

EuroVelo 10

Baltic Sea Cycle Route

Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] Development Strategy 2020-2030



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1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Strategy of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] 2020-2030 (Strategy) is a long-term, strategic document, implemented as an output of the Biking South Baltic! - Promotion and development of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route in Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden project (BSB!). The project was co-financed by the Interreg South Baltic Programme and realized in 2017-2019.

This document was prepared on the base of experiences and actions of the BSB! project partners in the South Baltic area:

1. Pomorskie Tourist Board: Gdańsk, Poland [Lead Partner].
2. Centre for Regional and Tourism Research: Nexø, Denmark.
3. Danish Cycling Tourism: Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. European Cyclists' Federation: Brussels, Belgium.
5. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board: Rostock, Germany .
6. Pomorskie Voivodeship: Gdańsk, Poland.
7. Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship: Szczecin, Poland.

The associated partners of the BSB! project were: Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland (Warsaw, Poland), The Regional Council in Kalmar County (Kalmar, Sweden), Association "Klaipeda Region" (Klaipeda, Lithuania), Ustka Commune and Trzebiatów Commune (Poland).

Direct target groups of the Strategy are the BSB! project partners and the key stakeholders of the southern part of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo10] in Denmark, Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) and Poland (Zachodniopomorskie and Pomorskie Voivodeship), so-called as "Intervention Area." The document can be used as a good practice in all countries and regions of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo10].

The Strategy overall objective is developing and maintaining of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] as a leading European cycle tourism product of the EuroVelo network.

Strategy priorities are the increasing of comfort, safety, and satisfaction of cyclists on the route through developing of the infrastructure, services, and marketing of the route with accordance to the EuroVelo standards. Improvement of the route accessibility and establishing of the long-term route stakeholders cooperation framework are also included in the Strategy priorities.

EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, is a brand and idea, developed, and managed by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF). ECF's goal is to incorporate existing and planned national and regional cycle routes into a single, European network of high-quality cycling routes connecting all European countries. EuroVelo routes network improves the comfort, safety, and attractiveness of cycling in Europe.

The EuroVelo brand helps with developing, and maintaining the cycling infrastructure, cyclists-friendly services, marketing, trans-national cooperation and garnering funds for these actions.

This document is a background of the long-term route development actions and establishing of the key route stakeholders cooperation framework in the whole Baltic Sea region. Involving important NGO-s, cycling tourism businesses, and transportation companies around the Baltic Sea are also expected to increase the efficiency of the route management system.

Best practices, pilot surveys, investments, and partners' experiences from the Biking South Baltic! project should be the inspiration to continue the BSB! project actions in the future and to improve the standard, quality, and complexity of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route.



2. Baltic Sea Cycle Route

[EuroVelo 10]: background information

The Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] so-called as Hansa Circuit Route, is one of the 16 EuroVelo routes, included in the European cycle route network by European Cyclists' Federation (ECF).

Almost the whole route follows the Baltic Sea coastline, which makes the cycle journey on the route unique. There are different cultural, historical, and natural regions of Europe on the route. The Baltic Sea is connecting Northern, Eastern, and Central Europe, building the shared heritage and the identity of the route. Baltic Sea Cycle Route runs through - or close to - many natural and cultural tourist attractions, exciting heritage sites and magnificent primeval landscapes of the Baltic seashore.

It is a circuit route, surrounding the Baltic Sea and running through nine countries: Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia Federation (Kaliningrad District and Leningrad District), and Sweden. There are five capitals located directly on the route: Copenhagen (Denmark), Helsinki (Finland), Riga (Latvia), Stockholm (Sweden), and Tallinn (Estonia).

Different sources present the length of the route from 7980 km (www.eurovelo.org), by 8573 km (Open Cycle Map, www.cycling.waymarkedtrails.org) to c.a. 9000 km (GPS track of the route, verified and edited by the documents' author).

The differences are because some large sections of the trail itinerary are only the suggestion or recommendation, and the signposting of the route is not completed yet. There are also numerous ferry connections between islands and peninsulas, where cycling is not possible, but these water connections are included in the total length of the route. "Island-hopping" is typical to the Danish, German and Estonian sections of the route. It is c.a. 100 km of ferry connections on the whole route.

There are 31 natural and cultural World Heritage Sites close to the Baltic seashore, on the route or close to the route. It is the highest brand that is given by the UNESCO organization to significant sites with top natural, cultural, historical or scientific (or mixes) value for humanity.

There are also 40 national parks, where the most beautiful landscapes and areas with the highest natural values are protected. These parks are home of many rare species - often endangered by the human activity.

