

Promoting Transnational Blue Growth Cooperation Projects – The Smart Blue Regions Experience

GoA 4.3

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The goal of this GoA was to identify possibilities for internationalisation of cooperation. During the project, the goal was to produce five documented examples of planned transnational cooperation. This document presents the overview of our experiences in identifying potentially interested stakeholders, networking actors from different regions, gathering project ideas from workshops, developing the ideas into detailed project idea papers and supporting interested stakeholders in organizing project development workshops. At the end there are also findings that we have gathered during the process.

GoA 4.1 as a first step in identifying actors for potential transnational cooperation

First step of this work package was to identify potential actors for this kind of cooperation. In [GoA 4.1, a Baltic Sea Region wide study identifying Blue Growth Cooperation Opportunities](#) was conducted.

Not much information on actors working on different blue growth sectors in different countries and regions was available before the project. With the help of project partners from Schleswig-Holstein, Skåne, Pomorskie, Southwest Finland, Ida-Viru and Riga, the study brought a lot of easily accessible information by mapping actors operating in the fields of "Machinery and technology", "Energy" and "Life Sciences and Blue Medicine".

The study includes short overviews of blue regions (also outside the project) in the countries participating in the project. Besides these, there are also maps showing actors from different fields of blue growth, a long list of actors identified during the gathering of information and identified topics for future cooperation projects. The identification of cooperation topics was conducted by interviewing regional stakeholders in each of the partner regions.

The identified topics for future cooperation projects played a big role in deciding the themes for GoA 4.2 workshops.

The topics that had most interest in regions were the following:

- Building/developing/testing of autonomous ships (5 interested regions)
- Alternative drive technologies in shipping (4)

- Autonomous shipping (4)
- Blue Biotechnology for health/ pharmaceuticals (4)
- Health tourism – especially marketing (3)
- Lack of skilled workers (3)
- Monitoring (3)
- New materials for shipbuilding (3)
- Offshore wind energy (3)

GoA 4.2: Identifying cooperation possibilities by workshops

The findings of GoA 4.1 were used in deciding the themes for workshops. Besides these findings, it was found out during the project that cluster support systems seem to be important in implementing blue RIS3. The topic of blue biotechnology was dropped because of a parallel project of the Submariner Network, Blue Biotechnology Alliance, is already dealing with this theme.

The workshops were held in following themes that were identified in GoA 4.1:

- *Skills and competences needed for the autonomous ship of the future in a reindustrialized Europe – Options for transnational cooperation (Autonomous shipping)*
- *Clusters in maritime technologies and tourism – cooperation opportunities in the Baltic Sea Region (Clusters)*
- *Offshore Wind Energy Supply Chain – future outlook for technologies and cooperation (Offshore Wind Energy)*
- *Coastal and maritime tourism- cooperation potential in the Baltic Sea Region (Health and Coastal Tourism)*

The information brought by the study helped the project partners to better identify potential actors that would be invited to participate in GoA 4.2 workshops that were held in order to gather information on cooperation possibilities in several fields identified in GoA 4.1.

Because the regions themselves know their stakeholders the best, inviting participants to the workshops was on each partner region's responsibility. The number of participants ranged from around 25 people to more than 90 people. In total, more than 160 persons took part in the four workshops.

Workshop on autonomous shipping

The first workshop was held on autonomous shipping in Malmö, Sweden on 1 March 2018 where around 25 people took part in discussions.

The workshop began with presentations that dealt with future skills needed for autonomous ship, basics of autonomous ship operations and the future of autonomous shipping in the BSR.

The second part of the presentations dealt with how to recruit skilled workforce, how to improve the image of the maritime sector for young people and how to encourage students to choose maritime industry as their field of specialization.

During group work phase, the participants were divided into small groups to discuss the theme of "How can cooperation between regions/ countries help us on the way forward". During the discussion part of the workshop, five ideas surfaced:

1. Transnational database for sharing skills & competence
2. Transnational education platform
3. Making the shipping industry visible in a transnational communication project
4. Global recruitment campaign
5. Innovation arena

From these ideas, the recruitment campaign and innovation arena were seen to be the most promising ones for further evaluation and idea papers were drafted based on the findings of the workshop.

