

Success Story

Baltic Sea Tourism Center - Sustainable tourism cooperation in the Baltic Sea region



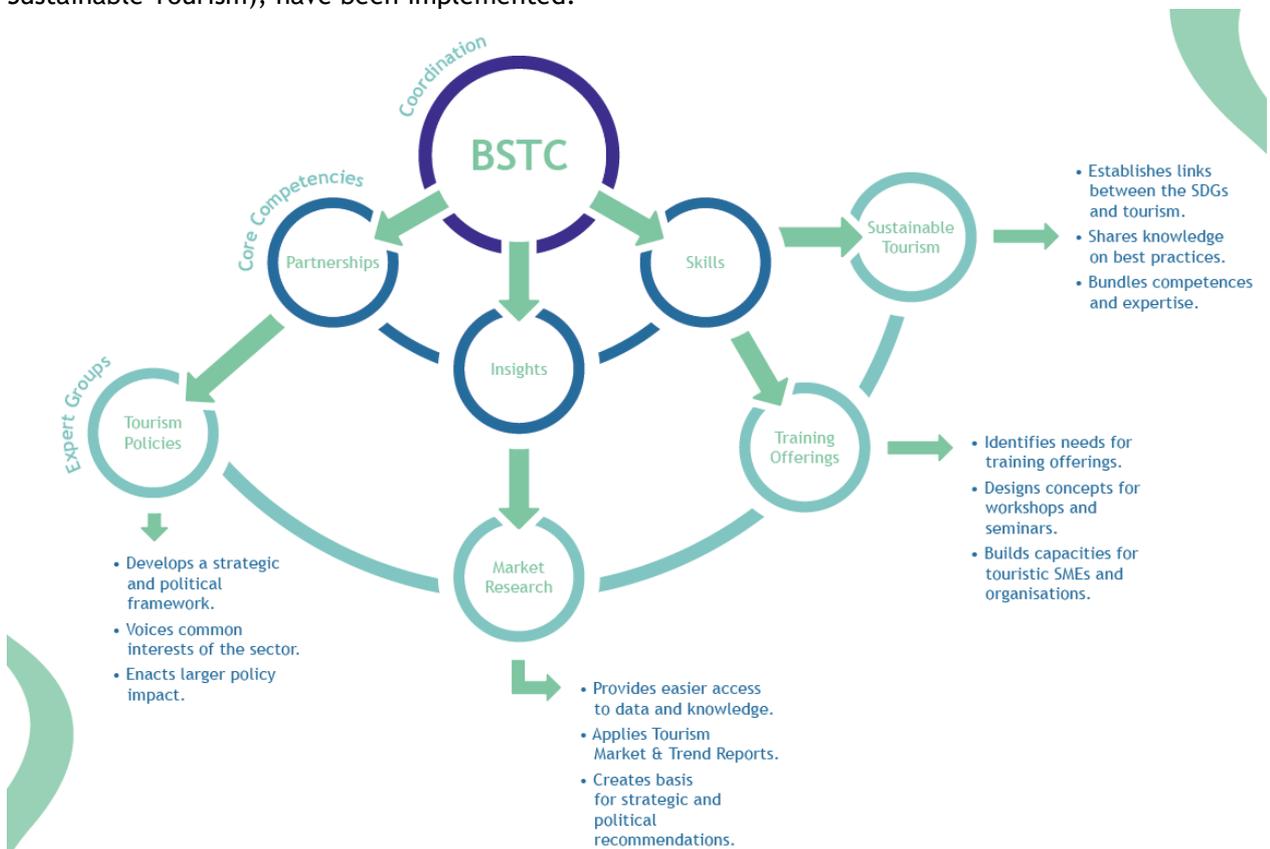


Sustainable Tourism cooperation in the Baltic Sea region

The countries bordering the Baltic Sea have much in common - but especially the tourism industry that is an “important driver for the sustainable economic development in Northern Europe” (BSTC State of the Tourism Industry Report 2018). Parallel to that, many of the tourism stakeholders are looking for a way to compete and assert in a more and more demanding and fast-paced world, which also includes faster tourism developments and the need for change when it comes to implementing sustainable tourism goals. Since many years, it has been deemed necessary by the BSR tourism industry to bundle the expertise and resources of not just different countries, but also different levels of tourism stakeholders, helping the whole BSR community to thrive towards a new and sustainable way on how to understand and implement tourism.

