

Working towards Europe's goals:

**Highlights from
INTERREG III C North Zone**



Preface



Cooperation between regions is a core dimension of the European “added value” concept, and to make it a reality requires action at many levels. The EU can inject an economic stimulus from the top, but implementing and maintaining the results is essential for individuals and authorities in the regions themselves to collaborate closely.

From the perspective of the Baltic Sea Region, we must consider what is unique about our region and what role interregional cooperation plays, from both a national and a European perspective. In other words, the key question is: “Why do we need to work together?”

The Baltic Sea Region shares many historical ties and common values. Our cultural inheritance enhances our regional identity, which can help to make our region a more attractive environment for business and tourism. Nature as a common resource is one of our most important assets compared to other regions.

Therefore, the EU’s Lisbon Agenda and Gothenburg Strategy are of particular importance for us in key areas such as entrepreneurship, transport, water management and maritime safety: challenges that require a focused and integrated approach across national boundaries.

The INTERREG IIC North Zone provides many examples of the positive results of regional cooperation. The partnerships have fostered stronger links between old and new Member States by learning from each other and developing joint solutions for the economic, social and environmental challenges that they face. Participation in joint projects has given the partners new motivation, confidence and enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and experience with other regions.

Such cooperation helps to form new partnerships across Europe, to combine and share experience, to improve regional policies and instruments, to encourage cohesion, to speed up economic development, and to stimulate growth across the whole area.

Experiences gathered from the INTERREG IIC North Zone are helping to pave the way for the interregional cooperation programmes for 2007-2013. Although the new INTERREG IVC will not be divided into geographical zones, I believe that intensified cooperation and networks already established between the regions around the Baltic Sea will continue successfully into the future.

This brochure aims to highlight just some of the ways in which a random selection of projects from the North Zone are contributing to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives. □

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kampus".

Krista Kampus
Chair of INTERREG IIC North Monitoring and Steering Committee

INTERREG IIC in a nutshell

INTERREG IIC

INTERREG IIC is an EU programme that helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common regional development projects. By sharing knowledge and experience, these partnerships enable regions to develop new solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges.

Projects supported by INTERREG IIC involve partners from at least three different countries from Europe and beyond. Each project organises joint activities like workshops, seminars and study visits, and produces studies and comparisons. Each project partner can enhance its own regional development policies and instruments with inspiration from the others.

INTERREG IIC is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the EU's Structural Funds. It is managed by four closely coordinated programme zones: North, East, South and West.

The programme has committed € 300 million in funding to 268 projects with more than 2650 partners. They involve 194 regions in 50 countries. □

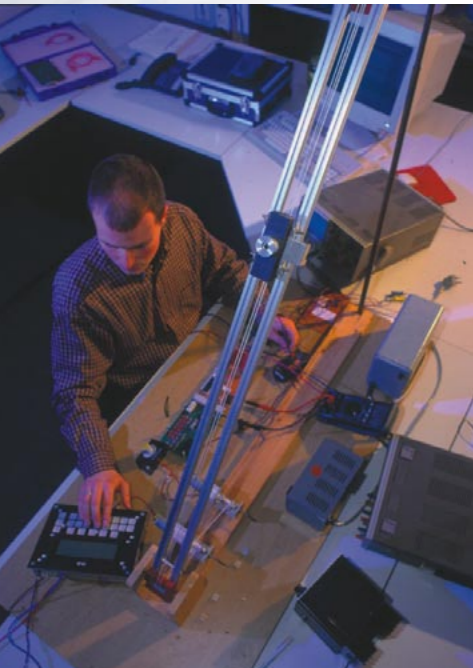
INTERREG IIC North

The programme covers a range of issues related to regional development policy and the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives. Since 2003 INTERREG IIC North has allocated € 32 million to 35 approved projects with more than 370 partners from across Europe.

More than half of the North Zone projects address themes related to the Lisbon Agenda, such as: Research, Technology and Innovation; SME Development and Entrepreneurship; Information Society and e-Government; Employment; Social Inclusion; Human Resources and Education. A fifth of the projects represent priority areas in the Gothenburg Strategy which include Environment, Risk Prevention, Energy and Natural Resources.

For more information on INTERREG IIC, visit the website at www.interreg3c.net. □

Transforming Europe into the world's most competitive and largest knowledge based economy



High unemployment, low economic growth and an ageing population are just some of the challenges that the EU must confront in the coming years if it is to meet its self-imposed objective: "To transform Europe into the world's most competitive and largest knowledge based economy."