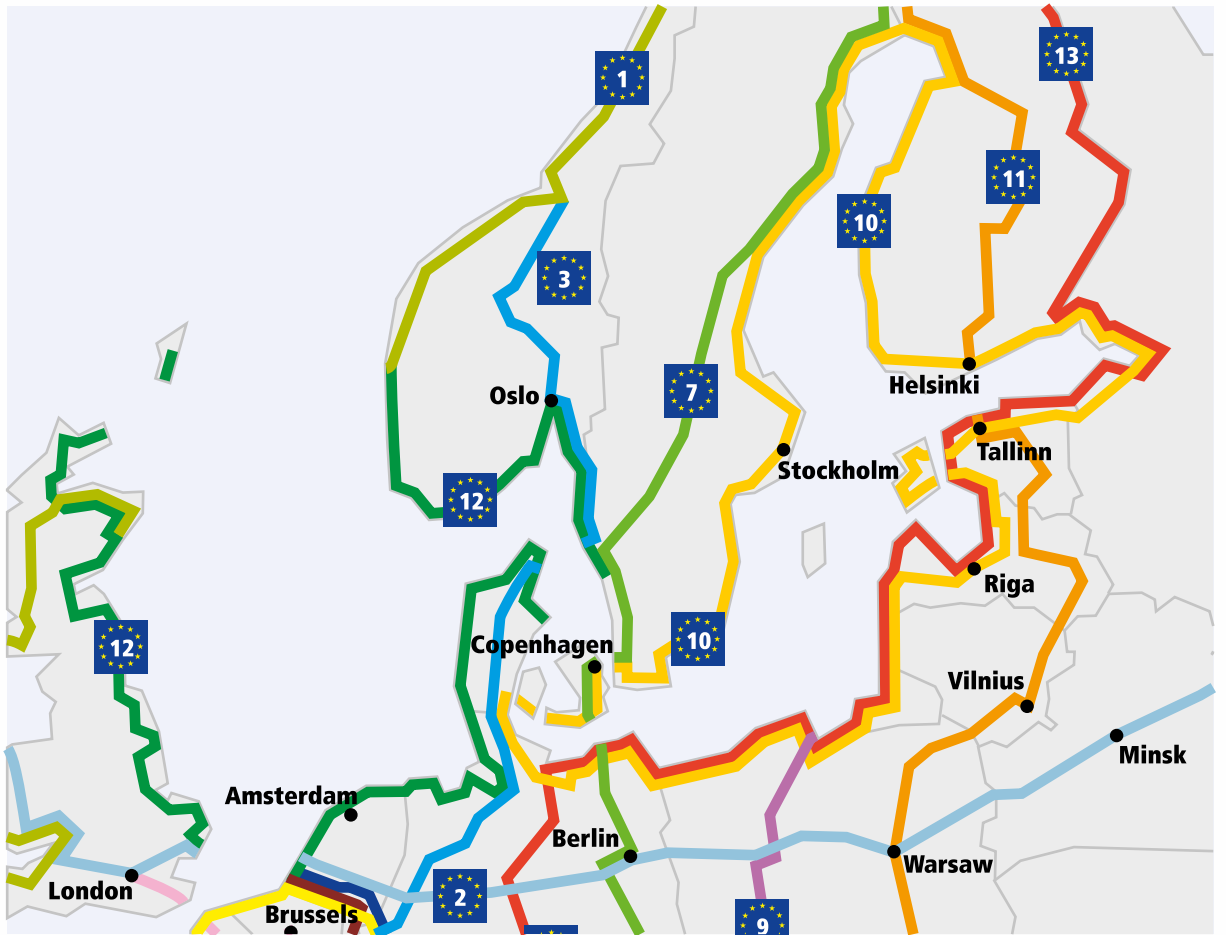
And there are 11 MAB (Man and Biosphere) UNESCO reserves: 9 directly on the Baltic Sea shore and two close to the sea. These reserves are created to improve and promote the sustainable development and biodiversity of natural areas with high cultural and natural value.

On the Baltic coastline, there are more than 50 cities, with high or very high historical value and cultural heritage. All these cities are interesting tourism destinations and important tourist attractions of the Baltic Sea region. These cities are situated directly on the route or very close to the route. It is also a basic "must-see" for cyclists, traveling around the Baltic Sea.

Coastline of the Baltic Sea is very well developed and counts c.a. 8100 kilometers. There are many of islands, mazes of sea bays, spits, and peninsulas. Thousands of small rocks and islets cover coastal water of the northern part of the Baltic Sea. Many of medium and large island is also significant. For the southern part of the Baltic Sea, the long sandy spits are typical, separating the mouths of big rivers from the open sea.

Baltic Sea Cycle Route runs through about 20 bigger islands, peninsulas and spits. These parts of the route are picturesque and unique. Bridges and local ferries connect some of these islands and spits.

There are also some loops of the route on these islands and spits. It makes the route a little bit longer, but much more attractive. The most extended loops (200-300 km) are located at Rügen Island in Germany and Hiiumaa, Saaremaa, Muhu islands in Estonia. Shorter loops are located on Germany islands: Fehmarn and Poel. A new Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] loop was established on Bornholm in Denmark as one of the additional BSB! project's outputs.



There are other tourist routes and trails close to the Baltic Sea Cycle Route. Some of them are certified as the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe": Hanseatic Route, Vikings and Norman Route and Route of the St. Jacob. Other interesting cultural routes are European Route of Brick Gothic, Amber Route, and Cistercian Route.