With the Baltic Sea Tourism Center (BSTC) the Interreg South Baltic project team - consisting of partners from Lithuania, Poland, Denmark and Germany - worked on an issue that exists since many years: a missing roof for tourism stakeholders throughout the BSR that combines different services and actors in the field of sustainable tourism development, providing a platform for communication and cooperation. The newly developed model of the Baltic Sea Tourism Center offers that sort of platform, which helps us all to grow together. It jointly improves competitiveness for sustainable tourism in the Baltic Sea region by focusing on its Core Competencies Partnerships, Insights and Skills. Partner Institutions addressed (DMO’s, Public Administration, Education & Research Institutes, Transnational Organisations as well as private companies) have the chance to grow their international network, enhance their international visibility of the institution itself but also of the BSR tourism industry in general. Up until this day, the Baltic Sea Tourism Forum - an annual forum that connects the BSR countries and its tourism stakeholders since 2009 by focusing on relevant issues in the tourism sector - has been the main approach to connect people as well as gather and improve ideas. Besides being a wonderful opportunity for a diverse range of tourism institutions to connect cross-border, the BSR was in need of a more deep and permanent approach when it comes to cooperation and sustainable development.

In order to enhance precisely this development and to anchor necessary activities in the BSTC, four permanent working groups, the so called BSTC Expert Groups (Tourism Policies, Market Research, Training Offerings and Sustainable Tourism), have been implemented.



The BSTC approach and set-up. | © BSTC



Those working groups shall further serve and support the BSTC in collecting and analysing the needs of the BSR tourism industry. At this point, the organisations that participated in the development of the BSTC found that there is an immense need for data collection, not just for each country or region but also for the whole macro-region (BSR). With its BSTC Tourism Market Monitor® and BSTC Tourism Trend Radar® the Baltic Sea Tourism Center is making data, knowledge and best practices available to participating institutions, which helps them to optimize and adapt the business and political decisions, as well as to take better advantage of international development trends. The latest BSTC State of the tourism industry report (edition 2019) and the BSTC Tourism Trend Radar on Digital Tourism (edition 2020) can be found online on www.bstc.eu.

Furthermore, the project team developed a service, especially suitable for SMEs and DMO's that helps to further improve their tourism product portfolio and make their offerings more sustainable and suitable for the low-season. Through a comprehensive Product Development Workshop series, that uses the Design Thinking method as a guiding principle, BSTC partners can learn how to think creatively with diverse techniques such as the Business Model Canvas, Authenticity Model or the Harvard Value Pyramid. If your institution is interested in going through guided Workshops focusing on your individual needs, contact the BSTC team or the Expert Group Leader on Training Offerings, Karin Melbye Holm (<https://bstc.eu/expert-groups/exg-training-offerings>).

The Baltic Sea Tourism Center is meant to simplify the way in which tourism stakeholders in the BSR work together and make use of already existing knowledge in their fields of work. It helps the tourism industry to not tackle a problem 3 or 4 times, due to the missing information on identical approaches in the past. It serves its partners as a platform for networking and thus creates new opportunities for future projects and cooperation partners.

Should we have sparked your interest in becoming a member of the Baltic Sea Tourism Center, look up the website www.bstc.eu and/or contact the team via info@bstc.eu.



Project Partner Meeting in Gdansk/Poland, June 2018 | © BSTC

Baltic Sea Tourism Center

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