



Seagull

Rolf A Karlson

Minutes

from the 4th Seagull INTERREG Steering Committee (SC) meeting in Klaipeda, Lithuania
2003-08-07

Participants:

SC members: Mr Hakan Brynielsson (Chairman), Mr Niels Chresten Andersen, Mr P-G Lindencrona, Mr Normunds Niedols, Ms Roma Stubriené, Ms Gunbritt Ohlén.

Seagull INTERREG Secretariat: Mr Rolf A Karlson, Ms Eva-Lisa Ahnstrom, Mr Ulf Andersson, Ms Carolina Gunnarsson, Ms Erica Mansson, Mr Lars Öhrman.

Others: Ms Gunta Ceplevica, Kurzeme Planning Region Agency, and Mr Andreij Moshkov, substitute for Mr Victor Koshelev.

1. Opening of the meeting

Hakan Brynielsson opened the meeting. A brief presentation of the participants followed. Mr PG Lindencrona is new member of the SC, representing Region Blekinge and replacing Ms Catharina Blom.

2. Approval of the agenda

The draft agenda was approved with the following additions to paragraph 15:

- Discussion of working forms and general contents frames of future SC meetings.
- Agreement of times and places for the SC meetings during the year 2004.

3. Approval of minutes from the SC meeting in Malbork 2003-02-25

The SC approved the minutes (see *Annex 1* to the agenda).

4. Reports

- Mr Karlson and Mr Andersen informed that decisions taken by the SC at its meeting in Malbork in February have been executed, e.g. the letter about handling the ERB cooperation in the same way as INTERREG III A cooperation has been sent to relevant DGs and national authorities. The questions forwarded to the ERB Council or Board have been prepared by the national ERB secretariat and will be on the ERB agenda, either at the council meeting in August or at the next board meeting.

- Mr Karlson informed that the BSR Programme Secretariat in Rostock has asked for clarifications of the funding division between the Swedish Government and the INTERREG III B programme for the Good Governance activities described in the Seagull application. These clarifications will be done by the project co-ordinator and financing manager together.
- Mr Andersen and Mr Karlson made some summary comments from the ERB Board meeting in Brussels in May of special interest for the Seagull project (see *Annex 2* to the agenda). The discussions in Brussels led to a new element in the ERB strategy – to focus on lobbying and external promotion of the ERB.
- Mr Karlson commented the current situation concerning the Seagull co-financing applications to the PHARE and Tacis programmes and to the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) (see *Annex 3* to the agenda):
 - NCM has approved the application from Lithuania with budget cuttings.
 - The Kurzeme Planning Region application to PHARE seems to be approved within some weeks.
 - Concerning the other applications there is no information up till now.
- Mr Karlson informed about the aims of the sailing trip to Klaipeda and Gdansk and referred to the draft reports in *Annexes 4 and 5* to the agenda.
- Mr Karlson informed about a symposium held in Ystad, Sweden in June 2003 about ongoing Macro Region projects funded by BSR INTERREG III B. A conclusion from the symposium was that efforts should be put on information transfer between ongoing projects and possibly also some coordination actions for transnational cooperation in the southern Baltic Sea area. These issues are on the agenda for the BSSSC XI Annual Conference in St Petersburg in October this year – see further paragraph 14 beneath.
- Mr Andersen gave brief information about the ERB National Secretariats' meeting in Klaipeda, August 6.
It was a good meeting with all National secretariats participating. These kind of meetings are important in order to make the board and council meetings well prepared and effective. The ERB secretariats need resources to handle the ideas from, for example, the Seagull project, in a proper way. Today we have a lot of ambitious ideas but not resources enough.
- Reports from the SC members of regional Seagull activities in each ERB member region:
 - DK, Mr Andersen: The people interviewed for the expert reports of WP 1 are often opinion makers. As a spin off of the interviews, these persons have got better knowledge about Seagull, which is a good thing.
 - RU, Mr Moshkov: The Central Development and Trade Office of the Kaliningrad Region is a partner in the Tacis application. It is, among else, supporting the project with statistical data.
 - LT, Ms Stubriené: There are sometimes difficulties to gather the needed data for the expert reports. If there is any problem with the input from the Klaipeda County, contact Ms Stubriené.
 - LV, Ms Ceplevica: The Kurzeme Planning Region Agency has got three new officers, which will make it easier to take part in the future Seagull activities.

