



THE CROSS-SECTOR AND MULTI-LEVEL COOPERATION ENHANCING THE SERVICES IN MARINAS IN SOUTH BALTIC COAST

1. Challenge/problem addressed

The cross-sector and multi-level cooperation enhancing the services in marinas in south Baltic coast and promoting this boating area as a single destination.

2. Main scale of governance involved: local / regional / national / international

Local, international

3. Description of what and where was done

The cross-sector and multi-level cooperation in marina development has been supported by the Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities since 2011. It has been a long a multi-angle journey, which was based on international cooperation and transnational grants, obtained from various Interreg Programmes.

There are number of valuable practices obtained along the process, but the main asset lays on the long-term orientation while designing the cooperation, with the partners being connected throughout many years and beyond single project.

It started in 2011 with a project called MARRIAGE, funded from Interreg South Baltic Programme. The project aimed at: increasing the competitiveness of marinas located along the South Baltic coast, hence it involved international partners in the project, who worked together to create a brand and promotion strategy for their region. MARRIAGE, which full name was: “MARRIAGE – better marina management, harbour network consolidation and water tourism marketing in the southern Baltic rim”, provided activities that directly responded to the needs of each of the project partners, therefore, acting together, each region also implemented activities that were intended to strengthen its individual position on the sea route. Probably that was the reason for a strong commitment of the stakeholders involved. Some of the most important activities involved trainings for marina operators to increase the standards of customers’ service, etc. Additionally, exchange of good practices in customer service and marina operations was done. Also, joint marketing was initiated. The latter led to application for another project by the partners. That is how South Coast Baltic project was launched. South Coast Baltic is a joint marketing initiative that promotes the boating region of the south eastern shores of the Baltic Sea,

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including Vorpommern (DE), Bornholm (DK), Zachodniopomorskie (PL), Pomorskie (PL), Klaipėda region (LT) and Kaliningrad region (RU). Although the project finished in 2020, the cooperation still prevails based again on the strong partners' commitment and belief that together more can be achieved, this time in the context of brand development and promoting the south coast Baltic shores as single boating destination. The brand still exists and is promoted by the partners, also via other projects they are involved. Also, the new elements of destination development are being added and new project has been submitted recently to keep the initiative alive.

4. What sectors were involved?

- Public (local governments, regional authorities – especially infrastructure and tourism departments)
- NGO (Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities as a bridging actor)
- Private sector (SMEs operating in the marinas e.g. equipment rentals, private marina operators chosen by the municipalities to operate the marina, restaurants/bars)

5. Which target/interest groups / stakeholders were reached?

The same as above plus to some extent local tourism offices/associations aimed at tourism development in the area. Also, in the latter phase the boaters (via promotion at the international fairs for boaters) as the end-users.

6. What methods were applied?

- Consultations with experts on concrete problems identified by stakeholders (e.g. on possibilities and opportunities of digitalisation of marinas, as well as available solutions existent on the market)
- Workshops – organised face-to-face or online to discuss the concrete problems connected with marina development (e.g. digitalisation, marketing, eco-certifications and green investments)
- Trainings for marina operators (connected to efficient marina management and operation)
- Development of promotional material (harbour guide) in the international team that was very high quality and was very well received also by the end-users (boaters)
- Presentations of the South Coast Baltic brand at international boat fairs vis a vis the market and end-users of the product/service (boaters)

7. Lessons learned

The problem which is well-defined and close-to-heart of the stakeholders' involved shall be selected as the basis of cross-border cooperation.

The continuous funding for a project is very important but with committed partners who look at the problem from the long-term perspective, there can be periods when the initiative is not externally financed but done on a smaller scale from own resources if there is a perspective for future gains/profits or future project.

Continuous dialogue between stakeholders' is crucial. Face-to-face meetings are important but also very regular e.g. online discussions, which give the stakeholders the feeling the problem is still valid and their involvement make sense and is valuable is the key.

While working on marina development and destination promotion, constant verification with the end-users and the market is a must. This can be done at fairs and branch events, etc. or individual consultation/interviews.

8. To which Multi-level Governance steps this valuable practice contributes?

- 2) Stakeholder involvement
- 3) Solutions and implementation
- 4) And to some degree Evaluation and learning

9. Links to further information about the practice/case

<https://southcoastbaltic.eu/en/about-scb>