Workshop on clusters

The second workshop, this time for maritime and tourism clusters, was organized 14–15 March 2018 in Kiel, Germany. Around 30 people took part in this workshop.

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to presentations of different clusters from different regions: how they are organized, how they are funded and what makes them successful. Four topics were chosen as guiding structure: cluster structures, cluster activities, financing cluster organisations and internationalisation of cluster organisations. Themes of the clusters presented varied from tourism to maritime clusters.

The second day of the workshop was dedicated to group work on future cooperation projects for cluster managements in the Baltic Sea Region. The World Café method was used. The participants were divided into 3 groups, sitting on 3 tables with different topics. After 30 minutes, the participants changed the table. At the end, each participant spent 30 minutes at each table,

meeting different people in each round. The result of each table was presented at the end of the workshop.

Table one dealt with the question regarding financing international cooperation projects, table two with success factors and formats to establish international cooperation projects and table three with topics for future international cooperation projects in the Baltic Sea Region. A fourth table was dedicated to tourism clusters only.

Table three came up with the idea of a modularized shipyard network to create common standards for e.g. design and engineering, supply chain, contractor and supply sources. The tourism table came up with the idea of a signal session tool, an online based tool to give education to actors working in the field of tourism.

Both these ideas were taken up to further evaluation. The idea paper on signal session tool was drafted in cooperation with the presenter of the idea. The modularized shipyard network idea, however, was later found to be very difficult to develop further.

Workshop on offshore wind supply chain

The workshop on offshore wind titled "Offshore Wind Energy Supply Chain – future outlook for technologies and cooperation" was held in Gdansk on 26 April 2018. This workshop was by far the most popular one, attracting over 90 participants.

The themes for this workshop were following:

- Constructions: Wind Towers (design, optimization), Substation (concept design, design optimization, modular design), Foundation (new designs, new functionalities)
- Vessels: Seabed Preparation (offshore cabling / foundations, port / inland waterways dredging, deep sea mining), Installation Vessels (land-based vs. offshore assembly, direct delivery of components, purpose-built installation vessel – jack-up's), Service Vessels (mother vessel accommodations, transfer vessels, service parts transport)
- Wind Farm Efficiency: Concept Design (turbines / substations / grid layout), Decommissioning of Constructions (modularity, recycling, new use), Multi-use of Constructions (aquaculture, biomass, energy storage, marine hydro kinetics, wave)
- Autonomous Operations (surveying, Operation & Maintenance)

The workshop began with a short introduction after which the participants divided into groups of around twenty people. There were different rooms for different themes, as stated above. The groups moved from one theme to another and were instructed to think of potential transnational cooperation possibilities.

The following cooperation possibilities were identified:

- Multi rotor system (interest expressed by 4 participants)
- Aluminium constructions (interest expressed by 5 participants)
- Modular mills (interest expressed by 5 participants)
- Charging vessels (interest expressed by 2 participants)
- Operating floating platforms (interest expressed by 2 participants)
- Port developments (interest expressed by 1 participant)
- Optimizing vessel fleet (interest expressed by 1 participant)
- Autonomous operations standards (interest expressed by 2 participants)
- Data platform for ROV operations (interest expressed by 2 participants)

Based on the participants' interests reported during the workshop, a brief description of each project idea was sent out to all interested participants with a kind request to reflect and contribute to these descriptions. After collecting all inputs, the idea descriptions were updated and sent out to interested parties. Due to limited resources, including time – in the frames of the SBR project, project partner MIG offered further assistance to the development of the themes that gained the greatest interest. These ideas were the multi rotor system, aluminium constructions and modular mills and they were selected for further evaluation.

Parties interested in other ideas were put in contact to the given idea proposer. Thus, they have had a chance to start potential future cooperation regardless of possible assistance from the Smart Blue Regions project team.

Workshop on tourism

The final workshop, on health and coastal tourism, was organized in Jurmala, Latvia on 19 June 2018. Around 25 people took part in the workshop. The aim of the workshop was to exchange ideas and identify transnational cooperation opportunities in the Baltic Sea Region in the maritime and coastal tourism based on common tourism product groups and selling points of partner regions.