There has been a discussion about the Seagull project within the Board of the Kurzeme Planning Region. All bodies want to participate actively, but the lack of resources is a problem.

SE, Ms Ohlén: We have discussed how to, in the best way, take care of the upcoming concrete ideas from the Seagull project.

SE, Mr Brynielsson: The Regional Council in Kalmar County has decided to put ERB (and Seagull) on the agenda each and every board meeting, as a way to get the politicians more involved.

5. Economic status per 2003-06-30 of the Seagull project, and the second Progress Report to Rostock in the end of August – information. (see *Annex 6-7* to the agenda).

Next progress report will be sent to the Programme Secretariat in Rostock latest August 31. It is now under preparation by the Seagull secretariat.

A summary of the economic status, excluding personal costs and in kind contribution was presented. It shows preliminary that all budget lines except the one for travels and accommodation (pending on the costs for all eastern participants at the conference in Ronneby in December 2002) are well inside the budget frames.

The contribution from the PHARE and Tacis countries up till now has also been estimated. When the PHARE and Tacis projects will be under implementation, the financial contributions from these projects also have to be reported to the Rostock Programme Secretariat.

6. The project implementation in general so far

Mr Karlson gave a brief overview of the overall situation with reference to *Annex 8* to the agenda. There are some delays in relation to the implementation schedule, mainly due to lack of resources by the eastern partners (and thereby difficulties to appoint experts and send representatives to seminars and workshops).

In the future it is necessary to decide about, and hold on to, clear deadlines for the delivery of information from the different regions to the authors of reports, etc. Hopefully the project will catch up with the initial implementation schedule during milestone 3 and 4 – *if* the results of the PHARE and Tacis applications will be positive.

7. The project implementation so far – WP 1

The WP 1 Project leader, Mr Ohrman started to conclude that the mapping surveys carried out during spring this year have been much more time consuming and complex than expected. He underlined that the reports are *mapping reports – not evaluation ones*. He also underlined that all reports except the Democracy one are very preliminary.

a) Comments to the Regional strategies report (see *Annex 9 and 13* to the agenda):

- Authors are Swedish experts on local and regional development planning.
- This is a first draft report – it will be distributed for comments to the regional contact persons.

- The objective of the report is to give a focused picture of the present state concerning regional development strategies in the ERB member regions - the work methodology and process, and key priorities.
- The report will be subject for one 1-day workshop in each member region during autumn 2003 with discussions about the facts presented concerning respective region. The main objective is to discuss the regional strategies in relation to an ERB JTDP.
- Issues to high-light are:

The process: How to reach a position where a joint focused opinion of the ERB development is well anchored in the member regions? The readiness for commitment and actions in the region.

What should be the first priorities for concrete action? Areas for joint ERB-initiatives?

Stages in a process where all partners actively participate and influence the JTDP.

The difficulty will not be to formulate a programme document - but to get commitment for actions in line with it.

- Comments of the draft report should be sent to Mr Ohrman latest the first of September 2003.
- ***Comments from the SC members:***

It is essential that leading politicians from the regions will participate in the coming seminars. There were split opinions about this. Some SC members argued that the first seminars should be concentrated on facts in the present regional development plans and therefore meetings for experts – not politicians.

It is a central task for the SC members to inform the right people to participate in the coming seminars.

It is essential to ASAP decide the dates for the seminars.

The anchoring process of what is dealt with during the seminars is very important.

