

## Analysis of Barriers for Project Development



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## Background/Introduction

The aims of the Capacity Building Project are to better attract the main target group (newcomers, especially from local authorities and NGO's) of the South Baltic Programme, and to strengthen the capacity of the target group to prepare and later to implement good projects within the Programme. The results from the two first application rounds show that there is a strong interest and demand for funding cross-border co-operation among local public authorities, publically owned corporations, regional public authorities, universities and non-governmental organizations. However there is a significant discrepancy between the number of applying institutions and the number of successfully applying institutions. Although many projects present valuable ideas, their quality is not sufficient to receive funding. This proves that there is an apparent lack of knowledge and experience in cross-border projects' development among the Programme's potential beneficiaries. The Capacity Building Project aims to bridge this gap through various trainings and tailored assistance. To achieve this aims it is necessary to identify the barriers and needs of support among the Programme's potential beneficiaries.

This report is based on the results of questionnaires and interviews. It aims to shed some light on the barriers that hamper a smooth development of projects. Based on the questionnaires and interviews with potential project developers, obstacles for project realization are explored.

## Evaluation process

The analysis was carried out in two steps. The first step was a standardized web-based or printed closed-question questionnaire. The broad group of potential Programme beneficiaries were encouraged to fill-out the questionnaires in order to define specific reasons for a lack of their activity in the international programmes and SBP in particular. In total 220 questionnaires were analysed. (22 of which 20 were New comers (NC) from Denmark, 36 (30=NC) from Germany, 51 (46=NC) from Lithuania, 71 (62=NC) from Poland, 38 (26=NC) from Sweden and two unidentified both of which were NC)

The second step was followed by deeper interviews with selected potential beneficiaries in each country. The interviews were conducted both through face-to-face meetings and over the phone. The analysis was made, taking into consideration all aspects of the cross border projects' development and implementation. In total 56 interviews were conducted 10 in Denmark, 10 in Germany, 16 in Lithuania, 10 in Poland and 10 in Sweden.

## Questionnaire

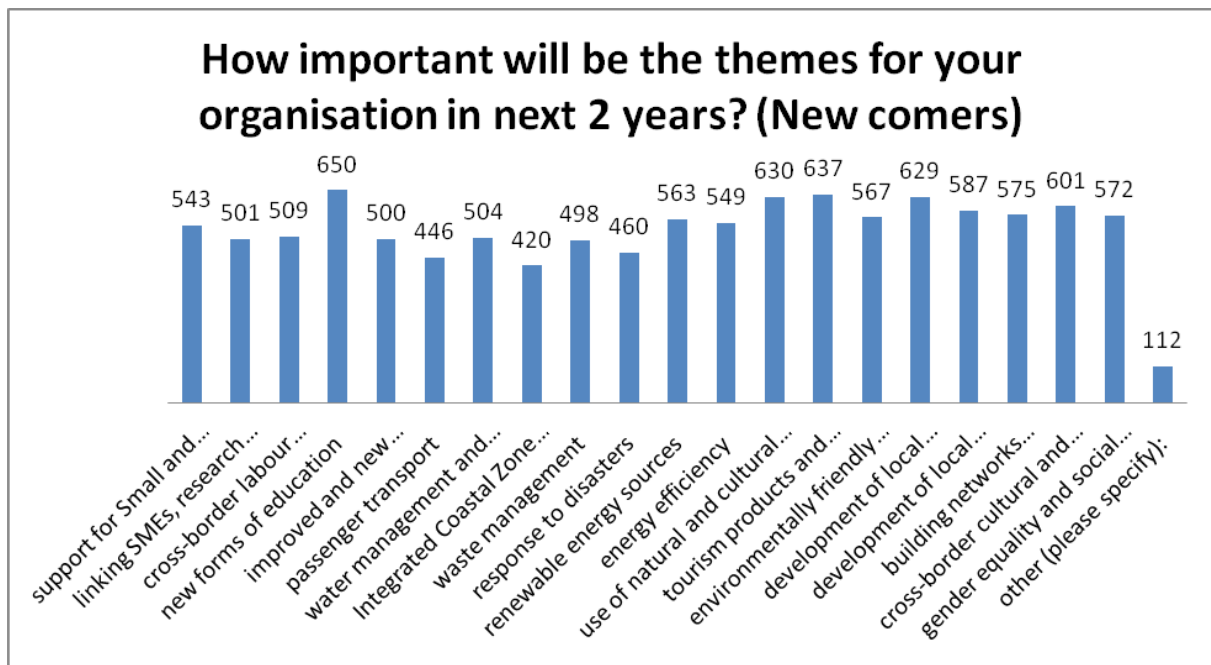
In the questionnaire issues related to the thematic areas as well as the greatest barriers are being investigated for potential beneficiaries especially newcomers. The general applicants including those with more experience and knowledge of the programme are also asked. The questionnaire is structured into four main parts. The first one is about the thematic areas that the potential beneficiaries are interested in. The second part examines the familiar of the SB program in the regions. The third and four parts focus on the barriers that people encounter when they apply and implement projects and what support they need.

### Thematic areas

The question posed in the questionnaire:

*How important will the themes be for your organization in next 2 years?*

*(You need to select all themes, please prioritize the themes by selecting number from 1 to 5, where 5 means the most important theme)*





A first glance at the questionnaire results show that NO thematic area is regarded uninteresting. However areas related to education, tourism, heritage, development of local communities focused on young generation and cross-border cultural and sports events get the highest scores both in general and when only considering new comers.