That was the 10-year goal set by the European Council in Lisbon in 2000, and expressed through a "growth and jobs" strategy to close the gaps in Europe's social and economic model – the knowledge gap, the inequality gap, and the poverty gap. In that way the Lisbon Strategy was born.

Mid-way through the plan, policymakers recognised that although progress had been made, many of the am-

bitious Lisbon targets would not be met by 2010. In light of this, the European Commission presented a review of the Lisbon agenda on 2 February 2005, leading to a relaunch of the objectives.

Lisbon: Growth and jobs

The Lisbon Strategy holds economic growth and development in a careful balance with promoting social cohesion and reducing social disparities, by highlighting four specific policy areas:

1. Making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work
2. Knowledge and innovation for growth
3. Creating more and better jobs
4. Defining a common energy policy

Each policy measure has a number of clearly defined objectives (see table for details).

Lisbon policy measures

Making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work **means ...**

- Producing more resources for research and innovation
- Promoting Private-Public Partnerships
- Fostering relationships between higher education, research and enterprise

Investing more in knowledge and innovation **means ...**

- Improving the business environment for small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Reducing administrative burdens for business
- Facilitating entrepreneurial education and training

Creating more and better jobs **means ...**

- Encouraging labour market reforms
- Implementing an ageing strategy
- Promoting women's employment and gender equality

Defining a common energy policy **means ...**

Addressing challenges such as:

- Increasing import dependency
- Fluctuating energy prices
- Increasing global energy demand and limited supply

Gothenburg: The environmental aspect

Unsustainable trends such as rising consumption, increasing pollution, and climate change cannot be overlooked if Europe is to achieve its goals. With this in mind, the European Council launched its Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) in June 2001 at Gothenburg, Sweden. Like the Lisbon Agenda, the Gothenburg Strategy was also subject to review. The renewed EU SDS builds on the Gothenburg Strategy and sets clear challenges in seven priority areas for the period 2005–2010 (see table for details).



The future: sustainable development

The re-launched Lisbon Agenda and Gothenburg Strategy aim to ensure that Europe can work towards its goals in a sustainable manner by curbing unsustainable trends and patterns of behaviour to ensure a cleaner, safer environment as well as quality of life for future generations. The re-launch was also an opportunity to refocus the goals of both strategies and to establish a firmer and more clearly defined partnership between the Commission and Member States. The Gothenburg strategy in particular includes a new approach to implementing policies in all areas to ensure sustainable development is taken into account.

INTERREG IIIC and its contribution

Co-financing from the Structural Funds aims to boost regional competitiveness and helps to reduce regional disparities. Structural Funds programmes such as INTERREG IIIC are directly or indirectly contributing to the Lisbon and Gothenburg goals.

This brochure aims to highlight the achievements of a selected number of North zone operations and their contributions to both Lisbon and Gothenburg.

Projects such as STIMENT are contributing to the Lisbon priority measures by stimulating entrepreneurship between regions. The BEPART partners are facilitating entrepreneurial education and training in the Baltic Sea Region.

WIND-TECH-KNOW and CleanRegion are contributing to several of the Gothenburg priority measures. WIND-TECH-KNOW is conducting studies on the viability of wind energy projects as well as educating people to better understand the advantages of renewable energy. The partners involved in CleanRegion aim to promote innovative approaches to ensure a safer, greener environment by reducing pesticide emissions. □

EU strategy for sustainable development

1. Climate change and clean energy
2. Sustainable transport
3. Fighting global poverty
4. Management of natural resources
5. Public health threats
6. Social inclusion, demography and migration
7. Sustainable competitiveness and innovation

STIMENT: Stimulating new ways of entrepreneurship

Lack of entrepreneurial know-how is a common problem in many regions across Europe that are more familiar with traditional economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry and mining. STIMENT is a partnership that aims to **Stimulate new ways of entrepreneurship** by providing new models and approaches in the following three areas: Economic Intelligence, E-learning, and Logistics and Location.



STIMENT involves five regions (Övre Norrland, Sweden; Häme, Finland; Lorraine, France; Wielkopolska, Poland; and Brescia, Italy) working together on nine subprojects with a total of 62 participants from across Europe. The County Administrative Board of Västerbotten is Lead Partner.

STIMENT The following three sub-projects have addressed different themes for this aim.

The Entrepreneurial Knowledge Community (EKC), which finalised its activities in mid-2006, addressed the issue of e-learning for young entrepreneurs. The EKC pilot study included a platform to access the needs and potential of “virtual cooperation” for young entrepreneurs. Virtual cooperation is an ideal way to stimulate entrepreneurship, especially in peripheral regions such as Övre Norrland, since the future generation of entrepreneurs will not be limited by geographical borders. This approach is a source of new business opportunities for the region and for local small and medium enterprises (SMEs). EKC assessed the needs of those who would form such a community – incubator centres, students and young entrepreneurs – and organised a test of a potential online community. The results have been incorporated into the next EKC project (EKC+) which will aim to implement the community in the participating regions.

