



PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020

Cross-border co-operation programme under the European Territorial Co-operation objective

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SECTION 1

PROGRAMME INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Strategy for the cooperation programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

Introduction

The Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 is a continuation of the cross-border co-operation which started with the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013.

The Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 aims to strengthen co-operation among regions, achieving the following strategic goals:

- Competitive economy (Priority axis 1);
- Sustainable use of common resources (Priority axis 2);
- Well-connected region (Priority axis 3);
- Skilled and socially inclusive region (Priority axis 4).

The Programme will thus contribute to achieving the goal of the Europe 2020 strategy for "smart", "sustainable" and "inclusive" growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 aims to contribute to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region supporting objectives "save the sea", "connect the region" and "increase prosperity".

Programme area

In continuation of the 2007-2013 co-operation, the participating regions in the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 are situated in Estonia, Finland including Åland, Latvia and Sweden. In total there are 18 "core" and 9 "additional" regions in the Programme area (according to the European Union Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics by regional level 3 classification (NUTS 3)).

There are 2 new participating regions of Finland: Satakunta as the core area and Pirkanmaa as the additional area.

The inclusion of Satakunta in the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 has been a natural development due to strong co-operation between Satakunta and the Programme area. In the recent years the ties between Satakunta and the Programme regions have been strengthened even further. The physical connections from Satakunta to other parts of the Programme area are good and increase the possibilities for co-operation. As Satakunta shares characteristics and challenges with other parts of the Programme area, the preconditions for co-operation are good.

Pirkanmaa has been included after a request of the Regional Council of Tampere Region to join the Programme area. The inclusion of Pirkanmaa to the Programme area is an accepted development as the region shares the orientation towards the Baltic Sea and the Central Baltic area. Due to actors relevant for the development of Baltic Sea issues the extended co-operation could bring added value particularly in the fields of innovation and the environment.

Programme structure

Due to the size and complexity of the Central Baltic Programme as well as previous 2007-2013 co-operation the Central Baltic Programme has three sub-programmes: the Central Baltic, the Southern Finland - Estonia and the Archipelago and Islands sub-programme. Sub-programmes are geographically defined. Maps of the sub-programme areas are included in the Annex to this document.

The **Central Baltic sub-programme** covers all eligible NUTS 3 regions of the Programme area. This sub-programme builds on 2007-2013 co-operation and is extended with Satakunta region as the core area and Pirkanmaa as an additional area. The sub-programme supports projects with partners from at least two of the Member States (including Åland) bringing added value to the whole Central Baltic region.

The **Southern-Finland - Estonia sub-programme** covers all Programme regions from Estonia and Finland (excluding Åland). This sub-programme builds on the Central Baltic 2007-2013 co-operation and is extended with Satakunta region as the core area and Pirkanmaa as an additional area.

The **Archipelago and Islands sub-programme** is a unique co-operation area of the Programme that covers the islands and archipelago parts of the coastal municipalities from the eligible NUTS 3 regions from Estonia, Sweden and Finland. This sub-programme builds on the Central Baltic 2007-2013 co-operation, widening the partnership with islands and archipelago from the Satakunta region. This sub-programme supports projects whose activities benefit the islands and archipelago parts of the sub-programme area.

The Programme priorities and specific objectives are common for all three sub-programmes.

More information about the partnership requirements for the sub-programmes is included in Section 5.3 and will be further dealt with in the Programme Manual.

Cross-border challenges and opportunities for the Central Baltic region

This chapter provides a short summary of the regional socio-economic analysis of the Programme area on topics as Programme area location, population, education, labour market, economic development, environment, natural and cultural heritage, transport, communication infrastructure, and social inclusion. The chapter also overviews the specific characteristics of the Southern-Finland - Estonia and Archipelago and Islands co-operation area. Each theme is then concluded with the key challenges and opportunities for the Central Baltic region that are relevant for cross-border co-operation. However, not all the challenges listed have been reflected among the Programme priorities due to the scale, available resources and co-operation interest of the Programme. For the purpose of clarity, statistical data has been left out. For the full analysis and references to relevant statistical data, see the Annex to this document ("Central Baltic Regional Analysis").

Area and location

The Central Baltic Programme area is located in the North-Eastern part of the European Union. The Programme area includes the Scandinavian countries Sweden and Finland and the two Baltic countries Estonia and Latvia.

The Central Baltic Programme area includes coastal regions of all Programme countries, for which the Baltic Sea is an important water body. The Baltic Sea has united countries over the centuries, forming a basis and continued strong potential for important economic and cultural relations in various spheres of life.

The Programme area covers 234 254.3 km² and is approximately 5% of the total land area of the European Union. The Programme area includes four metropolitan regions of the capital cities Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn and Riga. These all are located along the coast of the Baltic Sea and are relatively well connected with each other, as well as with the European and global economic centres. In turn, there are large territories of peripheral, isolated islands and rural regions, for which accessibility within the region, as well as with the European social and economic centres, is a challenge.

The Central Baltic Programme area covers very diverse regions: on the one hand there are highly developed, well connected, intensely populated cities and, on the other hand, less developed peripheral (in terms of location and accessibility), sparsely populated rural, islands and archipelago regions.

Through the borders of Finland, Estonia and Latvia and the common water body of the Gulf of Finland, the Central Baltic is a neighbouring region to Russia.

Challenges and opportunities related to the location of the region:

- Accessibility to the European and global centres;
- Accessibility within the Central Baltic region to achieve more integrated economies and labour markets;
- State of the development of the North- South and East-West transport corridors;
- The proximity of the Russian market.

Population

The total population of the Programme area is 10.5 million inhabitants (including additional area, 2012), which is close to 2% of the total population of the European Union. Compared to 2006 (before the start of the Central Baltic co-operation) the population of the Central Baltic region has increased by 156.8 thousand people (1.51%). This growth has been uneven within the Central Baltic region with growing population in the capital regions of Sweden, Finland and Estonia and decreasing numbers in all regions of Latvia and the rest of the territory of Estonia. Almost all Central Baltic regions experience negative rates of natural increase, except Harju county in Estonia, Helsinki-Uusimaa region, Pirkanmaa, Varsinais-Suomi in Finland, Åland, and Stockholm, Uppsala counties in Sweden. There is a continuing trend for people moving from the rural areas to the cities. This creates an additional challenge and need for urban planning. To achieve more regionally balanced development there is a need to support the creation of sustainable jobs outside of urban centres, and to strengthen rural-urban connections and resilience of the territories. The migration within the Central Baltic region has taken place for a long time. Significant number of people has moved between Finland and Sweden and in more recent years from Estonia and Latvia to Finland and Sweden. This is a good precondition for a better

integrated Central Baltic labour market that can be a solution for regional imbalances between jobs and skills available.

The whole Central Baltic region's population is ageing. The share of the older people (aged 65+) is projected to increase even more. This creates an additional pressure to the region's economic growth and substantially increases the social costs of the economies, including a challenge to provide public services. The smaller number of employed people to support those who are not working, signals for a need to increase productivity. In addition, there is a strong potential to exploit the opportunities of the "silver economy". This may take a form of new business models, new products and services created.

Challenges and opportunities related to population:

- Decreasing number of people in the working age that need to support those who are not, creates a need to increase productivity of the workforce;
- Increasing potential of the "silver economy" - opportunities related to developing services for the elderly as a target group;
- Further integration of the Central Baltic labour markets can be solution for regional mismatches of jobs and skills available;
- Education and knowledge intensive work-related migration adds to the international experience and increases competitiveness of people who bring benefit to the Central Baltic region in case of returning.

Education and research

The share of people with tertiary education is high and well exceeds the EU average levels and also the EU 2020 targets. Through the globally competitive educational systems people in the region are equipped with competitive skills. There are also top level universities within the region (mostly located in the region's urban areas) that have attracted international students both from the Central Baltic region countries and outside. To stay a globally competitive region, there is a need to further internationalise and strengthen the competitiveness of the Central Baltic educational system.

Vocational education and training (VET) plays an important role in providing people with the necessary competitive skills that match with the labour market needs. Accordingly, the main challenge for VET is to achieve stronger integration of learning and practise in the workplace.

Promoting the entrepreneurial activities in the region is relevant for the future competitiveness and it can be addressed by cross-border co-operation. There is a need to strengthen the entrepreneurial attitude already from the early school years.

There is a strong tradition and performance in adult education in the Central Baltic region. However, involvement rates of adults in the Central Baltic countries are different with high involvement in Finland, Sweden, and Åland and lower in Estonia and Latvia.

Regarding research and innovation, the Central Baltic region's cities (all capital cities but also Tartu in Estonia, Tampere and Turku in Finland, Uppsala and Linköping/Norrköping in Sweden and Ventspils, Jelgava and Valmiera in Latvia) are major drivers of innovation as compared to the outermost regions. There are quality education institutions, business development organisations and established companies.

Labour market

The employment rate among the Central Baltic regions differs. The highest involvement rate is in Stockholm county, whereas the rates are lower in Estonian and Latvian regions.

The economic crisis had a strong impact on the labour market situation in all the Central Baltic countries (to the largest extent in Latvia and Estonia). Since 2010, the employment rate again increases for all the regions. A further challenge is to lessen the mismatch of skills of people and the needs of the labour market. In addition, the Central Baltic economies experience relatively high youth unemployment rates, indicating the challenge of young graduates to enter the labour market. In terms of employment by economic sectors, demand for employees in the knowledge intensive industries (Information and Communication Technology (ICT), financial and insurance activities, professional scientific and technical activities) has increased and is expected to increase even further.

Challenges and opportunities related to education and labour market:

- Better integration of the Central Baltic labour market leading to more opportunities for work, lower unemployment and decreased risk of social exclusion;
- Identifying the skills needed for future jobs and delivering the necessary education and training to provide them;
- Better “translation” of competitive skills and future labour market needs into curricula and teaching processes;
- Further internationalisation and marketing of the Central Baltic education programmes to allow attracting more international students;
- Developing entrepreneurial attitude in the society already from the early school years via adding entrepreneurial or business approaches to curricula;
- Targeting adult education and lifelong learning to overcome structural unemployment. A special focus can be put on adult learning activities for the elderly to promote their competitiveness in the labour market.

Economic development

The Central Baltic region is characterised by significant differences in economic development. Regions of Sweden, Finland and Åland belong to the group of most developed regions within the European Union. Estonia and Latvia, on the other hand, still have gross domestic product (GDP) under the EU average level. However, both countries now show the fastest growth of GDP within the EU.

In addition, there are large differences among the urban and rural and peripheral regions, where capital cities, large cities and metropolitan regions stand out in terms of economic activity.

The Central Baltic countries have strong economic ties, characterised by intensive trade, considerable direct investments, integrated supply chains and significant numbers of people travelling across the region (both for work, study and leisure). Thus, there is a strong potential and a need to further integrate the Central Baltic countries' economies via new business development activities, cluster co-operation and further integration of labour markets. Clusters are defined as established co-operations between similar or complementary businesses and research and development (R&D) institutions.

There is a need to strengthen the export capacity of companies of the Central Baltic region. This can be done for example via identifying common business interests to jointly reach international markets.

Small and medium sized companies are the main providers of jobs in all the Central Baltic economies. Thus, their competitiveness and ability to innovate plays a key role in the future economic development of the Central Baltic region. For this reason, co-operation is crucial for working out new services and products that would later be brought to new markets.

New business development is crucial for all the Central Baltic countries. The Central Baltic regions approach to business development should be to target innovative, fast growing technology and other knowledge-intensive companies to strengthen the region's position on the global scale. As business areas, "blue", "green", "silver" economies, ICT and low carbon technologies offer excellent opportunities for the Central Baltic region.

There are several sectors with high potential in the region such as ICT products and services, electronic equipment, forestry, chemical industry, food production, transport and logistics and others. Tourism is an important sector for all the Central Baltic regions, both urban and rural and peripheral territories. The region is a preferred tourism destination both within and outside the region. Growing numbers of foreign tourists mainly from other parts of Europe, Russia and recently also from Asia, visit the Central Baltic countries. One of the major challenges for the tourism sector is seasonality.

Challenges and opportunities related to economic development:

- Further integration of the Central Baltic economies and markets;
- Identifying common interests (on the basis of clusters of different economic sectors) and further develop and market those clusters to access the new markets;
- New technology start-up activities to strengthen Central Baltic region's position as globally competitive hub for technology start-ups;
- Exploitation of potential target sectors for new business development such as ICT, "low-carbon" solutions, "silver" economy, as well as supporting the "green" and "blue" economy;
- Developing entrepreneurial attitude in the society already from the early school years.

Gender equality

Overall there are positive trends of increased number of women in the labour market and their involvement of better education and training. However, gender gaps remain in many areas in the labour market; for example, women are still over-represented in lower paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions. Similarly there is smaller share of women in leading positions in the research sector. In addition, the public sector is still dominated by women, while men tend to work in the private sector. However, compared with the EU average gender gaps in employment and pay in the Central Baltic countries are considerably smaller. Nevertheless, encouraging women to enter the labour market helps to balance the effects of decreasing working-age population and thus, has a positive effect on the overall growth of economy, lowered pressure to public resources and increased competitiveness. Apart from the labour market concerns, the proportion of female entrepreneurs is still smaller than for men, and more women than men still do not consider entrepreneurship as a relevant career option.

Challenges and opportunities related to gender equality:

- Potential of women skills and talent pool to engage in new business development, be self-employed;
- Involvement of women to the labour market;
- Potential of women being involved in science and research to further increase competitiveness and innovation potential.

Environment

The condition of the Baltic Sea is the main common concern and responsibility of the Central Baltic region countries. Even though the amounts of nutrient inflows have decreased over the previous decade, the Baltic Sea suffers from severe eutrophication. In regard to climate change, the Baltic Sea is the sea that seems to warm up fastest in the world. Climate change will mean changes for the Baltic characteristics and movements including ecosystem services.

Nutrients derive from different sources as households, industry and agriculture runoffs. One of the major concerns for the Baltic Sea is that once released, hazardous substances can remain in the marine environment for a long time because of the slow water exchange. In addition, the Baltic Sea is one of the most intensively shipped seas in the world. The heavy traffic carried out within narrow straits and in shallow waters increases vulnerability to pollution.

The Baltic Sea is home to a rich diversity of species and habitats. In order to protect the valuable coastal and marine habitats, HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) has identified and listed the Baltic Sea Marine Protected Areas (BSPA), with which the Central Baltic area is well covered (Recommendation 5/5 System of BSPA). On the one hand, it is important to further preserve the environmental values, sustain biodiversity and protect and improve the status of the Baltic Sea. On the other hand, there are different commercial activities (such as shipping and port activities, coastal tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, offshore wind farms) carried out on the sea or near its coasts. This implies that there is a “competition” for the marine space, signalling a strong need for efficient marine space planning and management to ensure that activities are carried out in a sustainable and efficient way. This can be achieved via effective and coordinated maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management that requires cross-border co-operation.

Natural and cultural heritage

The Central Baltic Programme area has a unique natural and cultural heritage. It is well covered and recognised among the list of Ramsar sites (i.e. wetlands of international importance in terms of ecology, biodiversity, hydrology), but also by the ecological network of protected areas by the Natura 2000. In addition, there are internationally recognised natural and cultural heritage sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (e.g. historical centres of Tallinn and Riga, Rauma, Struve Geodic Arc in Finnish, Estonian and Latvian territories, and others).

