

BSSSC Strategy 2016 - 2020

Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) was established in 1993, based on the Stavanger declaration. BSSSC shall act as an open, non-party political, network organisation, which will represent the interests of all regions around the Baltic Sea – and shall thereby gain legitimacy and instil confidence in those with whom it deals, stressing common political ideas with a common regional approach.

BSSSC shall be open to and able to adjust to a constantly changing geo-political and socio-economic environment.

BSSSC's mission is to

- use its role as a political network organisation and a regional partner to CBSS (Council of the Baltic Sea States) to promote and advocate the interests of the regions of the Baltic Sea area towards decision makers, such as national governments, the EU institutions and inter-governmental organisations, and
- act as a Pan-Baltic organisation open to all regions around the entire Baltic Sea area, bringing added value to regional co-operation on every side of the Baltic Sea, and
- provide expertise, best practice examples and networking opportunities

BSSSC will prioritise policy areas with a perceived benefit for participating regions (and potentially participating regions) in line with its role as an open network organisation. BSSSC does not want to compete with other organisations on specific topics – but rather complement their work. BSSSC wants to exploit its potential and to organise the work in a way that optimises the full use of available personal and financial resources.

The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) has from the very beginning influenced the actions of BSSSC and its regions, and the strategy is a key macro-level tool for finding solutions to joint problems. The Northern Dimension and cooperation with Russia constitutes an important feature of the BSSSC work.

In the conviction that interregional cooperation produces added value for the regions involved, strengthens the integration and cohesion of the whole Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and contributes to preserving a peaceful coexistence;

The BSSSC vision is

To facilitate partnerships and strengthen interregional cooperation in support of a more competitive, better accessible and more sustainable Baltic Sea Region – putting local and regional policy makers and the young generation at the heart of its work.

BSSSC strategic objectives towards 2020 are to

- become a strong and recognised platform to coordinate the voice of the regions in BSR
- be a link between the EUSBSR and regional and local authorities – making use of its Annual Conferences
- be actively engaged in policy discussions and lobby work on topics of particular relevance for the regions
- be a platform for project development, partner search and dissemination of project results
- be a networking arena for exchange of best practices and governance models
- continue to be a platform for young people in the Baltic Sea Region and to strengthen youth participation in all its policy work and beyond.

The strategy will be the basis for bi-annual work plans prepared by the BSSSC Chairmanships and guide the work of the organisation towards 2020 and beyond.

Important policy areas for the BSSSC work are

- Cohesion policy and programmes post 2020 - especially the future of Interreg
- Sustainable development – environment, climate and circular economy
- Transport and accessibility – transport corridors and clean transport
- Culture and identity
- Growth, jobs and innovation - including creative sectors
- Youth, education and employability

Cooperation with BSR organisations and programmes

The main mission of BSSSC is to promote and advocate common interests expressed by the regions towards decision makers at national and EU level. This requires joint work and coordination with other BSR organisations – to make the voice better heard. BSSSC will not duplicate already existing working structures, but support their work, cooperate with them and seek to optimise synergies – by taking a role as coordinator.

BSSSC will link its political platform and work more with practical project development and dissemination.

To support more concrete activities and projects - BSSSC will cooperate closely with the Interreg programmes in the Baltic Sea Region as well as other relevant EU/EEA (European Economic Area) programmes and the EUSBSR policy coordinators.

Implementation structure

BSSSC is an open political network organisation with no membership fee. This requires dedication from the participating regions/members to give content and life to the work. The working structure will continuously be adapted to the needs and the possibilities of the regions and organisations involved, as well as to the financial situation. The working structure will include:

- The Chairman and the Secretariat
- The Board
- Rapporteurs for policy areas
- Ad hoc rapporteurs representing BSSSC in conferences and events
- Brussels Antenna
- Youth Network

Adopted by the BSSSC Board 16.03.16