And there is an Iron Curtain Trail cycle route, connecting the European countries and places that were divided by the "Iron Curtain" after WW2. This route is also a part of the EuroVelo network (No. 13). EV13 route follows EV 10 route (Baltic Sea Cycle Route) at the distance of 3000 kilometers, from the border of Finland and Russia to the city Lübeck in Germany. These two EV routes run together through Russia Federation - Leningrad and Kaliningrad District, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Region in Germany.

All mentioned natural and cultural sites and attractions are worth to visit and see, as a part of the exceptional cycle travel on the Baltic Sea Cycle Route - EuroVelo 10 route. Tourism offers and products from these routes can be included for bookable offers and journey plans of cyclists traveling the route.

Only a part of the EuroVelo 10 route is signed yet. EuroVelo signs (for the route No. 10 and No. 13) are placed in Estonia, and partly in Latvia. The whole route in Poland will be signed with EuroVelo signs until 2020.

EuroVelo survey and preparation to the certification of the route are in progress in Denmark, Germany, and Poland, as one of the Biking South Baltic! projects activities.



3. Target groups of the strategy

Direct target groups

The first direct target group of the Strategy are the Biking South Baltic! project partners from the South Baltic part of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] route:

1. Pomorskie Tourist Board: Gdańsk, Poland [Lead Partner].
2. Centre for Regional and Tourism Research: Nexø, Denmark.
3. Danish Cycling Tourism: Copenhagen, Denmark.
4. European Cyclists' Federation: Brussels, Belgium.
5. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourist Board: Rostock, Germany.
6. Pomorskie Voivodeship: Gdańsk, Poland.
7. Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship: Szczecin, Poland.

A special role of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) is highlighted in the Strategy. This institution is the leader and owner of the EuroVelo brand. ECF is responsible for international development, implementation, marketing, operation, and quality assurance of the EuroVelo routes network at the European level. It is also responsible for the management and marketing coordination of the EuroVelo 10 route.

The potential key stakeholders of the route and the Strategy are public administration bodies on the national and regional level from the Baltic Sea countries: Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia Federation, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Sweden.

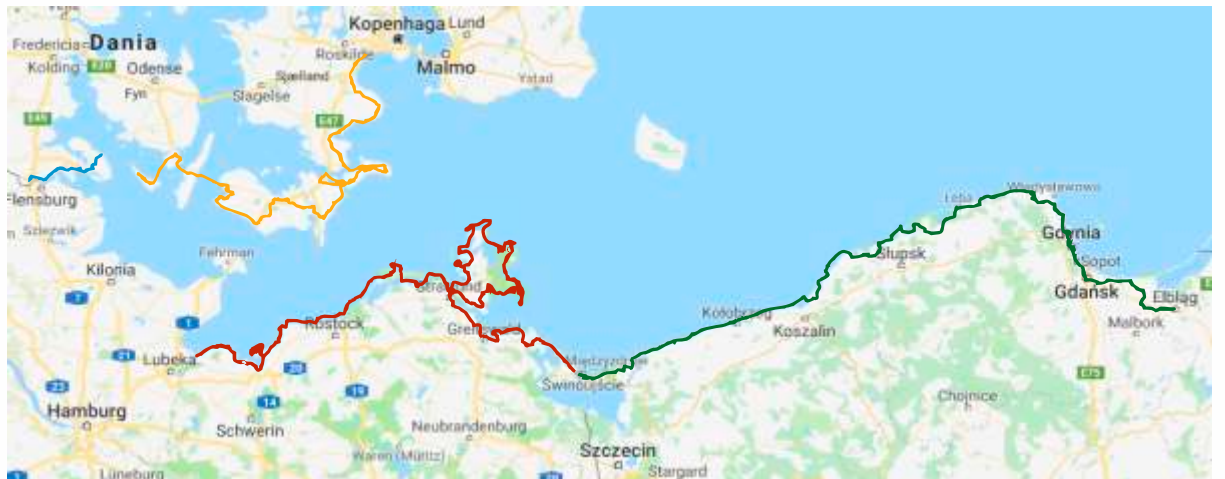
Strategy actions are focused on involving these key stakeholders to the common management framework of the EuroVelo 10 route. Biking South Baltic! project partners' long-term agreement can be used as a best practice for this purpose, and the cooperation network can be enlarged to the whole route this way.

Local public administration (municipalities, communes) and DMO (Destination Management Organisations) around the Baltic Sea are also key stakeholders, due to their role in the route infrastructure development, maintenance, and marketing.

Indirect target groups

Indirect target groups of the strategy are the final beneficiaries in the Intervention Area and the whole Baltic Sea Cycle Route: people and institutions that are getting profits/benefits from the route improvement and development, or are the essential partners of these actions:

1. Individual cyclists (tourists and locals): users of the route.
2. Decision-makers and officers of the public institutions (local, regional, and national level administration).
3. Owners/managers of the local tourism businesses located along the route and other businesses (e.g., tour operators from different countries and regions, public and private transport companies, and others).
4. Managers/leaders of the cycling associations and other NGO-s, LAG-s, DMO/DMC-s (local, regional, and national level).
5. Journalists, bloggers, influencers from local/regional/national media - press, cycling, tourism magazines, TV, radio, tourism blogs, portals, social media channels.
6. Scientists/researchers from R&D and educational institutions.