They are closely followed (in both categories) by gender equality, energy related topics and environmentally friendly products, development of local communities focused on rural areas, building networks between NGO's and support for SME's.

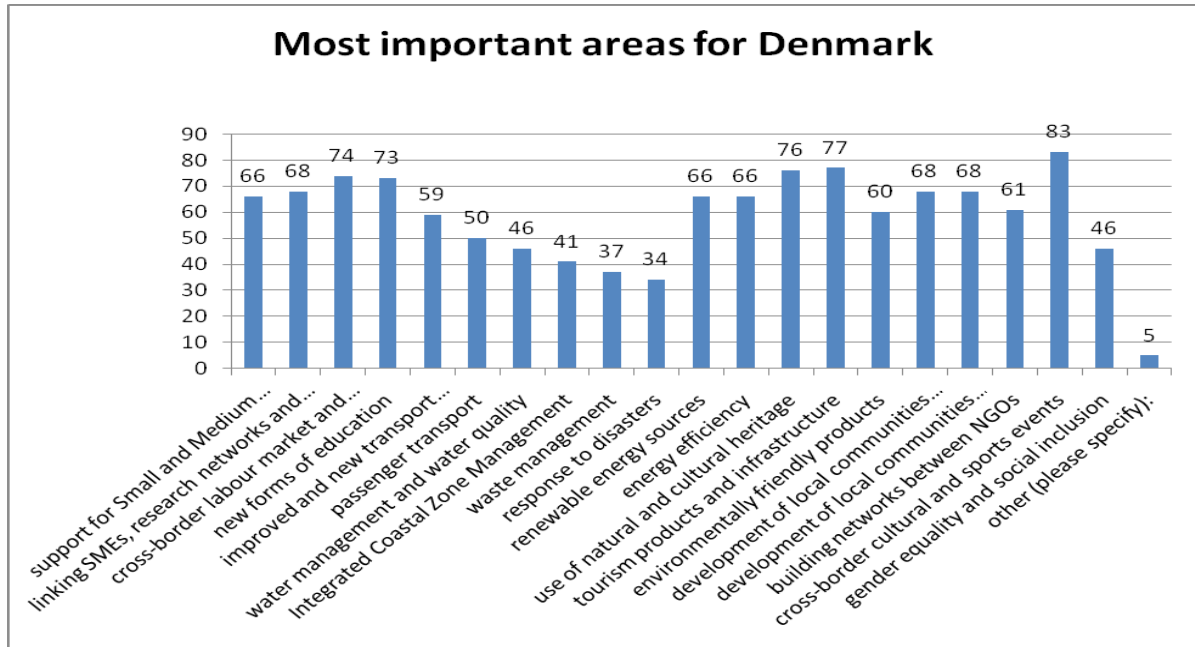
The slight deviations between people with experience from the South Baltic Programme and newcomers are that energy related topics are of slightly less importance with newcomers while tourism and development of local communities focused on young generation are of slightly higher importance in comparison. But the same subjects appear among the top 10 thematic areas.

## The most important areas country by country

### Denmark:

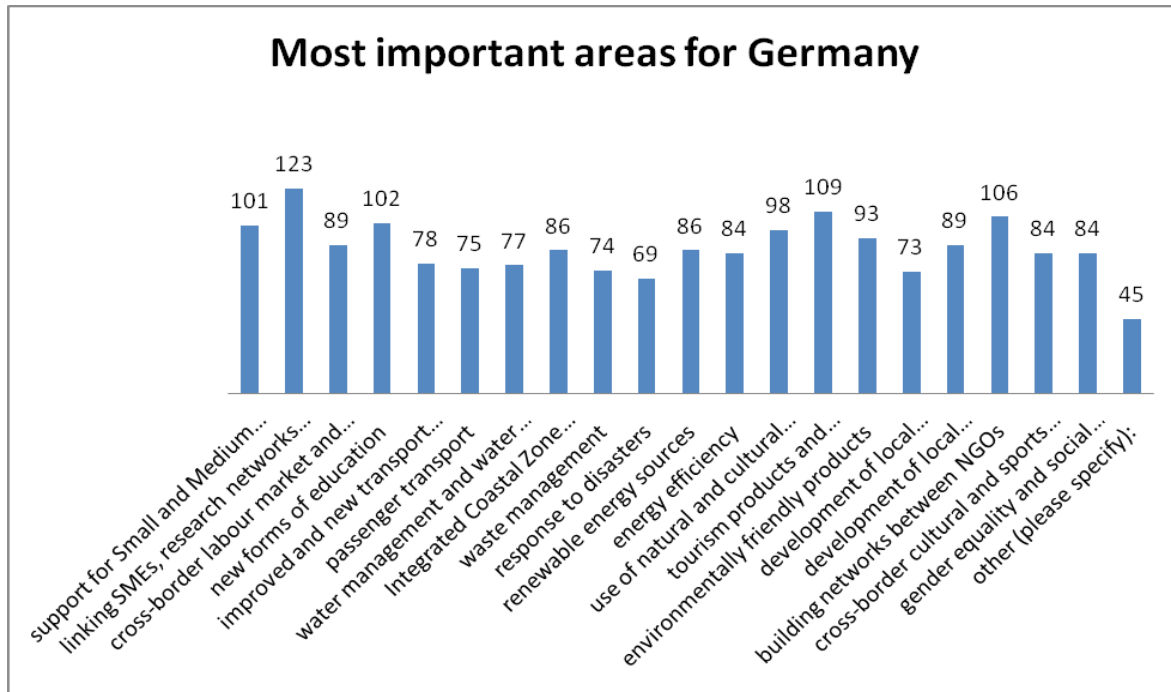
1. cross-border cultural and sports events