During the first part of the workshop participants exchanged selling points and development opportunities in common maritime and coastal tourism products: nature and active tourism, health tourism, wellness and SPAs, cultural heritage as well as small harbours and sailing tourism.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to concrete planning of transnational project ideas in joint development and marketing of the coastal and maritime tourism products in the Baltic Sea Region. The participants were divided into four groups, nature and active tourism, health tourism, cultural heritage and sailing.

Two ideas surfaced from this workshop:

- BSR – destination for health, sea medicine and SPAs
- Improving quality of coastal tourism destinations in the BSR

Both ideas were taken up for further evaluation and drafted in cooperation with the presenters of the ideas.

GoA 4.3: Developing project idea papers based on results from the workshops

Based on the results of the GoA 4.2 workshops, a total of eight idea papers were drafted and circulated for stakeholders. Besides these papers, further six papers were drafted on the theme of offshore wind. Due to limited resources only the three ideas on offshore wind listed below were offered further assistance by the project.

The idea papers were prepared by the project team members and further developed by stakeholders that took part in the workshops. Some of the ideas had a very strong ownership from the beginning, some of them were synthesises from the discussions in the workshops. The work on this GoA was coordinated by the Regional Council of Southwest Finland.

The following ideas were developed into idea papers that include the challenges to be addressed, expected results and target groups, main activities, possible partners and financing sources if there were to be identified:

- **BSR Innovation Arena for Maritime Industry** (3 interested regions)
 - Bringing together SMEs around the BSR from different fields of industry to find new smart and innovative solutions for maritime industry
 - Business support organizations or clusters as main partners
 - Example: Bastu-concept has been successfully developed in Southwest Finland to offer SMEs a platform to cooperate. The idea behind Bastu is that companies from different sectors (for example from blue growth in general, but more specifically from ship building and tourism for example) can cooperate while developing new ideas. This concept can be developed further to serve as a BSR-wide practice.
 - The most important thing is to boost concrete solutions instead of just new research themes
- **Recruitment Campaign for Maritime Industry** (2 interested regions)
 - The aim is to attract professionals from outside the BSR to regions suffering from lack of skilled workers

- The aim is also to improve the image of maritime sector in the BSR and create a joint image of an area with a lot of opportunity for professionals
- The main target group are SMEs because they do not usually have the resources to recruit globally
- Use of new and innovative marketing, recruiting and communication methods that work with young people (videos, social media etc.)
- Activities:
 - Collecting best practices from different regions and countries.
 - Establishing (through intermediate organisations) a network of SMEs in maritime sector in need of labour force
 - Realizing a pilot campaign in BSR to test different best practices and new ways of recruitment.
 - Capacity building training for SMEs on how to use new channels is needed.
- **Signal Session Tool for Baltic Sea Tourism** (2 regions)
 - Companies in tourism business are very small and don't have resources to follow and identify weak signals and trends that will be crucial for the development of tourism business in the future. Tourism is a business where global changes in customer behaviour have an almost instant effect on the encounter between the service provider and the visitor.
 - Thus, actors in tourism business should be offered a framework where they could learn more about those signals, think about what they mean, what kind of opportunities they offer and also an arena where they could share their thoughts with other actors and networks around the BSR.
 - Activities:
 - Identifying weak signals that will be taken into focus
 - Regional workshops in participating regions led by a "guru" of each signal in question.
 - Sharing the results of regional workshops to other regions
 - Based on lessons learned, planning and piloting of new tourism activities
 - Main target groups are tourism companies around the BSR. Each active area must have a larger entity that acts as a coordinator during the project (Eg. regional tourism organization (DMO, destination marketing organization))
- **Aluminium Constructions** (3 interested regions)
 - Using aluminium for wind mill infrastructure and for turbine cover