It is essential that the project management does its best to explain the added values of participating in this kind of development projects for local authorities and other possible beneficiaries.

b) Comments to the Democracy report (see Annex 10 and 13 to the agenda):

- The Author is a Swedish expert, head of a non-profit Swedish institution focusing on local and regional democratic development.
- The Final draft now presented is suggested for discussion in seminars in Sweden and Poland within the next 6 months.
- The report is compiled from data and facts from written sources and through interviews in all ERB member regions.
- The report contains:

A description of the democratic system in respective country/region, its present functioning and development, based on interviews

Concluding remarks with a future perspective - including the author's own reflections. A controversial issue is the balance between representative and direct democracy.

- The coming seminars will deal with key democratic issues, relevant in a local and regional development context.

- ***Comments from the SC members:***

It is now essential to extract what could be the possible input from the Democracy report to the planned Long Term Strategy and JTDP for the ERB.

Final comments to the report should be sent to Mr Ohrman latest October 1. The report will then – after amendments – be printed and disseminated broadly to the partnership of the Seagull project.

c) Comments to the Gender equality report (see Annex 11 and 13 to the agenda):

- Author of the report is a Swedish State Government regional expert on gender issues.
- The mapping method has been compilation of statistical data and informal, structured interviews.
- One must remember that the opinions described are from a limited number of interviewed persons. The conclusions are made with "Swedish glasses" on gender policies.
- The presented report is a first draft - data is missing.
- The report is concentrating on Gender equality - not equal opportunities in a broader sense. The main reason is that gender equality is very essential for real democracy.
- The Report will form the basis for two 2-day seminars in Kaliningrad and Denmark on the following theme: The gender perspective - what can and should be subject for further thinking and input to the JTDP and its development process, e.g. how does gender equality influence economic growth?
- Final comments to the report should be sent to Mr Ohrman latest October 1.

d) Comments to the planned Statistical database and GIS reports (see Annex 12 and 13 to the agenda):

- Authors are Swedish experts on municipal development planning and GIS – systems.
- The Reports are delayed due to problems with data collection.
- The GIS report will recommend a programme for development of a GIS-system proper for statistical data presentation and use.
- The Statistical data base report will recommend data for proper use in joint ERB development activities - standard, definitions, and sources.
- An expert work shop during milestone 3 will be arranged as scheduled.

8. The project implementation so far – WP 2

The WP 2 Project leader, Ms Gunnarsson, started to underline the problems related to the lack of resources by the eastern partners. External eastern water experts (in relation to the Seagull partners) must be reimbursed for their costs for participation in meetings, compiling material, etc., which has been impossible up to now due to lack of PHARE and Tacis funding.

In Poland there is also a special need of information exchange between experts engaged in the different Seagull WPs.

A status report for WP 2 was presented (see *Annex 14* to the Agenda):

- Planned seminars in each ERB member country (except Denmark that is not participating in WP 2) during milestone 2 has only been carried through in Sweden and Lithuania.
- Pilot river basin areas for starting activities in implementing the EU Water Frame Directive have been selected in Sweden, Poland, Kaliningrad Region and Lithuania – not in Latvia.
The next step is to describe the pilot areas and set up activity plans for implementation activities. A description exists for the chosen Lithuanian basin area, and is ongoing for the Swedish one.
- The report of the Water Quality situation in the ERB member regions is delayed and is now planned to be compiled during autumn this year, but there are still problems with input and data.
- It is not possible to follow the timetable according to the approved Seagull project proposal if there will not be better input from the eastern partners during the coming autumn.
- There is a positive interest from some NGOs in the member regions to participate in WP 2 activities. How to follow up? PHARE funds in Poland? Sida funding?

9. The project implementation so far – WP 3

The WP 3 Project leader, Ms Ahnstrom, underlined that the work up to now in WP 3 has been different compared with the other WPs – it has been concentrated on compiling three expert reports, establish contacts between the cities/towns that will participate in the coming seminar activities, and start preparations of the seminars. During autumn this year and spring 2004, seven seminars will be carried out.

