



EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

Approved by the National Coordinators Group
of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
on 17 March 2023

RULES OF PROCEDURE
of the National Coordinators Group of the EU Strategy for
the Baltic Sea Region

Having regard to:

- the Council Conclusions of 22 October 2013 on added value of macro-regional strategies, underlining the importance of well-structured and proportionate governance tailored to the specific macro-region with regard to the cooperation framework based on the needs of the macro-region;
- the Council Conclusions of 3 December 2020 on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, underlining the importance of capacity-building, clear-cut and results-oriented governance of the macro-regional strategies;
- the Action Plan of 15 February 2021 of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, providing clarified roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and giving ground for effective decision-making;

the National Coordinators Group of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region adopts these Rules of Procedure.

Article 1
Scope

These Rules of Procedure shall apply to all the meetings and decision-making procedures of the National Coordinators (NCs) of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The National Coordinators Group (NCG) may hold online meetings and video conferences.

Article 2
Composition of the National Coordinators Group

Each EUSBSR Member State shall nominate a NC as a permanent member of the NCG, until further notice to the NCG Presidency and the European Commission (EC). EUSBSR Member States have the right to appoint one or more deputies or send delegated substitutes to the NCG meetings after prior notice to the NCG Presidency. The list of the NCs is included in Annex I to these Rules of Procedure.

The NCG consists of the representatives of all eight EUSBSR Member States, i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. A representative of the EC shall participate regularly in the meetings of the NCG as coordinating and advisory body of the EUSBSR.

Representatives of the BSP shall participate in the NCG meetings, where appropriate, in the capacity of administrative and technical support. The NCG Presidency may invite representatives of other countries, organisations and cooperation formats to participate in the NCG meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Each NC may ask for a closed or informal session among NCs only.

Article 3
Frequency of the National Coordinators Group meetings

The NCG shall meet at least four times per year.

A joint meeting between NCs and Policy Area Coordinators (PACs) shall be held at least once a year.

Article 4
Roles and responsibilities of the National Coordinators Group

The NCG is the core decision-making body within the governance structure of the EUSBSR acting as its executive board. Its main tasks are set out in Article 5.

Article 5
Tasks of the National Coordinators Group

The NCG tasks include:

- General leadership, coordination and development of the EUSBSR, including providing strategic guidance and establishing priorities;
- Acting as interface and link between the EUSBSR and the political level;
- Ensuring targeted capacity building for stakeholders, in general via the BSP;

- Ensuring communication, information and publicity about the EUSBSR, in general via the BSP;
- Ensuring a monitoring and evaluation framework as well as analysing Policy Areas' (PAs)
- annual work plans and annual reports, especially regarding their achievements and added value.
- Appointing PACs and Lead PACs and providing a common structure for the rules of procedure of SGs;
- Directing and monitoring the work of the BSP, taking into account specific requirements due to the fact that the BSP is implemented as a project;
- Serving as guardian of the proper functioning of the governance of the EUSBSR. Any non-compliance with the EUSBSR Action Plan that affects the proper functioning of the Strategy must be addressed by the NCG;
- Representing the EUSBSR in its overall relations, e.g. with the EC, other EU institutions, other EU macro-regional strategies, managing authorities, including Interreg Baltic Sea region programme, Interact, and other cooperation formats in the region;
- Initiating revisions of the Strategy and/ or the EUSBSR Action Plan;
- Deciding on revisions of the EUSBSR Action Plan after having consulted the PAs (i.a. PACs and SGs) and other relevant stakeholders and conveying the proposal to the EC's internal procedure.

Article 6

Presidency of the National Coordinators Group

Pursuing a rotation principle, the NCG Presidency shall be held by the NC of the EUSBSR Member State for a one-year period from 1 July to 30 June according to the schedule laid down in Annex II to these Rules of Procedure.

The NCG meetings are organized and chaired by the Member State holding the NCG Presidency, in cooperation with the EC and with support of the Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP).

