

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
Steering Group for Policy Area Innovation

Rules of Procedure

Adopted on 9 June 2021

Article 1

Scope

These Rules of Procedure apply to all meetings of the SG for Policy Area Innovation 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 should also appoint a substitute representative for its main SG representative in the SG.

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. In the EUSBSR Policy Area Innovation SG, representatives of non-EU neighbouring countries are invited as members. 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. Policy Area Innovation has prioritised Smart Specialisation to secure that innovation measures are designed to better meet the local and subregional level need of actions. Therefore, also subregional/local level should be represented in the SG (one subregional/local level SG member, annually rotating between a member appointed by established networks for local and regional authorities in the Baltic Sea region, such as CPMR, BSSSC and UBC).

A representative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG Regio) participates in SG meetings as a strategic advisor.

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 EC¹;
 - 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.
- Promoting stakeholder engagement in PA activities in the Member States.

Article 5

The rotating SG Presidency

The SG Presidency should rotate among the SG Members, 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.

¹ 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 10 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 10 working days before the meeting for consultation.

Documents for discussion shall be submitted to all SG members at least 10 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 first agenda item.

Article 9

Meeting participants

The SG may decide to invite one or several guests to participate in a specific meeting. Policy Area Innovation project representatives are invited to meetings as observers.

Article 10

Frequency and format of meetings

The SG should convene at least twice a year. Online meetings are encouraged, but at least one live meeting per year is encouraged to be organised (hosted by the SG presidency).

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.