4. Key findings from the pilot survey of the route

The parts of EuroVelo 10 (Baltic Sea Cycle Route) in Denmark, Poland, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) have been surveyed in the frame of the "Biking South Baltic!" project. The survey was coordinated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and allowed to check the level of filling the EuroVelo certification criteria by the route sections in the Intervention Area.

The surveyed route has a total length of 1,745 km, distributed across three countries:

- **Denmark:** 514 km.
- **Germany** (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern): 697 km.
- **Poland:** 534 km, including:
 - Pomorskie Voivodeship: 268 km.
 - Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship: 266 km.

The surveyed route was divided into daily sections, i.e., stretches of about 50-60 km in length. There have been surveyed 33 daily sections of the route, including nine sections in Denmark, 14 sections in Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) and ten sections in Poland (five in Zachodniopomorskie Region and five in Pomorskie Region).

The surveyed route cannot be certified yet, according to the ECF's European Certification Standard. It does not meet the essential criteria for 100% of its length. At the time of the survey (2017), it met these criteria on 88.5% of its length.

However, the surveyed route allows for many positive cycling experiences, with few continuity restrictions, many traffic-free cycle paths, lots of good surfaces, and many cultural or natural attractions. The surveyed route provides excellent continuity, i.e., there are relatively few restrictions such as stairs that make it difficult to ride along the route. Almost 50% of the surveyed distance is composed of dedicated cycle paths, greenways or traffic-free roads (e.g., water management or forest roads). There is very low traffic on another 23% of the route. 75% of the route consists of perfectly, or well rideable surfaces and 99% of the route was considered highly attractive or attractive by the route inspectors, and only 14 km comprised social safety challenges.

Accommodation and food can be easily found in all of the surveyed regions. There is a good range of bike services on the majority of the daily sections. In terms of promotion, there is at least one tourist information center or panel on each daily section, often times many more.

As part of the BSB! project, the four partners have developed Action Plans after the survey, that suggests tailored actions to fix the weaknesses of the route identified in the survey.

The BSB! projects' partners have planned a total of about €72 million in investments to improve the surveyed section of the route 98.6% of this amount will go into infrastructure improvements. These funds are necessary to provide the EuroVelo standard and certification of the route.

Actions are already underway in Poland. In Zachodniopomorskie region, EuroVelo 10 was included in the regional network of 1,000 km of cycle routes currently under construction and planned to be completed by 2023. Pomorskie region is focusing on the investment efforts along EuroVelo 9 and EuroVelo 10, that also planned to be finished by 2023.



5. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High tourism attractiveness of the route and the whole Baltic Sea Region • EuroVelo brand of the route (No #10) • Good market recognition of the product • Clear and common identity of the route as a leading cycle tourism product of the Baltic Sea Region • Good route accessibility, a high number of ferry and train connections between Baltic cities, regions, and islands • Sufficient route infrastructure in Denmark and Germany • Popular Bett&Bike standard in Germany and Denmark • Good cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region countries, regions and tourism NGOs in many areas • Efficient and new marketing and monitoring tools that are implemented within the BSB! project • Number of tourism industries and companies that are interested in the product development on regional, national and transnational scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high number of route sections with heavy traffic and high speed of cars (low safety of cyclists) • Hard cycling around the Bothnia Bay (vast area, significant distances, low number of accommodation, the challenging climate at certain times of the year) • Insufficient infrastructure and services of the route in Northern and Eastern part of the Baltic coast • Incomplete itinerary of the route in some countries and regions (lack of complex information about the route) • Lack of EuroVelo signposting and route signs in most of the countries (especially Northern part of the route) • Lack of cyclists-friendly service standards in many Baltic Europe countries • Lack of the direct cooperation of all countries of Baltic Europe in the area of the product development and marketing Insufficient marketing of the route on a transnational level • Insufficient marketing of the route on the regional/national level in most of the Baltic Europe countries
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic trends (e.g., aging society) that are positive for cycling tourism in the future • Increasing role and popularity of cycling tourism in Europe • Route location close to the most significant cycling tourist market (Germany) and in the top 10 routes in Germany (ADFC) • Central and Northern Europe still is considered as a safe tourism destinations • Interreg EU programmes are an efficient and stable source of financing cross-border and trans-national projects in the future • Important investments to the cycle tourism infrastructure in Poland will improve the large section of the route quality and attractiveness • Implementing of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route to the EUBSR Strategy as a flagship product • ECF as potential management coordinator of the route • Baltic Sea Tourism Centre as potential marketing leader of the route Preparation of the Strategy, long-term agreement, marketing, and monitoring tools (BSB! long-term projects' outputs) • Improvement of the route stakeholders cooperation from the South Baltic area (BSB! projects' output) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable internal situation of the European Union • Expected decrease of the EU cohesion funds allocation, both for domestic EU countries investment and Interreg cross-border / trans-national programmes in the Baltic Sea Region • Unpredictable political relations between the Russia Federation and the EU countries of Baltic Europe that may create the formal obstacles on the borders and destabilize the region • An expected economic slowdown in Europe and the global economy • Possible insufficient engagement of the key route stakeholders from other countries/regions of Baltic Europe in the common route development and Strategy implementation • Insufficient engagement of the local public communities for the route infrastructure improvement • Insufficient engagement of the cycle tourism companies in the cycle tourism product development around the Baltic Sea, especially transnational products creation • Lack of funds for the domestic investments (improvement of the route infrastructure) in the Baltic Europe countries and regions • Lack of funds for the management, marketing, and communication of the route and service improvements



