

Concept note

Universitas Baltica

Science. Sea. Solutions



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Scope of the Project and Addressed SDGs

The project aims to create a university crossing the Baltic Sea, while connecting students and experts with the local communities at the docking harbours. The university will be part of a research vessel to connect theoretical knowledge and practical applicability in the best way. The team will consist of interdisciplinary practitioners, lecturers, students from different backgrounds and researchers. The goal of the project is to develop innovative approaches to wicked climate problems through interdisciplinary exchange.

The addressed SDGs are mostly SDG 4: Quality education, SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities, SDG 13: climate action and SDG 14: oceans and seas.

Suggested Project's Name / Title

Universitas Baltica

Project Summary

The project aims to connect inhabitants of the Baltic sea region and to give space to interdisciplinary intercultural learning and fact-based discussions. Therefore, we envision a ship crossing the Baltic sea on which students will have the chance to study about SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 14 (oceans and seas). Climate change and environmental protection in the Baltic Sea Region will be studied and researched from different scientific angles.

Background Information

The project was developed during the Baltic Sea Youth Dialogue 2018 in Germany by young people from all over the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. The bottom-up approach expresses the desire of young people to take actions themselves.

The project was further developed during the Baltic Youth Camp 2019 and presented to stakeholders during the EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdansk.

Project's Main Objective

The main objective of the project is to tackle environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region and to save the sea. Therefore, we have to join efforts and look at the complex multi-causal issue from different angles including different disciplines. It is important to connect the inhabitants of the BSR to think about and change the current situation collectively. This is the only way to protect the environment of the BSR and to increase its prosperity on the long run. In this process it is highly important to engage the actors of tomorrow: the youth of today. Their concerns and fields of interest need a platform for a fact- and research-based discussion that takes into consideration the voice of the whole society and is itself heard by politicians.

Project's Specific objectives

The project will implement a study programme that offers students to study on a vessel crossing the BSR and docking in different harbours for three months as the summer semester. During this period the students will get the chance to learn about SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 14 (oceans and seas) from different angles and in different disciplines. The lectures will last four weeks and will be held by key professors and practitioners leading the discussions in their field. After having gained some basic knowledge about key aspects concerning climate change and environmental protection in the BSR, the students will come together in focus groups (all students from one discipline working together) to develop research concepts on a question of their choice and interest. This phase during which the students conduct their research and formulate their results under the supervision of the mentoring professors will last 6 weeks. Subsequently the students will work together in mixed groups including students of different disciplines to present and discuss the conducted researches and to develop a concept to counter the previously mapped and examined problems. In the end these concepts will be presented to all students and discussed within the whole group. The students will decide democratically on one of the concepts or merge the existing ideas to develop one coherent approach in order of tackling the current issues present in the BSR. This approach will then be presented to politicians and published in a research paper that will also be accessible in easy language. During the study and the research periods the ship will dock in different Baltic harbours. Before each docking a group of media and communication students will prepare different kinds of meetings like e.g. panel discussions, speeches or presentations with stakeholders, politicians, researchers etc. to which the public will be invited. The idea is to transfer the gained knowledge and experiences, the results of the research, as well as the ideas to solve the current challenges of the BSR into the society. This will create room for a fact-based discussion and the results of these can then be reflected during the learning and research process and remarks and concerns of the society can be taken into account. The events will be streamed online to make them available to a large number of inhabitants of the BSR. Besides the media and communication students will work on a communication strategy (including social media) to promote environmental protection in the BSR and during the events in different Baltic cities, including the whole society, i.e. people of different ages and different backgrounds.

Besides information about the days on sea and the organized events will be made available through a blog run by the students themselves.

The programme will run only during the summer semester and it will be part of the Erasmus network. Therefore, students can attend the university as an Erasmus semester to receive ECTS credits and to integrate the semester into their education plan at their home university. The lectures, that are held in the first four weeks will be recorded and uploaded in an online forum for students of the Baltic University Programme (BUP) to attend and to receive ECTS credits. Thereby, the number of beneficiaries will be multiplied. The programme is based on the values of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). To ensure these the attendance of the programme will be free for all participants. The lecturers will be chosen delicately while trying to keep a gender balance. During the selection process of the students diversity factors and characteristics will be taken into consideration.

Project's Expected Results

1. One study programme on a ship crossing the Baltic Sea and docking in different harbours
2. Online courses for students of the BUP
3. Events when docking in harbours in form of e.g. panel discussions, speeches or presentations with stakeholders, politicians, researchers etc. and their live streaming
4. Publication of the researches conducted by the students
5. Publication of the final concept to counter current challenges in the BSR
6. Blog about the days on sea and the organized events

Project's Beneficiaries

- Students eligible to participate in an Erasmus exchange
- Students who participate in the BUP
- Inhabitants of the BSR
- Lecturers on the vessel

Project's Potential partners

- EU
- BSSSC
- UBC
- CBSS
- Governments of the countries that belong to the BSR and their ministries for education and environment
- Research institutions: e.g. IOW (Germany)
- Euroregion Baltic (+ their Youth Board)
- Private sector companies
- Universities
- UNESCO (?)
- Foundations, e.g. Mercator
- ARS Baltica

Project's Duration

It is aimed to create a long-term project, lasting for several years.

Project's Budget

Not yet decided. Depending on partners and scope of the project.