The Triple Helix project has developed a model for co-operation in four of the participating regions to promote the so-called “triple helix” approach to innovation, which brings together the three key actors in the economic development of a



region: Public Authorities, Universities and Business. In this case, the Agri-food and engineering sectors were a particular focus. The Triple Helix project has added a fourth element to the mix: financiers. The three key actors cannot implement their strategies successfully without capital. SMEs working with public authorities, research centres and businesses need access to funds in the form of affluent individual investors (“business angels”), venture capital or credit. The model proposes practical ways that all four players can work together.

Partners involved in the European Location & Logistic Strategies for SMEs (EU.LOGISTIC) sub-project successfully worked with SMEs and municipalities to understand the requirements for building industrial parks in participating regions. The study focused on location and logistics strategies from the point of view both of entrepreneurs, and of the regional administration. The study addressed land usage regulations, legal requirements, and environmental considerations. The resulting document will facilitate future strategies in industrial development. □

Project information

- Duration: May 2003 – June 2007
- Total Budget: € 3 400 000
- ERDF Contribution: € 2 050 000

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Regional Development – Snapshot Övre Norrland

The region of Övre Norrland consists of two of the northernmost counties of Sweden: Norrbotten and Västerbotten. The region is sparsely populated with a harsh climate. Due to its peripherality the region has had to ensure that it remains connected to key markets by finding new ways to continue growth and development.

This has meant not only utilising natural resources such as ore, timber and hydropower, but also investing in sectors such as IT, medical technology, energy and environmental research. Övre Norrland has had the opportunity to join forces with other STIMENT partners to address ways to foster an entrepreneurial spirit in regions which had previously had a focus on more traditional sectors of the economy. □

BEPART: Increasing links between entrepreneurs, universities and business

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of technical, economic and social development and therefore plays an important role in regional development. The partners of the **Baltic Entrepreneurship Partnership** (BEPART) are working to increase the links between promoters of entrepreneurship, such as universities, businesses and administrations, and to improve knowledge and methods to train potential entrepreneurs.



BEPART comprises 12 partners representing eight countries (Denmark, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Poland, Estonia and Lithuania) from around the Baltic Sea region, with the University of Rostock as lead partner.

Most of the partners are universities and development centres that are well versed in educational standards and teaching methods. With this background the partners formed Action Learning and Reflection Groups (ARGs) as a way to develop new knowledge and training practices. Their research found that traditional methods of education such as reading and theoretical exams are not sufficient to train entrepreneurs. Modern concepts need to be incorporated to meet the needs of a changing society: knowledge needs to be experienced, not just read.

The ARG members proposed to incorporate new elements into a training programme for entrepreneurs, including interactive project work and games, with the aim to link academic knowledge with hands-on experience. The proposed programme connects participants with the business community to stay abreast of international developments, and even develop networks to use after study.

To deliver this new approach to entrepreneurial courses, it is important that trainers are themselves well trained and understand how to apply the new concepts. BEPART is developing a course for professionals in the field of European-oriented entrepreneurship, aimed at lecturers and teachers, incubator managers, business consultants and advanced students.



The project has developed five main areas of action to promote entrepreneurship:

- Defining entrepreneurship in a broader way to promote the concept effectively to regions
- Creating awareness with the general public about the possibilities of entrepreneurship for the community
- Emphasising the importance of education and training in this field
- Generating support for entrepreneurship as a separate course of studies in universities
- Intensifying Triple Helix interaction - which involves university, industry and government □

Project information

- Duration: June 2004 – June 2007
- Total Budget: € 1 870 000
- ERDF Contribution: € 1 200 000

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Regional Development – Snapshot Mecklenburg Vorpommern

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in north-east Germany has not been traditionally focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. The reunification of Germany led to a serious problem of “brain drain” as many people migrated to economically stronger regions in Western Germany.

The project has given the University of Rostock – one of the oldest universities in the Baltic Sea Region, founded in 1419 – the opportunity to share its own ideas with regions facing similar challenges, and to learn from those that are more advanced in the field. By sharing experience with partners, the university is able to develop practical proposals to improve the region’s own activities, and to gather support for entrepreneurial competence training to attract people back to the region. □

CleanRegion: Minimising pesticide emission in urban areas

Pesticides pollute the environment and are a danger to human health. The EU has clear policies on their use and some countries such as Denmark, Germany and Sweden have severely restricted their use in urban areas – but others are yet to follow.