2. tourism products and infrastructure
3. use of natural and cultural heritage



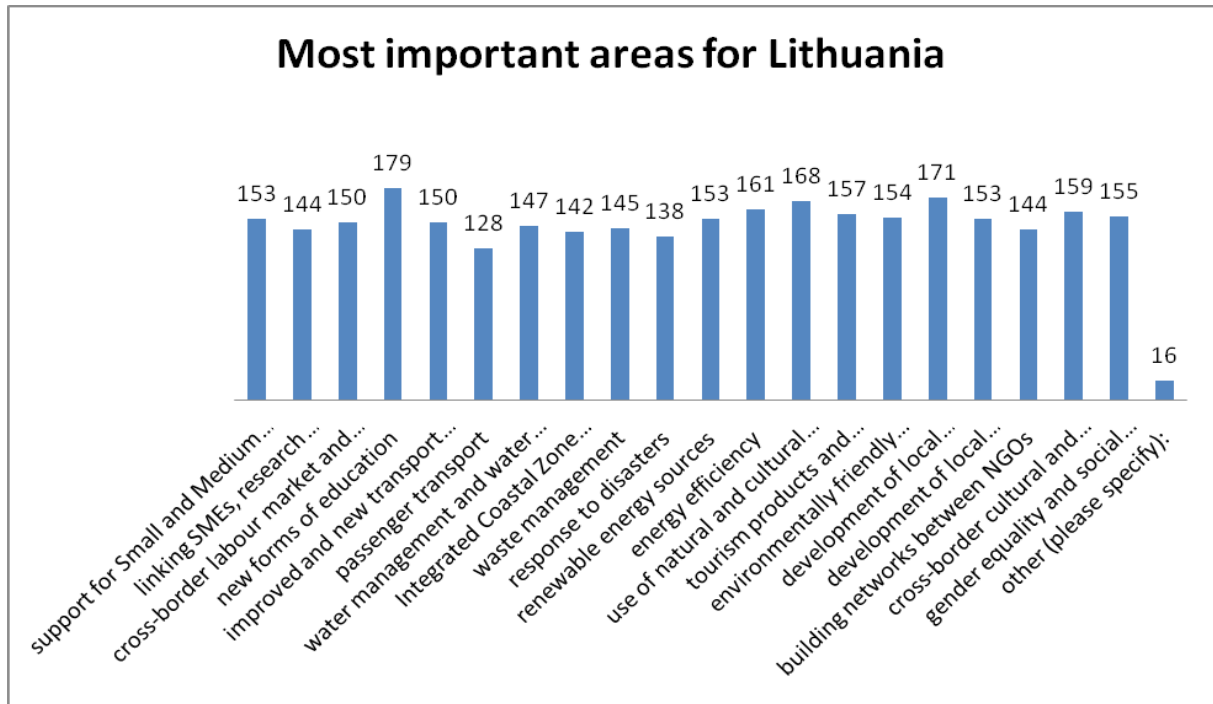
## Germany:

1. linking SMEs, research networks and regional governments
2. tourism products and infrastructure
3. building networks between NGO's



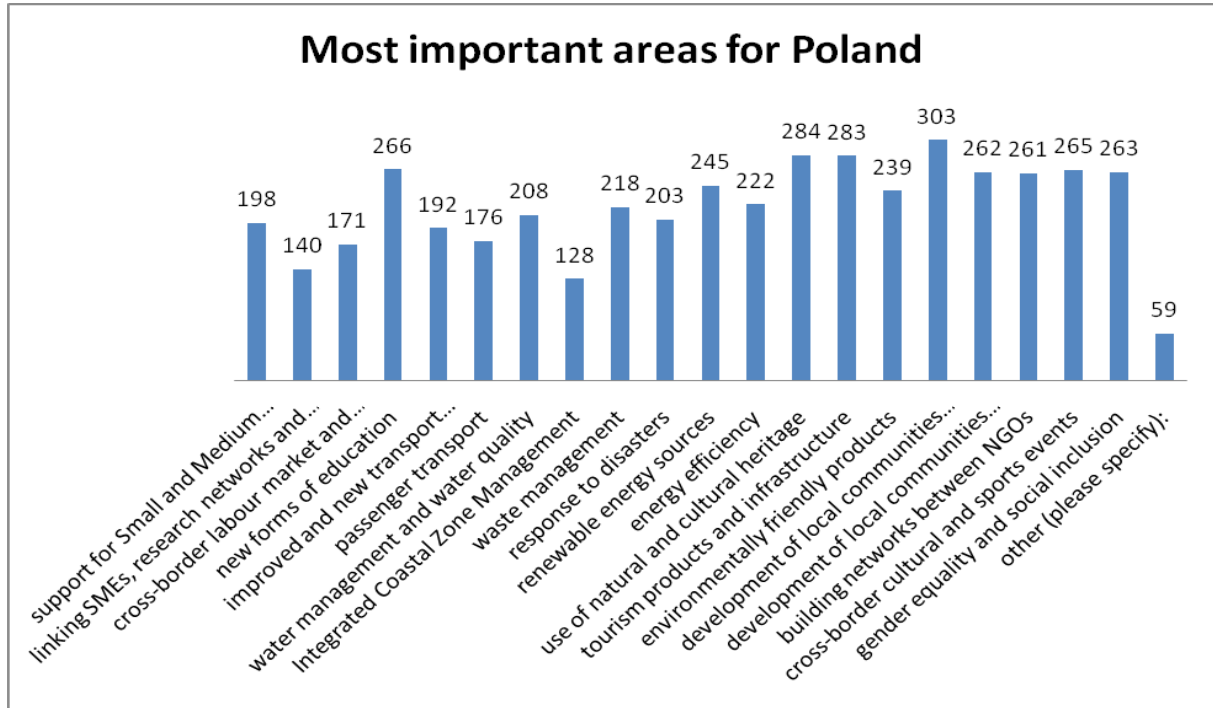
## Lithuania:

1. new forms of education
2. development of local communities focused on young generation
3. use of natural and cultural heritage



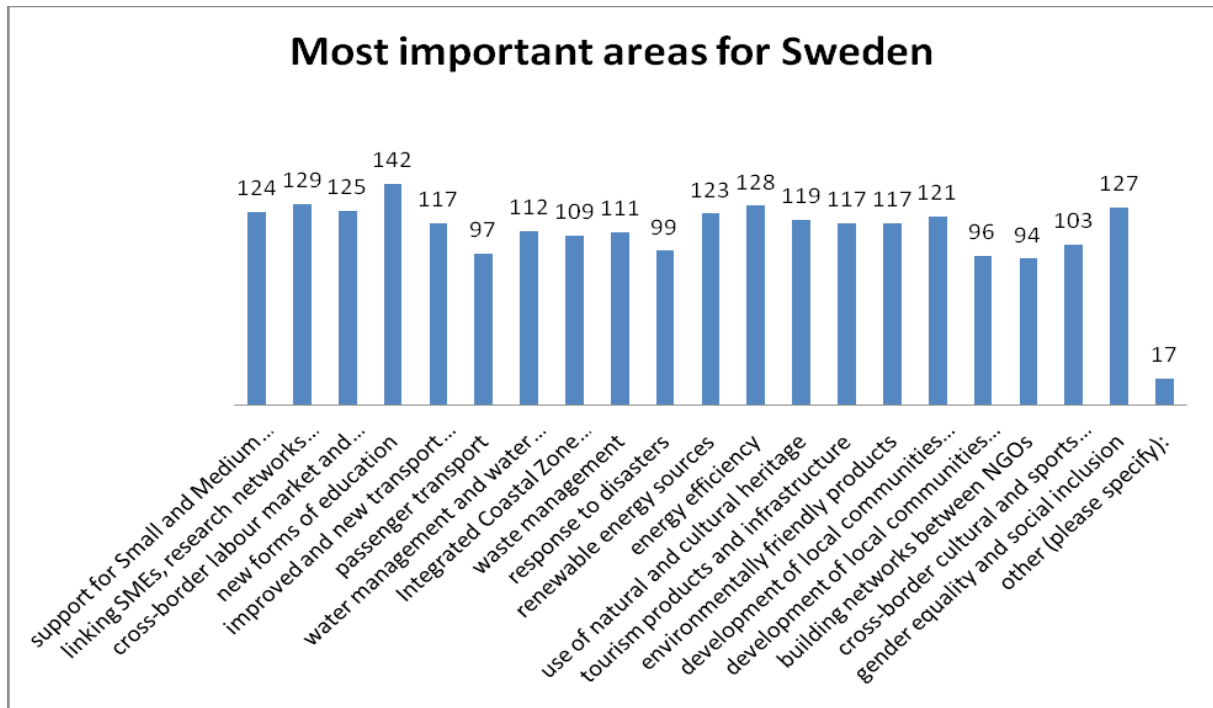
## Poland:

1. development of local communities focused on young generation
2. use of natural and cultural heritage
3. tourism products and infrastructure



## Sweden:

1. new forms of education
2. linking SMEs, research networks and regional governments
3. energy efficiency



## The obstacles for participating in the SBP divided by country.

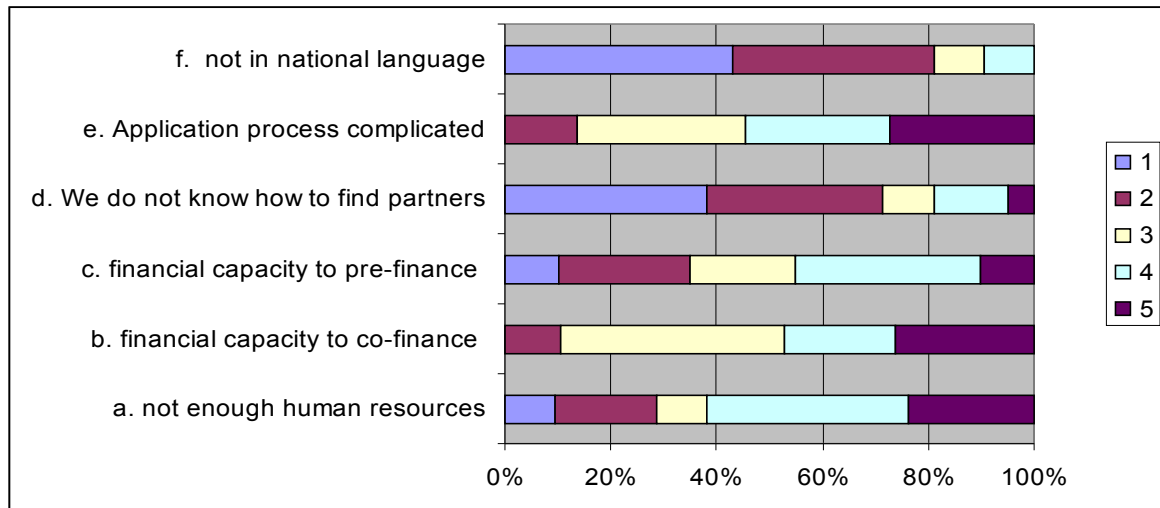
It is of great importance for the Capacity Building Project to have identified the barriers for participation within the South Baltic Programme. In order for the project to help newcomers overcome their main obstacles the input from this part of the analysis has been very valuable and useful when developing the training materials.