The following expert reports exist in draft versions:

1. Results of an inquiry to science parks and innovative centres including technology networks in the Euroregion Baltic (ERB), Part 1 (*Annex 15* to the agenda).
2. Review of existing links between innovation centres and clusters, such as science parks etc, in the member regions of Euroregion Baltic (ERB) (*Annex 16* to the agenda).
3. Review of existing studies on the subject of innovation policy/actions and implementations concerning and/or affecting the member regions of Euroregion Baltic (ERB) (*Annex 17* to the agenda).

Ms Ahnstrom urged for final comments of the reports latest in the end of October.

Report 3 is planned to be printed during the autumn, while report 1 and 2 will be redrafted after the seminars and then printed.

The time table for the seminars:

- Klaipeda September 16 –17, Kaunas September 18 – 19, 2003
- Liepaja October 21 – 22, Ventspils October 23 – 24, 2003
- Seminars in Poland and Kaliningrad Region during spring next year, and in Sweden during autumn next year.

The seminars will also include exhibitions with material about Science Parks, companies, etc. The thematic approach of the seminars is:

- Innovative centres/clusters
- The Triple Helix model
- Knowledge-based entrepreneurship
- Questions of specific local interest.
- Entrepreneurship issues, especially female entrepreneurship.

Seminar programmes are already worked out.

Comments from the SC members:

- In line with the ideas of a process oriented way of implementation of the Seagull project, and the importance of active engagement of municipalities in the ERB and Seagull activities, it was underlined that efforts should be put on increased twinning cooperation between municipalities within the ERB.
This idea should be presented to and discussed by the ERB Board and Council. The Board should be recommended to take actions to increase the twinning activities between ERB municipalities.
- Mr Moshkov underlined that the reports must be completed by material about the situation in the Kaliningrad Region.
- This WP and its activities could be used as an example of concrete cooperation activities within ERB.

10. The project implementation so far – WP 4

The WP 4 Project leader, Ms Mansson, presented a draft Summary report – Rural areas in Euroregion Baltic - Empirical description (see *Annex 18* to the agenda). She underlined that the report is somewhat uncompleted – that more information is needed from the regions.

She also underlined that the report is a living document, and that additional information is needed continuously. The report should be seen as a catalyst to common projects, cooperation and investments.

Concerning the *working process and project organisation* up till now, there have been some communication problems and lack of continuity in the working group as in the other WPs due to lack of resources for the PHARE/Tacis partners.

Interesting meetings with study visits and benchmarking have though been carried out during the first year of the project.

The report, carried out by a smaller expert group, is containing:

- ***Existing rural development programmes:***
 - 29 programmes were identified.
 - Non-farm business and decreased unemployment
 - Nordic countries: Attractiveness for new inhabitants
 - Accession countries: New demands in EU, structural change in agriculture, vocational training
 - Lack of regional/local development strategies.
- ***Common factors for the rural areas in ERB:***
 - Good or fair geographic location
 - Diverse landscape and beautiful scenery
 - Good or very good tourism opportunities
 - Relatively low educational level
 - Need to apply modern technologies and marketing techniques
 - Unequal age structure
 - Brain drain of intellectual resources to the cities
 - Inability to attract young people
 - Highly separated labour market with inadequate work opportunities for women
 - Lack of public and commercial service
 - Uneven development of social economy/cross sector cooperation
 - Lack of local development strategies
- ***Common factors for the non-INTERREG rural areas:***
 - Need for preparation for the accession
 - Problems connected with the former state-owned farms
 - Brain drain of intellectual recourses to the west
- ***Ongoing projects in the field:***
 - Aiming at development of supplementary business to agriculture, for example tourism
 - Aiming at attracting new dwellers to an area, for example The Kingdom of horses
 - Aiming at Development of voluntary associations/social economy
 - List of ongoing project on www.eurobalt.org
- ***Conclusions:***
 - Responsibility of the questions on different levels

Need for structural changes and preparation for the accession to EU among the Phare/Tacis parts

Need for service, new dwellers and attractive work opportunities for INTERREG-parts

Need for investments all over the region

Need for development of the social sector

Need for regional/local development strategies

- ***Strategies for future cooperation:***

Joint pilot projects within the agreed topics

Programming and implementation of the Leader Method

Strengthening of the network

Elaboration of a common development strategy.