6. Vision of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] in 2030

In 2030, Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] is an essential factor of economic growth, tourism attractiveness, sustainable development, social health improvement, and trans-national integration of the Baltic Sea Region.

The route idea and itinerary is integrated into the regional, national, and transnational strategies and plans, including the EUBSR Strategy (European Union Baltic Sea Region Strategy).

The route is well-recognized, top European cycle tourism destination both for domestic and foreign cycle tourists and increase the cycling conditions of the Baltic Sea Region habitats.

Attractiveness, image, and identity of the route are based on the unique natural values and the common cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea coastal regions.

EuroVelo standards and brand are backgrounds of building a high-quality cycle infrastructure, development of the cyclists-friendly services, marketing, and communication of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route.

European Cyclists' Federation support is provided to create the Baltic Sea Cycle Route as a leading cycle route of the EuroVelo network - EuroVelo 10.

The route is developed in accordance with the cycle route sustainable development rules, e.g., Greenways approach.

Cooperation with the ferry carriers and other public transportation companies is established to provide full accessibility of the route and providing the direct connections to the public transport system on the local, regional, national and transnational level.

A permanent network of the route stakeholders is established and implemented on the base of the long-term agreement. That provides the full cooperation, coordination, monitoring, and integration of the route development initiatives - and actors.

The cooperation network involves the public institutions on the local, regional, national, and transnational level together with the tourism industry, transportation companies, other commercial service providers, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) along the whole route.

Public and private initiatives and projects are realized to create complex, competitive, profitable, and innovative cycle tourism offer. That will result in the increasing number of cyclists and increasing economic impact to the local communities in the Baltic Sea coast.

Professional B2B and B2C marketing campaigns, regional, national and transnational websites, social media channels, and tourism information offices provide excellent product visibility to the market. Up-to-date, complex information about the whole route and the route attractions, sections, regions, and bookable offers are also provided.

The joint annual Route Development Plans are the essential tools of the route development, strategy implementation, and progress monitoring.



7. Strategy mission, overall objective, and priorities

Mission of the strategy:

Developing and maintaining of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] as an:

- accessible,
- attractive,
- competitive,
- common,
- complex,
- durable,
- high-quality,
- innovative,
- integrated,
- market-oriented,
- popular,
- profitable,
- sustainable,
- transnational,
- visible,
- well-recognized,

and a leading cycle tourism product of the Baltic Sea Region.

Overall objective of the strategy:

Developing of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] as a leading European cycle tourism product of the EuroVelo network by 2030.

Priorities of the strategy:

Priority 1: Improvement and maintaining of the high-quality cycle route infrastructure and the proper transport accessibility of the route.

Priority 2: Development of the cyclists-friendly services along the route.

Priority 3: Providing efficient product marketing and communication to the market.

Priority 4: Establishing a permanent route stakeholders cooperation network to provide proper route management, monitoring, and financing in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

These objectives are based on the best European practice of the cross-border cooperation, Biking South Baltic! projects' partners experiences, and the EuroVelo routes standards regarding the following European Cyclists' Federation documents:

- EuroVelo, the European cycle route network development strategy 2012-2020 [2011].
- EuroVelo, European Certification Standard [2013].



7.1. Priority 1: Route infrastructure and public transport accessibility

EuroVelo routes infrastructure must provide full safety and high comfort of the cycle journey. The quality assessment of the EuroVelo route infrastructure is based on the following elements:

- Continuity of the route (lack of physical - natural, artificial, and legal route disruptions).
- Route components (motorized vehicles traffic intensity and average speed, types of roads).
- Type and condition of the surface (asphalt, concrete, gravel, other).
- The width of the route, route gradients, and elevations (within the EuroVelo certification limits).
- Signposting (completion and standard).
- Route attractiveness (landscape, surroundings, social safety of cyclists).
- Public transport accessibility of the route (distance between the nodes, carrying the bikes).

65% of the all EuroVelo route assessment criteria weight is related to the infrastructural elements. A need for improving the infrastructure is required in many sections of the route. It makes the route infrastructure upgrade the first and the most expensive priority of the route development strategy.