The question posed in the questionnaire:

*What do you perceive as the main obstacles for participation in international projects (You may select several obstacles, please prioritize them by selecting a number from 1-5, where 5 means the biggest obstacle)*

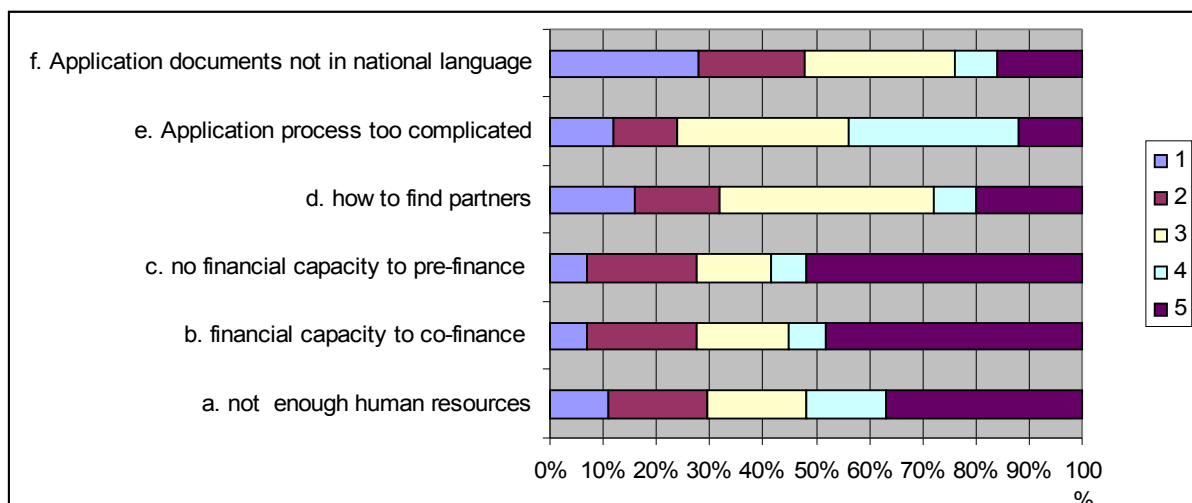
The barriers for participation within the South Baltic programme differ between the countries. The below statistics will provide an overview of the most important issues in each country.

## Denmark



For the Danish respondents the English language (as official programme language) does not discourage potential participants from taking part of the programme to a significant extent. The main barriers rather consist of the lack of human resources, the financial capacity to pre-finance and co-finance and the difficulties of the application process.

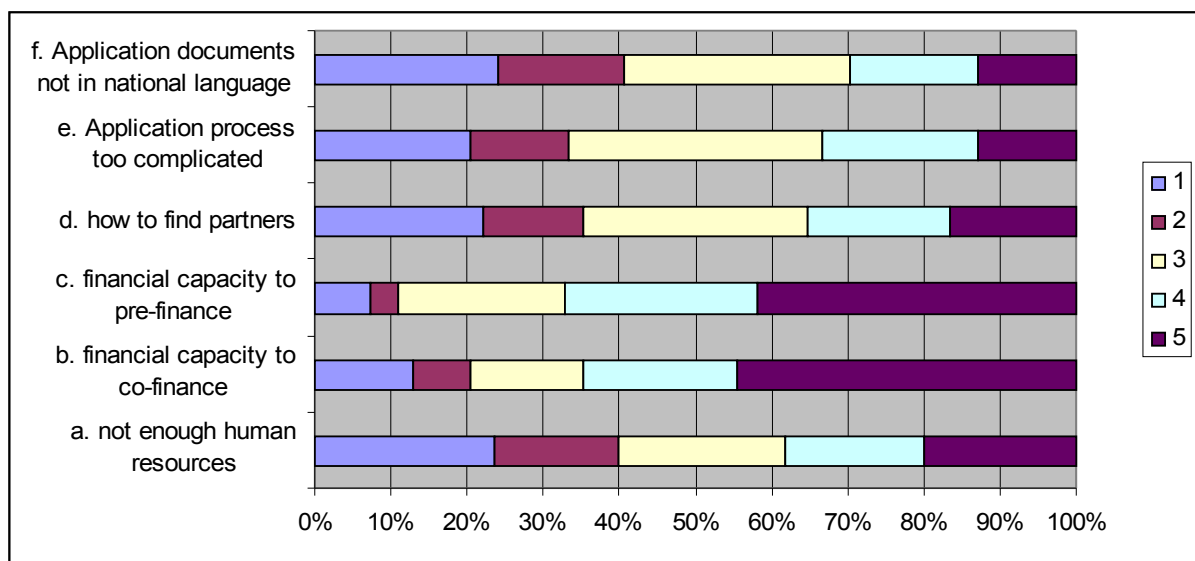
## Germany



In Germany three obstacles stood out as very problematic: The financial capacity is the main problem (pre-financing and co-financing being rated as the two greatest barriers to overcome). These are closely followed by the lack of human resources which more than 30% of the respondents considered to be of very high importance.