Ms Mansson also commented the following issues:

- ***Problems/Possibilities so far:***

Language problem

Communication problem, lack of Internet access

Lack of continuity in the working group

Difficulties in collecting facts and statistics

Lack of resources for Phare/Tacis parts

Network initiated during field studies and meetings

Big commitment to the issues.

- ***Main output so far:***

Draft report, Rural areas in ERB

Analysis of existing development programmes

Network of rural experts

Decision on common topics for pilot projects

Conclusions and benchmarking at meetings and study visits

Decision on areas for formation of LAGs in Klaipeda County and Warmia-Masurian region

- ***Map of future WP 4 work:***

The empirical description shall be completed

Every region will chose a LAG area

Seminars/workshops will be carried out about the Leader Method

Pilot projects will be elaborated in the LAGs.

Comments from the SC members:

- Mr Andersen underlined that there had been much discussions about the definition of rural areas within the WP 4 meetings up to now. No real agreement of a definition, but an acceptance of the definition proposed by the Swedish partners.
- It is essential to put focus on special investment problems concerning WP 3 and 4 issues for the eastern ERB partners compared with the Swedish and Danish partners. Describe investment opportunities. Study micro facilities.
- The web site is now “hiding” important Seagull information. Reports and statistics should be announced already on the first web page.

11. The project implementation so far – WP 5

The WP 5 Project leader, Mr Andersson, commented the draft Information and Communication Strategy (ICS) (see *Annex 19* to the agenda). He underlined that the prerequisites for internal and external information and communication are well developed already in the Statutes of the ERB, and if ERB bodies really followed the Statutes, the situation would be satisfactory. The problem is the gap between ambitions and resources within the ERB cooperation up till now. Therefore there is an obvious need of a more concrete ICS with evident priorities.

The proposed ICS puts demands on the ERB Council and Board to release more resources to the National Secretariats of ERB. Each national ERB secretariat should go through the proposals in the ICS and inform the Council members of each country before the ERB meeting in Roenne in the end of August.

Mr Andersson also underlined that the present ERB webpage is not visible enough, neither concerning the Seagull project, nor when it comes to other ERB issues. A rebuilding work of the webpage has now started within the Seagull project.

Further Mr Andersson informed that a tender has been sent to six Gallup institutions in Sweden and Denmark for evaluation activities of the Seagull project. Deadline for the tender is the end of August.

Comments from the SC members:

Mr Brynielsson made the conclusion that all proposals worked out within the Seagull project that will lead to a need of more resources for the ERB cooperation must be well anchored in each of the member regions.

It is a task for both the SC members and the ERB Board and Council members to see to it that such proposals are anchored in the proper decision bodies in respective region before decisions are taken by the ERB bodies. In more important cases, e.g. about the coming JTDP, the procedure could very well be: first discussions in the ERB Board and Council, then submission of a proposal to the decision bodies of the member regions (for comments, amendment proposals, etc), and finally decision in the ERB Board or Council.

12. Commitment in the future Seagull project from the member regions

(see *Annex 20 and 2 to the agenda*)

The ERB board had a lengthy discussion about the letter (Annex 20) at its meeting in Brussels in May this year.

Mr Karlson added that representatives for respective region expressed awareness of the problem raised in the letter and promised to give a feed back at the next ERB Council meeting. The issue for the SC will now be to act in order to get commitment for the Seagull activities.

Mr Brynielsson once more underlined the SC role to take the SC discussions back to the member regions. Seagull issues should be discussed as standing items on the agenda of the regional meetings.

