

# ESPO TANGO

## Territorial Approaches for New Governance

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Case Study Report  
A Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

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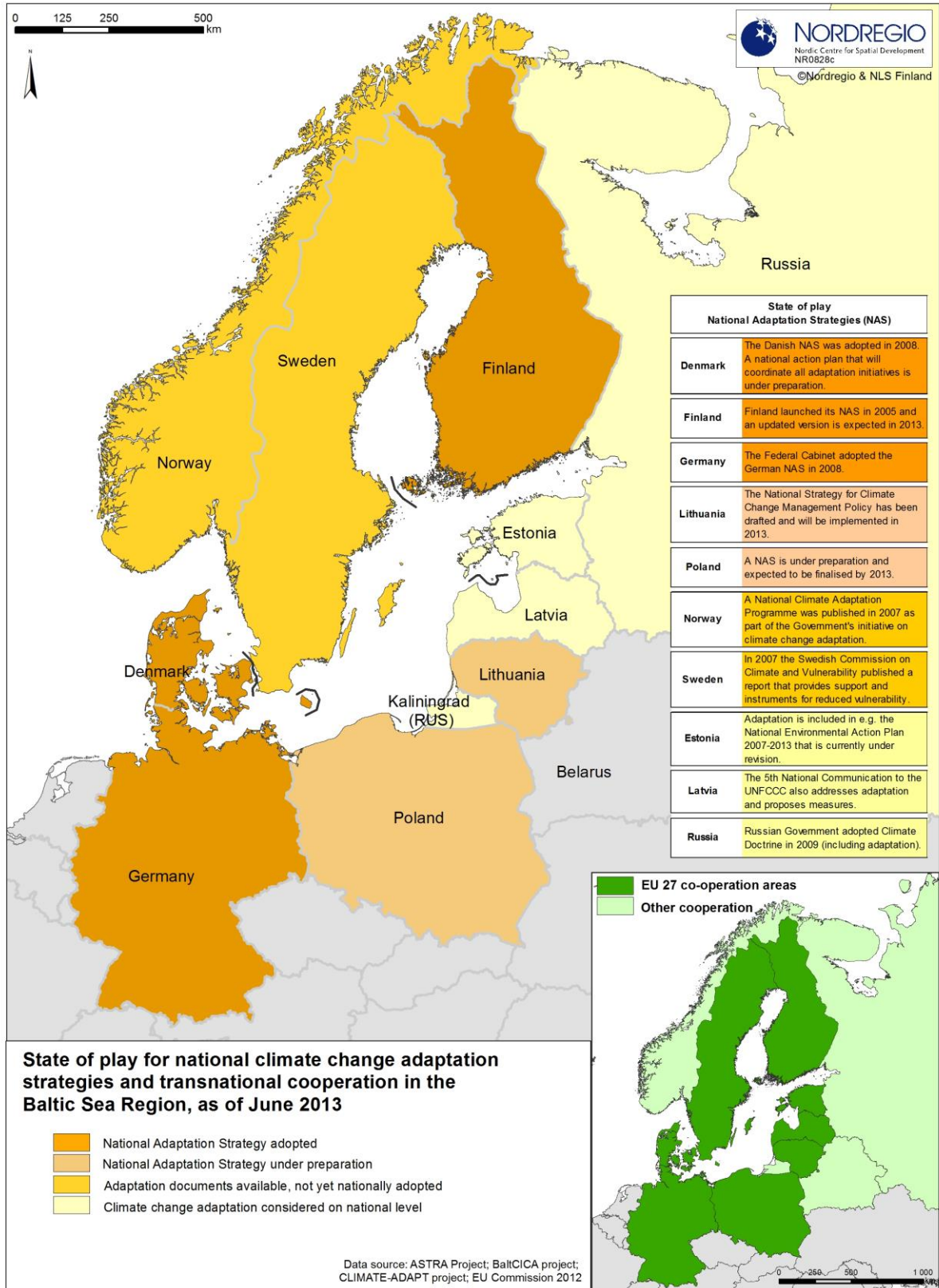
# 1 Introduction

The impact of climate change is expected to impact the territories bordering the Baltic Sea in a variety of ways, including sea level rise, increasing temperature, changes in precipitation and flood patterns as well as changes in biodiversity. This in turn influences many socio-economic sectors including agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Although the consequences differ in scope and severity between localities and regions, adaptation to a changing climate is set high on the political agenda of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region. A number of concrete adaptation activities are currently being undertaken at the local and regional level and at the national level most countries have already adopted or are preparing a National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) or similar strategy (see Map 1). In addition to these national efforts, there are strong calls for developing a macro-regional climate change adaptation strategy in connection with the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) (see box 1).

This case study thus examines the territorial governance processes around the development of a climate change adaptation strategy at the level of the Baltic Sea “macro-region”. This is a territorial governance issue that spans several administrative levels – from the local to the macro-regional and implies the coordination of a range of sectoral interests involving, among others, agriculture, fisheries, integrated coastal zone management, spatial planning and infrastructure, civil preparedness, tourism and water management. The principles related to climate change adaptation in the BSR mirror aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy: Adaptation measures in the BSR need to be “smart” in terms of coordinating actions within sectors integrated through EU policies and the single market; “sustainable” in the sense of the Baltic Sea as a common resource and the need for a “common BSR voice” in international contexts (to ensure that the specific vulnerability of the Baltic Sea and its river basin to climate change is acknowledged in EU and international policies); as well as “inclusive” to ensure solidarity for the most exposed and vulnerable territories to increase their adaptive capacity (Baltadapt 3<sup>rd</sup> Policy Forum 2013).

