



ECP Transnational Networking Activity
“COBALT”
Organisation of a transnational seminar considering
Territorial Cohesion and Coordination in the Baltic Sea
Region

Transnational ECP group implementing the activity
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ECP Lead Partner: **ECP Sweden**, KTH (Royal Institute of Technology) on behalf of the Swedish ECP, ITPS (Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies)

ECP Partners: **ECP Finland**, University of Joensuu (Karelian Institute & Department of Geography)

ECP Norway, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR)

ECP Denmark, Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, KVL

ECP Latvia, MRDLG (Ministry of Regional development and local government)

Subcontractor: **University of Tartu Pärnu College, Estonia**
Nordregio, Sweden

Description of key actions, main activities, rationale of the project:

The main activity will be the organisation of a transnational seminar on Territorial Cohesion and Coordination in the Baltic Sea Region. The seminar will take place in Estonia at the University of Pärnu, 24-25 of April 2006.

The goal of the seminar is to discuss how best to achieve territorial cohesion, balanced polycentric development and increased competitiveness of the region as a whole and within individual national country strategies, in particular with regards to the recent enlargement process. It will build upon the results and efforts of ESPON, VASAB (Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea) and other Interreg projects and Euroregions in the BSR.

The conference will have a focus on completed ESPON projects but also on the newly completed ESPON projects e.g. 1.1.3 (Enlargement) and projects that will be completed just after the seminar, e.g. 3.4.1 (Europe in the World).

The seminar will bring together academics (both ESPON scientists and others), practitioners, students and policy-makers in the fields of spatial planning, regional development and international relations. Presentations will be made from representatives of national ministries, national authorities, regional planners, ESPON projects and other academics in the field. A special consideration of the seminar is to facilitate greater involvement of young practitioners and scientists from the Baltic States, particularly in Estonia, which has not yet joined ESPON.

The transnational seminar is expected to attract around 100 participants including around 40 Masters Students in the KTH international Masters Program in Spatial Planning if the conference is held in April (note: participation of these students is not included in this tender budget, but with rather be financed by the KTH course budget).

Listing and detailed description of envisaged concrete outputs and deliveries

- **Transnational seminar:** end of April 2006, alternatively October 2006, in Pärnu, Estonia. Audience 100 persons including 15 invited speakers. Seminar participants will also be actively engaged in workshops with the goal to explore methods and means to national and transnational coordination of territorial cohesion strategies.
- **Dissemination materials** to be used, evaluated, and adapted in the workshops at the Transnational seminar. These materials will be translated by the national authorities in each country to be used by regional and even local authorities in their work with spatial planning and development. These will even be produced in electronic versions and hypertext.
- **Conference Proceedings:** encompassing all conference papers, presentations and workshop results (approx. 100 pages).
- **Preliminary Coordination Plan for National Actions promoting Territorial Cohesion and Polycentric Development in the BSR.** Results of ideas generated at the conference and greater input from VASAB (approx 15 pages).

- *Publications in various academic journals.*
- *Potential new project ideas for future ESPON programme.*

Overall aims and objectives:

The overall aim of the conference and publications is, like the ESPON programme and the ESDP, to encourage territorial cohesion and polycentric development in the BSR. Furthermore, with its orientation to transnational spaces, the activities in this tender bid, will promote transnational cooperation in the BSR, particularly for the Enlargement area.

The enlargement area is characterised by both social and economic convergence and divergence. One of the aims of the project and conference is to examine more closely the symmetrical and asymmetrical flows of production factors, goods and services in the BSR.

As such, the conference will be an important “test” of some of the ESPON results and methodologies in this specific European region.

Dissemination of ESPON results to both the national and the regional levels, ensuring their use and their implementation is also a primary objective for this activity. It is hoped that the conference and publications will also contribute to bridging the gap between scientists, policy-makers and implementers both at national and regional level, as well as even business communities. The conference will also be followed up by national and regional seminars.

ESPON projects or results addressed
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This project will particularly address the thematic ESPON projects, in particular ESPON 1.1.1 (Polycentricity), 1.1.2 (Urban-Rural), 1.1.3 (Enlargement) and 1.1.4 (Demography), but also projects 2.1.1 (Transport), 2.2.1 (Structural Funds) and 3.4.1 (Europe in the World).

In more detail we address the ESPON findings on goal conflicts and polycentricity and territorial cohesion, as well as a focus on symmetrical and asymmetrical flows