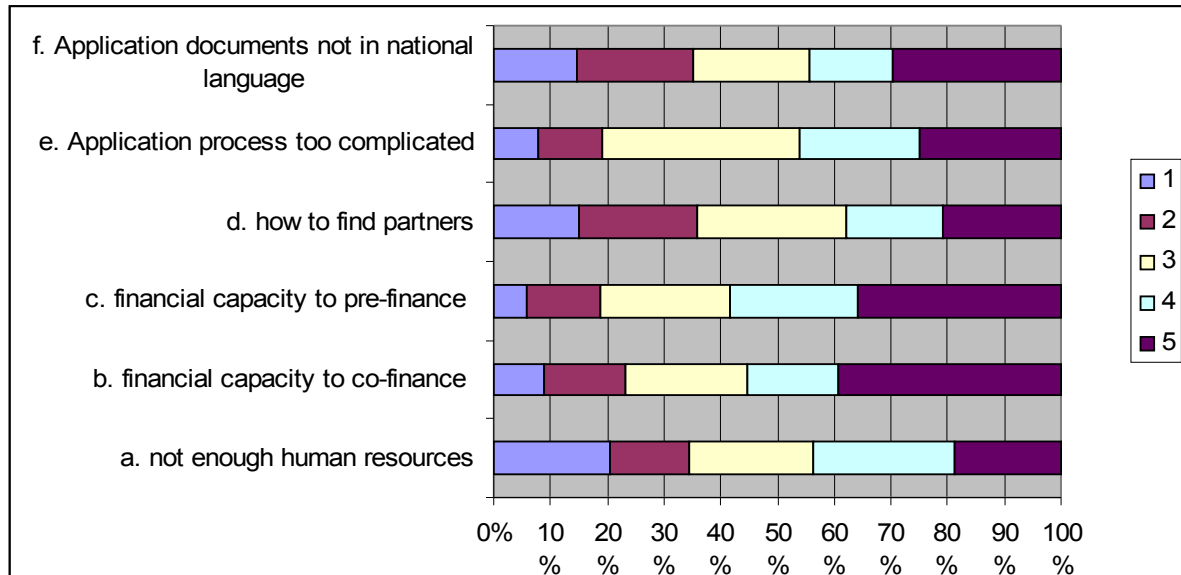
The application process and how to find partners were considered as barriers but to a significantly less extent. The smallest barrier to overcome for the German respondents was that the application documents are not translated into the national language.

## Lithuania



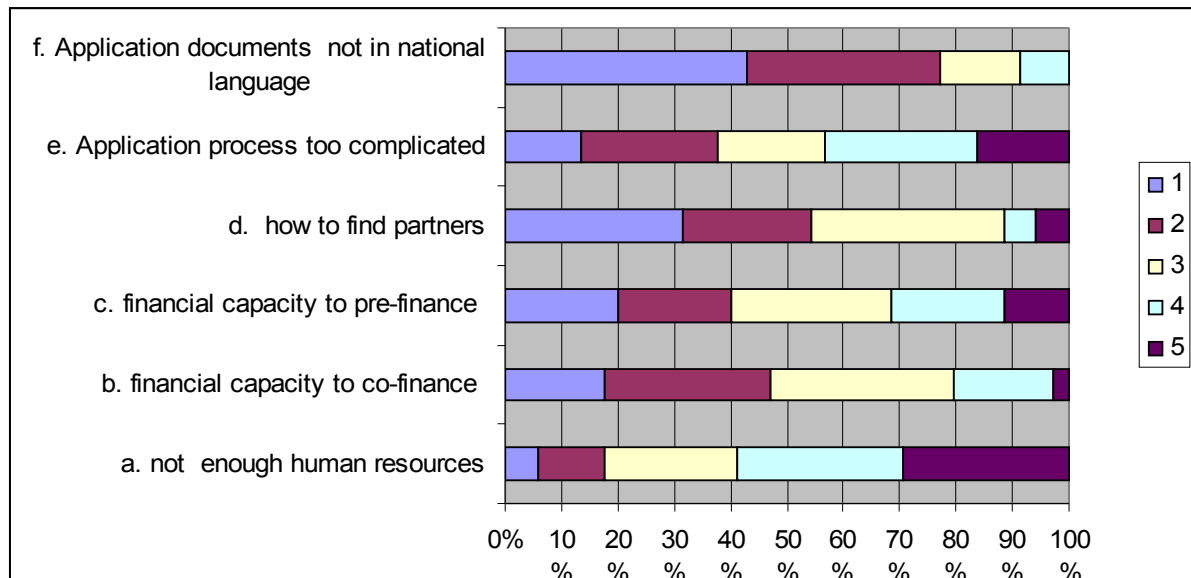
The greatest obstacles for the Lithuanian respondents were financial capacity to pre-finance and financial capacity to co-finance. The rest of the barriers mentioned were considered less important and were almost equally ranked.

## Poland



Once again the financial aspects (pre-financing and co-financing) were identified as the biggest obstacles, but in relation to the other countries none of the barriers stood out to the same extent in Poland. All were considered to be of relatively high importance.

## Sweden



Similar to the situation in Denmark the usage of English is not considered to be an important barrier and neither is finding partners. The main obstacle for the Swedish respondents is the lack of human resources.