Over the whole region, there is distinctive wildlife, geographical features and rich scenery. There is also rich cultural heritage of both material (structures and buildings) and immaterial (traditions and lifestyles) values.

The presence of these natural and cultural resources implies the importance to preserve and protect them. This also leads to more favourable living and visiting environments.

Challenges and opportunities related to environment and natural and cultural heritage:

- Status of the Baltic Sea and importance of supporting and promoting activities, developing new methods and technologies to reduce the inflows of nutrients, toxins and hazardous substances;
- Estimating and predicting the climate change responses of the Baltic Sea and adapting to a changing climate
- Better integrated planning of urban environments leading to improved urban environments and reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions;
- Improved maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management as basis for sustainable use of marine and coastal resources;
- Balancing the conserving and developing aspects of natural and cultural heritage resources in creating sustainable tourist attractions to improve the quality of living and visiting environment.
- Foster “green” growth of the region exploiting potential of environment friendly technologies and “blue” growth of the region exploiting potential of the Baltic Sea resources.

Transport

The transport network in the Central Baltic region is well developed and consists of different transport modes. There are road and railway networks, sea fairways, inland waterways and air routes. They link the Central Baltic Programme area tightly together, but also provide links with other European Union countries, Russia and beyond. However, while the capital regions of all the countries are relatively well connected with regional and global centres, accessibility is still a considerable challenge for remote, rural and peripheral areas.

Well-functioning and integrated transport systems play a key role in providing access within the Central Baltic region and between the urban centres and their hinterlands.

Maritime transport historically and currently plays an important role in both cargo and passenger movements between the Central Baltic countries (the most frequent passenger connections run between Finland and Estonia, Finland and Sweden). The Baltic Sea is also an important route for cargo transport to and from Russia. Among the largest ports of the region (with the largest cargo turnover) is Port of Riga, Port of Ventspils, Port of Tallinn (incl. Vanasadam, Muuga, Paldiski, Paljassaare, Saaremaa), Port of Haminakotka, Port of Helsinki, Ports of Stockholm (incl. Stockholm, Kapellskär, Nynäshamn). The most intensive passenger turnover (over 9 M passengers in 2013) is between Helsinki and Tallinn ports. The dependency on fossil fuels is, however, still high in all transport modes. This leads to CO₂ emissions. Thus, there is a need to develop and promote integrated low-carbon, sustainable transport systems, to foster better planning of the urban space and to develop integrated transport systems.

In addition, there are a lot of small ports in the coasts of the Central Baltic countries, as well as in the islands and archipelago area. Small ports (small-scale cargo ports, yachting marinas, fisheries' ports) are important for local economies. Their existence is crucial for local and regional mobility. Improvements in small ports' services (e.g. facility services, rescue services, marketing) improve accessibility, foster growth in economic activity, employ local people and enhance development of other business activities. In turn, they are also important for tourism development, especially for services of yachting boats and small fishing vessels.

Challenges and opportunities related to transport:

- Achieving better integrated, multimodal transport systems to have significant impact on lowering the CO2 emissions;
- Achieving better integrated, "green" and carbon -neutral transport solutions for the remote, rural and peripheral areas, improving urban-rural connections;
- Developing small ports infrastructure as precondition for tourism development.

Communication infrastructure

The Central Baltic region, compared to other regions in Europe, has well developed ICT infrastructure. The average internet access rates are higher than the EU (especially in Nordic countries). This serves as a regional precondition for innovation. It can be argued that the Central Baltic region excels with highly developed modern communications infrastructure and globally competitive companies within the ICT sector. This creates excellent business opportunities for new and established companies, but also creates a strong potential to develop solutions and services supporting productivity and providing services for an ageing population.

Challenges and opportunities related to communication infrastructure:

- Maintaining competitiveness of communication infrastructure needs further investments especially in sparsely populated, isolated, rural and peripheral areas;
- Using the well-established ICT competence in the Central Baltic region as a source for new business creation and export expansion over various sectors.

Social inclusion

The Central Baltic regions are different in terms of levels of social inclusion. In 2012, 36% of the total population in Latvia and 23% in Estonia was at risk of poverty and social exclusion, while the regions of Sweden (on average 16%) and Finland (on average 17.2%) had lower figures than the EU average (24.2%) (Eurostat, 2014). One of the reasons for higher risk of poverty in Latvia and in Estonia is relatively high long term (over 12 months) unemployment (7.8% in Latvia and 5.6% in Estonia) that exceeds the EU average of 4.7%. There are other reasons that increase the risk of social exclusion such as structural unemployment, people living in areas with low work intensity and low income levels of households. Accordingly, there is a need to put more emphasis on addressing the challenges faced by the Central Baltic region's communities, especially in remote, rural and peripheral areas.

All the Central Baltic countries have a relatively high life expectancy at birth (higher for regions in Finland and Sweden), and low under-five mortality rates. Higher life expectancy together with low fertility rates leads to the ageing population. This further leads to the need to create adoptive lifelong learning capacities. In addition, it is important to better integrate young generation into the Central Baltic labour markets, as youth unemployment is still relatively high in all countries, especially in outermost regions and rural areas.

There is a strong need to provide people with new skills to strengthen their competitiveness on the labour market and to empower the communities in the region.

Challenges and opportunities related to social inclusion:

- Better integrated Central Baltic labour market that would lead to more opportunities for work (including work opportunities for the elderly), lower unemployment (including youth unemployment) and decreased risk of social exclusion;
- Support to communities and social groups with special challenges and problems.

Specific characteristics of the Archipelago and Islands co-operation area

The Archipelago and Islands sub-programme is characterised by its unique, diverse and attractive nature consisting of tens of thousands of islands, which create very attractive living environments for both visitors and inhabitants. The islands and the archipelagos are united by a strong maritime culture and a long common history.

The population of the islands and archipelago areas is concentrated in smaller archipelago villages and communities. Towns and urban settlements are situated only on bigger islands. One of the major challenges for the Archipelago and Islands co-operation area is depopulation. In addition, the percentage of people above the labour force age is higher than the region's average, thus the ageing population challenge is expected to increase even further in the future. The ageing population has created additional challenge for business development as considerable share of people running their business are now over 65 and are likely to exit their business in coming years.

Nevertheless, the islands generally enjoy a high standard of living that is comparable to that of the mainland. GDP per capita on Åland islands is the highest of all the NUTS 3 regions in the Central Baltic region. Major industries are fishing and fish processing and small scale agriculture. The tourism sector is a significant part of the economy with a high season in summer. Among the biggest challenges for the economic activity and permanent living in the archipelago and islands are seasonality and isolation. Thus, there is a strong need to promote new business creation, deliver necessary education and training as needed in the labour market to ensure the possibility of permanent living in those areas and thus, the growth in prosperity of local communities.

Accessibility for the islands and respective coastal regions is a challenge. Islands are mainly connected by ferry transport. Air transport connections are expensive and only bigger islands are connected by air transportation. This creates additional obstacles not only for visitors of the region, but also increases costs for transport of goods to and out of the region, decreasing the competitiveness of businesses operating in those areas. However, the technological readiness and broadband connections are well developed within the sub-programme area, which is a precondition for distance work.

The quality of the secondary education in the sub-programme area is comparable to the mainland. However, after secondary school many young people move to the mainland to continue their studies, even though there are high quality higher education institutions in larger islands (e.g. Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Åland University of Applied Science and Kuressaare College).

The Archipelago and Islands sub-programme area shares the same environmental concerns as the rest of the Programme area - the vulnerable status of the Baltic Sea, which directly affects the life and activities in the area.

The uniqueness of the region lies in the fact that this is the largest archipelago in the world measured by the number of islands. In sub-programme area there are many national parks, Natura 2000 and nature protection sites and also UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Southern-Finland - Estonia co-operation area

Estonia and Finland are close neighbouring countries separated by the Gulf of Finland. Historically both countries are well integrated and share the economic and cultural co-operation history. Finnish and Estonian languages belong to the same Finno-Ugric language group.

Cultural and geographical closeness, as well as the higher standard of living in Finland has turned Finland to an important destination for Estonian people to work and live. Estonians now are the largest foreign nation group in Finland and also the largest Estonian community abroad (National Statistical Bureaus, 2013).

Finland (especially the Southern part) and Estonia have a potential to become even more integrated economy and labour market. The substantial number of commuters between Finland and Estonia already form a common Helsinki-Tallinn region.

Estonia, due to its considerably lower living costs, lower tax burden and well developed ICT infrastructure, has a potential to become the most preferred destination for Finnish people willing to get work experience abroad or to do business.

In terms of economic development, the level of economic activity in Finland is still considerably higher than in Estonia. The largest value added (in terms of GDP per capita) is generated in regions of Finland (Helsinki-Uusimaa, Pirkanmaa), exceeding both the average levels of the European Union and the Central Baltic (CB) regions, whereas all of the Estonian regions except the capital region have lower than Central Baltic-average GDP per capita. Both countries are also strong external trade partners with 14.6% of Estonian exports going to Finland, second only to Sweden (15.9% of all exports). The largest share of imports to Estonia comes from Finland (14.5%). In addition 23.3% of total Estonia's foreign direct investment originates from Finland.

The Gulf of Finland is an important corridor for shipping (both passenger and cargo movements). The Tallinn-Helsinki passenger ferry connection serves thousands of people daily.

Due to its shallow waters and intensive shipping, the Gulf of Finland now is one of the most polluted areas of the Baltic Sea, being affected by excessive nutrient inputs, hazardous substances, increased maritime transport and intensive fishing.

Based on the existing close economic relations between Southern Finland and Estonia, there is a strong potential to further promote joint business activities and interaction of people and communities to address common challenges and exploit common opportunities.

Justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities

The Central Baltic Programme has chosen 4 thematic objectives (TO): "enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs" (TO 3), "preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" (TO 6), "promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures" (TO 7), "investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning" (TO 10). The selection is based on the region's characteristics and the identified needs and challenges that may potentially be solved via cross-border co-operation.

The thematic objectives have been translated into the Programme Priority axes (priorities): "Competitive economy" (Priority 1 that corresponds to TO 3), "Sustainable use of common resources" (Priority 2 that corresponds to TO 6), "Well-connected region"

(Priority 3 that corresponds to TO 7), “Skilled and socially inclusive region” (Priority 4 that corresponds to TO 10) (described in more detail in Section 2).

In addition, the Programme has defined 2 horizontal objectives: “Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT” (TO 2) and “Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors” (TO 4).

The choice of thematic objective “enhancing competitiveness of SMEs” (TO 3) aims to develop and promote the Central Baltic region as knowledge based innovative economy, supporting the creation of new companies and promoting the Central Baltic small and medium-sized enterprises’ (SMEs) entrance to the international markets. In addition, the Programme focuses on increased entrepreneurial activities of young generation starting from early school years, as well as creating links between different generations of entrepreneurs.

The Programme aims to achieve sustainable growth of the region, achieving balance between economic and environmental interests. Economic activities should support the principles of “green”, “low-carbon” economy, and enhanced use of ICT.

While choosing this thematic objective it was considered in parallel with TO 1 (“strengthening research, technological development and innovation”). It was found that applying the focus on innovations to the business development would better address the main challenges of the Central Baltic region.

By choosing the thematic objective “protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency” (TO 6), the Programme aims to improve the status of the Baltic Sea, reducing pollution from nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins’ inflows via jointly developed and implemented new innovative methods and technologies. The Programme also aims to protect and develop the regions’ unique, joint natural and cultural heritage, promote sustainable use of marine ecosystems via maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, as well as to improve urban planning and management. An important part of preserving and improving the status of the Baltic Sea is also to mitigate and to adapt to climate change.

The chosen thematic objective “promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key infrastructures” (TO 7) aims to improve the accessibility to and within the region. That has a direct effect on the economic activity of the whole region. This includes the objective to support the planning of the integrated, “green”, multimodal transport systems, as well as to achieve and develop better urban environments to enhance sustainable development of the regions’ cities. To improve the region’s regional and local mobility as well as to increase its attractiveness as a favourable living and visiting environment, the Programme aims to support sustainable development of small ports’ networks of the Baltic Sea.

The thematic objective “investing in education, skills and lifelong learning” (TO 10) aims to achieve a more inclusive region via strengthening local communities and improving skills, knowledge and social well-being of people (especially of the youth and the elderly). This specifically includes supporting the competitiveness of vocational education and training.

When choosing this thematic objective another option considered was TO 9 (“promoting social inclusion and combating poverty”). After analysis it was found that to improve social inclusion, TO 10 would be the best approach. It allows for the Central Baltic region to target communities’ development and labour market integration via educational and training activities.

The Programme addresses the horizontal principles of anti-discrimination, equality between men and women and sustainable development in all its priorities (see Section 8 for more information).

The Central Baltic Programme aims to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy of “smart” (especially Priority 1), “sustainable” (especially Priorities 2 and 3) and “inclusive” (especially Priority 4) growth. In addition, the Programme strives to support and contribute to the delivery of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region achieving priorities of “save the sea”, “connect the region”, and “increase prosperity”.

The chosen thematic objectives are well in line with the recommendations presented by the Partnership Agreements between the Commission and each Member State.

A more detailed description of thematic objectives is provided in the next section via detailed descriptions of the Programme Priority axes (see Section 2).

In addition, the Programme has selected a limited number of investment priorities per each thematic objective. The selected investment priorities, as well as summary of justifications for the selection are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
Thematic objective 3 “Enhancing the competitiveness of SME’s”	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Europe 2020 objective of “smart growth”. • Supports EUSBSR strategic objective “increase prosperity”. • Potential for the region to become a globally competitive area for new innovative knowledge intensive business creation. • A need and potential to promote and develop “green”, “low carbon”, “silver” economy, new ICT solutions. • Cross-border co-operation potential to foster creation of new businesses and accelerate innovation capacity of existing companies through business incubators and networks. • A need and potential to promote self-employment, for young and elderly people to overcome the challenges of the decreasing population and youth unemployment. • Strong priority for all the Member States / Åland to enhance the business development of the region.

<p>Thematic objective 3 “Enhancing the competitiveness of SME’s”</p>	<p>Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Europe 2020 objective of “smart growth”. • Supports EUSBSR strategic objective “increase prosperity”. • Cross-border co-operation potential to enhance the export capacity of SMEs of the region, reaching new international markets. • A potential to develop co-operation clusters of common industries that are important for future development for all the Central Baltic regions. • Unused potential of the existing Central Baltic clusters. • Need to promote the Central Baltic area for its strong, innovative and competitive business environment. • Strong priority for all the Member States / Åland to enhance the competitiveness of the region.
<p>Thematic objective 6 “Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency”</p>	<p>Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Europe 2020 targets of “sustainable growth”. • Cross-border co-operation potential to develop joint activities to improve visiting and living environment by conserving, protecting and developing natural and cultural resources. • Potential to create sustainable tourist attractions in the Central Baltic region. • Potential of maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management to offer natural co-operation challenges for securing sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems and resources. MSP provides the countries with many opportunities, such as the creation of greater certainty to the private sector when it plans new investments, identification of compatible uses within the same area for development, and reduction of conflicts among incompatible uses and between uses and nature as well as promotion of efficient use of resources and space. It also provides improved opportunities for community and citizen participation. • Potential for strengthened cross-border co-operation between authorities responsible for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management.
<p>Thematic objective 6 “Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency”</p>	<p>Action to improve the urban environment, revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Europe 2020 targets of “sustainable growth”. • Cross-border co-operation potential for experience exchange to improve urban integrated planning practices in urban regions to achieve more sustainable urban environments (less air pollution, less noise, improved and regenerated industrial and military sites). • Potential for strengthened cross-border co-operation between authorities responsible for urban spatial planning and management.