**Box 1: The EUSBSR Action Plan and the call for strategic adaption action**

“Establish a regional adaptation strategy at the level of the Baltic Sea Region which would provide a useful framework for strengthening co-operation and sharing information across the region. The possibility of establishing such a regional adaptation strategy should be considered and the consistency of any such strategy with actions at EU level further to the White paper from the European Commission on adaptation needs to be ensured. This issue could be addressed in the Impacts and Adaptation Steering Group proposed in the White Paper. Ensuring complementarities with EU-wide initiatives, a regional strategy could focus on issues of cross border interest in the region such as: developing a more robust evidence base on the impacts and consequences of climate change, raising awareness of the need for action; ensuring and measuring progress (using indicators as benchmark for measuring progress) and recommending early action to ensure that adaptation is integrated in key policy areas – this means reviewing policies in the light of the risks of climate change and considering options for adaptive action” (COM 2009a:23).



Map 1: State of play regarding national climate change adaptation strategies and transnational cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region

In this case study the territorial “object” of analysis is the governance process to develop a climate change adaptation strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. To date, the lion’s share of the work to draft a climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR is being done in the Baltadapt project, a transnational cooperation project under the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. The Baltadapt project is a direct response to the summons in the EUSBSR to “Establish a regional adaptation strategy at the level of the Baltic Sea Region” (see box 1). The idea of Baltadapt is to work on a national and intergovernmental level and prepare the groundwork for the endorsement of a transnational political strategy on climate change adaptation in the BSR. Thus the project intends to set an institutional framework for what national policy makers need to take into account. The initial goals of Baltadapt were to create an umbrella structure for coordinating information on climate change adaptation in the BSR as the “Baltic Window” hub for decision-makers, to act as a “knowledge broker” between political decision-makers and research institutions dealing with the question and to embed the project in other existing structures so to be able to secure funding without overlapping of institutions (Baltadapt 2010) (see box 2). As such the strategy is to: 1) provide goals and visions, 2) Clarify links to other strategies and added value in a multilevel governance perspective (the “what’s in it for me”), 3) Identify coordinators and implementers and 4) provide the “rules of the game” regarding exposure, impact and vulnerabilities to climate change (Baltadapt 3<sup>rd</sup> Policy Forum 2013).

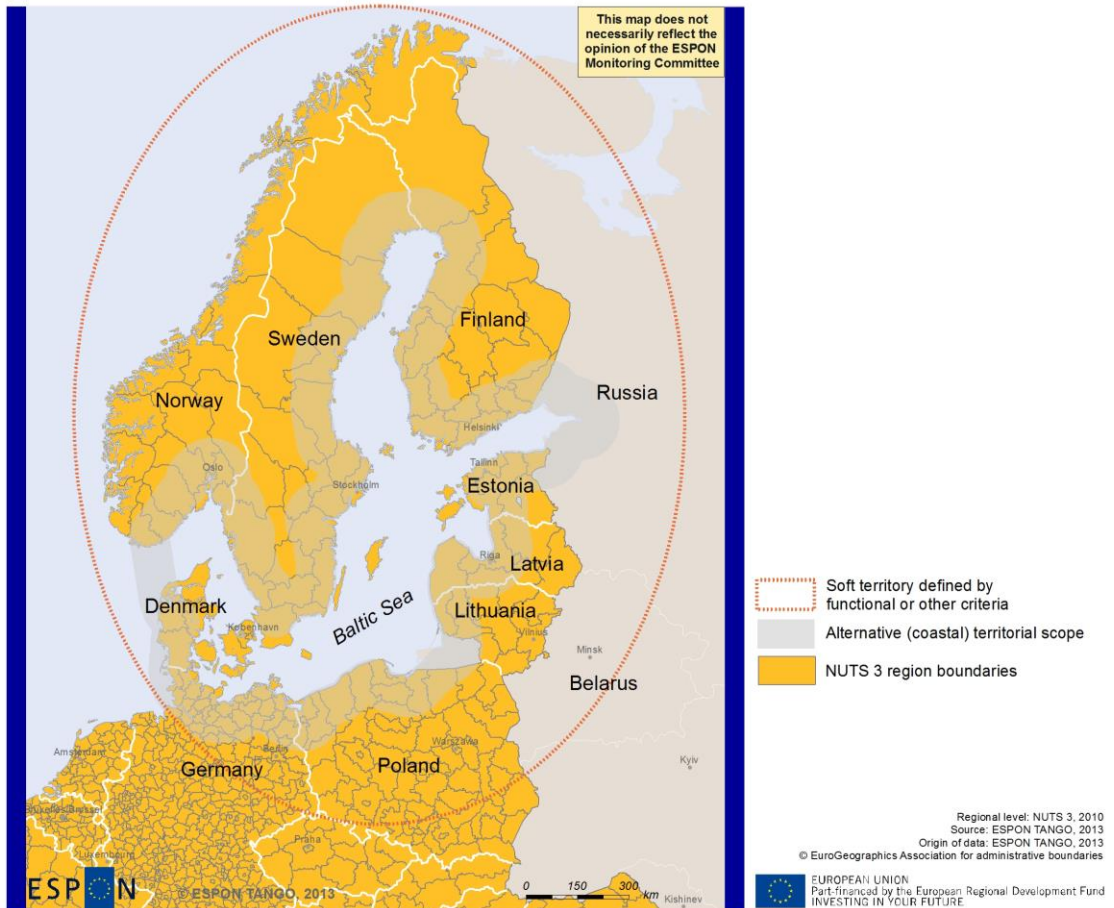
Box 2: The **Baltadapt** (Baltic Sea Region Climate Change Adaptation Strategy) project has the clear goal to develop and prepare a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region including an Action Plan with focus on the marine and coastal environment. During 2010–2013, the project involves 11 environmental institutions from around the Baltic Sea and receives funding (ca. 2.86 million Euro) from the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007–2013. The Danish Meteorological Institute (DMI) is the lead partner while the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) is responsible for formulating the Strategy and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Germany) for drafting the Action Plan. The Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (Sweden) organizes workshops and Policy Forums. Baltadapt is Flagship project under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and CBSS Baltic21 Lighthouse Project. More information can be accessed under: <http://www.baltadapt.eu>.