CleanRegion The CleanRegion project (**Regional Collaboration for Minimising Pesticide Emissions in the Environment**) aims to minimise the use of herbicides to control weeds in towns and cities, and so reduce the risk that they may contaminate ground water. The project partners aim to do this by focusing on non-chemical ways to control weeds, developing better policies on pesticide use, and improving technologies for preventing pollution.

CleanRegion comprises 22 partners from 7 countries: primarily research institutes, as well as local and regional authorities, from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The lead partner is the Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences.

Spraying with herbicides has been the predominant method for weed control for many years, but these chemicals carry specific risks to the environment including the pollution of surface and ground water, not to mention the health risks posed to people exposed to such chemicals.



One of the project's aims is to develop mechanical and thermal methods of weed control to replace herbicides. Techniques such as steaming, hot foam treatment, sweeping, hot water and flaming are effective but can be costly, so if they are to be used in communities they must first become a political priority. In order to achieve this the project plans to develop improved policies on pesticide use to be promoted to municipalities and administrations.

Researchers for the project are conducting surveys on weed species and weed abundance in the participating regions. Various weed control methods will be tested and the results incorporated into practical guidelines for urban weed control, which will be disseminated to municipalities across Europe.

The project is also working to improve technologies for preventing pollution from the spillage of pesticides in areas where equipment is cleaned. A pilot project is examining an existing filter system used for cleaning diesel spillage – developed by a Swedish SME. The partners are working on adapting this system to clean waste water contaminated with pesticides. Modifications are needed before it becomes operational, but when complete it promises an affordable method to prevent further pollution. □

Project information

- Duration: February 2005 – December 2007
- Total Budget: € 1 290 000
- ERDF Contribution: € 659 000

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Regional Development – Snapshot Latvia

Latvia does not have any restrictions on urban pesticide use, nor are there many research institutes that focus on tackling the environmental risks of pesticides.

The Latvian partner involved in CleanRegion has been introduced to new methods to control weeds. Prior to their involvement in CleanRegion, they knew little about the non-chemical methods used across Europe, and no surveys had been undertaken to clarify the weed species invading hard surfaces. □

WIND-TECH-KNOW: Educating the public about wind energy and its benefits

With the European Union focused on a common energy policy and climate change, educating the public about the environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy sources has become a key issue. The WIND-TECH-KNOW project aims to make wind energy a widely accepted alternative source of sustainable power.



WIND-TECH-KNOW (**Regional Wind Technology and Knowledge Transfer Strategies**) involves nine project partners from six countries (Germany, Greece, Portugal, Estonia, Sweden and the United

Kingdom) working together to share knowledge about wind energy generation and implementation. The partnership incorporates various actors from the education sector, non-for-profit enterprise, associations and government agencies with the Bad Doberan County Council Planning Department as lead partner.

Communities from the regions involved in the project have different perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of wind energy farming. Some face problems with regional planning and also with levels of knowledge about wind generation. The partners have tackled these issues in a three-fold way: education, regional planning and knowledge transfer.

A key output from the project from the educational perspective is a certified online course in wind energy offered by the University of Gotland. This is structured as three separate courses: an introduction to wind power, wind power technology and wind energy planning. 199 people registered for the first course from across Europe. The course is targeted at wind energy experts or those working in the field. All course material, exercises and communication with the teacher are available on the internet in a virtual classroom, and students completing the course receive internationally recognised ECTS academic credits. The results of questionnaires completed by students after completing the course indicated that it met their objectives, and most said they were satisfied.

Regional planning and knowledge transfer are important because the development of wind farms faces opposition at a local level in many regions due to a lack of understanding among the general public. The project partners are working together on studies analysing the potential of wind in selected regions, the results of which will be disseminated to public



authorities. Public administrations will be encouraged to use the results as a basis for regional planning concerning wind farms. The studies have been completed and the partners are working on strategies to disseminate their findings. □

Project information

- Duration: January 2005 – December 2007
- Total Budget: € 890 000
- ERDF Contribution: € 646 000

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Regional Development – Snapshot Estonia

Estonia agreed to raise its renewable resource portfolio during talks to join the EU, but has not enacted legislation to address the issue strategically.

Companies are currently working on detailed plans for several full-scale wind parks, which can be finalised only if environmental and planning aspects are taken into consideration. This is the subject matter of the WIND-TECH-KNOW studies. The Estonian partner - Estonian Wind Power Association (EWPA) - will present best practice case studies for wind park development to the Ministry of Environment. Information in these studies completes the picture for wind park development in Estonia and addresses questions asked by regional planners and companies involved in the planning process. □

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