

PASSAGE
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Action Plan of the Gulf of Finland

Connecting capital regions in the Gulf of Finland with fewer carbon emissions

Coordinated by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities



Helsinki-Uusimaa
Regional Council



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HARJUMAA OMAVALITSUSTE LIIT





Project information

Project: PASSAGE (Public Authorities Supporting low-carbon Growth in European maritime border regions)

Duration: 01.04.2016-31.03.2020

Partner organisations: Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities

Country: Finland and Estonia

NUTS2 region: Helsinki-Uusimaa and Eesti

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Action Plan aims to impact: European Territorial Cooperation programme / Interreg Central Baltic Programme

Introduction

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities¹ are partners in the Interreg Europe project PASSAGE (Public Authorities Supporting low-carbon Growth in European maritime border regions) that focuses on the development of the awareness towards transition to a low-carbon economy in the areas of maritime borders and particularly encourages the development of new cross-border initiatives. At the end of the first phase of the project (April 2016-March 2018) each participating strait formulates an action plan to engage themselves into action during the second phase (April 2018-March 2020).

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and Harju County, represented by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities, are the only capital regions within the European maritime straits. The regions serve as engines for economic growth as well as international logistics hubs in both countries. This gives some specific features for the strait in the Gulf of Finland compared to the other European straits. Firstly, both regions are vibrant and innovative with a lot of know-how, including top-class universities, research institutions and innovation clusters. Secondly, there is a constant flow of people and goods in the Gulf of Finland. Each year 8.7 million people and 3.8 million tonnes of freight cross the strait. Thirdly, regions and the capital cities Helsinki and Tallinn, have always had a tight bond and cooperation is seen as a necessity. Therefore, there are several on-going projects and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed on the joint understanding of the challenges and objectives of Finnish-Estonian cooperation towards further integration of the two economies.

The PASSAGE project corresponds to these specificities of the Gulf of Finland. Firstly, as the regions are forerunners in innovation, they have excellent capacities to work towards low-carbon economy which is the overall theme of the project. Secondly, one of the themes of PASSAGE is transport which is the core cooperation theme for both of the regions and capital cities. Thirdly, PASSAGE has given an opportunity to look for further cooperation possibilities between the regions.

This action plan for the Gulf of Finland has been designed jointly by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities together with stakeholders. It focuses on actions that can help to connect the regions with fewer carbon emission. The main focus is on transport as it is the core cooperation scheme for the strait. A smart approach has been taken for the actions. Different actions are being combined to avoid overlapping actions and to create synergies.

The PASSAGE project is funded by the Interreg Europe Programme. One of the specific features of the Interreg Europe projects is that each project partner has a specific policy

¹ The Estonian partner in the project was Harju County Government until the end of 2017. Due to a regional reform in Estonia, Union of Harju County Municipalities took over the partnership in the PASSAGE project in the beginning of 2018.

instrument that the partner strives to improve according to the project objectives. For Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities the specific policy instrument chosen to have an impact on is the Interreg Central Baltic Programme which is a joint funding instrument for the Helsinki-Uusimaa and Harju regions and also a funding instrument for many on-going joint projects. This action plan tackles also the policy improvement aspect.

Action 1 – Policy change and impact: towards fewer carbon emissions

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

During the project life-cycle from the preparation phase until now, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Union of Harju County Municipalities and the former Harju County Government have been in contact with the Interreg Central Baltic Programme about low-carbon objectives. The Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat has participated in several PASSAGE seminars and low-carbon objectives have been discussed with them. At the moment, low-carbon economy is one of the horizontal objectives of the Interreg Central Baltic Programme.

In addition to cross-border policy development, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council has carried out a regional policy change by approving a new Regional Programme that sets out a goal for the region to become carbon neutral by 2035.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

At the cross-border level, a fourth and final call of the Interreg Central Baltic Programme will be most probably organised at the end of 2018. As the programme and its priorities and objectives were approved before the PASSAGE project begun and most of the calls took place during the first phase, the programme can't be changed and there have only been a few possibilities to improve the consideration of low-carbon aspects. However, low-carbon economy has been taken into consideration as a horizontal objective. Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities support that low-carbon will be one of the priorities or objectives in the next programming period of the Interreg Central Baltic Programme or a cross-border programme that will be in place.

In the regional level, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council will formulate a new climate roadmap in 2018 to reach the carbon neutrality by 2035. The actions during the next four years include e.g. support to business based on circular economy, promotion of renewable energy production and improvement of sustainable transport.

Union of Harju County Municipalities has started the process of renewal of Harju County strategic development plan and there is strong incentive to include the low-carbon economy

objectives into that strategy. The Harju County strategic development plan will be renewed by beginning 2019. New City of Tallinn and Harju County SUMP (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) that will be ready in the beginning 2019 is ensuring that local policies would support connecting cross-border nodes sustainably and promote low-carbon transport solutions.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities are members of the Steering Group and the Monitoring Group of the Interreg Central Baltic Programme. Therefore, they are directly involved in the selection of projects and in the decision making of the priorities of the programme for the next programming period.

Considering the regional actions, they will be done together with the stakeholders, such as municipalities, regional and local authorities and companies will be involved.

4. Timeframe

Timeframe for this action will be till the end of the second phase (March 2020) and beyond. By the end of the second phase, there should be information about the next programming period, but the efforts to tackle the climate change continue beyond.