Research for the case study report was based on a desk survey of relevant documents as well as in-depth interviews with 13 significant stakeholders during December 2012 and January 2013. We have also actively participated as observers and participants in three Baltadapt Policy Forums (April, December 2012 and May 2013) where we had the chance to interact informally with stakeholders on all levels. Most of the work on climate change adaptation in the BSR is happening at the transnational level, within the Baltadapt project, but we have also included interviews from the region of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania in Germany and the municipality of Kalundborg in Denmark to help illustrate the extent to which the territorial



principles being developed in Baltadapt are actually useful for climate change adaptation measures at local/regional level.

## CASE STUDY AREA 1: BALTIC SEA REGION



Map 2: Case study area: Baltic Sea Region

## 2 Integrating policy sectors

As the development of the Baltic Sea Region climate change adaptation strategy is happening within the governance context of the EUSBSR, this macro-regional strategy sets the tone for how policy sectors can be integrated. With its focus on three objectives: (1) Save the Sea, (2) Connect the Region, and (3) Increase Prosperity, the EUSBSR implicitly intersects with a range of climate change issues (EC 2012). The new Action Plan of the EUSBSR suggests five Horizontal Actions (HA): 1) Spatial planning, 2) Cooperating with neighbours, 3) Boosting joint promotion and regional identity, 4) Multi-level governance, and 5) Sustainable development and bioeconomy (COM 2013a). Climate change adaptation and mitigation are included as sub-actions in the Sustainable Development HA. Each HA and sub-action have its own Horizontal Action Leader (HAL) to ensure that a cross-sectoral or territorial approach is taken. After the life-time of the Baltadapt project the climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR will “live on” under the aegis of the HAL for sustainable development (and sub-action climate change adaptation) (Interview L, COM 2013a).

### Policy packaging for climate change adaptation

Within the Baltadapt project, as the main vehicle to draft the climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR, several policy sectors have been chosen as a focus for strategic actions: tourism, infrastructure, food production (including fisheries and agriculture) and biodiversity. In the initial stages of the project there was some discussion about which sectors should be represented within the strategy. In the end these were the sectors which represented the interests and competencies of the Baltadapt partners (Interview C) but project leaders are aware that in choosing the main sectors as the basis for the strategy that others are purposely left out. Leaders also choose to call these “topics” rather than sectors (Interview L).

However several of the partners’ work within the project appears to be dominated by a clear environmental rationale, largely due to the natural science expertise of many of the partners (Interviews A & C). Partners came into the project with very different expectations of what was to be achieved. In the beginning of the project the social science or socio-economic aspects of climate change adaptation were only tacitly considered, and this is perhaps representative of much of the general public’s thinking about climate change adaptation as being an “environmental” issue that is at odds with economic and social development. One interviewee, however, tempered this observation by saying that each of the four chosen sectors deals implicitly with important resource and economic issues as well (Interview F). The initial stages of the project were marked by dissent on how to bring the various sectors together into one strategic “package”. But two alluded to the fact that it was the informal leadership of the project (specifically certain individuals) who helped to broaden the focus, get partners to think outside of their “sectoral boxes”, head towards synergies, and give the project a more “territorial” focus (Interviews C & F).

## **Overcoming barriers to cross-sectoral synergies**

Within Baltadapt the efforts for cross-sectoral synergies were realised and evolved as the project progressed, although there has always been some general discussion about seeking synergies between climate change adaptation measures and mitigation efforts (2nd Policy Forum 2012). One of barriers to cross-sectoral integration is that some of the sectors or “topics” (such as agriculture or partly tourism) see climate change as a *positive* phenomenon that may bring advantages to the Baltic Sea Region while other sectors (like fisheries) see it as a *negative* phenomenon that will disturb current patterns of resource use. Each topic seems to have established its own “network” in which climate change adaptation issues are discussed and they do not always speak the same sectoral language. Project partners realise that one way to overcome this is to discuss the issues, rather than the sectors or topics (2nd Policy Forum 2012). Time pressure to complete the draft of the strategy by September 2013 has also been a strong incentive to be open to different ways of linking topics and sectors.

One of the main initial barriers to further cross-sectoral integration is that the territorial scope of the project was under dispute for much of the project life. The Baltadapt project focuses mainly on the marine environment (“the Baltic Sea itself”) and the coastal areas, but discussions turned to broaden the territorial scope of the climate change adaptation strategy to focus on the entire macro-region (all territories within the national states). This has had far-reaching consequences for which topics or sectors were to be included, as well as which actors would be responsible for the strategy after the completion of the project. See further discussion under Chapter 6.

As discussed previously, climate change adaptation has been established as part of one of the Horizontal Actions (HA Sustainable development and bioeconomy) of the EUSBSR, which further provides status for the issue as a cross-cutting priority. At the transnational level, there have already been some attempts to create links with other Horizontal Actions (specifically the HAs for multi-level governance and for spatial planning (3rd Policy Forum 2013). At the local and regional level the various sectors involved in climate change adaptation are being integrated more effectively. However, this is done through the personal contacts and close relationships between sectoral actors at local level (Interviews D & I) in light of achieving a specific goal or output (drafting a plan or organising a workshop). But even at the local level, if there is no common agreement on the challenge or “problem” to be solved in climate change it is very difficult to work cross-sectorally (Interview G).

## **3 Coordinating the actions of actors and institutions**

### **Various levels of territorial governance**

Involving a wider range of actors and institutions from various levels to ensure relevancy of the BSR climate change adaptation strategy has been a strong

theme in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Policy Forum and 3<sup>rd</sup> Policy Forum as well as in the draft of the Action Plan with its emphasis on three actions: Informing about climate change adaptation, mainstreaming climate adaptation in other policies and connecting the region to common learning experiences about climate adaptation. One of the strategy's main objectives is to facilitate transnational cooperation and exchange among all states and regions of the Baltic Sea Region (including Russia). This is facilitated by multi-level governance approaches to implementation, raising awareness and increasing the knowledge base (Baltdapt 2013). But coordinating these actions could be a complex undertaking considering the multitude of actors and institutions on all levels which have been involved (1<sup>st</sup> Policy Forum 2012).

