



BALTIC SEA STATES SUBREGIONAL CO-OPERATION

FACTSHEET ANNUAL CONFERENCES

BSSSC is a political interest organisation for the regional authorities, with aims to participate actively in the transformation processes in Europe, Baltic Sea Region related issues and to be an instrument in strengthening decentralisation by supporting establishment of strong, efficient and democratic regional authorities. BSSSC is an umbrella organisation.

The BSSSC Conference

The BSSSC annual conferences are the most important meeting-place for representatives from regional authorities (political as well as administrative) in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) – gathering around 300 participants each year. The change of Chairmanship is announced at the conference.

Furthermore, the conference is the main forum for the organisation, where common ideas and interests are shared. The Conference shall be held annually, in September/October, at the invitation of the BSSSC Chairmanship and a host region. The host region with the support of the Chairmanship and Board members should strive to have as participants/speakers relevant representatives of other Baltic Sea region organisations, institutions, European Commission and national governments of highest possible level.

Visual elements

The main visual elements of the Annual Conferences are the BSSSC flag with the logo and the BSSSC Bell that opens and closes the conferences. It is suggested to include additional promotional elements during the annual conferences – for example cultural events - which help promote the host region and differentiate the BSSSC events.

The host region shall be designated on a rotating basis, to be announced annually at the Conference

The responsibility to host the AC is alternating between the 10 BSR countries. As BSSSC do not have an annual organisational fee – hosting board meetings and annual conferences is the way to share the costs among the regions in the participating countries over the years. The host region is encouraged to seek co -financing from the EC e.g. by organising a partner search forum or other events alongside the annual conference.

The host should be chosen in due time before the AC the previous year and they shall be given the opportunity to promote themselves at this conference. The Chairmanship has the main responsibility to find hosts for AC. They may ask the Board for support and advice. The traditional “flag passing over ceremony” should take place at the end of each AC.

The programme and organisation

The host should have a strong influence on the topic of the conference and the organisation of the event – to put its stamp on it. At the same time the BSSSC character has to be visible. The Chairmanship will assist the hosts in the preparatory work as well as during the event. The BSSSC priorities shall be reflected in the programme.

The BSSSC Board is the Steering Group for conferences and the proposed topics as well as the conference programme should be presented to, discussed and finally confirmed by the Board. BSSSC Board members could be given the responsibility to prepare and carry out specific panels/workshops/parallel sessions during conferences.

Each host should do their best to include a youth event as a side event before the AC opens. This event could be taken care of by a suitable organisation in the host region and financial means can be sought through EU-programmes.

The BSSSC AC should be seen as a good opportunity for the host region to promote itself towards the whole BSR and beyond.

Organising a meeting of chairs and heads of secretariats of BSR organisations alongside the AC has been a good BSSSC tradition.

Participants

The conference mainly convene regional representatives but is also open to local authorities, state government representatives, EU-institutions, other BSR organisations and institutions, NGOs and others. Invitations should be sent out broadly in due time before the summer break.

BSSSC annual conferences are an international event and this must be reflected in the programme. The hosts should strive to involve speakers and contributors from the different countries around the BSR. The Board members should assist the host and the Chairmanship in identifying and inviting speakers from their respective country. The Chair of CBSS is always invited as a speaker at the AC.

Representatives from EU-institutions and national government of the host country as well as of other BSR organisations and institutions should be invited to give interventions at the AC.

To make the BSSSC conference more attractive it should be considered to arrange the AC back to back with other events important for the BSR.

Financial issues

In order not to exclude regions from the possibility to host the annual conferences a participation fee can be introduced. The level of the fee will be decided by the Board as a part of the preparation for the conference. Financing the AC is the responsibility of the host. Board members can be asked to support the hosts with financing speaker's costs. EU-programmes can be used to partly finance the costs.

As a rule youth participants as well as board members and board civil are not subject to pay a conference fee. The Board can decide to expel this rule in certain situations. 1 – 2 participants from cooperative organisations in the BSR can be invited without a fee – if BSSSC in return will not pay for participation at their events. The conference fee can be differentiated to attract early registrations (early birds).

Share best practises and partner search events

The conference should be a good opportunity for partners to come together to learn from each other and to lay grounds for future cooperation. Informing about EU financial instruments and programmes should therefore be part of the conference. Cooperation with EU-programmes – especially Interreg – should be sought to carry out a partner search event back to back with the AC or as a part of the AC.

An exhibition of projects can be an element to share best practises and to disseminate results from project work. Share of best practise should also be considered in the parallel sessions of the conference itself.

National meetings

BSSSC Board members should be encouraged to organise national meetings before the AC starts.

Conference Resolution

A Conference Resolution should be prepared by the Chairmanship to each annual conference. The draft should be presented to the Board in due time and allow for thorough discussion and amendments by the members. The Resolution should reflect important political topics high on the agenda as well as the BSSSC priorities.

As the AC is not a formal body within BSSSC – the Board should adopt the Conference Resolution at its meeting before the opening of the conference. The Resolution should be presented to the participants of the AC and handed out in the morning of the last conference day.

The Resolution should be widely distributed – especially to national authorities, other BSR organisations and EU-institutions - and made available on the BSSSC web page. Responsibility for this lies with the Chairmanship.

Publicity and information

The AC should be promoted through the BSSSC Newsletter and the BSSSC webpage. The host may decide to establish an own conference webpage. All conference material should be made available at the web – both at BSSSC and the conference web site. The AC should be promoted at other BSR/EU events with participants relevant for the BSSSC AC.