It was decided that this should be reported to the ERB Council in late August.

Mr Andersen pointed to the fact that special ERB meetings are arranged in Poland and in Sweden – but not in DK and Lithuania, where these issues have to be referred to in direct contacts with the respective regional councils in their ordinary meetings.

Mr Brynielsson replied that this was of course a consequence of more than one Swedish and Polish member region of the ERB.

Mr Karlson pointed to the tricky issue to report properly from regional organisations to municipalities – which is necessary to get ERB known and well anchored locally.

Mr Brynielsson referred to existing twinning relations between municipalities as one way to use in order to inform about the Seagull project and ERB, but more activities have to be developed. He urged that this discussion should be kept ongoing in the SC.

There was a general appreciation from the SC members of the new Seagull News. From Latvia and Lithuania addresses will be reported for the further distribution of the Seagull News.

Ms Ceplevica underlined the language problem connected to the fact that information produced in English will not be accessible for municipal use. It has to be translated. The realism of managing translation of a letter distributed every fortnight was questioned.

Mr Brynielsson asked whether this task could be managed by the National ERB Secretariats and got the answer that it would be possible to translate at least parts of the newsletter.

The SC members also promised to do their best to make the Seagull organisation as effective as possible in each member region, which means responsibility for information and reporting of the project, that contact persons and experts know what has been decided and which the coming project activities are, etc.

13. Issues for the ERB Council meeting 2003-08-29

Information from the Seagull project will contain:

- Report from this SC meeting
- Status of applied proposals for Seagull co-financing to the PHARE, Tacis and NCM funds
- Actions undertaken and reports elaborated within the Seagull project since last Council meeting
- Information and Communication Strategy to be discussed and approved.

14. Information on other coming activities

Mr Lindencrona informed that the Baltic Gateway secretariat is now organised after some initial problems. A first Steering Committee meeting has been conducted. Information was distributed during the meeting with invitation to attend a conference later this autumn of also associated partners.

Mr Karlson mentioned the platform meeting in Roenne, Bornholm between the Seagull, SEBTrans Link, Baltic Gateway and South Baltic Arc project managements 27-28 August. The joint meetings to come after this first meeting will be more of conferences on common issues than exchange of project information.

The yearly conference for BSSSC will be organised later this autumn in St Petersburg. The Seagull project management will attend to inform about the project and to take active part in certain workshops during the conference.

Mr Brynielsson underlined the importance that also other ERB/Seagull members attend actively in this BSSSC meeting.

15. Forms of future SC meetings; meeting plan for the coming year

Mr Brynielsson raised the question about the future meetings in the SC – its proper forms and character and underlined the necessity of having time for discussions on the substance of the Seagull project and its development. The suggestion is that the SC will meet from lunch to lunch in the future – on agendas with thematic profiles.

All SC members agreed to this.

Mr Andersen also proposed that the meetings as far as possible should be coordinated in time with the preparation meetings of the ERB Board/Council meetings.

The question about meeting location was raised by Mr Andersson who suggested Klaipeda as location for all meetings due to logistical reasons.

Mr Andersen had the opinion that Klaipeda and Elblag could be alternate locations, while the chairman declared his view that the meetings should be held in the different ERB countries, an opinion agreed by Mr Karlson, Mr Lindencrona and Mr Andersen.

The Chairman concluded that

- the SC meetings from now on should be two days meetings from lunch to lunch with flexibility for travel reasons,
- they should be time coordinated with ERB National secretariat meetings and Seagull WP meetings as far as possible,
- most of the meetings should be located to the eastern part of ERB, not excluding meetings also in Sweden and Denmark.

Next SC meetings were decided to take place in:

- Latvia, 8-9 January 2004
- Kaliningrad/Baltiysk, 17-18 June 2004
- Elblag, 23-24 September 2004
- Sweden, 12-13 December 2004

16. Mr Brynielsson closed the meeting.