The Baltic Sea Cycle Route in the Intervention Area (Denmark, Poland, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) had been surveyed with accordance to the EuroVelo Certification Standard. At the time of the survey (2017), it met EuroVelo criteria on 88.5% of its length in this area (c.a. 1545 km).

EuroVelo signs (for the route No. 10 and No. 13) are placed in Estonia, and partly in Latvia. The whole route in Poland will be signed with EuroVelo signs until 2020. There are route sections where the itinerary is not fully defined or unclear.

It is recommended that by 2030:

1. The whole Baltic Sea Cycle Route itinerary should be consulted and agreed. Loops and alternatives of the route should also be defined. The full GPS track of the route should be elaborated and published online.
2. The whole Baltic Sea Cycle Route should be surveyed with accordance to the EuroVelo Certification Standard. The infrastructural elements of the route should be evaluated.
3. All needs of the route infrastructure improvements to the EuroVelo standard should be defined and implemented to the joint Action Plan.
4. Continuity of the route should be provided at "essential" EuroVelo Certification Standard level. All significant physical and legal disruptions on the whole route should be removed.
5. All infrastructural components of the route should be acceptable in terms of cyclists safety. The route should be removed from dangerous or very high motorized traffic level/speed road sections and junctions, or separated cycle lanes/tracks should be constructed here).
6. The whole route surface should be well rideable by cyclists (made from asphalted or solid, paved surface, lack of the unconsolidated gravel surfaces). Exceptions are allowed but not recommended only in natural parks, reserves, etc.
7. Elevations of the daily sections (50-60 km) should not exceed 1,000 meters, and there should be no minor sections of the route longer than 5 kilometers with a gradient of more than 6%.
8. Monotonous surroundings and landscapes, low social safety, industrial, polluted, and noisy areas should be avoided. These sections of the route should be shifted. It will increase route attractiveness.
9. The whole route should be signed with accordance to the EuroVelo guidelines and national signposting standards. Route signs should be complete, and there should not be unsigned junctions and crossroads. Information tables and other additional signposting of the route should be designed with accordance to the unified transnational visual identification system.
10. Carrying bikes on public transport to access the route should be legally and physically possible at least every 150 km on the whole route. It is recommended to provide the connections at least every 75 km. Public transport should allow avoiding the non-rideable or underdeveloped sections of the route between the public transport nodes.



7.2. Priority 2: Cyclists-friendly services

EuroVelo routes should provide full and complex services dedicated to cyclists. It will improve the quality of services and customers satisfaction.

The quality assessment of the EuroVelo route defines the following types of services that should be provided on the whole route:

- Accommodation (homestay, campings, standard, and luxury hotels).
- Food, drink, and rest areas (every daily section at least, recommended every 15 km).
- Bike repair/services and bike shops (every 150 km at least, recommended every daily section).
- Other services (e-bikes charging and rental stations, bicycle centers).
- Bookable offers (at least at transnational level).

20% of the all EuroVelo route assessment criteria weight is related to the services. Accommodation and food can be easily found in the Baltic Sea Cycle Route Intervention Area (Denmark, Poland, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany)). There is a good range of bike services in this part of the route.

A need for improvement of the accessibility and the quality of services is required in remote sections of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route. It is also recommended to establish the cyclists-friendly services along the whole route on the base of the unified standard.

It is recommended that by 2030:

1. The cyclists-friendly standard of services should be established and implemented in all countries/regions of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route. Benchmarking of the ADFC Bett&Bike standard is recommended. Cycle-friendly sites should be labeled with accordance to the national or unified transnational visual identification system.

The following (basic/obligatory) criteria of the cyclists-friendly sites should be included:

- safe bike storage/parking,
 - maps and folders dedicated to cyclists available,
 - one-night stay (accommodation only),
 - basic tool repair kit available for free (accommodation only).
2. Cycle-friendly accommodation should be provided at each daily sections of the route. It is recommended to provide it with every 15 km.
 3. Bike repair/services and bike shops should be provided 150 km at least. It is also recommended to provide it with every daily section of the route.
 4. E-bikes charging stations should be provided with every daily section. It is also recommended to provide bikes and e-bikes rental stations and bicycle centers with complex services every daily section.
 5. The bookable offer should be available at least at the transnational level. It is also recommended to provide specialized cycle tour operators at every country/region on the route. Tour operators should offer additional services (transport of bikes, sightseeing tours, bike guides, etc.).



7.3. Priority 3: Marketing and communication

EuroVelo routes should provide efficient product marketing and communication to the market. It will improve the route attractiveness, image, and visibility what will increase the number of cyclists.

15% of the all EuroVelo route assessment criteria weight is related to the marketing and communication of the route. In the Baltic Sea Cycle Route Intervention Area (Denmark, Poland and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) there is at least one tourist information center or panel on each daily section, often many more.

A need for improvement of marketing and communication is required in some parts of the route.

