Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme Monitoring Committee has decided on 14th June to fund a project aiming at communicating better the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) led by Centrum Balticum Foundation.

The "Let's Communicate!" project will put the Communication Strategy of the EUSBSR into practice and equip the stakeholders to communicate better and more efficiently about their work in the EUSBSR framework. Best practices and tools are to be developed in order to harmonize the communications of the EUSBSR. In addition, target groups who are not yet familiar with the EUSBSR framework will be approached during the project.

The project includes partners from all countries participating in the EUSBSR and also from Norway. Centrum Balticum will act as a lead partner in the project. Other core partners are the VASAB Secretariat of the Latvian State Regional Development Agency, Pomorskie in the European Union Association from Poland, Baltic Development Forum operating in Denmark, Vilnius Chamber of Commerce from Lithuania, Baltic Sea Forum from Germany and Eastern Norway County Network. In addition, the project has three committed associated partners: Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket), The Baltic Sea Commission of the CPMR and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

The communications project will start in the autumn 2016.

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is an essential framework for addressing common challenges and benefitting from the joint opportunities in the Baltic Sea Region. However, a need for more coordinated and coherent communications of the EUSBSR has been recognized on several occasions during the Strategy’s existence by the European Commission, the European Council and by other key stakeholders. Both internal and external communications are lacking coordination and cohesion. Important steps have been taken in communicating the EUSBSR better but a strategic approach has been missing. A Communication Strategy for the EUSBSR was eventually developed in 2015 and it includes a list of actions that could be taken in order to improve the EUSBSR communications both internally and externally.

“Let’s communicate!” project is putting the Communication Strategy into practice and is aiming at bridging gaps in both internal and external communications. Internal and external communications are in many ways intertwined: more coordination in the internal communications will automatically improve the external communications. The project is willing to function as a “Communication Point” of the EUSBSR for both internal stakeholders and for external audiences and potential new actors joining the EUSBSR framework. During the project time best practices on how to organize the EUSBSR communications are sought and thus the project is also looking beyond the project time.

The partnership of the project is a strong driving force of the EUSBSR communications. The core partnership and associated partners cover all the EUSBSR member states and one of the partner countries, Norway. The partnership includes different types of organizations functioning on all levels of society making sure the project supports the multilevel nature of the EUSBSR. All partners have strong experience in working within the EUSBSR framework. Thus, the outreach of the project to all member countries and also to one of the partner countries is ensured and the results of the project will be multiplied by the partners in their respective contexts. The activities of the project are divided into five groups, which address both internal and external communication challenges in the EUSBSR context.

Enhancing storytelling as an approach to communications is applied in all activities and the project will actively seek to both recognize and disseminate stories that show positive change in the region. The activities of the project range from equipping relevant stakeholders with communication tools and encouraging them in communication actions to supporting and organizing events and reaching out to those target groups that are not familiar with the EUSBSR framework. Expected outputs include stories and their dissemination, tool kits, publications, events, a report on how to reach the external target groups of the EUSBSR and piloting a campaign on one target group.