In addition to several important international level efforts which have spurred on the efforts of territories to engage in climate change adaptation (such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the publication of the Stern Paper in 2006), adaptation to climate change has been promoted on EU level through the EU Green and White Paper on Adaptation which emphasis the need of sharing experiences from early adaptation action (COM 2007 & COM 2009b) and the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change (COM 2013b). The EU White Paper "Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European Framework for Action" is the basis of the EU's strategic approach "to ensure that timely and effective adaptation measures are taken, ensuring coherency across different sectors and levels of governance" (COM 2009b:3). The White Paper identifies EU's vulnerability to the impact of global warming and emphasizes the need of an adaptation strategy at EU level and solidarity among EU Member States. Both the White Paper and the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change aim to improve Europe's resilience to climate change by emphasizing the need to integrate climate adaptation into all key European policies and enhance cooperation at all levels of governance. Thus, the EU sees its role in facilitating the coordination and exchange of knowledge among Member States in this cross-cutting issue (COM 2009b & COM 2013b).

As introduced in the Chapter 1, the call for addressing with climate change adaptation at EU level coincides with the efforts increasing territorial cohesion by establishing "macro-regions" within the EU. As the EU's first macro-region in 2009, the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) strives for closer cooperation between the Member States. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) provides an Action Plan for the BSR addressing priorities Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity. As the strategy makes no provisions for new institutions, funding, instruments or regulations, its role is rather as an integrated framework by which to utilize existing structures, institutions and actions – many of these in the form of projects funded by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 and the upcoming programme. The strategy stresses the need for coordinated joint actions in the BSR on a "macro-regional" level including discussions with external partners, especially Russia (COM 2009a).

## **Governing capacity and coordination across levels**

Within the Baltadapt project coordination among the actors (internally and externally) is done through meetings, seminars, the Policy Forums and topical Workshops. In the three Policy Forums, high-level participants from all of the BSR countries were invited to discuss the issues of climate change adaptation in the BSR. The 1st Policy Forum in April 2012 in Berlin focused on discussions of what the various stakeholders expected content-wise from the strategy and how cooperation across administrative levels could be linked. It also had the goal to raise awareness, by trying to find ways to ensure high-level political commitment in the region-wide work on climate change adaptation from the transnational to the local level. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Policy Forum in December 2012 in Stockholm became more operational with its focus to understand how stakeholders view climate change impacts and how they can coordinate their interests. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Policy Forum was also had the concrete goal to gain input into the drafting of the strategy. Originally the Policy Forums were intended to be used to gain support for the strategy from high level policy makers and decision makers (Interview F). Although each Policy Forum featured some national and EU-level policy makers as speakers, it proved to be more difficult than expected to bring them into the workshop discussions and the objective of the Policy Forums was widened to include many of other types of stakeholders from all levels.

At the EU level there is not much input to the workings of the project. Interviewees even stated that DG Regio and DG Clima had not previously cooperated around climate change adaptation, and the individuals had not spoken with one another (Interviews F & C). Yet subsequently the Commission has been following the project more closely and sees the BSR climate change adaptation strategy as an important part of the EU adaptation strategy (3rd Policy Forum). Thus one of the main goals of the 3rd Policy Forum in May 2013 in Tallinn was to ensure coherence between those two strategies.

Concerning transnational and intergovernmental actors, HELCOM (Helsinki Commission) is a major actor in the BSR and an important stakeholder in the BSR climate change adaptation strategy, but is not formally involved in the Baltadapt project. HELCOM does not work directly with climate change adaptation issues, as its mandate is to work intergovernmental with specifically the marine environment. But many of the issues that Baltadapt deals with are important for HELCOM such as biodiversity and fisheries. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> Policy Forum there seemed to be some tension between HELCOM and CBSS/Baltic21 (both being intergovernmental, pan-Baltic actors) with regard to the future work on climate change adaptation. However both the CBSS Secretariat representative and the HELCOM Secretariat representative each stated that they work together quite well and try to keep one another informed by face-to-face meetings and by participating in one another's workshops and meetings. The two organisations try to find "coherence" in their coordination and they do not seem to be protective of their niches (Interviews L & H).

Within the project, coordination was largely a “natural “ part of the project evolution, with partners being responsible for different actions (see box 2). Once the project partners understood and agreed on the goal of the project it became easier to coordinate actions (Interview F). Thus the common and very explicit goal (developing the strategy) is a strong uniting element, as well as the opportunity to make a difference or an impact through the strategy.

### **Informal leadership within the project**

One of the initial difficulties in coordination of the Baltadapt project was the lack of formal leadership. The *de jure* leader of the project (the Danish Meteorological Institute) has never played a strong role in the project. The driving force behind the initiation of the project was the European Commission and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). But for political reasons the Danes were asked to become the leader on paper (Interviews B & C). The *de facto* leadership of the project is diffused among the Work Package Leaders: Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) in charge of drafting the strategy, Ecologic Institute (Subcontractor to BMU) in charge of the Action Plan, S-PRO in charge of the administration and CBSS/Baltic21 in charge of the workshops and Policy Forums. All formal decisions are taken by the Steering Group which consists of the WP Leaders. Informally it seems quite clear that the Swedish team, spearheaded by SMHI (assisted by the University of Linköping) and individuals at CBSS/Baltic21 (an intergovernmental organisation, but which is located in Stockholm and has good personal contacts with SMHI), sets the tone of the project. This informal leadership is recognized and accepted by all project partners (Interviews A, C & F).

While a natural scientist by training, the individual at SMHI, who has taken on the role of *de facto* leader of the project is concerned about the territorial and political aspects of climate change adaptation and has encouraged other partners to think more territorially and strategically. Project partners also seem to base their decisions on a strong culture of consensus. Interestingly the *de facto* leadership of the project is dominated by Swedes and females, so this may be a factor in way that partners work consensually.

