

From best practice to a Baltic Sea Brand

Results from the seminar at Timmendorfer Strand 21-23 May 2007

On the 21st-23rd of May 2007 the fifth *Branding the Baltic Sea Region* activity, arranged by Baltic Development Forum and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, took place under the best possible conditions at Timmendorfer Strand, Germany. Baltic Development Forum has initiated Branding the Baltic Sea Region-process to fully unlock, develop and communicate the potential of the people, companies, organisations and institutions of the 11 countries comprising the Baltic Sea.

Baltic Development Forum first and foremost sends its thanks and appreciations to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in London for the professional and very generous setting of the seminar. Special thanks go also to Mats Hellström for moderating the seminar and to the speakers and participants for sharing their insights and commitment on further setting the branding process in motion.

Already the seminar title “*From best practice to a Baltic Sea Brand*” indicated a bottom-up approach to the branding issue, where stakeholders were expected to take an active part in the process. With point of departure in key projects and best practices in the sectors Tourism, Foreign Direct Investment, Baltic Metropolises and university/research cooperation, the seminar objective was to extract, reuse and apply the good practices and lessons learned in these activities in order to build the Baltic Sea Brand. Furthermore to promote the idea of branding to and ensure regional anchoring of key stakeholders from the business community, regional and sub-regional organisations, people in general and not least the national states not yet convinced of the positive spin-offs.

After had heard stakeholder presentations from Matti Ollinkari and Julija Berkovica, Baltic Metropolises Network; Carsten Schymik, Baltic Study Net; Mats Hellström, former County Governor of Stockholm; Uwe Weissflog, Baltic Sea Forum and Annika Rembe from the BIPA network (Baltic Sea Investment Promotion Agencies); the participating stakeholders at the seminar (listed below) were faced to the following challenging questions in two breakout sessions:

- 1. What can concretely be extracted from the current activities on BSR-branding?**
- 2. How do we take the process forward:**
 - **Branding wave?**
 - **General approach or sector specific approach?**
 - **Need for research to further the process?**
- 3. Identifying and including more stakeholders to the process**

During the plenary discussion following the presentations the still existing diversity of the different stakeholder’s points of view became clear - but it was also obvious that concrete examples, such as the BIPA network activities received wide support.

Timmendorfer Strand branding seminar conclusions

1. Existing examples of already successful regional branding and marketing activities should be made more visible and leveraged

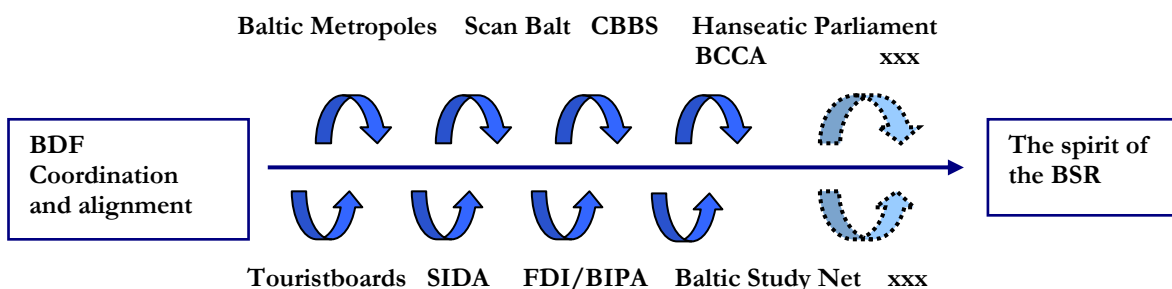
All stakeholders present agreed to further promote and support success stories as the Baltic Sea Region cruises (Cruise Baltic), Life Science, ICT, BIPA etc. It was also agreed to explore using the Baltic Metropolises approach on branding as a heaver/driver for the whole process. The role of CBSS (Council of Baltic Sea States) will be further elaborated in terms of the branding process.

Most stakeholders were in favor of using the label "Baltic Sea Region" in harmony with national brands The term "Top of Europe" is also used widely as an add-on top line.

2. The branding process and the "branding wave concept", where sector specific stakeholders take an active part in the process, gained strong support from current sectors/initiatives

Lots of specific actions are currently being taken in the areas of Tourism, Foreign Direct Investment, Education and Baltic Metropolises Network. The challenge is therefore to coordinate and align these fragmented initiatives in order to speed up the process, ensure efficient division of responsibilities/labour and most importantly, carry out the branding of the Region the best way possible. The seminar in Timmendorfer Strand was an attempt to extract, reuse and apply the good practices and lessons learned from the scattered stakeholder initiatives and actions in order to build the Baltic Sea Brand. Baltic Development Forum was appointed to hold the overall responsibility and coordinate the activities generated by the different stakeholders, networks/sub-themes and by contributing continuously to the thematic issues/roundtables/workshops etc.

The stakeholder-driven branding process was illustrated to the participants as a "branding wave concept", an inclusive work mode where all stakeholders contribute to the common branding of the Baltic Sea Region process. The branding wave concept gained strong support and commitment from the stakeholders as a form of "coalition of the willing". It is crucial though to ensure clear ownership and coordination of the process.



