



Sida Baltic Sea Unit 2010

What we did within Sida Baltic Sea Unit in 2010

Since its inception in 2005, Sida Baltic Sea Unit has worked with inspiring and supporting cooperation across the Baltic Sea, in particular with the Baltic states, Poland and Russia. Since the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was adopted at the end of 2009, the work to facilitate the implementation of the strategy has been an important part of the operation. Many of the flagship projects of the strategy have received initial support from Sida Baltic Sea Unit, which has also gone in as an active and full participant in some strategic EU projects.

Sida Baltic Sea Unit is located in Visby and has 16 employees. Read more about what we did in 2010.

Support from Sida Baltic Sea Unit gives Swedish actors the opportunity to start collaborating with one or several actors in the Baltic states, Poland and Russia. The projects supported by the Unit shall be based on mutual benefit for the parties involved, so-called actor collaboration. The collaboration can be used to solve joint problems or develop new opportunities within various areas.

The funds paid out are generally start-up grants – “seed money” – used to start the collaboration and they are often supplemented by financing from the own organisation or from other sources. In 2010, almost half of the approved applications provided their own co-financing.

Some of the work of Sida Baltic Sea Unit is currently aimed at informing about and supporting the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, EUSBSR. Up until the end of 2010, Sida Baltic Sea Unit had provided financial support and advice to 31 of a total of 80 so-called flagship projects for the strategy and in a report from the EU Commission, Sida Baltic Sea Unit has been highlighted as one of the most important actors for facilitating and supporting the implementation of the strategy.

A flagship for the EU Strategy

Marsuno will increase the knowledge about the information systems of our neighbouring countries says Heli Haapasaari, who monitors Finland’s section of the Baltic Sea via satellite and planes.

The Marsuno (Maritime Surveillance North) project is one of the flagship projects for implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In the project, 24 civilian and military authorities from ten countries collaborate to control shipping, fight organised crime, monitor the environment, protect marine resources, carry out sea rescue, control fishing and deal with discharges of chemicals and oil. During 2010 and 2011, the authorities will be exchanging experiences of information and monitoring systems and develop good examples of collaboration to fight oil discharging or rescue of people in danger at sea. The Marsuno project received SEK 300 000 from Sida Baltic Sea Unit to develop



a project application to the EU. The project budget is currently SEK 30 million, and is led from Karlskrona by the Swedish Coast Guard.



Exercise in the Baltic Sea for the Marsuno project.

Sida Baltic Sea Unit's work with project applications

Sida Baltic Sea Unit's work with developing actor collaboration in the Baltic Sea region is characterised by the Unit providing grants of catalytic character to many small projects, where the collaboration has potential to develop and continue once the project period has ended. During the entire process, the Unit programme officers maintain an active dialogue with the applicants. Apart from distributing financial support, they provide advice and help the projects find suitable partners in the cooperating countries. They coach applicants to ensure the projects are long-term, qualify for continued financing and are in line with the priority areas within EUSBSR.



Even before the actors send their applications to Sida Baltic Sea Unit there is a close dialogue with the Unit programme officers in order to produce an optimal design for the projects. The dialogue continues throughout all the phases of the project. Even after completion, a discussion is held regarding how to continue the cooperation.



1. The Actors

Funds paid out (SEK 1000) from Sida Baltic Sea Unit to various types of actors.

Actors	2008	2009	2010
NGO:s	11 243	9 080	10 846
Municipalities/Regions	5 709	5 697	4 799
State agencies	7 535	9 199	8 750
Private companies	295	266	0
Total	24 782	24 242	24 396

Comment: The table shows that support to NGO:s is high (38 per cent), which applies in particular within the area of health. The heading State agencies includes universities and colleges, which are active in the environment area in particular. The distribution between the various types of actors is stable, but Sida Baltic Sea Unit strives to increase participation by municipalities/regions. The actors come from almost the whole of Sweden, with an emphasis on the southern and eastern parts of the country.