### **Subsidiarity: Strategy finds “home”**

The real challenge of the Baltadapt project was to find a “home” where the strategy can “reside” in order to transcend the project-level. In February 2013 CBSS/Baltic21 became one of the Horizontal Action Leaders for the HA Sustainable development and bioeconomy. Thereby CBSS/Baltic21 received a mandate from the EU to take care of the strategy and find a “place” with the Horizontal Action Leader under the broad heading of sustainable development and bioeconomy including three sub-actions, 1) climate change mitigation, 2) climate change adaptation and 3) bioeconomy (COM 2013a). CBSS/Baltic21 sees itself as very well-placed to be HAL of the climate change adaptation sub-action as it represents high-level politicians in all the BSR countries. But they are doing this in cooperation with SMHI to ensure that the more technical

aspects of climate change adaptation are covered. Thus there are important linkages here between the subsidiarity of the future strategy and Chapter 6 (territorial specificities). CBSS/Baltic21 will also try to involve other experts in addition to SMHI in a type of steering group.

## **4 Mobilising stakeholder participation**

### **Stakeholder involvement in formulating the macro-regional strategy**

Stakeholder mobilization and participation at transnational level in the case is very much framed by the structure and aim of the Baltadapt project. The involvement of stakeholders from all levels and relevant sectors (even business interests and NGOs) (Interview I) is considered important for the development of the strategy and its implementation afterwards (Interviews E, C, I, F & L). Baltadapt public institutions (project partners) have worked to identify stakeholders by using their networks and the snowball-effect within the territory of the Baltic Sea Region (including Russia) and invite them to the three Policy Forums as organized by CBSS/Baltic21 (Interviews L & C). In addition to the Policy Forums, thematic workshops on agriculture and tourism were organized to which stakeholders were invited accordingly. The project provides some funding for stakeholders to come and participate. Many stakeholders are however excluded due to lack of resources (Interviews C & F) and the necessity to travel since the workshops sought to attract stakeholders from all around the BSR. For instance not a single farmer was present at the workshop on agriculture, although the agricultural union representatives from several countries participated. It is difficult to attract small enterprises (like farmers) since the costs of participation, in terms of time and money, can be prohibitive. The Baltadapt project was forced to make some budget re-allocations to be able to help pay for the participation of certain local/regional level stakeholders. Stakeholders representing the national level authorities are seen as key stakeholders (Interviews C & D) but did not participate as intended (Interviews C & J).

One of the goals of Baltadapt is to facilitate “science-policy dialogues at all levels by the provision of web-based as well as “in real life” meeting places (Baltadapt 2013). This process is already happening within the formulation of the strategy, but it is far from clear “how” to actually do this. Within the project, relevant stakeholders are informed about the process and their opinions, comments and ideas are taken into account (Interviews C & F). However, there are a lot of open questions among stakeholders concerning the structure, content, geographic scope and legitimacy of the strategy as well as relation to the EU adaptation strategy. All these questions are still open and jeopardize the process.

## **Making the strategy relevant “on the ground”**

It must be remembered that formal climate change adaptation decisions are taken “on the ground” at local and regional level. The climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR is thus only of guiding character. For instance in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the Coastal Protection Agency takes the formal decisions when it comes to protection measures following the legal framework. With the goal to protect people’s lives and secure economic development the agency has some room for manoeuvre and an interest in informal coordination with other actors (Interviews D & K). In the local case, the municipality has the formal mandate for climate change adaptation measures, but they are quite dependent on the directions set out in the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (Interview G). In both cases, national and regional representatives said that a climate change adaptation plan at the level of the BSR would not necessarily help them with their local climate adaptation work (Interviews D, G & K). They did, however mention that working in transnational cooperation projects has been useful for their learning processes. According to local and regional actors, one of the main potential added values of the climate change adaptation strategy in the BSR would be as a framework to further justify this type of project and to facilitate transnational or cross-border cooperation on adaptation to climate change (Interviews D & G).

Indeed, merging the top-down and bottom-up approaches is one of the remaining challenges put forth in the draft of the BSR strategy (Baltadapt 2013). Linking the two perspectives can be partly addressed by taking stock of some of the on-going efforts of local and regional climate change adaptation and ensuring that the strategy will have relevance for the actors “on the ground”. Still local level actors find the question of “what’s in it for me?” as very relevant in the Policy Forums. In interviews with municipal actors, it was not thought that the BSR climate change strategy would have much effect on local climate work. One respondent from a municipality with a strong track record of citizen involvement in preparing a climate adaptation strategy said:

“In the immediate future, such a strategy would not mean that we would prepare our climate adaptation plan any differently than we are now, which is in accordance with the national guidelines and norms” (Interview G).

In another regional case, in Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, there have been several stakeholder workshops focusing on climate change adaptation and coastal tourism. However in terms of accountability, results are not always formally taken into account by public authorities and have little real impact on decisions taken. Nevertheless, stakeholders would appreciate the existence of the network that might be promoted by the BSR strategy as a forum for exchange and cooperation (Interviews D, M, J & L) to discuss and exchange experiences about local/regional adaptation (Interview D).



## 5 Being adaptive to changing contexts

### Feedback procedures for institutional learning

In the context of developing the climate change adaptation strategy, public authorities, municipalities and regional actors, as well as universities and research institutes, have learned about and transferred various “tools” e.g. stakeholder involvement methods that become part of the institutional memory. Those methods can be even transferred to other institutions at another level (Interview G). The Baltadapt project itself has been reflexive of its own governance process by evaluating e.g. meetings they organized themselves based on feedback they receive from participants but also based on their own reflections (Interview D).

In developing the climate change adaptation strategy, individual learning has been promoted within the workshops and Policy Forums organized. But different challenges and local circumstances (territorial specificities) can be barriers to individual learning (Lange et al 2012), as the local and regional contexts differ in terms of climate change vulnerabilities, risks and governance context. Individuals within the Baltadapt project have learned by solving a common *new* problem together, by trying a *new* method/approach, by involving experts and seeking their knowledge, and simply by talking to each other (Interviews C & F).