It is recommended that by 2030:

1. Transnational, efficient and integrated marketing and communication of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] should be provided by the route stakeholders, including professional B2B and B2C communication channels, operated by the route marketing leaders.
2. The complex digital and traditional marketing campaigns (including ads, printed materials, events, media relations, study tours, fam trips, and PR) involving all key route stakeholders, BSTC and ECF was launched every year and included to the Annual Route Development Action Plan.
3. Cycle tourism information and contact points should be established in each country/region of the route (in the capital or the leading city on the route in the country/province). These points may operate as a part of tourism information offices.
4. Baltic Sea Tourism Centre (BSTC) can support the cooperation, exchanging the information and best practices. It can also maintain contact Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] management network in the Baltic Sea Region.
5. Overall EuroVelo 10 website and social media channels (in English) should be operated by the ECF (European Cyclists' Federation) as one of the EuroVelo routes' websites. Overall information about the route, GPS tracks, and the direct links to the regional/national route websites should be provided here. It is also recommended to establish the mobile app also.
6. Dedicated websites should be developed and systematically updated by the key route regional/national stakeholders (national/regional cycle tourism information centers/contact points). Each national/regional website should present detail information about the route section in the national language and English (Germany version is also recommended). GPS tracks of the route sections and other important information: POI-s, accommodation/cyclists-friendly services database, public transport timetables (or links), and link to the overall EuroVelo 10 route website should also be published online.
7. A basic leaflet about the whole route should be prepared and printed in English (Germany version is also recommended) and provided to the general marketing and information activities.
8. Printed materials (maps, guides) should be provided to the whole route in the national/regional level in national language and English (Germany version is also recommended). The maps of the route should be detailed enough to provide proper support to the cyclists' orientation.
9. Information boards and stands, presenting the route section and the overall information about the whole route, should be established on every daily section and transportation nodes. These boards should be designed in accordance with the unified transnational visual identification system.
10. New, innovative solutions in the ICT technology should be implemented to the marketing and communication of the route to provide the attractiveness and competitiveness of the route marketing.



7.4. Priority 4: Cooperation, monitoring & financing

One of the most critical challenges of the Strategy is establishing a permanent route stakeholders cooperation network. It should provide a proper and durable route management system in the whole Baltic Sea Region.

It is recommended that by 2030:

1. The Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] Strategy and management system should be expanded to the whole Baltic Sea Region.
2. Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] should be included to the EUBSR Strategy (European Union Baltic Sea Region Strategy) as a flagship project - the leading cycle tourism product and brand of the Baltic Sea Region.
3. Providing the sustainable source of financing or establishing a business model for the ongoing work of the route coordination, maintenance, and marketing of the route is the crucial challenge of the management system and the route stakeholders.
4. All key cycle route stakeholders from 9 countries of the Baltic Sea Region should join and sign the long-term agreement of the route development as the base of further cooperation.
5. The leading role of ECF (European Cyclists' Federation) as an umbrella organization should be provided. ECF should be responsible for the transnational route development and marketing.
6. National EuroVelo Coordination Centers or Coordinators should be established in every country of the Baltic Sea Region, playing crucial role in the route management.
7. BSTC (Baltic Sea Tourism Centre) should play a vital role in supporting the route management system. Exchanging the best practices, information, and providing route durability and sustainability can be the tasks of this institution.
8. Route cooperation network should include all route stakeholders from the public, private, and NGO sector along the whole route. Complex and transnational, individual and bookable offers, should be provided by the tour operators and DMO-s/DMC-s for the entire route and to all target groups of cyclists.
9. National, regional, and transnational competitions should be launched systematically to develop the route image and identity, and improve the business offer quality. Target groups should be cyclists, local communities and cyclists-friendly tourism businesses.
10. All countries/regions should develop the network of the cycle monitors to provide complex data about the number of cyclists on the whole route
11. All countries/regions should maintain the monitoring system of the route quality cyclists (assessment of the quality of the route, customers' needs, opinions and expectations to the products) on the base of the unified surveys methodology and questionnaire.
12. Financing of the route development should be provided on the regional, national, and transnational level. EU financial support is expected due to the positive and essential economic, environmental, social, health, and cohesion impact of the route to the Baltic Sea Region and the European Union. Interreg programmes should provide financing of the cooperation on the cross-border/transnational level, and national/regional funds/programmes should provide more focused support.



8. Expected outputs [2030]

1. Baltic Sea Cycle Route is a top tourism brand and a flagship tourism product of the Baltic Sea Region. Complex and transnational individual and bookable offers are provided by the tour operators and DMO-s/DMC-s on the whole route and to all target groups of cyclists.
2. Baltic Sea Cycle Route is one of three the most visited, exciting and attractive routes of the EuroVelo network, sustainably developed in accordance to the new market trends and innovations in cycling tourism.
3. The whole route fits the EuroVelo criteria related to the infrastructure, services, transport accessibility, and marketing in all sections, regions, and countries.
4. The whole route provides a high-quality cycle infrastructure for cyclists' comfort and safety.
5. The route is wholly signed under the national regulations, EuroVelo standard, and a unified trans-national visual identification system.
6. The route is well connected to the primary nodes of the EuroVelo cycle routes network, and with European, national, regional and local public transportation networks.
7. The route provides a high quality and complete cyclists-friendly services, implemented under the national and international standards and certification systems.
8. The quality of the route, the satisfaction, and the number of cyclists are monitored systematically with joint monitoring standard.
9. Marketing and communication of the cycle route are efficient. The route is well recognized by cyclists and successfully promoted by local communities and public authorities both for foreign and domestic tourists. The route marketing leaders operate B2B and B2C communication channels.
10. The long term agreement and annual Action Plans provide the durability of the tourism product and maintain the cooperation of all route stakeholders from the public, private, and NGO sector along the whole route.