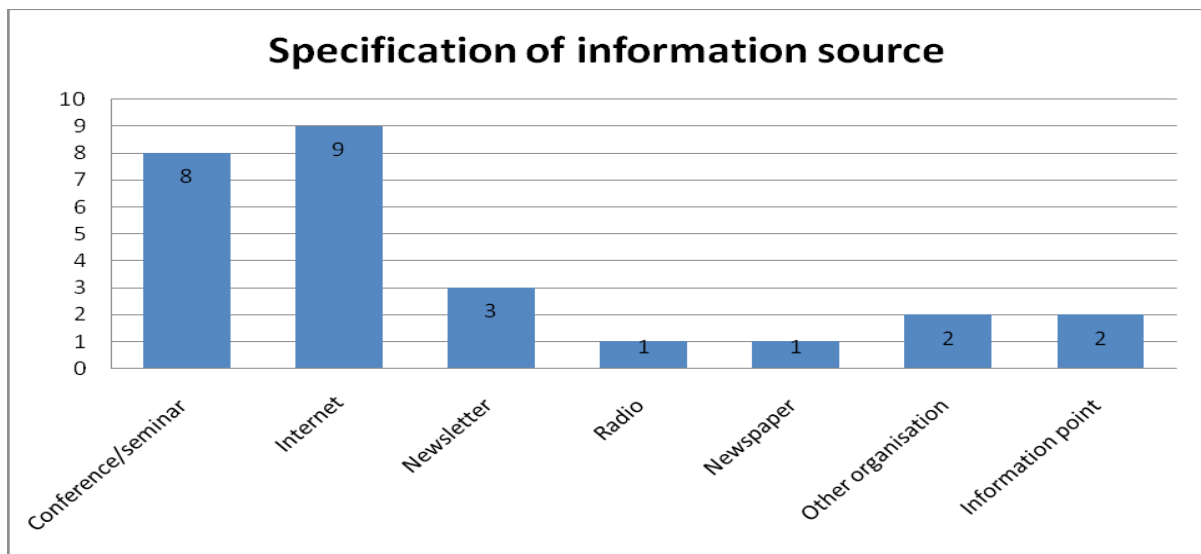
## The information Sources to know the South Baltic Program

The South Baltic Programme is still a young programme and relatively unknown in comparison with other EU-programmes. It is therefore especially useful to see which sources of information that has proven to reach potential beneficiaries so that these channels can be utilized also in the future.

The question posed in the questionnaire:

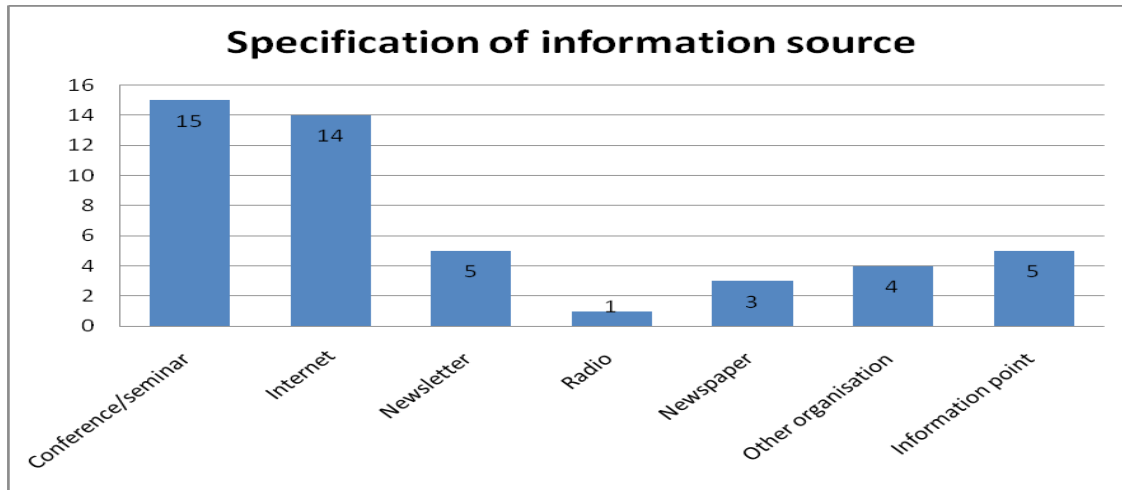
*Do you know the South Baltic Programme?  
If you answered YES, please specify the information source*

### Denmark



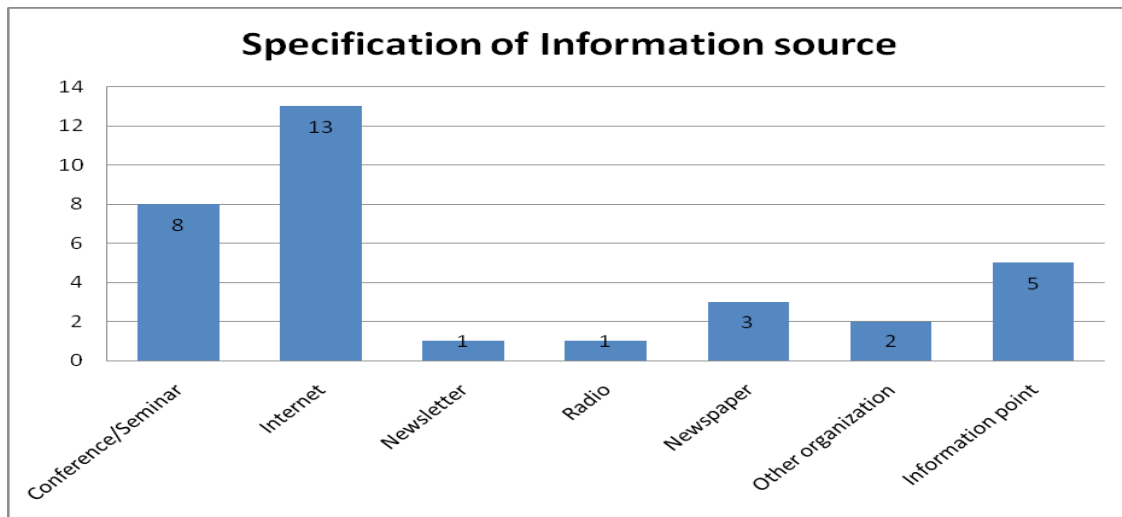
7 out of the 22 respondents from Denmark did not possess any knowledge about the SBP. For the remaining 15 Internet was the most effective tool, closely followed by conferences/seminars.