5. Costs (if relevant)

No additional costs.

6. Funding sources (if relevant)

Not relevant.

Action 2 – Ensuring low-carbon transport

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

One of the specific themes of the PASSAGE project is transport and it is also one of the key themes in the Gulf of Finland and in the Finnish-Estonian cooperation. In PASSAGE, we have learned about many good practices in the field of transport. In addition, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities are implementing several transport and low-carbon related projects together for example with the cities of Helsinki and Tallinn.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

One of the best practices of the PASSAGE project is Fehmarnbelt ticket. In Fehmarnbelt, local authorities on German and Danish shores have developed a single ticket enabling people to easily use public transportation on each side of the maritime border and to use the ferry to cross the strait, for a very interesting price. Such an initiative contributes to direct reduction of emissions in the region, while developing the capacity of people to travel across the border and thus enhancing the sense of belonging to an integrated region among the population of both shores.

In the Gulf of Finland, an Interreg Central Baltic project called E-ticketing was approved in November 2017. It focuses on the development of a common ticketing system in Tallinn, Tartu and Helsinki. The goal is to promote public transportation and the twin city idea. The findings of the Fehmarnbelt ticket will be presented to the project in order to benchmark the Fehmarnbelt ticket and benefit from its learnings.

Other ongoing projects in the Gulf of Finland consist of several transport and connectivity related projects. These projects include for example Interreg Central Baltic projects FinEst Link, FinEst Smart Mobility and Plan4Blue and Interreg Baltic Sea Region projects Sumba, NSB CoRe and Scandria®2Act. Actions of these projects include, for example, designing of the next steps of the possible Finnish Estonian railway tunnel, creating of faster and easier access to harbours, piloting of sustainable commuting, generating of policy recommendations for improved and sustainable access to the region, fostering of clean multimodal transport in core network corridor regions and making of future scenarios for blue economies.

These projects aim to create more sustainable and low-carbon regions and transport by reducing carbon emissions and emphasising circular economy. To enhance the process, digitalisation and innovations are being favoured. These are all major questions for the two regions.

In addition, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council will formulate together with Regional Council of Kymenlaakso a maritime spatial plan for the Finnish side of the Gulf of Finland by 2021. The aim is to combine the needs of different activities in the maritime areas, including for example transport and environmental protection. The same process is ongoing in Estonia as Maritime Spatial planning is carried by Estonian Ministry of Finance (the ministry is also responsible for county planning).

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The lead partner of the E-ticketing project is City of Tallinn and the partners are Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) and Tartu City Office.

Partners of the other projects include e.g. Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Union of Harju County Municipalities, City of Helsinki, City of Tallinn, Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications and Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications.

4. Timeframe

Timeframe for the E-ticketing project is from February 2018 to January 2021. Timeframe for the other projects vary from 2018 to 2020.

5. Costs (if relevant)

No additional costs.

6. Funding sources (if relevant)

Not relevant.

Action 3 – Deepening of the cooperation: Memorandum of Understanding

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The PASSAGE project has a wider perspective than solely low-carbon transport. It covers various aspects of low-carbon economy in addition to transport, i.e. environment & attractiveness strategies and entrepreneurship & social innovations. In addition, it has been enforcing the cooperation within the straits and between the straits. Helsinki-Uusimaa and Harju regions in the Gulf of Finland have also been able to deepen their cooperation by working together with multiple themes.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in 2016 between Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications, City of Tallinn Government, City of Helsinki, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Harju County Government on the joint understanding of the challenges and objectives of Finnish-Estonian cooperation towards further integration of the two economies.

The Memorandum of Understanding will end at the end of 2018, if not modified or terminated before. It is the only cross-border political agreement on cooperation at the moment. Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities wish to renew the Memorandum of Understanding or otherwise strengthen the cooperation with an inclusion especially of low-carbon aspects. The renewal of MoU is agreed between partners in principle

but the exact content is still discussed further between partners. Future of cross-gulf transportation is one of the key discussion topics in Finnish-Estonian governmental meeting in May 2018 and this can have an input on content of the MoU as well.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

When considering the cooperation between the two regions, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities are the main actors, but the cooperation or renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding includes other actors such as City of Helsinki, City of Tallinn and the Ministries.

4. Timeframe

Timeframe for the action is the year 2018.

5. Costs (if relevant)

No additional costs.

6. Funding sources (if relevant)

Not relevant.

Action 4 – Communication: broadening the awareness of a low-carbon Gulf of Finland

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The PASSAGE project has made efforts on communication and dissemination of the project and has gained visibility for the objectives of the project.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities will communicate and disseminate the results of the project and policy recommendations to the stakeholders and other relevant audiences. Single means will include for example writing of an article to the Interreg Central Baltic Programme newsletter and presentation of the results to the Board of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council which consist of political representatives.

Monitoring of the action plan will be done within the daily work and within the actions and projects in which Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities are jointly involved.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Union of Harju County Municipalities are responsible of the communication and dissemination activities.

4. Timeframe

Timeframe for the communication and dissemination activities is the second phase of the project.

5. Costs (if relevant)

No additional costs.

6. Funding sources (if relevant)

Not relevant.

Helsinki, ____.____.2018

Tallinn, ____.____.2018

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