

‘INTERCONNECT’ – Better public transport services for regional and cross-border travels in the South Baltic area’

Joint project co-funded by the EU Interreg South Baltic Programme

BRIEF ON THE PROJECT

Main project features

- Partnership: 19 organisations from 6 countries
- Geography: South Baltic area (coastal regions of five EU Member States: Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania and Poland)
- Budget: 3,46 million EUR
- Duration: 36 months (June 2017 – May 2020)

Why do we need the Interconnect project?

Today, the public transport offer in the South Baltic area hardly meets customer expectations for the comfort of making regional and cross-border journeys. Communities of the coastal regions see no clear benefits of choosing public transport over car for longer trips - dissatisfied with shortage of tickets allowing multimodal rides (e.g. bus-ferry-train) across the regional borders, a difficult access to one-spot passenger information and a lack of tailor-made products. This is particularly visible on ferry links, which see a steadily growing number of cross-border car travels due to customised services and price packages for motorised passengers, while the market segment of foot passengers remains marginal.

Public transport authorities in South Baltic area have insufficient knowledge about regional and cross-border mobility needs in their communities – both now and in the future - and lack expertise how to match them with sustainable solutions. The usual planning and management tools, market incentives and promotion campaigns in the regional communities to change the travel behaviour tend to fail, as they are usually not preceded by mapping of no-car travel preferences.

Although many interesting public transport services and products in the South Baltic area have been developed locally, the experience is very scattered and the good practice has never been effectively exchanged at the region-to-region level. In addition, some South Baltic regions lack public transport systems and the organisations to manage this process.

Better public transport services for regional and cross-border travels have a large potential to stimulate socio-economic growth in the South Baltic area - e.g. by contributing to more competitive labour markets and tourism. This potential is, however, untapped because of non-existent cross-sectoral dialogue and weak understanding of impacts made by public transport on other thematic domains.

What are we going to do together?

Interconnect addresses the opportunity of curbing the car-reliant mobility trend in the South Baltic area by means of user-adjusted and more sustainable public transport services for regional and cross-border travels.

We will carry out joint capacity-building, pilot demonstration and advocacy actions to tackle the three dimensions of public transport: the **demand**, the **supply** and the **governance**.

In the workpackage on 'Evidence, knowledge and experience' (WP3), we speak to local and regional stakeholders in the partner areas to (1) identify their current and future needs for traveling without a car, (2) help them agree on a vision of sustainable public transport system and a path to achieve it, and (3) work out a catalogue of sustainable public transport solutions matching current and future mobility patterns.

In the workpackage on 'Steering tools and business models' (WP4), we depart from analysing strengths and weaknesses of today's public transport systems in the partner areas. Through the three pilot cases (Blekinge-Pomorskie; Klaipeda area and Rostock-Guldborgsund) we are going to develop and enhance the specific regional and cross-border travel offer for foot passengers. We plan to organise a constant information exchange between the pilot cases and enhance the public transport systems with a multi-stakeholder planning model and a decision-making tool for better sustainability - so that the public transport services provide an attractive alternative to car travels, also in more remote rural areas.

In the workpackage on 'Future governance and institutionalisation' (WP5), we organise a cross-border and cross-sectoral dialogue to better plan and manage public transport in the South Baltic area, based on good practice available elsewhere. We are going to suggest a multi-level governance framework for cooperation on public transport between the South Baltic stakeholders and find ways to put public transport services for regional and cross-border travels on the policy agendas for sustainable and inclusive growth.

What do we offer to 9 million residents and transit travellers in the South Baltic area?

Interconnect supports new and more efficient public transport services both in and between the coastal regions of the South Baltic area - to give the residents and tourists broader and more sustainable options for realising their mobility needs.

We will invest the project funds in building a modern regional public transport offer in **Pomorskie** by designing and testing one-spot travel information and single ticket solution for rides on all public transport modes along two long-range lines in the region. Our results will lead to a wide-scale deployment of the integrated passenger information and ticketing system for the whole area of **Pomorskie** at the value of 135 million EUR.

To ensure an efficient management of this unprecedented system, we will transfer experience from other project partner areas and assist the authorities in **Pomorskie** Voivodeship in establishing a regional public transport organisation. We will deliver know-how and new planning tools for sustainable mobility to the public transport management bodies in **the partner areas**. Thereby, we will help them adjust the services to the community needs and launch innovative cross-border solutions.

We will implement a new cross-border travel information system for public transport passengers in **Blekinge** area to encourage them to visit attractive destinations in the neighbouring regions and countries without a car.

Ultimately, we will see to it that the public transport services in **Pomorskie and Blekinge** are harmonised to the extent that the joint products become feasible. We will push for single ticket solutions and multimodal journey packages between the two regions, including a Gdynia-Karlskrona ferry ride - to rival the existing offer for the motorised travellers.

We will offer better services for commuters in the **Klaipeda** area to attract them to a new regional-local bus interchange point and decrease car traffic pressure on the road network in town.

We will influence the travel decision choices on the **Rostock-Gedser** ferry line to see more foot passengers onboard and a flourishing institutional cooperation across the German-Danish border for regional integration and economic growth.

Working with new and innovative public transport services, we contribute to a reduced environmental footprint of transport and a better quality of life in the whole **South Baltic area**. Our methodologies and products are of use for any stakeholders in and outside the project geography and may give birth to new market initiatives and business opportunities. Therefore, the information and ticketing systems which we help design and implement, are compatible with existing solutions and allow for easy and low-cost extension to the neighbouring regions and countries.

The partnership

PP1 Region Blekinge (SE)	AP1 Rostocker Straßenbahn AG, RSAG (DE)
PP2 Pomorskie Voivodeship (PL)	AP2 Municipality of Karlskrona (SE)
PP3 Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Development at the University of Rostock, HIERO (DE)	AP3 Stena Line Scandinavia AB (SE)
PP4 Hanseatic City of Rostock (DE)	AP4 Planning Association Region Rostock (DE)
PP5 Municipality of Guldborgsund (DK)	AP5 Port of Trelleborg (SE)
PP6 Klaipeda Public Transport (LT)	AP6 Warminsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (PL)
PP7 Blekinge Institute of Technology (SE)	AP7 Scandlines Deutschland GmbH (DE)
PP8 Euroregion Baltic International Secretariat (PL)	AP8 Region Zealand (DK)
PP9 Viimsi Municipality (EE)	AP9 City of Gdynia (PL)
	AP10 Association "Klaipeda region" (LT)

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