Discussions with interviewees revealed that while the Baltadapt project has ambitions to be a “knowledge broker” to collect and coordinate studies, scenarios and experiences on climate change adaptation in the BSR, not much learning is happening in the case from former related projects, studies and processes with similar elements/features (e.g. BaltCICA, other macro-regional strategies) (Interviews C, F & J). Now since the strategy is finalized it is itself seen as *something* that can provide a forum for exchange and learning (Interviews J, C, D & M, Baltadapt 2013). This is one of its main added value aspects.

### Adapting to a large, new and “soft” type of territorial region

Climate change adaptation as such is adaptive to changing physical and socio-economic contexts. The topic brings along a certain risk and uncertainty especially for decision-makers: lots of new data coming in all the time, different scenarios, trying to forecast the future and the propensity of extreme events. At the same time most countries in the Baltic Sea Region have a comparably high adaptation capacity as they enjoy a relatively high standard of territorial development seen from a global or even European perspective. However, the act of developing a climate change adaptation strategy for the entire BSR is conditional on adapting to a “new” type of territory. Macro-regions are a fairly new phenomenon in Europe, with the Baltic Sea Region

being the pioneer case. While forms of territorial cooperation around the Baltic Sea has been on-going many years (Baltic Sea Region Programme, VASAB, HELCOM etc.) the EUSBSR (macro-region) brings with it new challenges; mainly working within a “soft” territory that demands no new institutions, no new regulations and no new funding. The actions for climate change adaptation have to be done within existing institutions, programmes and projects. In addition, at the national level, governmental contexts and power structures for the 11 different nations need to be taken into consideration. Thus national public authorities do not always have much scope for experimentation and need to follow certain rules, regulations and routines aiming at certain goals such as coastal protection (Interview K). Transnational actors, on the other hand, may be more flexible and can contribute with new perspectives on how to mainstream adaptation into other relevant policies.

Considering the nature of the BSR as an informal grouping of sovereign states (albeit with a long history of cooperation) and as a very large geographical territory, makes the development of the climate change adaptation strategy unwieldy. It is often difficult to integrate sectors, actors, stakeholders and knowledge for such a large territory. This is perhaps why the sectoral approach seems to persist. This is also the way that one of the important project stakeholders, HELCOM, approaches climate change. HELCOM does not have a specific strategy of policy for climate change adaptation, but rather looks at how *policies* need to be adaptive to the changing contexts that climate change brings about (Interview H).

### **Experimentation and flexibility**

In developing the climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR there is little guidance from above (the European Commission) and not very concrete expectations (from others) on what the strategy should look like. For instance Baltadapt project leaders were able to seek advice from a number of consultations and have been open to new ideas. Since the strategy is not binding in character, there is some room for experimentation. Furthermore, for a long time during the drafting process it was not entirely clear *to whom* the strategy should be addressed, which territory it should cover and what will happen to the strategy after the end of the Baltadapt project (Interviews A & C). Now the draft version of the strategy addresses a rather broad target group in the sense that “implementers represent all spatial levels of governance: local, regional, national, macro-regional including both the governmental, private and the research community” (Baltadapt 2013:10) and covers a large and “soft” territory. As the draft strategy quotes: “Although the Baltadapt project has had a focus on the Baltic Sea itself and its coastal zones, the proposed strategy aims to be relevant for the whole BSR” (Baltadapt 2013:4). Most of the “inflexibility” built into the project comes from the sectoral interests of the stakeholders involved in Baltadapt (Interview C).

## **6 Realising place-based/territorial specificities and impacts**

### **Territorial relationality and disputed territorial scope**

All Baltic Sea Region countries will be affected to some degree by the impacts of climate change. Localities and regions throughout the BSR face common challenges that come with climate change (e.g. flood risk) whereas specific impacts occur locally or regionally and differ depending on local circumstances such as surface structure, land use, and protection measures. Seen from the geographical perspective it may not seem obvious to address climate change adaptation on a macro-regional level. Yet considering that the Baltic Sea itself represents a common and shared ecosystem, all states bordering the sea have a stake in ensuring that it retains viable environmental, social and economic capital. At the local level administrative borders define the local and regional area of intervention (Interviews G & D). Public authorities responsible for these areas implement respective policies, laws and use respective instruments. This can be considered a barrier to territorial governance as these jurisdictional boundaries could hamper individual and institutional learning and cross-border and transnational cooperation (Interviews E, D & J). As discussed in Chapter 2, the territorial scope of the Baltadapt project itself was originally disputed. The Baltadapt project has initially focused only on the marine environment (“the Baltic Sea itself”) and the coastal areas, while the climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR is to focus on the entire macro-region (the national states). Within the project there was no agreement of the extent of what constitutes a “coastal area” – is it 200 meters from the sea, 2 kilometers or 200 kilometers? This has a strong impact on the extent to which some sectors (such as agriculture or biodiversity) should be covered by the strategy. Since the Baltadapt project actively must define its own geographic and functional scope (sea basin, coastline) this is a good example of new types of “soft” territorial grouping without strong jurisdictional or more permanent functional boundaries. As it is now, the geographic scope is partly defined by the four themes the project works on. The territorial dimension is only tacitly considered in the project due to the strong sectoral focus of the partners and experts (Interviews C & F). The uncertainty respectively broadness of “who” the strategy is for (geographically or territorially) has also been a barrier to realising the territorial or place-based approach (Interview F).

### **Making sense of territorial knowledge on climate change adaptation**

Climate change impacts occur locally or regionally and can be rather specific to one locality or region. Within the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) there are very different geologies and different levels of exposure to the impacts of sea level rise, storms etc. (Interview E). A common climate change adaptation strategy for the BSR needs to take this into account. But policy interventions to address climate change adaptation are taken and implemented locally/regionally and deal very clearly with place-based specificities, threats

and vulnerabilities. Thus the question is how much sense does a macro-regional climate change adaptation strategy make? The strategy has a normative and inspirational character, providing the impetus to action when needed and help to provide for a forum in which local experiences and knowledge could be exchanged and transferred.