- Prototype design, production (model scaled down?) and verification of the efficiency based on numerical modelling, cost-benefit in-depth analysis
- Target groups: Turbine producers, monopile producers, R&D (numerical modeling, model tests)
- **Modular Mills** (1 region)
 - OW constructions are getting bigger and heavier and because of this, their transport becomes an issue. On site modular production could be a solution, followed by modular installation of the mills in situ at the sea.
 - Developing the modular production and installation of the OWF mills
 - Prototypes
 - Technical analysis
- **Multi-Rotor System for Off-Shore Wind Turbines** (2 interested regions + regions outside the project)
 - Development of a multi-rotor systems in order to improve efficiency and to minimize damage risk of a one turbine system
 - R&D, building of a prototype, commercialization
 - Project consortium is already working for this idea, see below for more information on their work
- **Improving Quality of Coastal Tourism Destinations around the Baltic Sea Region** (4 regions)
 - Quality improvement on destination level by mapping current states of affairs of different regions and stakeholders and to develop new solutions based on the results of the mapping
 - Activities:
 - Mapping of current regional statuses: Services, customer satisfaction, staff satisfaction, current status of sustainable development in the area etc.
 - Sharing of findings with partners from other regions
 - Developmental activities based on the results (designing new services and products)
 - Peer-reviewing and benchmarking the destinations
 - Creating a handbook based on results and best practices
 - Target groups: destination marketing organizations, enterprises and higher education
- **BSR – Destination for Health, Sea Medicine and Spas** (3 interested regions)

- Making the BSR a recognized health destination by combining different kinds of expertise from different regions in Estonia, Latvia and Finland. The key is in finding common identity for the entire region and at the same time finding and communicating strengths of each BSR partner region. Further development of services and products is also a prerequisite.
- Activities:
 - Mapping the strengths and selling points of each BSR region with proven potential for health and well being tourism
 - Carrying out market researches to tailor products and services for specific potential target markets
 - Product development involving research institutes for generation of scientific evidence proving positive effects of nature and natural resources in the coastal regions on health
 - Activities targeted at improving skills and hospitality of staff involved in service sectors of wellness, health and SPAs
- Target groups: SMEs, intermediate organizations (eg. tourism and health clusters), coastal municipalities and regions, research and academia, IT sector representatives

These idea papers were drafted in cooperation with the stakeholders that presented these ideas. Each partner region circulated the papers around their stakeholders in order to gather critical mass for a possible cooperation project.

We approached also the MA Network with hopes of having a pilot call on blue growth. The idea got some momentum at first but for unknown reasons, it was never realized.

What happened and what will happen to the project ideas in the future?

BSR Innovation Arena for Maritime Industry

There was a lot of interest from various regions but unfortunately due to resources, no-one was ready to take the lead in project development. Because of wide interest, it is still possible that some time in the future someone could take up this project.

Recruitment Campaign for Maritime Industry

Initially there was strong interest for the campaign from both Skåne and Southwest Finland and the EMFF Blue Careers call was identified as a strong option for funding. The Southwest Finnish actors met regarding this project but unfortunately it was not possible for them to join the project

within the given timeframe. In a different situation in the future, this kind of project cooperation could be possible.

Signal Sessions Tool

After the workshop in Jurmala, it was suggested that it could be maybe put together with the idea on improving quality of coastal tourism destinations.

Aluminium Constructions

The idea presenter decided to join the Multi-Rotor Systems idea. The idea as such is thus not continued as a separate project but as a part of another one.

Modular Mills

Even though there was interest at first, this idea was not taken up at the end.

Multi-Rotor Systems

This project idea is going forward and there is a strong partnership already existing. There is a strong possibility for developing this project idea into a successful commercialized product. See next chapter for more information.

Improving Quality of Coastal Tourism Destinations around the Baltic Sea Region

There was strong interest from both Poland and Finland to develop this into a project but unfortunately there were no viable funding opportunities available at the moment. Thus this idea was put into hold to wait for new funding opportunities.

BSR – Destination for Health, Sea Medicine and Spas

Same as previous idea on tourism.

If you are interested in any of the project ideas, please contact your local Smart Blue Regions partner directly for further descriptions and information on the projects!