<p>Thematic objective 6 “Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency”</p>	<p>Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports EUSBSR strategic objective “save the sea”. • Need to address the main challenge of the Central Baltic region - state and conditions - of the Baltic Sea, where common action is needed (because of complexity of the problem). • The condition of the Baltic Sea and specifically reducing inflows of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins into the sea has a direct impact on the quality of living environment, the competitiveness and sustainability of the economy of all Central Baltic regions. • Potential of developing and using new innovative methods and technologies with a direct impact to reduce inflows of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea. • Priority named by all the Member States/Åland to promote “green” (i.e. exploiting potential of environment friendly technologies) and “blue” (i.e. exploiting potential of the Baltic Sea resources) growth of the region.
<p>Thematic objective 7 “Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures”</p>	<p>Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Europe 2020 objective of “sustainable growth” keeping the low-carbon economy principles. • Supports the EUSBSR objective “connect the region”. • The accessibility is a challenge for the region, especially for remote, rural and peripheral territories. • Achieving better integrated, “green” transport solutions and improved urban-rural connections. • Unused potential of small ports; a need for developing and improving port services, contributing to the region’s living and visiting environment and improving local and regional mobility. • Implementing sustainable, low-carbon transport solutions is strongly supporting the sustainability objectives and has positive effect on state of Baltic Sea. • Potential and need for strengthened cross-border co-operation between organisations responsible for planning and developing transport solutions. • Priority named by all the Member States/Åland to promote “low-carbon” economy as a horizontal objective.

<p>Thematic objective 10 “Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning”</p>	<p>Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe 2020 objective of “smart” and “inclusive” growth. • Supports Priority Area “Education” (EUSBSR). • Need to exploit region’s strong knowledge base to improve social inclusion and strengthen local communities. • Potential to address social inclusion in local communities via educational programmes and lifelong learning. • Better integrated Central Baltic labour market that would lead to more opportunities for work, lower unemployment, and decreased risk of social exclusion. • Need to increase the knowledge base and skills of the youth and elderly, encouraging them to enter the labour market or be self-employed. • Need to enhance the competitiveness of vocational education and training aligning it with the needs of the labour market. • Need to achieve a better regional matching of skills and jobs available
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Justification for the financial allocation

The main objective behind the financial allocation to Programme thematic objectives (priorities) is to effectively achieve the Programme results with resources available.

The Programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The total ERDF support to the Programme is 122 520 000 EUR, 6% of which (or 7 351 200 EUR) shall be allocated to the Technical Assistance.

European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) are not applicable to this Programme.

Main arguments behind the financial commitment for each priority include expected results to be achieved, planned types of actions under each priority, as well as types of investments to be made.

In addition, the performance and experience from the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A 2007-2013 is considered.

23,50% of the total Union support (excluding the Technical Assistance (TA)) shall be allocated to Priority 1. In total 3 specific objectives are defined and should be achieved under this Priority. To achieve expected results (establishing new Central Baltic companies, creating new joint student companies, increasing exports to new markets) a relatively large share of the Programme resources should be reserved. No investments in infrastructure are foreseen here.

30,55% of the total Union support (excluding TA) shall be allocated to Priority 2. In total 4 specific objectives should be achieved under this Priority. The status of the Baltic Sea is among those objectives and is one of the top priorities for the Programme stakeholders. In addition, capital investments are relevant to achieve the specific objectives; thus, a relatively large share of Programme resources shall be allocated to achieve the targets of this Priority.

An equal share of 30,55% of the total Union support (excluding TA) shall be allocated to Priority 3. In total 2 specific objectives shall be achieved under this Priority. Sustainable, “low carbon” transport is among objectives and is considerable precondition for economic development and reducing impact to the nature. In addition, this objective will cover investments into integrating transport systems and improving small ports’ services. Thus, a relatively large share of Programme resources shall be allocated to achieve the specific objectives.

9,40% of the total Union support (excluding TA) shall be allocated to Priority 4. One of two specific objectives will be implemented through small projects only. Thus a relatively smaller amount of Union support shall be allocated to achieve objectives under this Priority.

The final Ex-ante evaluation report (see the Annex to this document, “Central Baltic Ex-ante Evaluation Report”, February 28, 2014) states that the financial allocations are well justified, reasonable and logic, acknowledging that there is a financially feasible balance between the thematic objectives, results and planned allocation of the Union support.

Table 2. Overview of the programme investment strategy

Priority axis	ERDF support (in EUR)	Proportion (%) of the total Union support for the cooperation programme (by Fund)			Thematic objective (TO)	Investment priorities (IP)	Specific objectives (SO) corresponding to the investment priorities	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
		ERDF	ENI (where applicable)	IPA (where applicable)				
Priority axis 1 Competitive economy	28 754 691 EUR	23,50%	NA	NA	TO 3 Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	IP 1 of Priority axis 1 Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators	SO1.1 New Central Baltic knowledge intensive companies	Number of new joint or co-operating knowledge intensive enterprises
							SO 1.2 More entrepreneurial youth	Number of established joint student companies
							SO 1.3 More exports by the Central Baltic companies to new markets	Number of cluster co-operations exporting to new markets
Priority axis 2 Sustainable use of common resources	37 381 099 EUR	30,55%	NA	NA	TO 6 "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency"	IP 1 of Priority axis 2 Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage	SO 2.1 Natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions	More sustainable joint natural and cultural heritage based tourist attractions
							SO 2.2 Sustainably planned and managed marine and coastal areas	Share of marine and coastal areas with improved management

						IP 3 of Priority axis 2 - Action to improve the urban environment, revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures	SO 2.3 Better urban planning in the Central Baltic region	Share of urban areas covered with integrated urban management
						IP 2 of Priority axis 2 Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution	SO 2.4 Reduced nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins' inflows into the Baltic Sea	The amounts of nutrients', hazardous substances and toxins' inflows into the Baltic Sea
Priority axis 3 Well-connected Central Baltic region	37 381 099 EUR	30,55%	NA	NA	TO 7 Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key infrastructures	IP 1 for Priority axis 3 Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including [...] inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, [...] multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	SO 3.1 Improved transport flows of people and goods	Reduction of travel time of passengers and the movement time of goods
							SO 3.2 Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development	Share of Central Baltic small ports with good services
Priority axis 4 Skilled and socially inclusive region	11 501 878 EUR	9,40%	NA	NA	ETC-specific IP Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning"	IP 1 of Priority axis 4 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes	SO 4.1 More people benefiting from stronger Central Baltic communities	Communities with improvements
							SO 4.2 More aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region	Increased share of aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region
TA	7 341 623 EUR	6%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS 1 COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

Section 2.A.

Description of the priority axes other than technical assistance

ID of the priority axis	Priority 1
Title of the priority axis	COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total eligible expenditure

2.A.4 Investment priorities

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 1	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 1	Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes

2.A.5. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 1
Specific objective 1.1	New Central Baltic knowledge intensive companies
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union Support	<p>This specific objective aims to exploit the opportunities of “green, “silver”, “blue” economy. The potential of ICT and low-carbon solutions have been defined as a basis for new business creation.</p> <p>Knowledge intensive enterprises are the ones with a potential to grow and internationalise, aiming to achieve higher value added than the regional average level of the industry they belong in.</p> <p>The Central Baltic region has a good potential to strengthen its position as a globally competitive technology start-ups region.</p> <p>This specific objective aims also to target challenges related to the sustainability of the businesses operating in sparsely populated, rural, peripheral, isolated island and archipelago communities. The seasonality of some traditional activities (e.g. tourism, fishing, agriculture) adds complexity to the challenge.</p> <p>Specific attention is paid to the need of developing diverse sets of skills to be successful and sustainable in isolated and sparsely populated areas.</p> <p>New enterprises are defined as 2 years from the registration or the start of operations.</p> <p>“Joint” is defined as joint teams (key people), joint management or joint ownership by people from at least 2 Member States/Åland.</p> <p>“Co-operating” is defined as new Central Baltic companies that have established co-operation in relevant areas of their business development (e.g. product development, marketing).</p> <p>The aim is to achieve the creation of new joint Central Baltic enterprises and co-operation between new enterprises in the Central Baltic region, although it is accepted that a certain share of targeted teams and businesses will not become joint or co-operating.</p> <p>The main approach is to implement development projects via intermediate bodies in the field of business development. The Central Baltic Programme does not intend to use grants and financial instruments to new start-up companies. Activities supported by the Programme are seen as complimentary to existing national and regional financial instruments and grants.</p>

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 1
Specific objective 1.2	More entrepreneurial youth
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union Support	<p>This specific objective aims to use the potential of the young generation to make the Central Baltic region more entrepreneurial and competitive in coming years.</p> <p>Young generation is defined as people under 18 years old and involved in basic and upper secondary education.</p> <p>Joint Central Baltic activities will be based on good experience supporting youth entrepreneurship and attracting young people to engage into cross-border and international activities within all Programme regions.</p> <p>Joint activities aim to motivate young people to establish student companies and create international teams, which can serve as a basis for future business partnerships within the Central Baltic region.</p> <p>Student company (mini company) is defined as a team formed for business simulation under adult supervision. It is not a legal entity according to business law.</p> <p>It is understood that all participating teams will not become or stay "joint" by the end of the project activities. The experience from international co-operation acquired is nevertheless seen as a great benefit for young people.</p>

ID	Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 1
Specific objective 1.3	More exports by the Central Baltic companies to new markets
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union Support	<p>This specific objective aims to support the Central Baltic SMEs to enter into new markets with focus on innovation, product development and internationalization are relevant preconditions for sustainable growth</p> <p>New markets are defined as markets outside the European Union / European Free Trade Area (EFTA).</p> <p>Here a cluster-based approach for co-operation within the Central Baltic region is used promoting co-operation between already established clusters forming "meta-clusters". This should enable the SMEs to enter into the new markets with new or adapted products and services.</p> <p>Meta-cluster is a co-operation between established clusters within the Central Baltic region, undertaking joint activities with the aim to enter new markets.</p> <p>Cluster is defined as an established co-operation between similar or complementary businesses and research and development (R&D) institutions.</p> <p>No activities that fall under export aid measures will be co-financed.</p>

Table 3. Programme specific result indicators

Specific objective 1.1 New Central Baltic knowledge intensive companies

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R1.1	Number of joint or cooperating knowledge intensive enterprises	number of enterprises	650	2013	800	National and Bureaus of Statistics	Assessment made at the beginning (2014) and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 1.2 More entrepreneurial youth

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R1.2	Number of established joint student companies	number of student companies	0	2014	60	Analysis based on the Junior Achievement (JA) data	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 1.3 More exports by the Central Baltic enterprises to new markets

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R1.3	Number of cluster co-operations exporting to new markets	number of cluster co-operations	10	2014	30	Public information sources; business development organisations from national and regional level, cluster organisations.	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1. A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
	<p>Specific objective 1.1 New Central Baltic knowledge intensive companies</p> <p>Indicative list of actions supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising • Training, coaching • Advisory services • Networking of potential and new entrepreneurs • Mapping and analysing of opportunities, comparable experience • Incubator services <p>The main target groups</p> <p>The foreseen target groups are potential entrepreneurs and newly established enterprises (i.e. maximum 2 years from the start of operation) contributing to the "green", "low-carbon", "blue" and "silver" economies. ICT solutions are seen as offering new business opportunities.</p> <p>Technology start-ups are seen as strength in the Central Baltic region and can be targeted by joint activities.</p> <p>Students of universities and vocational schools of the Central Baltic region are seen as significant target group for new knowledge intensive business creation.</p> <p>The potential of the elderly people is seen as relevant resource for new business development. In addition to seeing young people as target group for new business creation, intergenerational teams are encouraged as a basis for new businesses. Teams are where young and elderly potential entrepreneurs are working together to establish new business are counted as intergenerational teams.</p> <p>A relevant target group are people considering establishing their first business in the archipelago and islands (AI) region. Also experienced entrepreneurs considering the establishment of new business in AI area, skilled professional people currently in employee positions or students in universities and vocational schools considering the establishment in AI region are relevant target groups.</p>

Specific territories targeted

Rural, peripheral and archipelagos and islands areas of the Central Baltic region are specifically targeted for identifying and supporting sustainable business models in sparsely populated, isolated communities.

Urban areas and specifically metropolitan areas and cities with R&D capacity are seen as important locations for new technology start-ups.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are business development organisations, business incubators, business associations, national, regional and local authorities.

Specific objective 1.2

More entrepreneurial youth

Indicative list of actions supported

- Awareness raising
- Training, coaching, internships
- Advisory services
- Networking of teams of pupils/students, experienced entrepreneurs, investors
- Capacity building of teams and pupil/student firms
- Designing and creating of e-platforms and e-tools

The main target groups

The target group is students involved in basic and upper secondary education.

Specific territories targeted

The whole Central Baltic region is targeted whereas different areas (e.g. urban, rural, isolated islands, archipelagos) may need different approaches.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are business development organisations, youth organisations, youth entrepreneurship development organisations, education institutions, national, regional and local authorities.

Investment
priority

Supporting the capacity of SMEs to engage in growth in regional,
national and international markets, and in innovation processes

Specific objective 1.3

More exports by the Central Baltic companies to new markets

Indicative list of actions supported

- Development and adaptation of services and products to new markets
- Branding, awareness building and marketing of services and products in new markets
- Process development
- Human resource development
- Market analysis, feasibility studies
- Joint efforts by between businesses, public sectors and academia

The main target groups

The main target groups are seen as SMEs cooperating through established clusters with ambition and potential to enter into new markets.

Established clusters reflect the strengths of the Central Baltic economies and can be: forestry, tourism, local-food, shipbuilding, maritime, and others.

In the area of tourism development, city, regional and national tourist boards and associations of tourism companies should be involved and consulted.

Specific territories targeted

The whole Central Baltic Programme area is targeted.

Urban areas and especially metropolitan areas of Central Baltic region represent the biggest potential and are places where most existing clusters operate.

Archipelagos and islands areas with their special characteristics related to isolation and seasonality may need different approach.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and national, regional and local authorities responsible for cluster development as well as business development organisations supporting cluster development, business associations, regional development organisations responsible for trade and industry.