In terms of knowledge gathering, the strategy alleges that it does not attempt to reinvent the wheel. It uses the myriad of knowledge, the processes and the tools that are already in place (both governance and engineering tools) as well as existing strategies and policies (Interview H) to avoid overlaps. Yet in the beginning it was not possible for the project to address this knowledge gathering aspect in a conclusive way. As there are no funds attached to the strategy, it is also important to look into other areas (e.g. flood directive, water framework directive) to determine possible areas for synergies of knowledge (Interview E). Currently, however, one of the concrete tools being developed in connection with the project, however is a “Baltic Window” portal to provide “one-stop-shop” information on all available information on climate change adaptation in the BSR, including the relevant policy frameworks, impacts, vulnerability studies and a range of adaptation actions. This will be made available for the general public, but is focused on being a hub for decision-makers from transnational to local level. As such it will form an important part of the EU-wide Climate ADAPT as the EU’s adaptation portal and be its pilot “macro-region” (3<sup>rd</sup> Policy Forum 2013).

The Baltic Sea Region is often seen as forerunner region when it comes to climate change adaptation (local and regional efforts) (Interview J) but it is not expected that a macro-regional strategy will have much influence on climate change adaptation work at local and regional level (Interviews J, D & K) and national level (Interview M). The main problem is that there is still a gap between what is happening at the macro-regional and strategy level and the local level. This is very much a territorial issue and one of the goals is to portray the strategy not as a regulation but as a tool to help other strategies come more alive (Interview C).

## **7 Other elements and aspects of territorial governance**

The case of developing the climate change adaptation strategy in the BSR exhibited a few elements of territorial governance that were only partly covered by our dimensions (or could be included as “indicators” in the existing dimensions).

The process of developing a climate change adaptation strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is characterized by (informal) governance and consensus. While there is an EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy binding for all Member States and there are National Adaptation Strategies adopted by a number of

BSR countries, they do not seem to play an important role in developing the macro-regional strategy. The strategy rather builds upon consensus between project partners who cooperate transnationally and partly cross-sectorally. The HA sustainable development and bioeconomy including the sub-action climate change adaptation will be the outcome of a consensus between different Member States and institutions who will further develop the strategy towards possible adoption.

Most saliently the case was marked by a seeming lack of “power” and an apparent emphasis on “consensus” as the mode of governance. This is reminiscent of the classic discourse debates on the rationality (Flyvbjerg 1998) versus communicative planning (Healey 1997). It seems a bit clichéd to discuss, but the case really did seem to lack much overt “power play” and show more elements of collaborative governance than government. This is perhaps due to the nature of elaborating a climate change adaptation strategy in the Baltic Sea Region, in which the topic is relatively new, the territory (macro-region) is new, the actors have yet to establish a true hierarchy and national actors are still somewhat outside of the process. In the end, the strategy is not politically binding, so the actors involved still don’t have much to lose by being adaptive and experimentative. The only element of power that we saw was some tension between the intergovernmental actors, HELCOM and CBSS/Baltic21, over the territorial scope of the strategy and where the strategy would “reside” after the end of the Baltadapt project. We assume that we will see more power dynamics when the strategy is to be approved by all national representatives.

But it is sufficient for us to say that the dichotomy “**degree of power vs consensus**” could be integrated more explicitly in the indicators (as it is, it is somewhat taken up by the indicator “democratic legitimacy”).

## 8 Conclusions

The territorial governance process of developing a climate change adaptation strategy for the Baltic Sea Region cannot yet conclusively be called a case of “good” or “bad” territorial governance as the case contains features of each. The expected utility of Baltadapt lies in how the activities and the process itself brings together relevant stakeholders, and networks of relevant people. It will help to raise awareness on the issue (Interview H). In turn, the strategy can be used as an impetus for action at the local and regional level or even national level. This would be done by referring to the strategy as a justification for having climate change adaptation as a thematic priority in the territorial cooperation programmes and providing justifications for new projects on climate change adaptation (Interview E).

In the end, the elaboration and adoption of a climate change adaptation strategy at the level of the Baltic Sea Region is still a pioneering effort, but

there are possibilities for transfer of lessons to other transnational cooperation strategies or to other “macro-regions” (e.g. the Danube macro-region). A number of experts emphasise the efforts of the BSR as “forerunner” and “model” in terms of regional climate change adaptation (Interview I) and this may give weight to the potential impact of the macro-regional climate change adaptation strategy.

There are some governance practices occurring in this process which can be seen as inhibitors to good territorial governance. At the same time most of these have been addressed, and while not fully overcome, have at least been acknowledged.

- 1) The **lack of cross-sectoral synergies** and the **dominance of an environmental rationale** in the initial stages of the work of the Baltadapt project made it difficult to see the territorial dimensions of the climate change adaptation strategy. This was mainly due to the backgrounds and competencies of the project partners and due to the initial **uncertainty of the territorial scope** of the project.
- 2) **Cross-sectoral synergy** is being addressed and facilitated by the partners realizing that they very quickly need to work towards a concrete goal: the drafting of the climate change adaptation strategy and the Action Plan. This urgent need (the strategy must be drafted by September 2013) has led to the process being more **reflexive** as well as forward thinking. Much of the reflexivity and new ways of thinking about integrating sectors was influenced by committed, but informal leadership.
- 3) An **informal leadership** emerged to fill the vacuum left by an uninterested formal leader and this had strong effects on the **governance capacity** of the process which was characterized by consensus and little guidance from above.
- 4) Although there was little **guidance from the European Commission**, the strategy found a “home” at CBSS/Baltic21 as HAL to **ensure the sustainability and impact** of the strategy after the completion of the Baltadapt project. Questions of **subsidiarity** are being addressed here in trying to keep the strategy alive at level closest to the citizens as possible, and again related to how the territory for the strategy is defined. This will be crucial for deciding who **should be responsible for the strategy** and the issues and sectors it should comprise.
- 5) At the transnational level, stakeholder involvement is also sought to bring in **public accountability** to the process of drafting the strategy as high-level political commitment to the strategy is necessary. Particularly at the local /regional level there is **broad stakeholder involvement** in climate change adaptation issues. This is sought in the local level forums mainly to utilize the existing **territorial knowledge about the threats and impacts** of climate change at the level at which implementation occurs.
- 6) As a natural progression of the Baltadapt project, partners were able to **learn from one another**, mainly through the **stakeholder forums**

**organized**, and to establish some **in-built feedback procedures** (questionnaires, surveys) to ensure that they were focusing the **correct mix of sectors or topics** for climate change adaptation. The need to consider the ownership of the **strategy after the completion of the project** also led to **some forward-looking thinking** and ensures the institutional sustainability of the strategy.