The NCG Presidency shall facilitate and encourage mainstreaming of the EUSBSR into the relevant EU policies/agendas, strive for synergies with other Baltic Sea regional cooperation formats and shall represent the EUSBSR in cooperation with other EU macro-regional strategies, EU institutions and other relevant fora.

In order to promote coherence and continuity of work across the NCG Presidency cycles, regular information exchange shall take place between the NCG Presidency and the previous and incoming Presidencies. This Presidency Trio (TRIO) shall have a supportive role vis-à-vis the incumbent Presidency. The EC and the BSP shall be invited to participate in TRIO meetings.

Article 7

Decision-making

The NCG makes decisions by consensus.

Decisions shall be taken only by NCs or their nominated deputies and if NCs of at least more than half of the EU Member States participating in the EUSBSR are present (50% + 1 rule).

In case of opposition by one or more EUSBSR Member States, the NCG Presidency shall decide whether the decision is postponed or defeated.

The NCG Presidency can initiate a written decision-making process (in a form of a silence procedure or a written procedure) by sending a draft decision and related documents to all EUSBSR Member States.

In case of a *silence procedure*, the EUSBSR Member States shall have at least 5 working days to respond to the NCG Presidency. In duly justified cases, the NCG Presidency may initiate a silence procedure of up to 3 working days. In the absence of any reaction, the decision shall be deemed to be adopted at the end of the period set by the NCG Presidency.

In case of a *written procedure*, Member States shall have at least 5 working days to respond in writing to the NCG Presidency as to whether they accept, object or abstain. The abstention does not count against the consensus. In duly justified cases, the NCG Presidency may initiate a written procedure of up to 3 working days.

If a written objection is raised, the matter shall be discussed bilaterally between the Presidency and the respective Member State. After the respective written response period has expired, the Presidency shall inform all NCs whether objections have been raised or not. If objections are raised, the decision shall not be adopted and need to be re-examined by the NCG.

In case of issues, which require broader national coordination, the above indicated periods can be adapted to those needs.

The use of written decision-making procedures shall take due account of public and national holiday periods.

Article 8

Tasks of the National Coordinators at the national level

In addition to their responsibilities as members of the NCG, NCs shall have tasks at the national level. The tasks of the NCs at the national level include:

- promoting political support and commitment to the EUSBSR;
- ensuring overall coordination and overview of, as well as guidance and support for, active participation by different national stakeholders in the implementation of the EUSBSR;
- promoting appropriate funding for the strategy implementation, including by encouraging cooperation with relevant managing authorities;
- acting as interface and link between the operational level of the EUSBSR and the political level;
- promoting the visibility and raising awareness of the EUSBSR, its actions and results.

Article 9

Agenda of NCG meetings

The NCG shall address topics at the request of its members and respond to the needs of key stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the EUSBSR.

The NCG Presidency shall submit the draft agenda for the NCG meetings to all participants at least 5 working days before the meeting for consultation.

Documents for discussion shall be submitted in due course.

The final agenda shall be adopted at the NCG meeting as the first agenda item.

The dates of the NCG meetings shall be published on the EUSBSR website: <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/> .

Article 10 Reporting

The Presidency of the NCG shall be responsible for reporting from all NCG meetings. The BSP shall assist in the reporting, where appropriate. The non-attributable reports shall be made public, while respecting the need for confidentiality, when appropriate. The NCG Presidency shall compile a completion report after conclusion of the Presidency. The NCG Presidency shall publish reports at the EUSBSR website: <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/> .

Article 11 EUSBSR Annual forums

The Annual Forum of the EUSBSR shall take place on an annual basis in one of the EUSBSR Member States according to the order of rotation of the Presidency of the National Coordinators Group of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, included in the Annex II to these Rules of Procedure, starting from 1 January 2025. The rotation order of the Annual Fora organisation prior to 2025 is included in the Annex III.