2.A.6.5. Output indicators

Table 4. Common and programme specific output indicators

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	150	Project reports	Annually
CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	150	Project reports	Annually
2	Number of participating young people	Number of people	150	Project reports	Annually

Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	300		
CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	300	Project reports	Annually
CO28	Research, innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	60	Project reports	Annually

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS 2 SUSTAINABLE USE OF COMMON RESOURCES

ID of the priority axis	Priority 2
Title of the priority axis	SUSTAINABLE USE OF COMMON RESOURCES

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total eligible expenditure

2.A.4 Investment priorities

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 2	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 2	Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
Investment priority 3 of Priority axis 2	Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution

2.A.5. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 2
Specific objective 2.1	Natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to develop cultural and natural resources into joint tourist attractions and products in order to improve the attractiveness of living and visiting environment.</p> <p>The investment priorities are selected to address, in a balanced way, the aspects of preserving nature and developing it as a resource for sustainable economic development. Thus, finding the balance between preserving and developing the natural and cultural resources.</p> <p>The first step for implementing activities under this specific objective will be to map the common natural and cultural resources of the Central Baltic region. The list of relevant natural and cultural resources will be defined in the Programme Manual.</p>

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 2
Specific objective 2.2	Sustainably planned and managed marine and coastal areas
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to address joint challenges and issues related to maritime spatial planning of exclusive economic zones of territorial waters and integrated coastal zone management.</p> <p>This objective aims to foster co-operation, mediate and find the balance between different sectors that have different interests using marine and coastal resources, e.g. agriculture and nature conservation, tourism and coastal protection, shipping and fisheries.</p> <p>It should lead to sustainable use of the fragile resources of the Baltic Sea and its coastal areas.</p>

ID	Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 2
Specific objective 2.3	Better urban planning in the Central Baltic region
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective targets the challenges and opportunities related to improving the urban space via joint urban planning activities.</p> <p>Integrated urban management is understood as broader set of activities than the planning required by legislation. It includes activities preceding the official planning processes and activities following official planning process.</p> <p>This specific objective is seen to contribute to the specific objective "Improved commuting and faster transport by developing integrated transport solutions and transport corridors" of Priority 3 within urban areas and connecting urban areas with their hinterlands.</p>

ID	Investment priority 3 of Priority axis 2
Specific objective 2.4	Reduced nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows into the Baltic Sea
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to reduce nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows to the Baltic Sea from all types of land-based sources. This includes among others the impact of runoffs from agriculture and urban storm-waters to the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>The objective is to support activities which lead to development and implementation of innovative methods and technologies within the Central Baltic region. Worked out and implemented methods and technologies should have potential for being used in other regions and countries.</p> <p>A relevant precondition for implementing activities under this specific objective will be to determine the list of priority sources of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows to be tackled. For that existing information of national, regional and transnational organisations will be used. The list of priority sources will be included in the Programme Manual.</p> <p>The priority list will be used for determining the potential activities but also to ensure a good division of work with other financing programmes.</p>

Table 5. Programme specific result indicators

Specific objective 2.1 Natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R2.1	More sustainable joint natural and cultural heritage based tourist attractions	number of attractions	1	2014	13	Public sources of information; national and regional authorities responsible for cultural, natural heritage and tourism development	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 2.2 Sustainably planned and managed marine and coastal areas

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R2.2	Share of marine and coastal areas with improved management	% (share) of marine and coastal areas	20	2014	25	Ministries and regional authorities responsible for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, VASAB, HELCOM	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 2.3 Better urban planning in the Central Baltic region

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R2.3	Share of urban areas covered with integrated urban management	%	29	2014	35	Public information sources; national, local and regional authorities and organisations responsible for urban planning	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 2.4 Reduced nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows into the Baltic Sea

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R2.4	Amounts of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows into the Baltic Sea	% consolidated, based on targeted and achieved reductions	Nutrient/hazardous substances inflow from 60 sources with most recent annual levels quantified	2014	Reduced quantities from 20 sources, based on targeted achieved reductions of inflows, % consolidated	Water Management Plans of River Basins, Baltic Sea Action Plan (HELCOM)	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priorities

2.A.6.1. A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage
	<p>Specific objective 2.1 Natural and cultural resources developed into sustainable tourist attractions</p> <p>Indicative list of actions supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and specifying the potential use of natural and cultural resources • Designing attractions and packaging tourist services • Investments into natural and cultural resources to create joint Central Baltic tourist attractions • Marketing activities as awareness raising, marketing events, visits, fairs, media advertising <p>The main target groups</p> <p>Visitors and local people, companies operating in tourism sector, regional and local organisations benefiting from developed attractions.</p> <p>Specific territories targeted</p> <p>The whole Central Baltic region is seen as target area. However, different characteristics of areas and resources have an impact on the design of attractions and packages. Areas with specific characteristics are, for example, archipelago and islands, capital cities, coastal areas, prehistoric and medieval sites.</p> <p>Types of beneficiaries</p> <p>Targeted beneficiaries are organisations responsible for maintenance and development of natural and cultural heritage, tourism development organisations, local and regional authorities.</p>

Specific objective 2.2

Sustainably planned and managed marine and coastal areas

Indicative list of actions supported

- Information collection, surveys, supporting and carrying out participatory processes preceding official planning process
- Experience exchange events, seminars, conferences and visits on implementation of management practices which follow the official planning processes
- Manuals, guidelines, agreements
- E-platforms and solutions for supporting participatory processes, planning processes and management

The main target groups

The main target groups are local people, visitors and companies interested in developing sea and coastal resources.

Specific territories targeted

Territorial waters, exclusive economic zones of territorial waters and coastal areas are targeted within the Central Baltic region.

Territorial waters, or a territorial sea, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is a belt of coastal waters extending at most 12 nautical miles (22.2 km; 13.8 mi) from the baseline (usually the mean low-water mark) of a coastal state.

Exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is a sea zone prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in which a state has special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources.

Coastal areas are defined as the interface or transition areas between the land and the sea. Coastal areas are diverse in function and form, dynamic and do not lend themselves well to definition by strict spatial boundaries.

The Central Baltic Programme aims to target the above-mentioned sea and coastal areas where interests of two or three countries meet.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and authorities on national and regional level responsible for the planning of territorial waters, exclusive economic zones of territorial waters and coastal areas; organisations with competence to contribute to improved planning and management, such as authorities from specific sectors using marine and coastal resources, including environmental protection organisations.

Investment
priority

Action to improve the urban environment, revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures

Specific objective 2.3

Better urban planning in the Central Baltic region

Indicative list of actions supported

- Information collection, surveys (evaluations, geological studies, feasibility studies etc.)
- Experience exchange seminars, trainings, guidelines
- Preparatory activities of environment impact assessments
- Concepts and primary designs for brownfield regeneration
- Pilot investments
- Dissemination of and putting into use acquired good practices

The main target groups

Inhabitants, visitors and developers of urban and sub-urban areas of Central Baltic region.

Specific territories targeted

Urban areas with their hinterlands of the Central Baltic Programme area seen as target group for this specific objective.

Urban areas are defined as densely populated areas with suburban surroundings.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and authorities on local, regional and national level responsible for spatial planning of the Central Baltic urban and surrounding local governments.

Investment
priority

Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector, soil protection or to reduce air pollution

Specific objective 2.4

Reduced nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows into the Baltic Sea

Indicative list of actions supported

- Information collection, surveys
- Designing, adapting methods
- Development and implementation of methods and technologies to reduce nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins' inflows
- Pilot investments to reduce nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins inflows

The main target groups

People living in the Central Baltic region together with visitors to the area are seen as target group benefitting from improved water quality and better condition of the Baltic Sea.

Specific territories targeted

The whole Central Baltic Programme area is targeted, but different methods and technologies may be needed for addressing the problem in rural areas, on archipelagos and islands and in urban areas.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and authorities responsible for environment protection, especially for water treatment and organisations capable of contributing to the reduction of nutrient, hazardous substances and toxins inflows; and research institutions with an expertise in the area are seen among beneficiaries.

2.A.6.5. Output indicators

Table 6. Common and programme specific output indicators

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO09	Sustainable Tourism: Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions	Visits/year	120,000	Project reports	Annually
2.1.1	Number of targeted joint attractions	Number	10	Project reports	Annually
2.1.2	Number of jointly targeted planning and management activities	Number	5	Project reports	Annually

Investment priority 2 of Priority axis 2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
2.2.1	Number of targeted integrated urban plans	Number	10	Project reports	Annually

Investment priority 3 of Priority axis 2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
2.3.1	Number of targeted sources of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins	Number	20	Project reports	Annually

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS 3 WELL-CONNECTED REGION

ID of the priority axis	Priority 3
Title of the priority axis	WELL-CONNECTED REGION

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total eligible expenditure

2.A.4 Investment priorities

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 3	Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including [...] inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, [...] multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
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2.A.5. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 3
Specific objective 3.1	Improved transport flows of people and goods
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to identify and target the challenges related to integration of different transport nodes so as to reduce time in transportation of both passengers and cargo, and at the same time reducing the CO2 emissions (defined as less CO2 emissions per person per tonne).</p> <p>This specific objective also aims to identify and target the challenges related to the improvement of the transport corridors within the Central Baltic region in North - South and East - West directions.</p> <p>Transport corridors are understood as infrastructure and logistics networks for passengers and cargo movement. This specific objective aims to target established transport corridors which have a potential to be further improved (i.e. extended, made more efficient) and new transport corridors which have a significant potential.</p>

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 3
Specific objective 3.2	Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to contribute to the improvement of the services of small ports' network (e.g. facility services, rescue services and joint marketing). This will improve local and regional mobility and thus improve travel opportunities of local people as well as attract more visitors to the region. In developing new services for ports modern technological solutions leading to resource efficiency or use of renewable energy will be supported. In planning investments challenges raised by climate change (e.g. risk of storm surges) should be taken into account.</p> <p>Small ports are defined as ports located at the coast of the Baltic Sea serving local people and visitors. Also small ports as parts of larger marina areas are seen as potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>Small ports will be mapped and a priority list will be determined in co-operation with responsible regional and national organisations of the Central Baltic region.</p> <p>The lists created would serve also as a tool for determining the division of work with other financing programmes. (The list will be included in the Programme Manual.)</p> <p>Investments for improving small ports services are meant for improvements on land (no dredging and new pier's construction).</p>

Table 7. Programme specific result indicators

Specific objective 3.1 Improved transport flows of people and goods

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R3.1.	Travel time of passengers	% of reduction of travel time	100 transport nodes or corridors identified	2014	5% reduction of travel time in chosen transport node/corridor (assumption: 25 nodes/corridors)	Responsible ministries and competent authorities. Different available tools for measuring the time (e.g. Google maps, etc.)	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)
R3.3	Transport flows of goods	% of reduction of travel time	100 transport nodes or corridors identified	2014	5% reduction of travel time in chosen transport node/corridor (assumption: 25 nodes/corridors)	Responsible ministries of transport (for approving the list of transport corridors and nodes) and competent authorities. Different available tools for measuring the time (e.g. Google maps, etc.)	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

Specific objective 3.2 Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R3.2	Share of Central Baltic small ports with good services	%	54	2014	75	Responsible ministries and relevant organisations of small ports	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and 2023

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2.A.6.1. A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including [...] inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, [...] multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility
	<p>Specific objective 3.1 Improved transport flows of people and goods</p> <p>Indicative list of actions supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, drawings and solutions for improving transport corridors and transport nodes efficiency • Pilot investments leading to lower CO2 emissions and more efficient transport flows • Planning and investing into ICT solutions to improve transport nodes and corridors efficiency • Marketing activities of developed and improved transport corridors • Experience exchange activities as joint seminars, study visits, surveys and trainings leading to implementation of new methods <p>The main target groups</p> <p>People and visitors using improved transport corridors and nodes. Transport and logistics companies of the Central Baltic region.</p> <p>Specific territories targeted</p> <p>The whole Central Baltic Programme area is targeted. This includes transport nodes to connect islands, harbours, transport systems, rural and urban territories, and centres of urban areas. Protected natural areas (e.g. NATURA 2000) should be excluded from planning new transport corridors.</p> <p>Types of beneficiaries</p> <p>Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and authorities on national, regional and local level responsible for planning and developing transport solutions; local, regional, national, governments, port authorities.</p>

Investment
priority

Developing and improving environment-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems including [...] inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, [...] multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility

Specific objective 3.2

Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development

Indicative list of actions supported

- Surveys to identify best ways to improve port services
- Plans and drawings for improving port services
- Investments (infrastructure and equipment on piers and land territory of port) leading to improvement of port services
- Planning and investing into ICT solutions to create new services or improve existing port services
- Marketing activities of improved small ports networks

The main target groups

The main target groups are inhabitants using small ports for commuting and leisure. Visitors of the Central Baltic small ports. Companies offering services to users of small ports.

Specific territories targeted

The coastline regions of the whole Central Baltic Programme area are targeted.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are organisations and authorities responsible for the development and maintenance of small ports, regional and local governments, non-governmental organisations, private companies operating in or providing services for small ports.

2.A.6.5. Output indicators

Table 8. Common and programme specific output indicators

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 3

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1.3.1	Number of developed and improved transport corridors and nodes	Number	25	Project reports	Annually
3.1.2	Number of ports with improved services	Number of ports	15	Project reports	Annually

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS 4 SKILLED AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE REGION

ID of the priority axis	Priority 4
Title of the priority axis	SKILLED AND SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE REGION

2.A.3 Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation basis (public or total)	Total eligible expenditure

2.A.4 Investment priority

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 4	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing and implementing joint education, vocational training and training schemes
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2.A.5. Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 4
Specific objective 4.1	More people benefiting from stronger Central Baltic communities
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective will target a wide range of practical community and local level social problems. It will do so through joint educational and/or training activities. This is the way chosen to strengthen social inclusion of Central Baltic region.</p> <p>Community and local level problems and challenges (thematic or territorial) can be related for example to health, minorities, safety, gender, elderly and low involvement in entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Activities supported under this Priority are seen as instruments to strengthen communities via “people to people” projects.</p> <p>In co-operation with Central Baltic countries’ responsible ministries, other organisations from regional level the priority list of the common social inclusion-related problems and challenges will be created. This list is the basis for determining the communities (thematic or territorial) with needs of improvement. The list will be included in the Programme Manual.</p>

ID	Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 4
Specific objective 4.2	More aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>This specific objective aims to contribute to the development and further integration of the Central Baltic labour market.</p> <p>Development of skills and better matching work opportunities with skills can have a strong impact on decreasing the social exclusion.</p> <p>Central Baltic joint actions are justified by linking them to the specific needs of enterprises operating within the Central Baltic region.</p>

Table 9. Programme specific result indicators

Specific objective 4.1 More people benefitting from stronger Central Baltic communities

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R4.1	Communities with improvements	Number of CB communities with improvements	7	2014	40	Analysis based on publicly available sources incl. responsible ministries for education, employment, labour market organisations and project assessments	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and 2023

Specific objective 4.2 More aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
R4.2	Share of aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region	Number of programmes	30	2014	60	Responsible ministries or education, employment, labour market organisations, survey	Assessment made at the beginning (2014), 2018, 2020 and at the end of the Programme (2023)

2.A.6. Actions to be supported under the investment priority

2. A.6.1. A description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives, including, where appropriate, identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	Developing and implementing joint education and training schemes
	<p>Specific objective 4.1 More people benefiting from stronger Central Baltic communities</p> <p>Indicative list of actions supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveys to identify and map problems• Training and development programmes• Seminars, experience exchange events• Network development• Designing and creating ICT solutions to contribute to the solution of problems <p>Projects within this specific objective are implemented by a simplified small project approach.</p> <p>The main target group Central Baltic people under risk of social exclusion are targeted communities.</p> <p>Specific territories targeted The whole Central Baltic Programme area, including communities from islands, archipelagos, rural and peripheral, as well as urban areas.</p> <p>Types of beneficiaries Targeted beneficiaries are regional and local authorities and community-based non-governmental organisations with statutory objectives to deal with community development.</p>

Specific objective 4.2

More aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic region

Indicative list of actions supported

- Surveys to identify the Central Baltic economic activities/sectors where joint activities for VET co-operation are justified
- Surveys to identify problems of Central Baltic labour market as bottlenecks to further labour market integration
- Activities to identify needed improvements to curricula and teaching, training methods and management methods of vocational schools are needed
- Activities to develop new curricula and improve existing curricula
- Designing and implementing pilot education and training activities based on joint curricula
- Seminars, experience exchange events
- Designing and creating distance learning and e-learning platforms

The main target groups

The main target groups are people involved in vocational education and training, companies.

