



EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION

**COMMON STRUCTURE FOR RULES OF PROCEDURE
of the Policy Area Steering Groups of the EU Strategy for
the Baltic Sea Region**

based on the EUSBSR Action Plan (SWD(2021) 24 final) and
approved by the National Coordinators Group on 26 of June 2024

*Revised document replacing the Common Structure for the Rules of Procedure of
11 May 2021*

Section 2.3.1. of the EUSBSR Action Plan¹ stipulates that the National Coordinators Group shall provide a common structure for the Rules of Procedure for EUSBSR Policy Area Steering Groups. This document responds to this obligation.

In regard to SGs, the Action Plan contains i.a. the following provisions:

Policy Areas (PAs) represent the expertise in their respective areas of activity and ensure the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. Having an overview of the relevant sectors, PAs hold policy discussions and identify key ways to achieve the EUSBSR Objectives through different means of actions and determine how to best implement the required solutions.

PAs are managed operationally by PA Coordinators (PACs), supported and guided strategically by their respective Steering Groups (SGs).

Each PA has a Steering Group (SG). SG members are representatives of the national or regional governments of EUSBSR Member States. The SG may be an existing cooperation body within the PAC organisation, if appropriate and approved by the NCG.

SG members have two kinds of tasks. On the one hand, they represent their governments in their respective SG. On the other hand, they perform their tasks as focal points at the national level.

The objective is that all SGs include members from all EUSBSR Member States. However, a Member State can choose not to participate in a specific SG. A Member State can also appoint more than one representative to an SG, if this is necessary due to the structure of the Member State or other similar reasoning. In this case, one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative and act as one.

SG members should come from key ministries or authorities in the relevant field. They should have sufficient capability, mandate and resources to fulfil their tasks as required by the EUSBSR.

An SG may also invite representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations to join the group as members or observers, upon a decision taken by consensus by the EUSBSR Member States representatives in the group. However, before such a decision is implemented, it has to be endorsed by the NCG. Such representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations cannot block decisions of the EUSBSR Member States, but they may choose to opt out of specific decisions taken by the SG. This has to be appropriately reflected in the SG Rules of Procedure.

PACs have to keep the SG Presidency and the BSP updated as soon as changes in the composition of SG membership occur.

SGs should convene at least twice a year. Online meetings are encouraged. The meetings are prepared and organized by the SG Presidency, in close cooperation with the respective PAC/PACs. The SG Presidency should rotate among the SG Members, normally on an annual basis.

SGs make decisions by consensus.

In accordance with these provisions of the Action Plan, each SG is required to adopt a set of Rules of Procedure. Such documents need to conform to a common format and satisfy a number of obligatory minimum requirements, as set out in the Annex.

SGs can adopt further rules adapted to the specific requirements of the Policy Area concerned, as long as such rules are not in contradiction with the provisions of the Action Plan and the obligatory minimum requirements set out in the Annex. The PAs may consult the BSP in the drafting process.

¹ [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region ACTION PLAN SWD\(2021\) 24 final](#)

ANNEX: *Common Structure for Rules of Procedures of EUSBSR Steering Groups*

**EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
Steering Group for Policy Area Ship**

Rules of Procedure

Adopted on 5.11.2024

Article 1

Scope

These Rules of Procedure apply to all meetings of the SG for Policy Area Ship of the EUSBSR. If the SG is an existing cooperation body within a PAC organisation, it shall apply these Rules of Procedure when addressing issues regarding the Policy Area. These Rules of Procedure also apply when the SG makes decisions by way of written procedure.

Article 2

Composition of the Steering Group

The SG consists of representatives of the national or regional governments of EUSBSR Member States. SG members should come from key ministries or authorities in the relevant field. They should have sufficient capability, mandate and resources to fulfil their tasks as required by the EUSBSR.

An EUSBSR Member State can choose not to participate in the SG by informing the lead PAC in written form. A Member State can also appoint more than one representative to the SG, if this is necessary due to the structure of the Member State or other similar reasoning. In this case, one of the representatives has to be nominated as the main representative and act as one.

The SG may be an existing cooperation body within the PAC organisation, if appropriate and approved by the NCG.

The SG may also invite representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries to join the group as members or observers, upon decision taken by consensus by the EUSBSR Member States. Furthermore, an SG may also invite representatives of regional, national or other organisations to join the group as members or observers, upon decision taken by consensus by the EUSBSR Member States. However, before such decisions are implemented, they have to be endorsed by the NCG.