The Annual Forum shall be organised in the second half of the Presidency, i.e. during spring-early summer period. If necessary due to external circumstances, the member states have the possibility to organise the Annual Forum after the end of the member state's Presidency, within the boundaries of the same calendar year as the Presidency is concluded.

Any deviation from the order of rotation as set out in Annex III to these Rules of Procedure shall be announced at least 18 months before the calendar year by the Member State concerned. The NCG Presidency shall lead the consultations to find a solution.

The NCG, via the NC of the Member State organizing the Annual Forum, keeps regular contact with the organizers of the subsequent Annual Forum and reports regularly to the NCG.

The NCG Presidency shall prepare a letter of support on hosting organizer's account for the submission to the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Joint Secretariat.

Article 12 Revision

The Rules of Procedure of the NCG shall be adopted by consensus.

The Rules of Procedure of the NCG shall be revised as appropriate by consensus.

10 March 2023

ANNEX I

List of National Coordinators Group of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The personal composition of the NCG is regularly updated and published on the EUSBSR website <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/> .

Estonia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia
Denmark	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
Finland	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
Germany	German Federal Foreign Office
Latvia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
Lithuania	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
Poland	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Sweden	Prime Minister's Office of Sweden
European Commission	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission (DG REGIO)

ANNEX II

Order of rotation of the Presidency of the National Coordinators Group of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The NCG is chaired by one EUSBSR Member State for the duration of one year (1 July - 30 June) and under the following rotating order:

2022/2023	Sweden
2023/2024	Latvia
2024/2025	Poland
2025/2026	Estonia
2026/2027	Denmark
2027/2028	Finland
2028/2029	Germany
2029/2030	Lithuania

ANNEX III

Order of rotation of the Annual forums of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Annual forums of the EUSBSR shall be organized under the following rotating order:

2023	Latvia
2024	Sweden
2025	Poland
2026	Estonia
2027	Denmark
2028	Finland
2029	Germany
2030	Lithuania

ANNEX IV

Chronology of EUSBSR Presidencies prior to July 2022

2013 (Jul - Dec)	Lithuania ¹
2014 (Jan - Jun)	Finland
2014 (Jul - Dec)	Estonia
2015 (Jan - Jun)	Latvia
2015/2016 (Jul - Jun)	Poland
2016/2017 (Jul - Jun)	Sweden
2017/2018 (Jul - Jun)	Estonia
2018/2019 (Jul - Jun)	Denmark
2019/2020 (Jul - Jun)	Finland
2020/2021 (Jul - Jun)	Germany
2021/2022 (Jul - Jun)	Lithuania

Chronology of Annual forums of the EUSBSR prior to January 2023

1 st Annual Forum	2010 (14-15 October)	Tallinn	Estonia
2 nd Annual Forum	2011 (24-26 October)	Gdansk	Poland
3 rd Annual Forum	2012 (17-19 June)	Copenhagen	Denmark
4 th Annual Forum	2013 (11-12 November)	Vilnius	Lithuania
5 th Annual Forum	2014 (3-4 June)	Turku	Finland
6 th Annual Forum	2015 (15-16 June)	Jurmala	Latvia
7 th Annual Forum	2016 (8-9 November)	Stockholm	Sweden
8 th Annual Forum	2017 (13-14 June)	Berlin	Germany
9 th Annual Forum	2018 (4-5 June)	Tallinn	Estonia
10 th Annual Forum	2019 (12-13 June)	Gdansk	Poland
11 th Annual Forum	2020 (20 October)	Turku	Finland
(online)			
12 th Annual Forum	2021 (27 September - 1 October)	Kaunas and Klaipėda	Lithuania
(online)			
13 th Annual Forum	2022 (28-29 September)	Lappeenranta	Finland

¹ N.b. Lithuania was formally not NC-chair but acted as one and coordinated the Baltic Sea Region Member States as president of the Friends of the Presidency group for macro-regional strategies and helped establish the first “NCP-guidelines” December 2013.