Specific territories targeted

The whole Central Baltic Programme area, including communities from islands, archipelagos, rural and peripheral, as well as urban areas.

Types of beneficiaries

Targeted beneficiaries are public and private vocational education and training institutions, including universities of applied sciences, i.e. universities delivering professional degree programmes, national, regional and local authorities responsible for developing vocational education and training, as well as organisations representing employers and employees (social partners).

2.A.6.5. Output indicators

Table 10. Common and programme specific output indicators

Investment priority 1 of Priority axis 4

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
4.1	Number of participating people	Number of people	5000	Project reports	Annually
4.2	Number of benefitting vocational education schools	Number	15	Project reports	Annually

2.A.6.2. Guiding principles for the selection of operations

The procedures for the selection of operations are established so that all projects selected will contribute to the delivery of the specific objectives and achievement of results. The guiding principles for the selection of operations are the same for all investment priorities and are summarised in section 5.3.

The Monitoring Committee will agree on the guiding principles in the form of assessment criteria. Where relevant, the Monitoring Committee may agree on targeted calls and assessment criteria separately for all priorities in order to select the projects that best help achieve the set targets. A key requirement is that the assessment criteria must support the identification of the best and most relevant projects for each investment priority. The assumption has been that it is possible to achieve a level of generalisation for the assessment criteria so that they are relevant for all priorities. The Interact Harmonised Implementation Tools and more detailed guiding questions for the JS to assess the relevance of each project will be used to make a proposal for the Monitoring Committee on the assessment criteria.

2.A.7. Performance framework

Table 11. Performance framework of the priority axis

Priority axis	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data
Priority axis 1	Financial indicator	Expenditure	EUR	5 750 938 28 754 691	36 398 343	eMonitoring System
	Output indicator	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	30	300	Project reports
Priority axis 2	Financial indicator	Expenditure	EUR	7 476 220	47 317 847	eMonitoring System
	Output indicator	Number of targeted joint attractions	number	2	10	Project reports
	Output indicator	Number of jointly targeted planning and management activities	number	1	5	Project reports
	Output indicator	Number of targeted sources of nutrients, hazardous substances and toxins	number	4	20	Project reports
Priority axis 3	Financial indicator	Expenditure	EUR	7 476 220	47 317 847	eMonitoring System
	Output indicator	Number of developed and improved transport corridors and nodes	number	4	25	Project reports
	Output indicator	Number of ports with improved services	number	4	15	Project reports

Priority axis 4	Financial indicator	Expenditure	EUR	2 300 375	14 559 339	eMonitoring System
	Output indicator	Number of participating people	people	700	5000	Project reports
	Output indicator	Number of benefiting vocational education schools	number	3	15	Project reports

In accordance with Article 21 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) (1299/2013) the achievement of the milestones of each priority axis will be evaluated by the Commission in 2019 based on the information and the assessments presented in the annual implementation report submitted in the year 2019. Milestones for 2018 include financial indicators and output indicators. Milestones include the progress achieved from fully completed activities by December 31, 2018. Financial indicators imply the total amount of expenditure incurred by beneficiaries and certified.

2.A.8. Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis, based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 12-15. Categories of intervention

Table 12: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority axis 1	067 SME business development, support to entrepreneurship and incubation (including support to spin offs, spin outs)	14 377 346
Priority axis 1	063 Cluster support and business networks primarily benefitting SMEs	14 377 345
Priority axis 2	091 Development and promotion of the tourism potential of natural areas	4 672 637
Priority axis 2	055 Other social infrastructure contributing to regional and local development	18 690 545
Priority axis 2	094 Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage assets	4 672 643
Priority axis 2	021 Water management and drinking water conservation (including river basin management, water supply, specific climate change adaption measures, district and consumer metering, charging systems and leak reduction)	9 345 274
Priority axis 3	036 Multimodal transport	14 952 440
Priority axis 3	040 Other seaports	18 690 549
Priority axis 3	044 Intelligent transport systems (including the introduction of demand management, tolling systems, IT monitoring control and information systems)	3 738 110
Priority axis 4	109 Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	3 450 563
Priority axis 4	118 Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	8 051 315

Table 13: Dimension 2 Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority axis 1 Priority axis 2 Priority axis 3 Priority axis 4	01 Non-repayable grant	115 018 767

Table 14: Dimension 3 Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
	04 Macro regional cooperation area	-

Table 15: Dimension 6 Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	Code	Amount (€)
-	07 Not Applicable	-

2.A.9. A summary of the planned use of technical assistance

Priority axis 5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
	Please see chapters 2.B as well as 5.3. for further information.

Section 2.B.

Description of the priority axes for technical assistance

ID of the priority axis	Priority 5
Title of the priority axis	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.2. Fund and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	ERDF
Calculation Basis	Eligible public expenditure

2.B.3. Specific objectives and expected results

Specific objective	To ensure a good implementation of the Programme
The results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support ¹	<i>Not applicable</i>

¹Required where the Union support to technical assistance in the cooperation programme exceeds EUR 15 million.

2.B.5. Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to results

Priority axis 5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
	<p>The objective for the use of Technical Assistance (TA) is to ensure a good implementation of the Programme. TA is used to prepare Programme processes and templates, for programme administration, monitoring, evaluation, communication, auditing and improving the administrative capacity of Programme bodies and stakeholders.</p> <p>Technical assistance is used to employ all Programme staff (Managing Authority (MA), Joint Secretariat (JS) and Audit Authority (AA) staff as well as employees of the Contact Points). Staff costs make up the largest part of TA costs. Also all operation costs linked to the staff (office and administration, travel costs etc.) will be covered from the TA.</p> <p>The Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 plans to use the Interact developed eMonitoring System. This is a cost-effective solution, leaving only server costs to be covered by the Programme. Evaluations are foreseen as required by the Regulations. Expert costs for assessing the achievement of result indicators will be covered. Tendering will be used when experts are chosen for evaluations.</p> <p>An essential element of TA costs is servicing the applicants and beneficiaries. For this purpose, a number of seminars, working meetings and trainings are foreseen annually in the different Programme countries. The ambition is to provide relevant information at the different steps of the Programme. Applicants and beneficiaries should get the same information regardless of location or who the information is given by. Especially consultations will be given in all Member States/Åland and Programme events will be spread across the Programme region. This ensures that all beneficiaries have access to the information and that the Programme is accessible.</p> <p>Funds for the Monitoring Committee (MC) and Steering Committee (SC) meetings have been reserved. Following the principle of accessibility and good coverage of the region, these meetings will be held according to a principle of rotation. Each Member State/Åland will chair the Committees in turns and the meetings will be arranged in the hosting country. In order to ensure adequate regional representation in the SC, TA funds have been reserved for 2 regional representatives from each Member State/Åland for one SC meeting annually.</p> <p>Communication activities or materials are another large part of the TA costs. The objective is to inform potential applicants of the funding possibilities provided by the Programme and later about the results reached in projects and thus by the Programme.</p> <p>The MA will prepare a Description of the Management and Control Systems for the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020. TA will be used, as necessary, to ensure the functioning of the First Level Control (FLC) systems and the Second Level Audits or any other audits necessary. In order to achieve a common understanding and interpretation of Programme rules the MA arranges two annual meetings for the FLC representatives. Similarly the AA arranges the Group of Auditors (GoA) meetings annually. The meeting costs are covered from the TA.</p> <p>All costs of the AA, including costs for system audits or audits of operations, will be covered from the TA.</p>

2.B.5.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 16. Output indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit
1	Number of consultations provided to potential applicants	number
2	Number of used tools (events, newsletters etc.) aimed at strengthening the performance of projects	number
3	Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by technical assistance	number

2.B.6. Categories of intervention

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 17-19. Categories of intervention

Table 17: Dimension 1 Intervention field		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
Priority axis 5	121 Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	6 925 768
Priority axis 5	122 Evaluation and studies	127 100
Priority axis 5	123 Information and communication	288 755

Table 18: Dimension 2 Form of finance		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
-	01 Non-repayable grant	7 341 623

Table 19: Dimension 3 Territory type		
Priority axis	Code	Amount (EUR)
-	07 Not applicable	-

SECTION 3

Financing plan

3.1. Financial appropriation from the ERDF

Table 20. Financial appropriation from the ERDF (in EUR)

Fund	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
ERDF	6 069 170	8 861 809	12 655 225	22 994 468	23 454 359	23 923 444	24 401 915	122 360 390

3.2.A Total financial appropriation from the ERDF and national co-financing (in EUR)

Table 21. Financing plan

	Fund	Basis for calculation of Union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e)	For information	
					National Public funding (c)	National private funding (d)			Contributions from third countries	EIB contributions
Priority axis 1	ERDF	Total eligible cost	28 754 691	7 643 652	6 497 104	1 146 548	36 398 343	79,0000000824 %	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								
	ENI	Not applicable								
Priority axis 2	ERDF	Total eligible cost	37 381 099	9 936 748	8 446 236	1 490 512	47 317 847	78,9999997253%	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								
	ENI	Not applicable								
Priority axis 3	ERDF	Total eligible cost	37 381 099	9 936 748	8 446 236	1 490 512	47 317 847	78,9999997253%	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								
	ENI	Not applicable								
Priority axis 4	ERDF	Total eligible cost	11 501 878	3 057 461	2 598 842	458 619	14 559 339	79,0000013050%	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								
	ENI	Not applicable								
Priority axis 5	ERDF	Public eligible cost	7 341 623	7 341 624	7 341 624	0	14 683 247	49,9999965948%	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								

	ENI	Not applicable								
Total	ERDF	Total eligible cost	122 360 390	37 916 233	33 330 042	4 586 191	160 276 623	76,3432543747%	Not applicable	Not applicable
	IPA	Not applicable								
	ENI	Not applicable								
Total	Total all Funds	Total eligible cost	122 360 389	37 916 232	33 330 041	4 586 191	160 276 623	76,3432543747%	Not applicable	Not applicable

3.2.B. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Table 22. Breakdown by priority axis and thematic objective

Priority axis	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Priority axis 1 - Competitive economy	Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	28 754 691	7 643 652	36 398 343
Priority axis 2 - Sustainable use of common resources	Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	37 381 099	9 936 748	47 317 847
Priority axis 3 - Well-connected region	Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	37 381 099	9 936 748	47 317 847
Priority axis 4 - Skilled and socially inclusive region	Investing In Education, Skills And Lifelong Learning	11 501 878	3 057 461	14 559 339
Priority axis 5 - Technical Assistance	<i>Not applicable</i>	7 341 623	7 341 624	14 683 247
<i>Total without Priority axis 5</i>		115 018 767	30 574 609	145 593 376
Total		122 360 390	37 916 233	160 276 623

Table 23. Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the programme (%)
	Will be generated automatically based on the selected categories of intervention and their contribution to the climate change objectives (given by the EC)	
Total	18 690 549,20	15,27%

SECTION 4

Integrated approach to territorial development

The Central Baltic region, its development and wellbeing is challenged by strong urban-rural disparities. The region covers diverse regions: urban and rural and peripheral, isolated areas. There are 4 highly developed, densely populated capital cities and their metropolitan areas and large territories of urban, rural and peripheral areas with less economic activity and population density. In addition, the Programme covers a unique Archipelago and Islands co-operation area that has different territorial needs and challenges, especially related to isolation and accessibility. The remote areas are characterized by especially low density of population, low economic activity and especially high outmigration. Many people relocate from least developed, isolated, rural and peripheral to more developed urban areas both within the same country and outside its borders.

The importance of those economic and territorial development challenges were taken into account while choosing the Programme priorities. The challenges to be addressed, as well as the chosen Programme priorities are well in line with the Partnership Agreements between the EC and each Member State.

The Programme aims to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion and reduce the urban-rural disparities via, among others, supporting the new business creation (Priority 1); via developing natural and cultural resources and improving living and visiting environments that are of a special importance in remote regions (Priority 2); via improving small ports of the Baltic Sea that would improve local and regional mobility, promote sustainable tourism development and strengthen local economies (Priority 3), via strengthening local communities and creating better integrated labour markets (Priority 4). The special location of the region surrounding the Baltic Sea creates both the preconditions for economic development, especially to the direction of the coastal areas, as well as additional responsibility for the environmental protection. The Programme aims to achieve more sustainable marine and coastal ecosystems (Priority 2), and to foster development and implementation of new methods and technologies to improve the status of the Baltic Sea.

The Programme approach is to integrate the cross-border approach to all its priorities, e.g. via joint business development, joint planning, joint marketing, aligned education and training programmes, thus, fostering the territorial cohesion.

In addition, the Programme applies the integrated approach to territorial development via its structure of 3 sub-programmes - Central Baltic, Archipelago and Islands, Southern-Finland - Estonia; thus, addressing the areas with specific territorial, economic and social challenges.

The Programme aims to contribute to achieving the goal of the Europe 2020 strategy for "smart", "sustainable" and "inclusive" growth. Priority 1 supports the Europe 2020 objective of "smart growth". It has been agreed that innovative businesses (SMEs) are targeted as the main target group to contribute to the knowledge intensive economy of the Central Baltic region. Investment priorities and specific objectives chosen for the Priority 2 contribute to the Europe 2020 "smart growth" and "sustainable growth" objectives. Priority 3 in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy is seen as precondition for the "smart growth" and "sustainable growth", while Priority 4 contributes to the "inclusive growth" and "smart growth" objectives."

4.4. Contribution of planned interventions towards macro-regional and sea basin strategies

Priority 1 contributes to the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) objective “increase prosperity”, which is strongly related to the Europe 2020 strategy via the sub-objective “EUSBSR contributing to the implementation of Europe 2020 Strategy”.

By applying “ICT” as a horizontal objective within all priorities the new Central Baltic Programme contributes to the “digital single market”, which has been emphasised by EUSBSR as “hugely important to the economies in the BSR and to its global position as an innovative region.”

In relation to EUSBSR priority areas (hereby PA), the Priority 1 of the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 is directly contributing to PA “SME” (“Promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the growth of SMEs”) and PA “Education” (“Developing innovative education and youth”) (the entrepreneurship aspect), PA “Culture” (Developing and promoting the common culture and cultural identity) and PA “Innovation” (“Exploiting the full potential of the region in research and innovation”).

Priority 2 will contribute to PA “Hazards” (“reducing the use and impact of hazardous substances”). Priority 2 will also contribute directly to PA “Nutri” (“Reducing nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels”), PA “Agri” (“Reinforcing sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries”) and PA “Tourism” (“Reinforcing cohesiveness of the macro-region through tourism”) Because of the chosen specific objectives to allow cooperating in joint planning of urban space, maritime and coastal areas, this Priority contributes directly to the horizontal action “Spatial Planning”.

In the context of the EUSBSR it contributes to “save the sea” objective and particularly to the sub-objective “clear water in the sea”. Because of the chosen investment priority (c) and its focus on tourism it also contributes to the objective “increase prosperity”.

The Priority 3 contributes to the “connect the region” objective and, more specifically, targets existing bottlenecks and efficiency of transport nodes and corridors.

