

# Smart Blue Regions

## Output 4.3 - Transnational blue growth cooperation projects

Project name:

BSR – destination for health, sea medicine and SPAs

Challenge to be addressed:

Baltic Sea Region has resources to offer - the Baltic sea, comparatively well managed, clean and calm coast, beaches, pine tree forests and natural resources (spring waters, muds, sulphur waters) and mild climate to attract travellers for health, green tourism and SPAs treatments for wellness and recovery purposes. At the same time, health tourism offers and traditions vary among countries: Estonia specializes in SPAs and wellness, Finland values preventive and nature based health products and services, Latvia – medical tourism for rehabilitation and recovery and nature tourism (hiking on the beach, green cycling, kayaking, etc.), SPAs are also developing.

The offer is varied appealing to different tastes and experience needs of visitors, however, number of challenges to successfully attract and serve visitors remains and those are:

- finding common identity for the entire region and at the same time finding and communicating strengths of each BSR partner region,
- elaborating appropriate and attractive marketing tools, channels, etc,
- understanding the customer – what visitors expect and what they are looking for in this particular region when it comes to health, wellness and green/active tourism services and products,
- service quality is often insufficient and competencies of staff involved in provision of services need to be improved,
- multi-sectoral approach both in marketing and service quality development needs to be enhanced,
- seasonality and climate change should be considered when tackling service development and marketing.

Objective

BSR becomes recognized health and wellness tourism destination capitalizing on existing resources and traditions, improving service quality and implementing effective marketing measures.

Expected results:

- Health and wellness SMEs and cluster organizations cooperating for joint development and marketing of BSR as a valued tourism destination to new/emerging markets,
- New and improved services and customer care leading to increased number of visitors (possibly decreasing seasonality effects).

Target groups:

- SMEs (service providers),
- intermediate organisations e.g. tourism, health clusters,
- coastal municipalities and regions,

- research and academia,
- IT sector representatives.

#### Main activity blocks that need to be narrowed down and specified:

- Mapping the strengths and selling points of each BSR region with proven potential for health and well being tourism,
- Carrying out market researches to tailor products and services for specific potential target markets: Japan, China, Moldova, Ukraine, Belorussia, Bulgaria, etc.
- Product development involving research institutes for generation of scientific evidence proving positive effects of nature and natural resources in the coastal regions on health,
- Activities targeted at improving skills and hospitality of staff involved in service sectors of wellness, health and SPAs.

#### Timeframe:

##### 36 months: 3 phases:

- Resources, competencies mapping and target market research,
- tourism product development,
- promotion and marketing

#### Partnership:

Riga Planning Region, Health Tourism Cluster (Latvia), Ida-Viru Municipality (Estonia), City of Turku (Finland), Skåne Tourism Board (Sweden), Schleswig-Holstein Region (Germany), professional associations and clusters, IT clusters and business support organizations, etc. [partnership is open].

#### Estimated budget:

Up to 2,5 MEUR

#### Financing sources:

Interreg BSR programme, Interreg Central Baltic Programme, Horizon2020

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