The lead PAC has to keep the SG presidency, the BSP and the respective NC updated as soon as changes in the composition of SG membership or observers occur.

Article 3

Role and responsibilities

The SG provides strategic guidance to the PA, holds policy discussions and identifies key ways to achieve the EUSBSR Objectives through different means of actions and determine how to best implement the required solutions. Its main tasks are set out in Article 4.

Article 4

Tasks

The main tasks of the SG are:

- Supporting the PAC/PACs in fulfilling their tasks, notably by
 - Guiding the development of the PA in general by policy discussions and by endorsing new objectives, developments and operation formats, including flagships;
 - Endorsing proposals to update targets, references etc. that do not change the Action Plan substantially, in close dialogue with the EC²;
 - Ensuring linkages to relevant national and regional policy-making;
- Monitoring and evaluating the PA, notably by
 - Endorsing the Work Plans and annual substantial reports on achievements for the PA, drafted by the PAC/PACs, and submitting these documents to the NCG for information.

In addition to their responsibilities within their group, SG members representing national or regional governments serve as focal points in their respective administrations, where their functions notably include:

- Acting as liaison between the PA and the respective administration, ensuring linkages between macro-regional and national or regional policy processes;
- Raising awareness and ownership of the Objectives, means and achievements of the EUSBSR within their respective administrations and by other relevant stakeholders;
- Cooperating with relevant Managing Authorities in their respective home countries, regarding the operational level;
- Supporting their respective National Coordinator in promoting political commitment to the Strategy as well as in raising national awareness and promoting visibility of the EUSBSR.

Article 5

The rotating SG Presidency

The SG Presidency should rotate among the SG Members, normally on an annual basis. The SG decides among available candidates.

The SG Presidency supports and works in close cooperation with the PAC/PACs.

SG meetings are prepared and organized by the SG Presidency, in close cooperation with the respective PAC/PACs.

² Decisions on substantial changes to the Action Plan remain the sole competence of the National Coordinators Group.

Article 6

The Policy Area Coordinator(s)

The PAC/PACs are the key operational stakeholders of the PA, ensuring the implementation of the Strategy with support and guidance of the SGs. Their tasks include:

- Ensuring a general overview of the PA;
- Managing, coordinating and developing the PA;
- Monitoring and reporting on progress within the PA;
- Ensuring communication and visibility of the PA.

If the PA has more than one PAC, the NCG decides which one of them is the leading PAC, following a proposal by the SG. The lead PAC is responsible for coordination among the PACs and for the administration of the PA.

The PAC/PACs have to keep the SG Presidency and the Baltic Strategy Point updated as soon as changes in the composition of the SG membership occur.

The PAC/PACs are appointed and recalled by the NCG, following a proposal by the SG.

The PAC/PACs participate in all meetings of the SG, except for those that directly concern decisions regarding their performance and proposals for appointment or recall of PACs or lead PACs.

Article 7

Decision-making

The SG makes decisions by consensus. However, representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries or organisations cannot block decisions of the EUSBSR Member States but may choose to opt out of specific decisions taken by the SG.

The SG Presidency, or the PAC/Lead PAC after approval by the SG Presidency, can initiate a written decision-making process (written procedure) by sending a draft decision and related documents to all SG members, which shall have at least 7 working days to respond in writing to the Presidency. In case of issues which require national coordination, the period can be adapted to those needs. In the absence of any reaction, it will be deemed as a silent agreement. The use of written procedures should take due account of holiday periods.

Article 8

Agenda

The SG shall address topics at the request of its members and respond to the needs of key stakeholders with regard to the implementation of the objectives of the Policy Area.

The PAC/Lead PAC, after approval by the SG Presidency, shall submit the draft agenda for the SG meeting to all SG members at least 5 working days before the meeting for consultation.

Documents for discussion shall be submitted to all SG members at least 5 working days prior to the SG meeting, unless duly justified circumstances require circulating documents later.

The final agenda is adopted at the SG meeting as the first agenda item.

Article 9

Meeting participants

The SG may decide to invite one or several guests to participate in a specific meeting.

Article 10

Frequency and format of meetings

The SG should convene at least twice a year. Online meetings are encouraged, and onsite meetings back-to-back with a relevant event such as the EUSBSR Annual Forum, if possible.

Article 11

Reporting

The PAC/PACs are responsible for ensuring timely reporting from all SG meetings. Such non-attributable reports should be made available on the EUSBSR website.

Article 12

Revision

The Rules of Procedure of the SG are adopted and shall be revised, as appropriate, by decision of the SG.