3. Further research is needed in parallel with the branding process; develop a concentrate on specific content themes/stories/messages from the Baltic Sea Region*

* Possible Baltic Sea Region visionary stories:

- The Baltic Sea Region has the most responsible: people, environment and nature
- Cross-boarder cooperation to avoid (oil etc) accidents

- World recognition for democracy, respect, openness, living standard etc
- Good residential area, free fresh air, clear and cold water and possible export of water

Recommended concrete action points

- Formal approach: BDF writes a letter to CBSS on the Baltic Metropolises branding initiative and possible joint event on branding (BDF and the Latvian Presidency of CBSS)
- Operational approach: common appearance at fairs, cruises etc.
- Internal perception: State of the Region Report
- External perception: a common BSR-appearance in the Anholt National Brand Index?
- EU approach: better Baltic Sea Region visibility in Brussels (BDF will initiate a dialogue with the Baltic Europe Intergroup). The new Baltic Sea Region Interreg Programme is starting up by 2008 and the branding of the BSR/BSR identity is prioritized. Utilize it!
- Sales/promotion/background material on visions (for) and potential (of the BSR) to educate stakeholders and “ambassadors”. BDF will take action together with SIDA, Baltic Study Net, Cultural Tourism Institute and others for concept, vision and potential. The Cultural Tourism Institute of Sweden is writing a book on cultural tourism in the Baltic Sea Region. If the human resource dimension is included and linked to i.e. life science; the material can be used as sales material and picture a holistic view of the BSR.
- Add the small and medium sized business perspective to the branding wave concept by the Hanseatic Parliament and the Baltic Chambers of Commerce Association.
- Include the educational cooperation perspective to the branding wave by taking the Baltic Study Net into account.
- Baltic Sea Region awareness and education at an early age (youth)
- Organize an event to visualize branding. Will be elaborated further (Uwe Weissflog).
- The Branding website (www.bsrbranding.org) can be used for inputs and information about events going on regarding branding. The website is adjusted accordingly to the suggested process and content.

Visionary goals for the Baltic Sea Region in 2020:

- Joint Baltic Sea Region cultural event
- Joint Baltic Sea Region sports event
- Integrated financial market
- Innovation: ICT, life science
- High education standard; 1 BSR university among world top 20.

Contact

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Seminar participants

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Christensen, Jørgen	Baltic Development Forum	DENMARK
Diderichsen, Børge	Novo Nordisk	DENMARK
Ellefors, Arne	Cultural Tourism Institute	SWEDEN
Frijs-Madsen, Ole	Baltic Development Forum	DENMARK
Hellström, Mats		SWEDEN
Hogeforster, Max	Hanseatic Parliament	GERMANY
Jacobsen, Jens	Baltic Design Transfer	GERMANY
Kalnins, Ojars	Latvian Institute	LATVIA
Karringer, Susanne	Baltic Development Forum	DENMARK
Kiilerich, Dorthe	Visit Denmark	DENMARK
Köckler, Bettina	University of Lueneburg	GERMANY
Kokkonen, Esa	Baltic Sea Institute of Finland	FINLAND
Laurila, Tatu	Greater Helsinki Promotion	FINLAND
Lindberg, Pontus	Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association	SWEDEN
Ollinkari, Matti	City of Helsinki	FINLAND
Pawluszek, Andrzej	Polish National Tourist Board	POLAND
Pohjanen, Pekka	Mærsk Finland Oy	FINLAND
Rainisto, Pekka	Meritleader	FINLAND
Rembe, Annika	Invest in Sweden Agency	SWEDEN
Schou-Knudsen, Jesper	Nordic Council of Ministers	DENMARK
Schuchmann, Jeanette	German Tourist Board	GERMANY
Schymik, Carsten	Humboldt University Berlin	GERMANY
Spiekermann, Marie	Ass. for Place Branding and Public Diplomacy	GERMANY
Stehling, Thomas B.	Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Londo	UK
Szabo, Kinga	Baltic Development Forum	DENMARK
Wahl, Marion	Konrad Adenauer Foundation, London	UK
Weissflog, Uwe	Pathway Guidance Europe / Baltic Sea Forum	GERMANY

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Seminar at Timmendorfer Strand, 21-23rd of May 2007

Seminar Programme

21st of May	Arrival of participants
19.30	<i>Dinner</i>
22nd of May	Seminar moderator Mats Hellström , Former County Governor of Stockholm
09.00	Welcome to Timmendorfer Strand Thomas B. Stehling, Director of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
09.15	Opening remarks on Branding the Baltic Sea Region Setting the scene and current status of the project. Director Ole Frijs-Madsen, Baltic Development Forum.
09.30	Stakeholder presentations Short presentations on current activities/projects from key stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matti Ollinkari, Head of Mayor's Office, City of Helsinki “Baltic Metropolises Network’s support and expectations in the branding process”• Carsten Schymik, Humboldt University of Berlin, Project manager Baltic Study Net, Humboldt University of Berlin• Julija Berkovica, Head of BaltMet Secretariat, City of Riga, “Balticness project”• Mats Hellström, Former County Governor of Stockholm• Uwe Weissflog, Baltic Sea Forum, Update from the conference, “Ein Label für die Ostseeregion”• Annika Rembe, Director Market Communications Invest in Sweden Agency, BIPA network.
11.00	Discussion on the presentations and other initiatives; Establishing a common understanding
12.00	<i>Lunch and contact break</i>

- 13.00 **From best practice to a Baltic Sea Brand – Breakout sessions**
Extracting and reusing the good practices and lessons learned in order to build a Baltic Sea Region Brand
- 15.30 *Coffee break*
- 15.45 **Plenary session**
- 17.30 **End of Day 1**
- 19.00 *Dinner*

23rd of May

- 09.00 **Branding activities during 2007**
Ensuring the regional anchoring by development of a contact strategy to businesses, governments, academia and the EU.
- Identification and education of present and future “ambassadors”
- Up coming branding activities – how to contribute?
- Baltic Sea Convention/balticness
 - BDF Tallinn branding session
 - Nordic Council of Ministers
 - Council of Baltic Sea States
- 11.30 **Concluding remarks**
- Lunch and end of seminar**

Views of the Seeschlösschen Hotel in Timmendorfer Strand