This Priority with the chosen specific objectives directly contributes to PA “Transport” (“Improving internal and external transport links”), PA “Ship” (“Becoming a model region for clean shipping”) (in line with the small ports’ services development focus) and PA “Tourism” (in line with the small ports’ focus as seen as contributing to tourism development).

In the context of EUSBSR the Priority 4 contributes to the “increase prosperity” objective and more specifically “improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea region” sub-objective, where labour market inclusion and integration is emphasised.

On priority area level this Priority with chosen specific objectives contributes to the PA “Education” and PA “Health” (“Improving and promoting people’s health, including its social aspects”).

Priority 4 contributes to the Horizontal Action “involve”.

The Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 intention is to use the Flagship Projects status established within the EUSBSR for financed projects in order to contribute to the achievement of objectives of the EUSBSR and to achieve good visibility of financed projects.

The Flagship Projects labelling is seen as an excellent tool for securing strong linkages between the Central Baltic 2014-2020 and the EUSBSR.

To fully exploit the EUSBSR Flagship Project status there is a need to establish good information exchange with relevant national contact points, priority areas coordinators and horizontal action leaders of the EUSBSR. As the Programme is well in line with the EUSBSR, a strong contribution to the Strategy is foreseen. The Programme does not foresee the use of a separate assessment criteria for the EUSBSR, but the contribution will be included in an overall assessment of the project's contribution to regional, national or other strategies. The Programme contribution to the EUSBSR will also be highlighted in Programme communication activities.

Section 5

Implementing provisions for the cooperation programme

5.1. Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 24. Programme authorities

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body	Head of the authority/body
Managing Authority	Regional Council of Southwest Finland	Tarja Nuotio Regional Development Director
Audit Authority	Regional Council of Southwest Finland	Kari Håkämies Region Mayor

The body to which payments will be made by the Commission is:

- the Managing Authority
 the Certifying Authority

Table 25. Body or bodies carrying out control and audit tasks

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body	Head of the authority/body
Body or bodies designated to carry out control tasks	Estonia: Enterprise Estonia Finland: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Regional Department Latvia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development Sweden: Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth Åland: Åland Government, Department of Trade and Industry	Estonia: Ms Nele Ivask, Interreg Programmes Supervision Bureau Finland: Ms Tuula Manelius, Ministerial Counsellor (responsible for FLC of ETC programmes) Latvia: Mr Artis Lapins, Director of the Investment Supervision Department Sweden: <i>to be confirmed</i> Åland: Ms Linnéa Johansson, Permanent Secretary

<p>Body or bodies designated to be responsible for carrying out audit tasks</p>	<p>Estonia: Estonian Ministry of the Interior, Internal Audit Department</p> <p>Finland: Ministry of Finance, Government financial controller's function, Audit Authority Unit</p> <p>Latvia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Internal Audit Department</p> <p>Sweden: The Swedish National Financial Management Authority</p> <p>Åland: The National Audit Office of Åland</p>	<p>Estonia: Ms Aive Adler (Head of Internal Audit Department)</p> <p>Finland: Mr Jan Holmberg, Financial Counsellor (Head of Audit Authority Unit)</p> <p>Latvia: Ms Zanda Janusauska, Director of Department</p> <p>Sweden: Ms Ulrika Bergelv, Head of Audit Department of EU structural funds</p> <p>Åland: Ms Marika Björkman, Auditor</p>
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5.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

The Managing Authority (MA) will set up the Joint Secretariat (JS) in accordance with Article 23 of the European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) Regulation and as outlined below.

The JS will be located in Turku, hosted by the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. The Regional Council of Southwest Finland also acts as MA and Audit Authority.

As the Regional Council of Southwest Finland continues as MA from the 2007-2013 period many administrative arrangements are already in place. The staff structure has, however, been evaluated and internal restructuring has been made for more efficient and qualitative Programme implementation. The whole JS will in the 2014-2020 period be located in Turku. The structure with sub-secretariats and info points in the Member States/Åland will not be continued from the 2007-2013 period, thus allowing for more flexible and efficient use of secretarial resources.

Staff will be recruited for the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 during 2014. The ambition is to have international staff, preferably with representatives from all Programme countries. All staff will be employed by the Regional Council of Southwest Finland.

The JS will become fully operational as soon as the OP has been approved by the European Commission and the TA budget has been approved by the Monitoring Committee. Until then all preparatory activities will be financed from the predecessor Programme.

5.3. Summary description of the management and control arrangements

Division of tasks within the joint implementation structure

The joint implementation structure consists of the following bodies:

- Managing Authority (MA)
- Monitoring Committee (MC)
- Steering Committee (SC)
- Joint Secretariat (JS)
- Contact points (CP)
- Audit Authority (AA) and Group of Auditors (GoA)

References to Programme staff are made for the staff that is covered from the Technical Assistance, meaning the Managing Authority and Audit Authority, the Joint Secretariat and the Contact Points.

Managing Authority

In accordance with Article 21 of the ETC Regulation, the Member States participating in the Programme have agreed to designate the Regional Council of Southwest Finland to act as Managing Authority (MA) of the Programme and being responsible also for carrying out the certifying tasks. The MA will perform the functions listed in Article 125 and 126 of the CPR Regulation. The Regional Council performed the same functions also during the previous Programme period. Member States have received evidence of their effective functioning during that period. The designation of the MA will be carried out by Finland, following the procedure set out in Article 124 of the CPR Regulation.

The MA will not carry out the verifications under point (a) of Article 125(4) of the CPR Regulation, but in accordance with Article 23(4) of the ETC Regulation, each Member State/Åland has designated the body or person responsible for carrying out such verifications in relation to beneficiaries on its territory (see Table 21 and the description of management verifications below).

The MA counterparts in the Member States/Åland are the national responsible authorities represented in the Monitoring Committee.

Monitoring Committee

In accordance with Article 47 of the CPR Regulation, the Member States participating in the Programme, in agreement with the Managing Authority (MA), will set up a Monitoring Committee (MC) for the Programme within three months of the approval of the Programme. The Rules of Procedure of the MC, including rules on the MC members' impartiality, will be adopted by the MC at its first meeting.

In accordance with Article 48 of the CPR Regulation, the Member States have agreed on the composition of the MC. The MC will be composed of relevant partners from all Member States/Åland. Each Member State will nominate up to 6 members and Åland up to 2 members.

The MC shall review the implementation of the Programme and progress towards achieving its objectives and examine in detail all issues that affect the performance of the Programme. The

tasks of the MC are defined in the Rules of Procedure and are based on Articles 49 and 110 of the CPR Regulation and Articles 12 and 18 of the ETC Regulation.

Steering Committee

In accordance with Article 12 of the ETC Regulation and due to the complex structure of the Programme, the Monitoring Committee (MC) will set up a Steering Committee (SC) for the selection of operations. The Rules of Procedure of the SC, including rules on the SC members' impartiality, will be agreed by the MC at its first meeting. The SC will be joint for all three sub-programmes. This allows for an efficient and transparent handling of relevant Programme implementation matters.

The SC will consist of up to 5 members from each Member State and up to 2 members from Åland.

Joint Secretariat

The Managing Authority (MA) will set up a Joint Secretariat (JS) in accordance with Article 23 of the ETC Regulation. The JS shall assist the MA, the Monitoring Committee (MC) and the Steering Committee (SC) in carrying out their respective functions. The JS shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities within the programme and shall advise beneficiaries in preparation of the project applications and assist in the implementation of operations. The JS shall prepare payment claims for certification and provide information to the national contact points on the programme rules and other requirements.

Contact points

Contact points (CP) will be established in each Member State/Åland. They will deal with information and communication activities related to the implementation of the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020.

The CP will be a link between the Programme and region/country and vice versa. The CP should have a proactive and mobilising role on a regional and national level in order to meet the Programme goals. This will help to improve the visibility of the Programme throughout the region and will ensure communication measures that suit the local needs. The tasks of the contact points will vary during the programme implementation cycle but can be at least the following: informing about the Programme as a source for funding, sharing general information about the projects, attracting relevant partners and projects, communicating Programme results and supporting the Joint Secretariat in practical events/activities taking place in the regions. The Managing Authority (MA) will ensure consistency of advice between the contact points and other Programme bodies through trainings and direct communication.

An agreement on the setting up of each contact point will be signed between the MA and each Host Organisation/Member State, defining the tasks and responsibilities of both parties.

Audit Authority and Group of Auditors

In accordance with Article 21 of the ETC Regulation, the Member States participating in the Programme have designated the Regional Council of Southwest Finland to act as Audit Authority

(AA) of the Programme. The AA will perform the functions listed in Article 127 of the CPR Regulation including the System audits as verifications of Management and control system. The Regional Council performed these same functions also in the predecessor Programme.

The separation of functions between the Managing Authority (MA) and AA will be guaranteed within the organisational framework of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. The MA and AA tasks will be fulfilled by separate and independent departments in the Regional Council, each of them lead by only one of the managing directors of the Regional Council. The Regional Council has issued a modified internal administrative rule on the separation of functions of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland, thus assuring the genuine independence of the respective units. All legally binding documents on the MA and the AA issues are to be signed by the holders of the respective offices excluding the executive director from the decision making of the MA and AA units.

In accordance with Article 25 of the ETC Regulation, the AA is assisted by a Group of Auditors (GoA) composing of a representative from each of the Member States/Åland. The GoA will be set up at the latest within three months of the decision approving the Programme. The GoA will approve its Rules of Procedure in its first meeting. The GoA will be coordinated by the AA. In addition the AA will provide the auditors with guidance and manuals to perform the audits of operations. Audits of operations will be carried out by auditors designated by the Member States/Åland. The GoA will be coordinated by the AA.

Organisation of audits

Each member of the Group of Auditors (GoA) representing a participating Member State/Åland shall carry out audits of operations on the basis of a sample provided by the Audit Authority (AA). The audits of operations to be carried out by the member of the GoA are limited to the beneficiaries located in the territory of the participating Member State/Åland represented by the member of the GoA.

The national member of the GoA reports the audit results to the AA who will coordinate the audit work in the whole Programme area and compiles the final audit report.

The members will support the AA in carrying out its duties. This includes any audits required such as e.g. complementary audit or audit requested from the Commission.

Arrangements and procedures for programme management, implementation and control

Procedure for assessment and selection of operations

The Programme foresees mainly the use of open calls, but also targeted calls for certain Priorities or other options are possible if deemed necessary by the Monitoring Committee (MC). At least one call per year shall be organised until the funds have been completely allocated. During the programme implementation the Member States (through the MC) may agree on preparing and implementing strategic projects. The Programme will use a simplified application for small projects.

The Contact points and Joint Secretariat (JS) provide consultations to potential beneficiaries according to an internal agreement on division of tasks. Consultations will be done in a structured manner, aiming at consulting each project at least once before the application is submitted.

All applications will be received through the eMonitoring System (see also description of PA 5 Technical Assistance). The assessment and later monitoring of the projects will be carried out within the same system.

After the deadline for proposals the JS will assess each application. A technical admissibility check will be conducted for all projects. Those technically admissible will be content assessed. The assessment will be done by a tandem, i.e. two JS colleagues, thus ensuring transparency and impartiality of the assessment.

The assessment will be submitted to the Steering Committee (SC) to which the MC will delegate the selection of projects.

The selections of the SC will be confirmed by the Managing Authority's administrative decision to approve or reject the projects. The JS will inform the Lead Partners (LP) about the selected projects in writing through the eMonitoring System. The administrative decisions can be appealed against. The detailed appeal instruction is annexed to the decision of the MA and is approved by the Board of the Regional Council. The appeal will be submitted to the Board of the Regional Council of the Southwest Finland.

In case the LP is unsatisfied with the ruling of the Board the LP from the participating Member State/Åland of the Central Baltic Programme may also appeal to the Administrative Court of Turku in the first instance. This procedure takes place only after the Board of the Council has ruled on the case.

Guiding principles for selection of operations

The detailed assessment criteria will be approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). The MC may also agree on targeted calls or call-specific criteria. The assessment criteria will be published in the Programme Manual for the respective call.

The overriding principle in the selection of operations is that all projects must comply with one specific objective and contribute to the achievement of the larger Programme objectives. The assessment will thus look at the relevance and strategic context of the project, its contribution to the programme's objectives results and outputs, the relevance of the partnership and the co-operation character of the proposal, including its cross-border impact and the justification for a cross-border intervention.

Only projects that are found to be on an acceptable level on the strategic relevance will be assessed further based on operational assessment criteria. Guiding principles here are that the management structures and procedures are efficient, communication activities relevant, the work plan realistic, consistent and coherent and the budget well prepared.

Investments in infrastructure are eligible for priority axes 2 and 3. The assessment will be made of their relevance and cross-border character for each project separately, as will be set out in the approved assessment criteria.

The aim of the assessment criteria is to select the most suitable projects for funding but also to set a good basis for project implementation. The assessment criteria should guide towards supporting projects with added value and sustainable impact for the region.

Management verifications and payments to projects

The management verifications (later referred to as First Level Control, FLC) will be carried out by designated controllers in each Member State/Åland. The bodies designated to carry out the controls have been defined in chapter 5.1. Finland has set up a decentralised FLC system, while the other Member States/Åland have set up centralised systems. All Member States continue with the chosen FLC system from the 2007-2013 period. Audits carried out during this period show consistently very low error rates, indicating that the system functions well.

The Managing Authority (MA) will establish joint systems and quality control for the verifications. This will be done firstly by preparing a manual for the FLC work and setting out in detail the process of management verifications. The MA shall define the quality criteria expected and the procedures required for the Programme. The MA shall also provide the FLC with relevant working documents. In doing so, the experience from the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013 will be taken into account.

The Programme rules and requirements will be explicitly defined, allowing for all controllers to implement a unified level of controls. Equal treatment of project partners will be considered when setting up the rules. The MA will be responsible for interpreting Programme rules in case of a dispute on different understanding between Programme bodies and/or beneficiaries. During the Programme implementation phase the MA will organise regular meetings with the FLC to discuss procedures, joint interpretation of rules and other topics of common interest. These meetings are crucial in ensuring the common standards across the Programme area and for all Programme bodies.

Once the whole project payment claim has been certified, the payment will be made. According to Art 132 of the CPR Regulation the MA shall ensure that the beneficiary receives the payment no later than 90 days from the submission of the payment claim. The MA shall strive for shorter handling times.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the programme and projects will be ongoing during the programme period in order to illustrate and enhance the performance of the programme. An evaluation plan must be approved by the Monitoring Committee at its first meeting.

Monitoring of the projects will include elements of anti-fraud risk assessment. The programme risk assessment will be updated annually (or upon need) and will, among other things, consider the risk of fraud.

If any programme body identifies the (risk of) fraud or an irregularity, the MA shall be informed and shall be responsible for further actions. The procedure for corrective measures are/will be explained in the Pre-agreement between Member States, the Programme's Description of Management and Control Systems as well as the Subsidy Contract.

In case the MA receives information that the LP may have violated the Subsidy Contract in a way which fulfils the characteristics of fraud in a judicial criminal sense the case will be handed over to the relevant national law enforcement agency by the relevant national authority after all the available means for the MA have been applied. The refunding process is conducted and the Subsidy Contract is terminated.

In case findings on fraud above the OLAP 10 000 euro threshold will be made by the MA, the MA shall inform the Member State in question immediately.

