EUSBSR
EU STRATEGY
FOR THE BALTIC
SEA REGION
POLICY AREA 'INNOVATION'

EUSBSR Policy Area Innovation

Extraordinary Steering Group Meeting to Approve the Updated Action Plan

Friday 17 October 2025
from 12:00 to 13:30 CET (13:00 to 14:30 EET)

Participants:

Kairi Otto, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

Gytis Puiše, Ministry of Economics and Innovation from Lithuania

Aurelijus Leipus, Ministry of Economics and Innovation from Lithuania

Petri Koistinen, European Commission, DG Regio

Carolina Luciani, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

Venla Virkamäki, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

Esa Kokkonen, The Baltic Institute of Finland, Lead Policy Area Innovation Coordinator

Aino-Maija Koljonen, The Baltic Institute of Finland, Lead Policy Area Innovation Coordinator

Jenny Uusikartano, The Baltic Institute of Finland, Lead Policy Area Innovation Coordinator

Zuzanna Kozlowska, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Policy Area Innovation Coordinator from Poland

Kristi Aruküla, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Policy Area Innovation Coordinator from Estonia

Minutes:

1. **Opening by chair- Kairi Otto**

Estonia is having the chair in PA Innovation and presidency of the EUSBSR.

2. **Overview of action plan- Esa Kokkonen**

The full overview is presented on the slides.

Main changes- updated template and more concrete, concise sections regarding cross-macroregional collaboration and indicators.

Activities descriptions are based on initial version that was fully discussed and agreed in January 2025.

While placing a stronger emphasis on challenge-driven innovation and addressing shared BSR challenges as its overarching approach, the updated Action Plan underlines that innovation, including in digitalization, does not take place within sectoral or macro-regional silos. Accordingly, PA Innovation actions must be closely aligned with broader EU innovation policies, networks and value chains, while also considering the increasingly complex security environment. In digitalization, PA Innovation's dedicated action specifically addresses overarching cross-border issues.

Final version approved by SG to be submitted to the EUSBSR BSP/NCG by the end of October 2025.

3. Feedback session by Steering Group members

To summarize, the Steering Group members found the proposed updated action plan more concise and easier to read. The proposed Actions and impact indicators were viewed positively, as relevant and providing sufficient flexibility for planning future activities.

It was discussed how in the implementation of EUSBSR, funding instruments and projects collaborate and how projects implement strategic goals.

It was proposed that Steering Group members could contribute more to PA Innovation joint activities.

The PA Innovation Actions presented, e.g. related to place-based innovation, can provide important input for integrating these themes into upcoming MFF frameworks and national funding priorities.

4. Approval of action plan

Among the participating Steering Group members, the updated Policy Area Innovation Action Plan was approved.

Additionally, it was agreed to finalize the decision of the Action Plan approval through a silence procedure, and leave one week for extra comments for all members to comment.

5. Next Steering Group meeting

Agreed to be held on 8 June 2026 in Tallinn, jointly with the EUSBSR Annual Forum 2026.