The actors' collaboration partners

Sida Baltic Sea Unit works towards involving as many as possible of the countries in the Baltic Sea region in the project, so that project collaboration is not just created between Sweden and Latvia, Sweden and Estonia, etc. In one third of the projects to which Sida Baltic Sea Unit provided support in 2010, all the six collaboration countries with which the Unit works were included. But there are also projects covering the Baltic Sea region in a wider sense: one such is the project relating to forest fires that links the region and increases the opportunities to fight a common problem that is tending to increase due to the greenhouse effect.

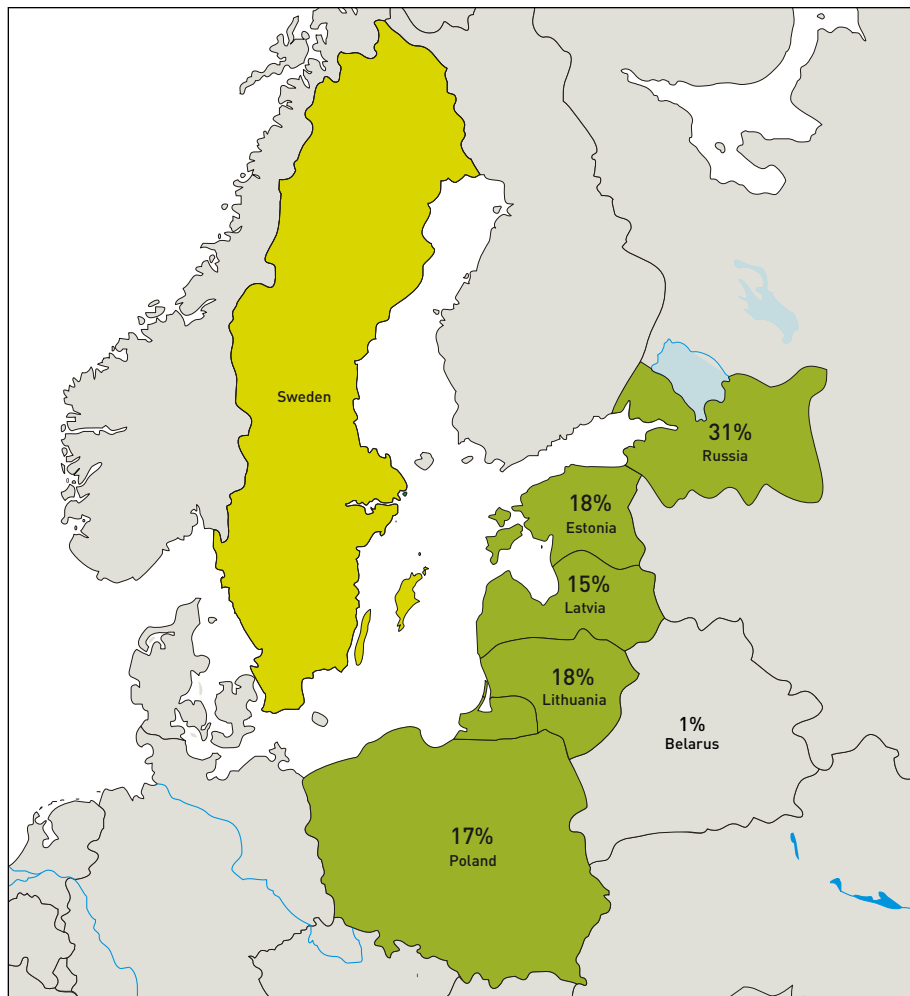
Forest fires

In 2010, Sida Baltic Sea Unit granted financial support to the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to build up a forum for issues relating to forest fires for all the countries in the Baltic Sea region, including Norway and Belarus. When Russia suffered dramatic forest fires that were difficult to extinguish in 2010, collaboration between the countries became very important, and other countries (in particular Poland) were able to contribute help quickly thanks to the new contacts that had been built up. The collaboration has entailed new knowledge for all parties, including Sweden.



