new competences and to develop their carrier; high possibility to find funding institution (due to medium/low costs of scholarship)

4. Research Internships for Students within the BSR Expert group feedback

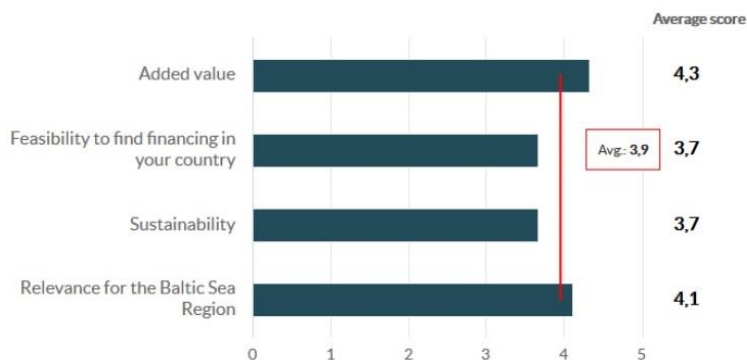
- Overall score: 3,9
 - Life Sciences: 4 Welfare State: 3,4 Photon/Neutron Science: 4,3
- It is possible to form groups of PhD students focused on particular problem, relevant also for the common Baltic identity of future professionals.
- Idea is good, but there is already number of international mobility schemes (ERASMUS, bilateral agreements), the added value of this measure will be therefore small.
- Great added value and opportunity, esp. for the students from the new (2004+) members of the EU and Russia/Belarus. Highly feasible if the selection criteria are clear and the selection process is transparent.
- Life Sciences expert group proposed internships at companies.

5. Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students

- **Aim:**
 - Over the course of a doctoral project specific scientific questions arise which cannot be answered at the best with the resources on-site (knowledge, instrumentation etc.).
 - This is a good opportunity to strengthen international cooperation between research groups which work on related topics
- **Proposed tool:**
 - Short-term (1-6 months) scholarships for PhD students
 - Individual applications, invitation letter from hosting institution is needed
 - Co-financing by home or host institution can be used

5. Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score: 3,9



5. Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Good approach to avoid brain drain. All depends on the research field and the attractiveness of the host organisation. Long-term co-financing must be secured. Who is part of the committee (and who is paying them)? If this leads to long-term networks, this of course is of high relevance.
- Clear focus on research; mobility is direct result; considerable numbers can be achieved; a direct exchange between EU 15 and EU13 can easily be ensured
- Can be substituted by existing programs. Doctoral students are very focused and will find their way to fund semester abroad. Focus on excellence may limit many Baltic destinations under this tool. Russia and Belarus are even not mentioned and this is a very disappointing fact.
- Contributes to better utilisation of Research infrastructures in the BSR. Very good for widening topic targeted at students and young Researchers. Financing out of regular Hamburg Budget not so likely, only chance if thematically focused of one of Hamburg's strategic fields. Tool would be very suitable for BSN Extension stage

5. Short-Term Scholarships for Doctoral Students Expert group feedback

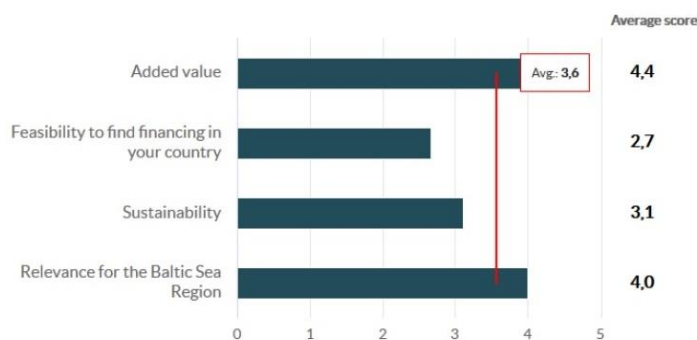
- Overall score: 3,8
 - Life Sciences: 3 Welfare State: 3,7 Photon/Neutron Science: 4,7
- This seems to be the most valuable programme.
- Repeats already existing schemes (ERASMUS, special mobility schemes for PhD students). Special Baltic call have some relevance, but the number of participants will not be very large (there are already existing mobility schemes available for mobility).
- Very attractive for researchers, incl. those from the social science field. A great option for researchers as the possibility to travel and stay abroad may vary in terms of duration (not all would be able to stay for a longer period, so 1-6 months is an excellent range adaptable to various circumstances)
- In e.g. Estonia there is not such big need for this kind of mobility tool. This kind of short-term mobility periods could be connected to infrastructure for most useful visits.

6. International Postdoctoral Research Projects within the BSR

- **Aim:**
 - At the postdoctoral level it is important for up-and-coming scientists to develop an individual research profile and an adequate output in a promising research area.
 - Aim is to open new opportunities for international institutional cooperation, home and host institutions can use the project as starting point for new/more intensive cooperation.
- **Proposed tool:**
 - Individual researchers are supported with 18 months work contract at home institution. First 12 months are spent abroad, last 6 months are a reintegration period at home university.
 - Target group are post-docs
 - Adapted from DAAD program [P.R.I.M.E.](#), which has been very attractive for researchers

6. International Postdoctoral Research Projects within the BSR BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Overall score: 3,7



6. International Postdoctoral Research Projects within the BSR

BSN Partner / Associate feedback

- Tool is not suitable for BSN Extension stage (too long), could possibly be funded by MSC-Cofund (but only 50% funding)
- Already today we fund postdocs. However, it will be hard to find consensus within Sweden to limit the calls to a specific geographic region.
- Good approach for reducing risk of brain drain. Should be interlinked with research topics relevant to the country/region.
- This scheme is worth piloting to see whether it affects the brain drain.

6. International Postdoctoral Research Projects within the BSR

Expert group feedback

- Overall score: 3,9
 - Life Sciences: 3 Welfare State: 4 Photon/Neutron Science 4,3
- For post-docs 18 months is too short a period, as most postdocs would prefer longer periods. This time is too short for personal reasons (e.g. family moving with the postdoc), and for research.
- Great added value, especially due to measures to reduce brain drain. Highly relevant, esp. for students from countries with relatively poorer resources/infrastructure or narrower career opportunities.
- The research may be deep and focused, with new results. It is important that the home and the host institution can use the project as a starting point for a new or more intensive cooperation – as a start of a new initiative for the BSR.

Summary



Suggested mobility tool	BSN Partner/ Associate score	Expert group score
Seed money for networking	3,7	3,7
BSR mobility ambassadors	2,2	2,4
Summer schools for large research infrastructures	4,1	4,1
Research internships for students within the BSR	3,9	3,9
Short-term scholarships for doctoral students	3,9	3,8
International postdoctoral research projects within the BSR	3,7	3,9

Proposal



- Most scores to:
 - Summer schools for large research infrastructures
 - Research internships for students within the BSR
 - Short-term scholarships for doctoral students
 - International postdoctoral research projects within the BSR
 - Might be too long to be implemented within BSN Extension stage?