Complaint procedures

All decisions in the programme will take the final form of an administrative decision made by the Regional Council and signed by a person with signatory rights. The administrative decision can be appealed against. The detailed appeal instructions for both procedures are annexed to each decision of the MA/AA as well as the Board of the Regional Council. The appeal will, in such cases, be submitted to the Board of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. An appeal can be submitted by the LP only, on behalf of the partnership. Other problems which might arise during programme implementation will be solved in accordance with the procedures set out in Finnish Administrative Law. Complaints should be sent to the JS/MA.

Partner and partnership requirements

Eligibility of partners

The eligibility of partners has been defined according to their legal status and the location of the partner. The programme will accept public authorities (national, regional and local) as well as bodies governed by public and bodies governed by private law. More detailed definitions will be provided in the Programme Manual.

The financial stability of non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and private partners shall be confirmed as part of the admissibility check.

Project partners should, as a general rule, come from the Programme area. As set out in Article 20 of the ETC Regulation, in total 20% of Programme funds may be used to cover costs for operations or parts of operations outside the Union part of the Programme area.

Further definitions on partner eligibility will be provided in the Programme Manual.

Partnership requirements and principles

The Programme supports only projects with partners from at least two of the Member States. Bilateral co-operation between Finland and Estonia is always funded from the Southern Finland - Estonia sub-programme. Projects will be funded from the Archipelago and Islands sub-programme providing that the partners come from Member States participating in the sub-programme and at least one partner is located in the sub-programme area and the project benefits the sub-programme area.

The relevance of the partnership will be evaluated as part of the content assessment on basis of the assessment criteria. The partnership must be relevant for achieving the results of the project and must have the needed capacity to implement the project. The benefit of projects should come mainly to the core programme area, wherefore limits to the participation of partners from additional areas may be set in the Programme Manual.

Any further definitions about the partnership requirements will be presented in the Programme Manual.

Additional programme documents

Details of the management, implementation and control arrangements will be provided in the Multilateral Agreement, the Description of Management and Control Systems and the Programme

Manual to be developed and agreed jointly by the Managing Authority and the Member States/Åland.

5.4. Appointment of liabilities among participating Member States in case of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

The Art 27 of the ETC Regulation sets out the basic principles for recovery of funds. The Managing Authority (MA) shall recover any amounts unduly paid from the Lead Partner (LP).

If the LP does not succeed in securing the repayment from a project partner, the Member State on whose territory the beneficiary concerned is located shall reimburse the MA the amount unduly paid. The Member State becomes responsible for reimbursing the cost only when the MA has taken all measures available for securing the payment from the LP. The MA is responsible for reimbursing the amounts concerned to the general budget of the Union.

Regardless of the date of detecting systemic and other errors on Programme level, the methodology of sharing financial corrections among participating countries will be chosen according to the type of error as agreed in the Multilateral Agreement between the participating Member States and the MA.

Systemic errors detected on Programme level leading to consequences such as financial corrections or interruption/suspension of payments on Programme level might also affect the project level. This will be dealt with in the Programme Manual.

With regard to the Technical Assistance (TA) expenditure based on joint decisions by the participating Member States, the Member States will bear joint liability proportionally to their respective share in the overall TA budget, whereas regarding systemic errors connected to the TA, liability is with the Member State hosting the organisation spending the TA.

5.5. Use of the euro

As defined in Art 28 of the ETC Regulation 1299/2013, expenditure incurred in a currency other than the euro shall be converted into euro by the beneficiaries using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which expenditure was submitted for verification to the First Level Control. The method chosen shall be explained in all relevant guidance to the beneficiaries. The method is applicable to all beneficiaries from Sweden.

5.6. Involvement of partners

The participating Member States have given the Regional Council of Southwest Finland the mandate to coordinate the programming process. Each Member State has been represented by its responsible national authority during the process. These are the Estonian Ministry of the Interior (Estonia), Ministry of Employment and the Economy (Finland), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (Latvia), Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications (Sweden) and Government of Åland (Åland).

The responsible national authorities have been represented in the Joint Programming Committee (JPC) and in Working Group 2 (Management). For some Member States the responsible national authorities are also members of Working Group 1 (Content). In addition to these representatives, also regional representatives participate in the JPC and both Working Groups. The partners have been nominated by the responsible national authority for each Member State/Åland.

A wide involvement and active participation of partners has been sought. For the two working groups it has been decided that each Member State/Åland nominates one permanent member. The other members may change depending on the issues at hand. This means that the best experts and a wide representation from each country have been ensured. In addition each Member State organises its work so that relevant partners are consulted between the meetings. Accessibility has been ensured partly by holding the meetings in each country in turn. The meetings are arranged in capital cities and usually as one-day meetings in order to reduce time and cost for travels, thus allowing for high participation levels.

A wide and experienced partnership for the programming process has been achieved through thematic seminars held in each Member State/Åland. The workshops attracted all in all more than 250 participants. They represented both partners from projects funded in the period 2007-2013 and organisations new to this co-operation. The partners have discussed the intervention logic and defined the topics relevant for cross-border co-operation in the Central Baltic region. During the seminar the partners were asked to submit potential project ideas from all interested organisations. The process of gathering ideas was continued throughout the initial phase of the programming process. The ideas have been used as a demonstration of the needs of the region when defining Programme content. In addition, meetings with regional representatives of the Programme area were held to discuss Programme intervention logic and get information on co-operation projects. In some countries analyses on the region's needs and co-operation potential have been made. Information from these and other relevant analyses and strategies have been taken into account.

Accordingly, the discussions and decisions by the Programme bodies have been based on the findings of the regional analysis and input from stakeholders in thematic seminars. As these cover a wide range of issues, the expertise of the partners has been needed to identify the most relevant topics for co-operation. The intervention logic has been defined in consensus between all partners. Significant comments and recommendations have come from all partners and when supported by others, have been implemented. There has been a general agreement on the direction of the Programme.

The Ex-ante evaluation was launched as soon as the Regional Council of Southwest Finland was given the mandate to act as Managing Authority and coordinator of the programming process. The JPC could at its first meeting decide on the selection of the Ex ante evaluators. The evaluators have since participated in the JPC and working group meetings and provided their feedback to the process. They have also participated in the thematic workshops.

The public hearing process on the Operational Programme draft and the Strategic Environmental Assessment report gave a good opportunity for stakeholder participation and involvement. Public hearing events were organised in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden. There was big interest towards the events as all in all more than 180 people participated in these. There were participants both from current partner organisations and new stakeholders. In addition, more than 30 stakeholders submitted comments through an online questionnaire on the Programme website and some submitted their comments by letter. The response from the stakeholders was generally positive. Only minor adjustments to the text were suggested. All feedback was discussed and commented by programming working groups.

Economic and social partners have had the possibility to participate in the preparation in all stages and they have also been actively invited. The places for involvement have been specifically the thematic seminars and public hearing events in all countries, including the possibility to provide comments during the public hearings.

Many of the partners currently involved in the preparation of the Programme are foreseen to be involved in either the Monitoring Committee (MC) or Steering Committee (SC) in the future. Continuity between the preparation and implementation and monitoring could be ensured through the organisations or people involved in both the preparation and later the implementation and monitoring.

Having a link between preparation and later implementation contributes to good management of the Programme and achievement of the objectives. The MC shall consist of members from the national and regional level as well as social and economic partners. The national authorities responsible for programming are involved in the MC. Also the regions will be represented in the implementation and monitoring of the Programme.

The SC shall consist of members from the national and regional level but may also have social or economic partners represented. Also here a continuation from the preparations is foreseen to take place.

Both the MC and SC will be actively involved in the Programme implementation and monitoring. The MC will have a stronger focus on the monitoring aspect, whereas the SC will take funding decisions and thus focus more on the implementation. Members of the MC and SC are expected to spread information about the decisions taken at the meetings within their own organisation. They may also participate in the general communication activities in other ways.

Section 6

Coordination

During Programme implementation coordination with other EU funds will be ensured. Activities funded should not overlap with project activities financed by other funds but may at times bring synergies. The assessment of overlaps and/or synergies will mainly be made during consultations and project assessments. One way of securing good division of work with other programmes is to determine the lists of eligible themes (e.g. communities' problems and challenges under Priority 4), objects (e.g. small ports under Priority 3), and resources (e.g. natural and cultural heritage under Priority 3) to be targeted by the Central Baltic Programme.

The Managing Authority has the main responsibility for ensuring the coordination, but the day-to-day implementation of these activities will lie in the Joint Secretariat (JS). The staff is expected to have a basic knowledge of the relevant EU funds. In view of the chosen priorities, the funds and programmes in relation to what the coordination should be considered are the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) funded programmes, "Horizon 2020", "Creative Europe", "LIFE", "URBACT" and "Erasmus+" programmes and national funding programmes. Furthermore, synergies between Priority 1 actions and the Enterprise Europe Network are possible.

While defining the intervention logic of the Central Baltic Programme, the above-mentioned programmes and their planned activities have been monitored. Potential overlaps have been avoided already in the phase of defining specific objectives and supported actions.

Whereas the national ESF and ERDF programmes are designed keeping in mind each Member State's needs and priorities the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 intends to target the challenges that are similar to several of the participating Member States but always strengthening cross-border co-operation. The focus of the Central Baltic Programme is to provide opportunities for different organisations to develop their activities so that the whole Central Baltic region will benefit from the projects.

Some examples of complementarities between the Central Baltic programme and other funding instruments can be mentioned for each Priority: for Priority 1 no national programmes (financed from ERDF, ESF) have targeted joint Central Baltic new businesses, new Central Baltic student companies and clusters' cooperation (meta clusters) towards new markets. The specific objectives add value to the development and efforts achieved/made by regional and national business development programmes; in Priority 2 the link with Water management plans creates effective mechanisms for co-ordination with other programmes and allows together with national and regional efforts to achieve better water quality of Baltic sea; in regard to SO 3.2. the programme addresses the "improved network" aspect, which no other programme has or will have a focus on. For establishing a clear division of work with other programmes designed to improve small ports, the Central Baltic programme will use a priority list of small ports and their services in most need for development; Specific objective 4.2. goes one step further than national programmes towards a deeper integration of Central Baltic labour market by financing VET programmes to become better aligned with the needs of the CB future economy.

During Programme preparations some potential overlaps were identified. These have been systematically dealt with. Potential overlap between the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 and the transnational Baltic Sea Region Programme was identified for the specific objective 2.2

of Priority 2 (“Sustainably planned and managed marine and coastal areas”). The Programme area is partly the same and the chosen thematic objectives and investment priorities could have led to activities coinciding. Information from participating Member States and bodies involved in Programme preparations was taken into account and the Central Baltic content was defined as targeting maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management challenges between 2-3 Central Baltic countries.

For specific objective 2.3 (“Better urban planning in the Central Baltic region”) of Priority 2 a risk of overlap with the “URBACT” programme was seen, as “URBACT” funds activities related to experience exchange of urban planning. The issue was addressed by targeting the planning challenges of urban areas together with their hinterlands, addressing complex common issues related to integrating different transport modes and foreseeing pilot investments as ways of achieving touchable results.

The ETC programme Estonia-Latvia has partly the same programme geography as the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020. Close contact has been established with the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Estonia-Latvia already in the 2007-2013 period. During the programming phase discussions about the chosen priorities have been ongoing so as to avoid overlaps. Contact is foreseen during programme implementation with the aim to ensure that projects are funded from the most appropriate programme and that no risk of double financing exists.

Finally, a potential for overlaps was identified between the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020 and the “Erasmus+” programme. Activities funded within these programmes could have intersected with the specific objective 4.2 (“More aligned VET programmes in the Central Baltic region”) of Priority 4. In order to maintain a clear separation between the activities funded, the Central Baltic Programme focuses solely on projects that address the specific needs of the Central Baltic labour market integration.

Synergies with other programmes may, on the other hand, be found especially with adjacent ENI programmes (South-East Finland-Russia and Estonia-Russia and Latvia-Russia). There has been some interest to include Russian actors in the Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020. Although the possibilities to include costs outside the EU will be used and possibilities for Russian actors to participate at their own cost may be encouraged, no direct partnership from outside the EU is foreseen. Contacts shall be established between the Managing Authorities of the Central Baltic Programme and the ENI programmes in order to explore the potential for co-operation in funding operations that are of common interest.

When consulting project ideas the JS shall keep in mind the potential overlaps and synergies with other programmes. The applicants shall be made aware of these findings as early as possible. The Contact Points have been tasked with staying informed of the relevant funding sources within their countries (especially ETC, ESF and EAFRD programmes) and forwarding information to Programme staff about possible overlaps. As the Programme employs thematic experts for each Priority, it is also within the scope of their work to stay informed about other funding opportunities within their field and the potential for synergies or the risk of overlap with these.

During the project assessment phase the JS will make the final assessment. Projects that overlap with other funding programmes shall not be suggested for the Steering Committee (SC) for approval.

The SC will be made up of experts from different thematic fields and from all regions and/or countries. They are key actors in providing information about remaining overlaps, should they identify such. The SC is also in the position to propose changes to the projects, thus allowing for

further developments to exploit the complementarities between funding programmes. The members of the SC may also in many cases overlap with the MC/SC members of other programmes. This provides additional assurance that the same project idea is not funded twice.

SECTION 7

Reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries

Assessment of the administrative burden in the 2007-2013 period

The reduction of the administrative burden has been a key principle for the whole programming. During the period 2007-2013 the main challenge for the partners was the financial reporting and the time required from the moment a cost occurred to when it was paid out. Although several steps of simplification were implemented already during the period 2007-2013 the process of payments remained quite heavy.

This was due to several facts: reporting periods were frequent (every 4 months), at the beginning of the Programme not enough staff resources had been reserved for financial monitoring in the Joint Technical Secretariat, the payment process involves many levels (First Level Control - Technical admissibility check - Financial monitoring - Content monitoring - Certifying Authority checks - payment) and the work flow between the different steps did not function at its best. Advance payments were not used. Having three milestones did not have the desired impact on the speed of reporting and money flow. The average handling time was between 2 to 3 months during the Programme implementation period, but the variation between individual projects payments was big.

Several provisions for simplification have been made for the 2014-2020 period, leading to a considerable reduction of the administrative burden for the beneficiaries. The comments received in the public hearing strongly support the need of these simplification measures.

Payments to beneficiaries

The reporting periods will be defined in the Application Form and Subsidy Contract. There will be no more than 2 reporting periods per year. This will considerably reduce the amount of administrative work for the beneficiaries. Although there will be more invoices per each report this is still less work (for the projects, First Level Control (FLC) and Joint Secretariat (JS)) compared to all the mandatory documents that have to be filled in with every report.

Advance payments will be used for small projects. They may, where feasible, also be used for other projects. Advance payments mean that immediately after having received the project payment claim a certain amount of the requested ERDF amount will be paid out.

The tasks of the JS and the functions of the Certifying Authority (CA) have been reviewed and a simpler implementation process will be set up. The tasks of the JS and the regulatory tasks of the CA are separated functions but will be coordinated within one team, thus allowing for fluent processes without overlapping controls.

All necessary steps will be taken to reduce the time needed for payment to projects. The National Authorities responsible for the FLC ensure that the deadlines as set out in Art 23(4) of EU Regulation 1299/2013 are met. Shorter handling times will be strived for. Similarly, the current steps of simplification ensure that Managing Authority can make payments within 90 days

of the submission of the payment claim as set out in Art 132 of EU Regulation 1303/2013. The MA will strive for shorter handling times where possible.