- 7) Because the EUSBSR represents such a new, “soft” and large type of territory (BSR as a macro-region), the efforts to implement the strategy are somewhat **adaptable to the changing, and not yet solidified contexts**. This relates mainly which issues or sectors are taken up in the strategy in relation to the EUSBSR and its Action Plan (and Horizontal Actions), as there is still scope for experimentation. Adaptability is even more important since the **territorial scope of the strategy is still rather broad**. Adaptability and reflexivity could be magnified if project leaders **took better advantage of the existing territorial knowledge** in the form of results of previous and on-going projects, programmes, studies and scenarios. This would lead to greater efficiency (not trying to re-invent the wheel) as well as ensuring that **certain stakeholders were not excluded** from the process.

## 9 Promoters and inhibitors of territorial governance

### Promoters:

- One of the defining features of the process of drafting the climate change adaptation strategy of the BSR is that actors find it difficult to work cross-sectorally, particularly at the national and transnational levels. When policy packaging and cross-sectoral synergies are achieved it is generally due to the efforts of certain individuals and the realisation among actors that they are all working towards **the same territorial objective**.
- Basically it comes down to changing the mind-set of individuals and helping them **think outside of their own sectoral “boxes”**.
- With regard to climate change adaptation there seems to be the general agreement that cross-sectoral integration is easier to do **at the local level**, where individuals work in closer proximity towards territorial goals.
- The Baltadapt project is a good example of how **informal leadership** of a project can be assumed and made effective in a very consensual manner.
- Since it is now certain where the strategy will “live” after the end of the project, the strategy will be able to **transcend the “project form”** (see also Chapter 6).
- **Broad mobilization of stakeholder involvement** is desired at all levels, but particularly at local level where mobilization is facilitated by addressing a common action problem.

- Meetings, workshops, policy forums, citizen summit have been discussed as good **forums for exchange**, but measures still need to be taken to ensure that the climate change adaptation strategy is relevant for local and regional stakeholders.
- Individual and partly institutional learning is happening under certain circumstances (e.g. meetings, workshops); within the project there are often built-in **feedback procedures** to encourage institutional learning.
- The importance of **participating** in meetings, workshops and evaluations is stressed as a way to bring lessons into institutional memory and promote reflexive and forward-looking learning.
- Development of the Baltic Window portal for climate change actions as a sub-section of the EU Climate-ADAPT portal for **knowledge dissemination**.

#### **Inhibitors:**

- The **lack of a strong formal leader** did delay the project somewhat in the beginning, but this was overcome by the informal leaders appealing to project partners about the importance of rallying around the common and concrete territorial goal (drafting the strategy document).
- Stakeholders' ideas and opinions are taken into account to some extent by public authorities (more on local and macro-regional level; less on regional and national), but it is **difficult to develop routines** to do this.
- Lack of information regarding **accountability** and the results of the use of the outputs produced in the workshops and stakeholder forums.
- The bigger the territory, the more **financial means** that are needed to secure participation from a broad range of stakeholders across several countries; this means an extended need to cover travel costs.
- As the macro-regional level is rather **new, large and lacks sovereignty** (as a region) there is significant scope for flexibility integrated in institutions and policies at macro-regional level concerning climate change adaptation.
- In the development of the strategy and within the Baltadapt project the **intervention area was initially not clearly defined**. This disputed territorial scope is a decisive territorial governance feature which colors the entire case study.
- At macro-regional level (strategy) territorial knowledge, territorial impacts of strategies, programmes and projects are not taken into account (yet); there is some **risks for tension** between different actors and their areas of intervention (territory) that can be the same or overlap.
- Territorial specificities play an important role in climate change adaptation/impacts and local and regional adaptation processes but are not taken into account in the Baltadapt project and thus in the strategy.
- **Jurisdictional boundaries and national regulations** are barriers to transnational cooperation and learning (transferability).



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2<sup>nd</sup> Policy Forum (2012), Second Baltadapt Policy Forum on Climate Change Adaptation in the Baltic Sea Region, 10–11 December 2012, Stockholm, Sweden

3<sup>rd</sup> Policy Forum (2013), Third Baltadapt Policy Forum on Climate Change Adaptation in the Baltic Sea Region , 29-30 May 2013, Tallinn, Estonia.

### List of interviews

*Random list of Interviewees (To guarantee anonymity, the order of interviewees does not correspond with the alphabetical references in the text)*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
2013-01-17	Civil servant	Public authority	Denmark
2012-12-11	Researcher	NGO	Germany
2013-01-08	Researcher, Project partner	Public authority	Sweden
2013-01-10	Researcher	NGO	Germany
2013-01-14	Researcher, Project coordinator	Research institute	Finland
2013-01-23	PhD student, Project coordinator	University	Finland
2013-01-16	Student, Project assistent	University	Sweden
2013-01-18	Adviser to policy maker	Intergovernmental institution	Finland
2013-01-21	Civil servant	Public authority	Sweden
2013-01-25	Civil servant	Public authority	Germany
2013-01-25	Adviser to policy maker, Project partner	Intergovernmental institution	Sweden
2012-12-11	Researcher	Public institute	Denmark
2013-01-28	Project assistent	NGO	Germany

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