9. Strategy implementation

Seed role of the Biking South Baltic! project

Biking South Baltic! (BSB!) project (2016-2019) implemented some best practices, documents, and tools of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] development, management, and monitoring. These actions were realized in the South Baltic area by the project partners from Denmark, Germany, and Poland. Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10] Development Strategy 2020-2030 was implemented within this project as the key document.

With accordance to the Strategy, project partners declared the further development of the following section of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10]:

- **Denmark:** the whole route in Denmark (514 km)
signatory of the agreement: Danish Cycling Tourism
- **Germany:** the route section in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Region (697 km)
signatory of the agreement: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Tourism Board
- **Poland:** the route sections in the Pomorskie Region & Zachodniopomorskie Region
signatories of the agreement:
 - Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship (266 km)
 - Marshal of the Zachodniomorskie Voivodeship (268 km)

The long-term agreement of the BSB! project partners is the cooperation framework of the route management in the Intervention Area. It should provide further route development in the South Baltic area after the project BSB! ends and would maintain the BSB! project's outputs.

The particular dedicated actions focused on the promotion and dissemination of the Strategy were planned by the BSB! project partners to attract new route stakeholders and to extend the area of the route development to the whole Baltic Sea Region.

Tools of the strategy implementation

- **Long-term agreement** is the essential tool of Strategy implementation. It is a contract signed by the key route stakeholders on the regional and national level. Contractors are involved in the participation of the joint development of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route [EuroVelo 10], with accordance to the Strategy. The contract defines the general tasks, responsibilities, and relations of the sides, including financial and organizational obligations.
- **Annual Route Development Plan** describes the current/detail actions (and the budget) of the key route stakeholders. This document is prepared by the sides of the agreement every year. Action Plan that is described in the EuroVelo Certification Standard is implemented to this document.
- **Annual Monitoring Report** presents year-by-year data related to the route and route development. E.g., the number of cyclists on the route sections/regions/countries, the route users' satisfaction level, or the description of actions that were undertaken by the sides of the long term agreement.

The special role of the European Cyclists' Federation

ECF (European Cyclists' Federation), as an exclusive cosignatory of the long-term agreement, was defined as an umbrella organization to the route. ECF is responsible for dissemination and implementation of the project outputs and best practices to the whole Baltic Sea region, with the cooperation to the regional and national route stakeholders.



Extension of the Strategy to the whole Baltic Sea Cycle Route

Regarding the BSB! project area, the Strategy is realized in the Intervention Area (Denmark, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Region, Pomorskie Voivodeship, and Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship) at first. ECF (European Cyclists' Federation) provides the transnational support of this initiative as an umbrella organization.

The route development and cooperation model is open to the new members, especially on the regional and national level (defined as key route stakeholders). The Strategy, best practices, and the cooperation scheme should be extended to the whole Baltic Sea region. National and regional route stakeholders from these countries/regions should join the initiative.

The overall idea of the BSB! partners are to cover the whole Baltic Sea Cycle Route (EuroVelo 10) by the network of regional and national route stakeholders, that are involved in the joint Strategy implementation.

There are nine countries in the Baltic Sea Region:

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Denmark | 2. Estonia | 3. Finland |
| 4. Germany | 5. Latvia | 6. Lithuania |
| 7. Poland | 8. Russia Federation | 9. Sweden |

The key route stakeholders from these countries are:

- National administration bodies (e.g., Ministry/Department of Tourism)
- Regional administration bodies (provincial/regional level)
- NECC-s (National EuroVelo Coordination Centers), if established
- Important/transnational NGO-s that are related to cycling tourism
- Key tourism businesses and relevant transportation companies (ferry operators, international cycle tourism operators)

Local administration bodies that are responsible for the route infrastructure and the maintenance should participate in the agreement within the national/regional networks, due to the number of these institutions. They are potential members of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route (EuroVelo 10) management and development network and likely new sides of the long-term agreement.

It is recommended to avoid the participation of single companies, cities/municipalities, or NGO-s, as the sides of the agreement. It prevents the management system dispersion and inefficient multiplication of the partners' number.

New partners can declare joining to the Strategy implementation and network of the cooperation by accepting and signing up the long-term agreement. Terms and conditions of the collaboration are defined in the agreement and should be the same for the new and present members.

New partners are included in the next Annual Route Development Plan, and Annual Monitoring Reports automatically.

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