Forest and grass fires can spread rapidly across national borders. With a warmer climate, the number of severe forest fires will increase. In order better to meet the threat, collaboration between countries around the Baltic Sea is in progress.





The map shows the countries where the actors supported by Sida Baltic Sea Unit have their collaborating partners (projects approved in 2010). Russia (St Petersburg and the counties of Leningrad and Pskov) is an important collaborating partner, primarily within environment and health. Poland's participation is low in relation to its large population and the country's importance to the Baltic Sea region. Actors in Finland and some other countries in the Baltic Sea region also participate in some projects.



2. Applications for project grants

Sida Baltic Sea Unit started its operation in 2005 and has since given grants to just over 500 collaboration projects. During 2010, 117 applications were received, of which 113 were given support. The reason why so few applications are turned down are the comprehensive discussions held between the Unit administrators and the applicants before the application is made; ideas that cannot be supported rarely result in applications.

The applications received in 2010 came from 69 different actors, of which 23 were new to the Unit. 34 of them had previous project experience of collaboration in the Baltic Sea region and 12 of them should be regarded as professionals (they had already made more than five applications).

The actors often return to Sida Baltic Sea Unit with new applications (often following up previous projects) until they can manage with financing from the EU, Nordic or national sources of finance. One example of such an actor is Trelleborg Municipality. The Municipality applied for project grants from Sida Baltic Sea Unit for several different projects since 2007, and now has considerable Baltic collaboration, which it drives with other financing.

Trelleborg – from beginner to professional

Five years ago, Trelleborg Municipality had hardly any contacts around the Baltic Sea. The initial project was a collaboration with around 40 parties around the Baltic Sea relating to the production of biogas from algae lying rotting on beaches, and this then continued with other environmental problems. In 2010, it was decided that the Municipality was to lead a three-year EU-financed project for cleaner shipping in the Baltic Sea, a so-called flag ship project within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Together with the neighbouring countries, the Municipality is to develop a standard for how ports should handle waste from ships in a sustainable manner, and Trelleborg's



Algae washed up on the beach outside Trelleborg

port is to be the pilot port. Sida Baltic Sea Unit has supported several of Trelleborg Municipality's successful environmental projects over the last few years. In cooperation with the Unit, the Municipality has built up a knowledge and resource base that has given them the opportunity to carry out the multi-million projects.



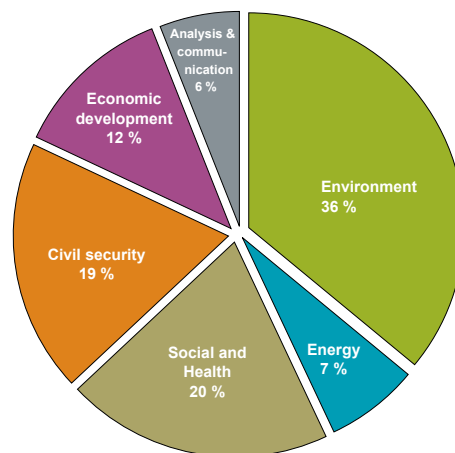
A Russian scientist from St Petersburg is helping to carry out an inventory of the coastal area of Trelleborg.

The applicants are Swedish municipalities, regions, state agencies, NGO:s and universities, and in order to receive project grants they must have at least one collaborating partner in one of the collaboration countries in the Baltic Sea region. The activities for which applicants usually apply are commonly seminars, pilot studies or finding collaborating partners. Sometimes, applications are made to work out an application to one of the EU programmes.

A survey carried out on behalf of Sida Baltic Sea Unit in early 2010 shows that what the actors appreciate most at the Unit is its advisory service. This applies in particular to new actors, but also those with long experience of project management regard the Unit's programme officers as important and equal partners in a dialogue. The advice is mainly about how to get help with developing the projects and information about EU financing. Often, Sida Baltic Sea Unit will suggest that there should be more participants in the projects, and helps to find suitable collaboration partners. Practically all were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the help they had received to develop the projects, and three out of four were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the advice about EU financing and the support given to create contacts with foreign actors.