Success case presented: pushing the Multi-Rotor Systems idea forward

The theme of Multi Rotor System was identified as one of nine ideas raised and discussed during the workshop on offshore energy value chain organised by project partner Maritime Institute in Gdansk (MIG) – in cooperation with the GSG Towers S.A. on 26 April 2018 in Gdansk.

In the frames of the Smart Blue Regions project a following offer was provided to parties interested in the project:

- Active searching for further consortium partners based on SBR project contacts (potential partners from regions involved in the project: Skåne, Southwest Finland, Ida-Viru, Riga, Schleswig-Holstein)
- Practical and technical assistance in organisation of the project development workshop. This includes covering the costs of the venue renting and catering, workshop facilitation, documentation from the workshop, including a description of the project enabling its use for the project financing application.

The theme proposers were asked to inform MIG once the partnership of a given idea decided to make use of the above presented offer. Out of three potential consortia, only one reacted to the offer and the first project development workshop on the theme Multi-Rotor System was organised on 13-14 August in Gdansk (less than 4 months after the idea identification – because in innovative ideas time matters).

MIG provided venue, catering as well as the workshop facilitation including drafting minutes. Afterwards, MIG has been in constant contact with the idea developer, providing him with updates from the project partners (e.g. interest from Estonian entity) as well as updates on possibilities for co-financing of the idea.

Given the fact that this experience has been considered as a best practice of the SBR project, the consortium was invited to the project conference in Berlin in January 2019. Parties considered this an opportunity to meet and further elaborate the idea and discuss next steps. The venue and catering was again offered by the SBR project (EPCO) and idea owner (now a start-up company named Windtak) presented the theme and stage of development to SBR partners at their meeting on 23 January 2019. According to the representatives, the workshop organized in April and the help and facilitation of the Smart Blue Regions project were vital in making the project come true.

According to representatives of the project, the project is going strong and there is a very good chance of commercializing this idea. In the next five years there are estimated to be investments at following levels:

- First stage prototype, an investment of around 250 000 euros
- Second stage prototype, an investment of around 2,5 million euros

Our findings

- It is important to know your stakeholders. Without the work done in GoA 4.1, it would not have been possible to invite all the relevant stakeholders. The work in GoA 4.1 also helped in identifying most promising themes for cooperation.
- Deciding clear themes for workshops is important. This however does not mean that the scope for cooperation should be very limited. For example, the workshop for offshore wind supply chain had 4 sub-themes and several smaller themes listed under it. This way more stakeholders were able to find the ones they had something to offer for. The result was that more than ninety people from various fields in the wind energy supply chain participated in the workshop.
- Follow-up after the workshops is important. Even though project partners have had the responsibility to prepare the idea papers, keeping in touch with the idea presenters has been a prerequisite for relevancy. The more the partners have been able to engage the idea presenters, the more detailed the idea papers have been.
- Identifying the relevant regional stakeholders and circulating the project ideas to them is the key to build up consortiums.
- Contacting stakeholders through local project partners is important. It is easier to build trust if invitation for cooperation comes from someone you know. This is also the case in transregional cooperation. Project partners know their stakeholders and can vouch for them.
- Local project partners use regional cluster organisations or networks to reach single actors. Cluster organisations and networks proved to be useful intermediaries and contact points.
- Building trust among actors takes time. Because of this, it might be difficult to start projects in a quick timeframe. On the other hand, the workshops have brought actors together and got them to know each other, in the future there are chances that they might join together for a different project.
- A committed lead partner should be found very soon. Without a committed lead partner pushing the project further, there is a strong chance that the project ideas will stay as such.
- Innovating new project ideas without aiming for a specific funding call can be challenging. On the one hand, there is a possibility to innovate without limits and this can produce also positive unexpected results. On the other hand, it can be difficult to find viable funding options for the ideas.
- Gathering info for funding opportunities even after the project has ended is important. There are still some projects that have potential to be funded. Keeping in touch with the

idea presenters and the ones interested in them is important in case there will be funding options in the future.

- Facilitating the first meetings of a project team is very important. The Multi-Rotor System consortium has been very grateful for the work of MIG and according to them, the project idea would not have been such a success without proper facilitation, inviting partners and supporting them.