Online monitoring system

The Programme monitoring system is prepared based on the Interact Harmonised Implementation Tools and in co-operation with Interact and other ETC programmes. The templates and processes are based on the most essential elements and the structure has been based on an analysis of best practices from more than 40 ETC programmes. Also the fact that several programmes use the same templates will simplify for beneficiaries applying for projects from several funding instruments.

The online monitoring system will also be a remarkable tool for reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries. It eliminates the need to send documents in paper and with signatures. It also allows for streamlined and efficient handling of any changes required to the project application as both the project and the Joint Secretariat/Managing Authority can access the same information in the database. It allows for interactive and/or pre-filled forms by the system on the basis of the data which is stored at consecutive steps of the procedures, for automatic calculations preventing mistakes and speeding up the work, where appropriate, automatic embedded controls which reduce as much as possible back-and forth exchange of documents, system generated alerts to inform the beneficiary of the possibility to perform certain actions and on-line status tracking meaning that the beneficiary can follow up the current state of the project, which results in more transparency. Due to the principle of information inserted only once the beneficiaries avoid doing extra work. The eMonitoring System also greatly reduces the amount of documents that need to be signed and sent in. All in all the eMonitoring System allows using human resources in an efficient way.

Simplified cost options

Simplified cost options are planned to be used where possible, especially for small projects. Lump sums are seen as especially suitable for small projects, but may be used for all projects according to need. Overheads will be used for all projects. The simplified cost options are foreseen to reduce the amount of needed paperwork and to speed up the reporting and control procedures. When deciding on the eligibility rules and simplified cost options the experience of the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat of the current period as well as that of the First Level Control will be taken into account. The detailed rules for eligibility and use of simplified cost options will be set in the Programme Manual and will cover the eligibility rules set by the Commission in Regulation (EU) No 481/2014.

Indicative timeframe

All provisions for simplification will apply immediately from the start of the Programme implementation. They will be introduced at different times, depending on at which stage of implementation they are relevant.

During Programme implementation all processes will be reviewed regularly. Further measures for simplification and reducing the administrative burden will be applied as relevant.

SECTION 8

Horizontal Principles

8.1. Sustainable development

Sustainable development will be taken into account as a horizontal principle in all Programme implementation. Sustainable development should be included in programming at all stages. The objective is to ensure that all Programme activities are socially, ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable. The impact on the environment, climate and human wellbeing should be positive.

Projects are in the application form asked about their contribution to sustainable development. An assessment criterion is foreseen for sustainable development. When the environmental impact is assessed during the project application phase the Programme can direct the potential impact in a controlled way. The project can be asked to reduce or mitigate the negative impact. Projects with a direct negative impact on the environment and sustainable development will not be funded. More detailed guidance will be given in the Programme Manual and in guidance on filling in the Application Form.

Priority 2 relates directly to environmental protection and resource efficiency. Thus projects funded under this Priority will have a direct positive impact on sustainable development. Low-carbon economy is a horizontal objective for all priorities. This principle will highlight the practical implementation of sustainable development in all priority axes and clearly strengthen the Programme's contribution to sustainable development and in particular to climate change. Projects will be reviewed from the viewpoint of risks of climate change. Climate change mitigation and adaptation is important to prevent negative impacts on the natural and cultural heritage and the ecosystem.

8.2. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Guaranteeing equal opportunities and preventing discrimination are important principles in all Programme stages. No-one should be discriminated based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Instead, Programme and project activities should, where possible, increase the possibilities of all groups to participate in society.

These principles shall apply in the implementation of the Programme but also in the selection and implementation of individual projects. Projects are in the application form asked about their contribution to equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

Contribution to the horizontal objectives is foreseen as an assessment criterion and the information provided by the projects is assessed. Projects with a negative impact on equal opportunities and anti-discrimination will not be funded. More detailed guidance will be given in the Programme Manual and in guidance on filling in the Application Form.

Projects supporting equal opportunities and anti-discrimination directly may be most relevant under Priority 4, but relevant actions can also be foreseen under Priority 1. Actions under

Priorities 2 and 3 are expected to be neutral on equal opportunities and non-discrimination, but these should also not have a negative impact on these principles.

8.3. Equality between men and women

In addition to the general principle of anti-discrimination the Programme will pay attention to the equality between men and women. Projects are in the application form asked about their contribution to equality between men and women. An assessment will be made as to the relevance of gender in the project, based on the information provided by the project. This principle will be considered for all projects and priorities. Equality between men and women will be considered in Programme implementation, for example when recruiting staff and in all personnel policy.

The contribution to the horizontal principles is foreseen as an assessment criterion. Projects with a negative impact on equality between men and women will not be funded. More information will be given in the Programme Manual and in guidance on filling in the Application Form.

SECTION 9

Separate elements

9.3 Relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme

- 1) Responsible national authorities participating in the Joint Programming Committee, Working Group -1 (Content), Working Group -2 (Management):
 - Estonian Ministry of the Interior (Estonia);
 - Ministry of Employment and the Economy (Finland);
 - Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (Latvia);
 - Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications (Sweden);
 - Government of Åland (Åland).
- 2) In addition, representatives of other national authorities, regional representatives or social and economic partners were nominated by responsible authorities to participate in the Joint Programming Committee and both Working Groups. Those organisations were:
 - Estonia - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research , Harju County Government, Saare County Government;
 - Latvia - Riga City Council, Kurzeme Planning Region, Vidzeme Planning Region, Zemgale Planning Region;
 - Finland - Ministry of the Environment, Regional Council of Kymenlaakso, Regional Council of Satakunta, Regional Council of Southwest Finland, Uusimaa Regional Council;
 - Sweden - Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Samverkansorganet i Gävleborgs län (Regional Development Council of Gävleborg), Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (County Administrative Board of Stockholm), Samverkansorganet i Uppsala län (Regional Council of Uppsala), Region Gotland (Region Gotland), Samverkansorganet i Södermanlands län (Regional Development Council of Sörmland), Samverkansorganet i Östergötlands län, (East Sweden Regional Council).
- 3) Wide partnership in Thematic Seminars in each Member State from governmental, non-governmental, private sector organisations, including project beneficiaries from the 2007-2013 co-operation and new organisations to this co-operation. In total the workshops attracted more than 250 participants.
- 4) Meetings with regional representatives in Satakunta, Päijät-Häme, Kymenlaakso, Pirkanmaa regions (Finland), Saare county, Ida-Viru county, Lääne-Viru county (Estonia).
- 5) Sessions/seminars with the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Central Baltic INTERREG IV A Programme 2007-2013
- 6) Ex-ante evaluators' team

More information on the involvement of partners during the preparation of the Programme is included in Section 5.6.

Annex 1. Map of the cooperation area

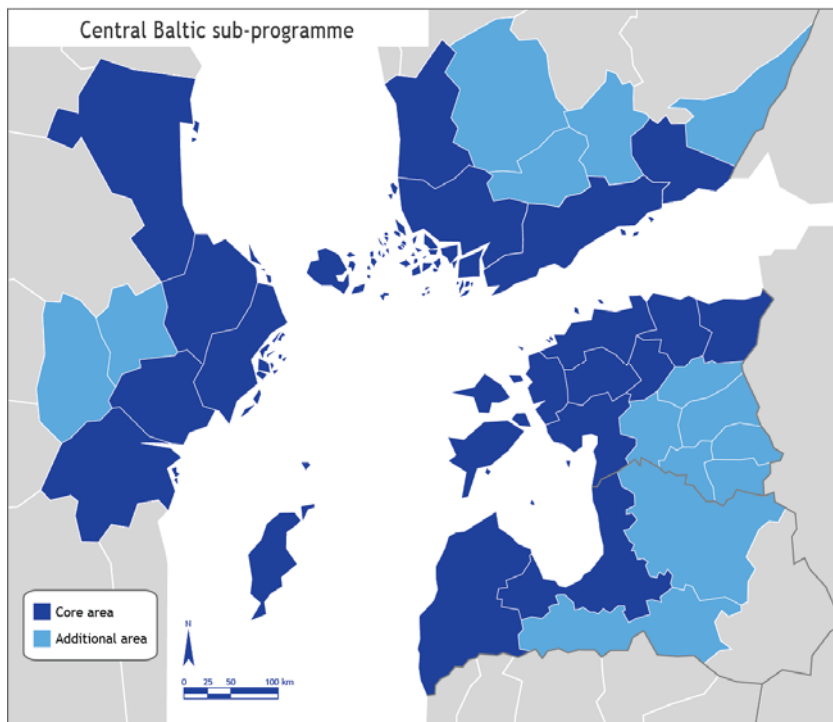


Figure 1. Map of the area covered by the Programme (Central Baltic sub-programme)

Regions of the cooperation programme (NUTS III)		
Country	NUTS 3 Regions, Core Area	NUTS 3 Regions, Additional area
Estonia (EE)	1. Kesk-Eesti (EE006) 2. Kirde-Eesti (EE007) 3. Lääne-Eesti (EE004) 4. Põhja-Eesti (EE001)	19. Lõuna - Eesti (EE008)
Finland (FI)	5. Kymenlaakso (FI186) 6. Satakunta (FI196) 7. Uusimaa (FI181) 8. Varsinais-Suomi (FI1C1)	20. Etelä-Karjala (FI1D1) 21. Kanta-Häme (FI1C2) 22. Pirkanmaa (FI197) 23. Päijät-Häme (FI1C3)
	9. Åland (autonomy) (FI2)	
Latvia (LV)	10. Kurzeme (LV003) 11. Pierīga (LV007) 11. Rīga (LV006)	24. Vidzeme (LV008) 25. Zemgale (LV009)
Sweden (SE)	13. Gotlands län (SE214) 14. Gävleborgs län (SE313) 15. Stockholms län (SE110) 16. Södermanlands län (SE122) 17. Uppsala län (SE121) 18. Östergötlands län (SE123)	26. Västmanlands län (SE125) 27. Örebro län (SE124)

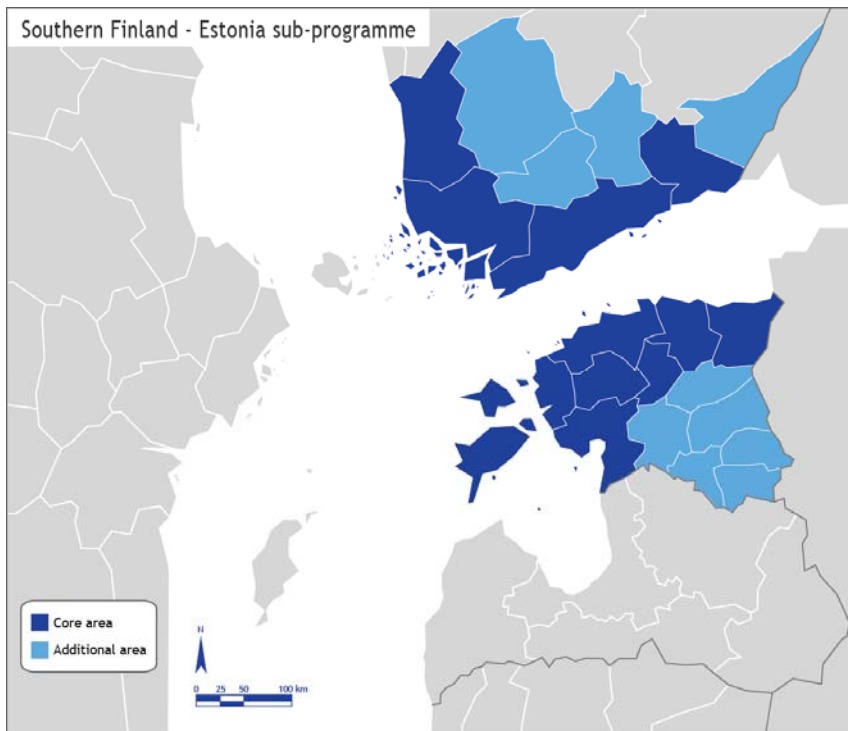


Figure 2 Southern Finland–Estonia sub-programme area

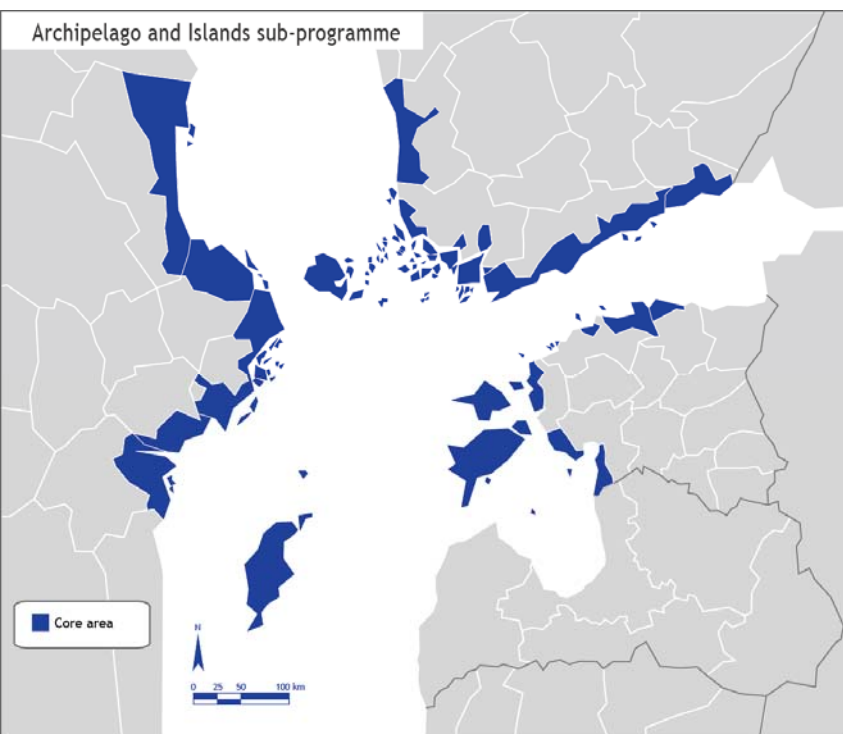


Figure 3 Archipelago and islands sub-programme area
(includes islands and archipelago parts of municipalities and municipalities on coast that have islands and archipelago parts)

Annex 2. List of abbreviations

AA -	Audit Authority
AI -	Archipelago and Islands
BSPA -	Baltic Sea Protected Areas
CA -	Certifying Authority
CB -	Central Baltic
CO ₂ -	carbon dioxide
CP -	Contact Points
CPR -	Common Provisions Regulation
EC -	European Commission
EEZ -	exclusive economic zone
EFTA -	European Free Trade Area
ENI -	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ERDF -	European Regional Development Fund
ESF -	European Social Fund
ETC -	European Territorial Co-operation
EU -	European Union
EUSBSR -	European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
FLC -	First Level Control
GDP -	Gross Domestic Product
GoA -	Group of Auditors
ICT -	information and communication technology
IP -	investment priority
IPA -	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JS -	Joint Secretariat
MA -	Managing Authority
MS -	Member States
MC -	Monitoring Committee
NGO -	non-governmental organisation
NUTS -	nomenclature for territorial units for statistics
OP -	Operational Programme
PA -	Priority axis
R&D -	research and development
SC -	Steering Committee
SO -	specific objective
TA -	Technical Assistance
TO -	thematic objectives
UNESCO -	the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET -	vocational education and training