In 2010, the applications were distributed over different subject areas as follows:

Distribution of funds paid out per subject area as percentages



Comment: Interest from new actors in collaboration in the security area has increased strongly over the last year. In order to create synergies, during the year Sida Baltic Sea Unit developed close collaboration between the areas **Social and health** and **Civil security**, which has meant that several projects now are multidisciplinary and deal with both security and health issues. One example is the project relating to antibiotics resistance. Demand for support with the **Environment** area continues to be great. In several of the projects within the Environment area, energy components are also included. The subject area **Economic development** covers measures of general character aimed at implementing EUSBSR. In the **Environment** area, HELCOM plays an important part in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. All EU countries surrounding the Baltic Sea and also Russia participate in HELCOM.



3. Project grants – small and quick

Decisions about project grants are taken on an rolling basis throughout the year, with a brief pause during summer. In general, applicants are told whether a grant has been approved within a month of the application date. The grants are paid out shortly after the decision.

The lowest grant approved during 2010 was for SEK 8 870 and the highest SEK 1.5 million. The average amount was SEK 216 000. A central part of the advice of Sida Baltic Sea Unit is to encourage own co-financing. Experience shows that this increases the ownership and sustainability of the projects.

In addition to the SEK 24 million paid out by Sida Baltic Sea Unit as project grants during 2010 should be added SEK 10 million of own financing and SEK 3.6 million from other financiers (public authorities, research foundations, etc.). The total amount to which the projects had access was thus SEK 37.6 million.



4. Project in progress – continued dialogue

Most projects run for approximately one year. The role of Sida Baltic Sea Unit as a dialogue partner continues throughout the project. The programme officers are kept updated and sometimes visit projects. The issue of continued financing following completion of the project is discussed on an ongoing basis. Often, new ideas arise that the partnership wish to pursue. This can result in additional decisions or new projects. Sida Baltic Sea Unit programme officers function as “guides”, which can help to link together and develop ideas.



5. Completion – follow-up

During 2010, 102 projects financed by Sida Baltic Sea Unit were completed. In 80 of them, the collaboration continued in some form. Of them, 20 have continued their operation with EU financing in a total amount of SEK 240 million. The return was greatest within the Environment and Energy areas. Here, 35 measures were completed which together had received SEK 9.5 million from Sida Baltic Sea Unit. Five of the projects had been given EU grants totalling SEK 173 million, a return of 18 times the input. One example of successful EU financing from 2010 is the collaboration between coastal municipalities against nutrient leakage.

Coastal municipalities collaborate against nutrient leakage

The “Local initiatives for a cleaner Baltic Sea” project is a collaboration between coastal municipalities in several countries. The project was initiated by Norrtälje Municipality following an EU Directive that the municipalities around the Baltic Sea must reduce emissions of nutrients into the sea. In order to exchange experiences and collaborate to implement measures as efficiently as possible, a collaboration was initiated with municipalities in Estonia and Finland, and another Swedish municipality.



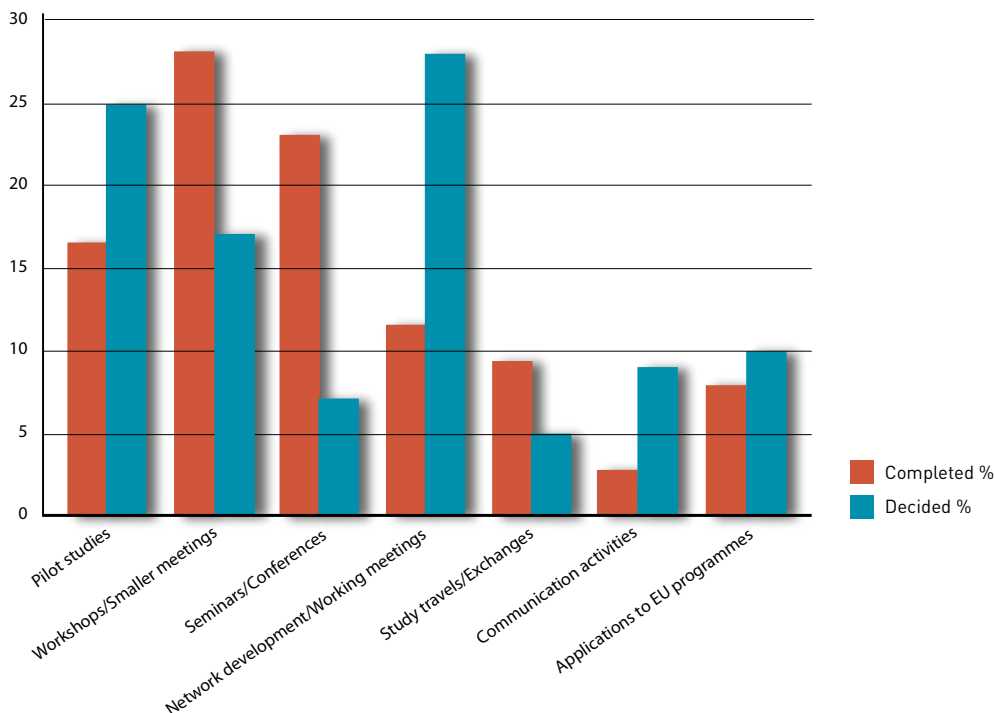
Sida Baltic Sea Unit gave a grant of SEK 236 000 to support the municipalities in making an application to the EU, and at the end of 2010, the project was granted EUR 730 000 from the EU programme Central Baltic.



The 113 projects that were given grants in 2010 included 650 actors: public authorities, organisations, etc. The median number per project was four actors. The total number of persons reached by or participating in the activities (meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.) amounted to almost 10 000 according to the projects’ own reporting.

Many actors continue to maintain contacts with Sida Baltic Sea Unit long after the end of the financing, and the programme officers have a network that they use to link actors together.

What the project grants are used for



Comment: The red bars relate to activities in projects completed in 2010, while the blue bars show activities in the projects given project grants during 2010.

The activities completed in 2010 were decided on between 2007 and 2009. A noticeable difference from previous years is that the proportion of applications for general meeting activities has fallen, while the proportion of applications made and grants given for more result-oriented activities, such as pilot studies, work meetings and establishment of partnerships in order to solve a joint problem has increased.

Pilot studies and the development of partnerships is an important part of the preparation for successful EU-financed project activities.

Own initiatives

With the aim of stimulating new collaboration projects in the region, Sida Baltic Sea Unit is increasingly participating actively in projects. One example is the large EU-financed Interreg project Baltic Compass, which aims to reduce the nutrient leakage of the Baltic Sea by supporting sustainable agriculture. Sida Baltic Sea Unit is one of the 22 parties to the project, and the programme officers from Sida Baltic Sea Unit has the special task of getting more Russian actors into the collaboration. To date, the participation in Compass has led to five new satellite projects aimed at Russia and supported by Sida Baltic Sea Unit.

Sida Baltic Sea Unit is increasingly acting as an engine to stimulate collaboration within areas of urgency. One example from 2010 concerns the exploitation of labour.

High impact report

On the initiative of Sida Baltic Sea Unit, the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) carried out a study (Walter Kegö and Erik Leijonmarck, *Slavarbete i vår tid: Utnyttjande av estnisk och lettisk arbetskraft i Sverige*, "Slave work in our time: The use of Estonian and Latvian labour in Sweden", December 2010) about trafficking for labour exploitation with examples from Estonia, Latvia and Sweden. The report was distributed to the parties affected and had a high impact in the media. Since then, Sida Baltic Sea Unit has contributed to several new projects against trafficking and labour exploitation being started.



Another example of own initiatives is a study about gender equality in Baltic Sea collaboration carried out by the Unit. The study was completed in 2010 and showed a dominance by men in senior positions in the Interreg projects studied. Sida Baltic Sea Unit has produced a handbook as a supplement to the study, and offers expert help to the projects in order to stimulate gender equality in the Baltic Sea collaboration. The project is part of the mandate to stimulate and strengthen the Swedish participation in the EU's Interreg programme.

Communication

Analysis and communication is a separate programme area, which distributes grants to various collaboration projects in the Baltic Sea region. The Unit has supported external actors in Sweden and abroad to carry out their own communication activities. Material for digital and social media, press work, events, exhibitions and printed information are tailored according to purpose, target groups and strategic requirements.

The communication work prioritises reaching out to new target groups that do not yet participate in collaboration in the Baltic Sea region. The 23 new actors given project grants by the Unit in 2010 are partly the result of this work.

Informing about EUSBSR has become an important part of the Unit's communication work. Through various activities, Sida Baltic Sea Unit is highlighting good examples of how the strategy is being implemented.

A poster illustrating EUSBSR has been distributed to several hundred actors and key persons in the Baltic Sea region. Dissemination of information in important arenas, such as conferences and meetings about Baltic Sea collaboration and EUSBSR is an important part of the communication work. In a survey, 40 per cent of the actors stated that they have learnt about Sida Baltic Sea Unit's services at various meetings and conferences.

In the summer of 2010, Sida Baltic Sea Unit and the rest of Sida arranged a "Global Meeting Place" during the Politicians Week in Almedalen, Visby on Gotland, and this became a meeting place for actors and stakeholders in Baltic Sea collaboration. Another important occasion was the first annual forum for EUSBSR, which was arranged in Tallinn in Estonia. Sida Baltic Sea Unit carried out several activities to stimulate network building, to inform about financing opportunities and to link together actors within the EUSBSR's subject areas in a partner search activity.

Challenges

Sida Baltic Sea Unit has noticed an increase in interest in collaboration within the Baltic states, and increased commitment to the region is also noticeable in Poland. What is of particular interest is collaboration with concrete problem solving, not least within the environment and energy areas. The challenge for Sida Baltic Sea Unit is to meet this increased interest.

In Russia too, the interest in regional collaboration is also increasing, but the picture is more complicated. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region has heightened the realisation of how important it is that Russia participates in Baltic Sea collaboration, in particular in the areas of environment and energy. Here, HELCOM (a collaboration body between all Baltic Sea countries to stop emissions) has an important role to play as, contrary to EUSBSR, it includes Russia. The problem is that the environment is not of obvious interest to Russia, and that collaboration with other countries is not a matter of course. In addition, there are linguistic problems and cultural differences. One of the challenges is to identify good Russian collaboration partners.

Transfer from Sida to the Swedish Institute

A report commissioned by the Swedish Government in 2010 recommended that Sida Baltic Sea Unit should be transferred from Sida to the Swedish Institute (SI). The Government thereafter commissioned SI to investigate a transfer of Sida Baltic Sea Unit and a merger with the two sections within SI that work with Baltic Sea region issues: The Visby Programme and the Leadership Programme. The report, in which Sida Baltic Sea Unit participated, was submitted in January 2011 to the Government and a merger is planned for January 2012.

The mandate for Sida Baltic Sea Unit is *“to develop Sweden’s relations with the Baltic Sea region in collaboration in particular with state agencies, municipalities, regions and NGO:s”* (Government’s instruction to Sida). The appropriations letter states that the Unit shall work with *“collaboration with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia (primarily St Petersburg and Leningrad and Kaliningrad counties)”* and that the funds in the first instance shall be used for *“contact and information work in the environment and energy area (not investments), social and health area and within civil security and for measures aimed at facilitating Sweden’s participation in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.”* On the basis of the appropriations letter, the operation has developed in line with the agreements Sweden has entered into for Baltic Sea collaboration.

Sida Baltic Sea Unit develops collaboration projects in the Baltic Sea region. We have a special mandate from the Government to support activities on the basis of Swedish interests within the areas environment and energy, social and health issues and civil security. The aim of our projects and activities is to facilitate the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