## Germany



The two main sources of information are conferences/seminars and Internet. These were equally effective and had reached significantly more respondents than the other tools.

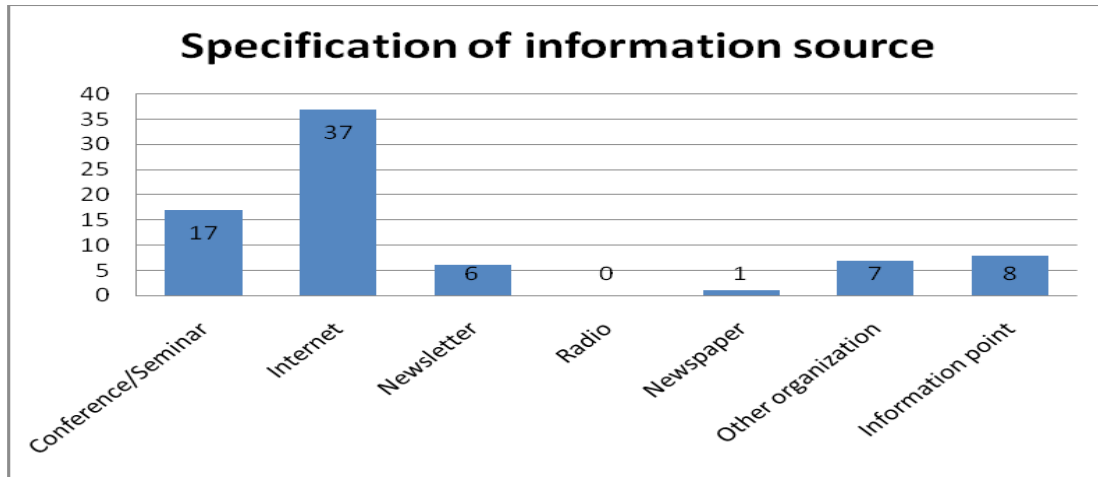
## Lithuania



In Lithuania more than half of the organizations who responded to the questionnaire (33 out of 51) did not know of the South Baltic Program. Most of the respondents had learnt about the programme through Internet. Internet was the significantly mostly used source for getting information. The second most often used source being

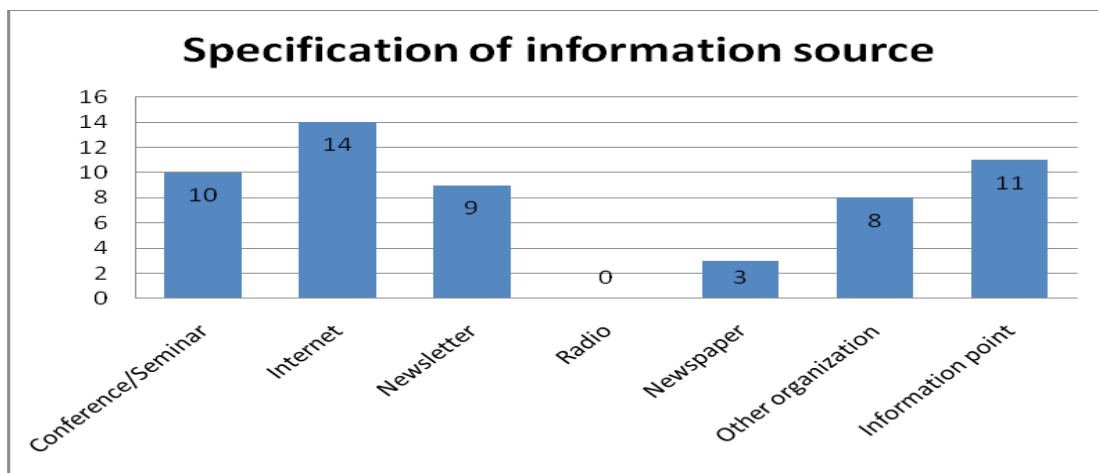
conferences/seminars and thirdly information-/contact-points

## Poland



Once again the Internet stood out as the most valuable source of information with twice as many votes as the second most important source for information which was again identified as the conference/seminar source. And similarly to the rest of the respondents (from the other countries) there was a general lack of knowledge about the programme (27 out of 71 respondents were not aware of its existence). This means that for 38 % of the Polish respondents the Capacity Building project was the first contact with the South Baltic Programme.

## Sweden



Concerning the general knowledge about the programme 26 % of the respondents were not aware of the programme (10 out of the 38).

The sources of information in Sweden differ considerably in comparison to the other countries. Internet is still the most commonly used information source. But the role of the contact points is apparently higher and also other channels, such as newsletters and other organisations were much more used to spread knowledge about the programme.

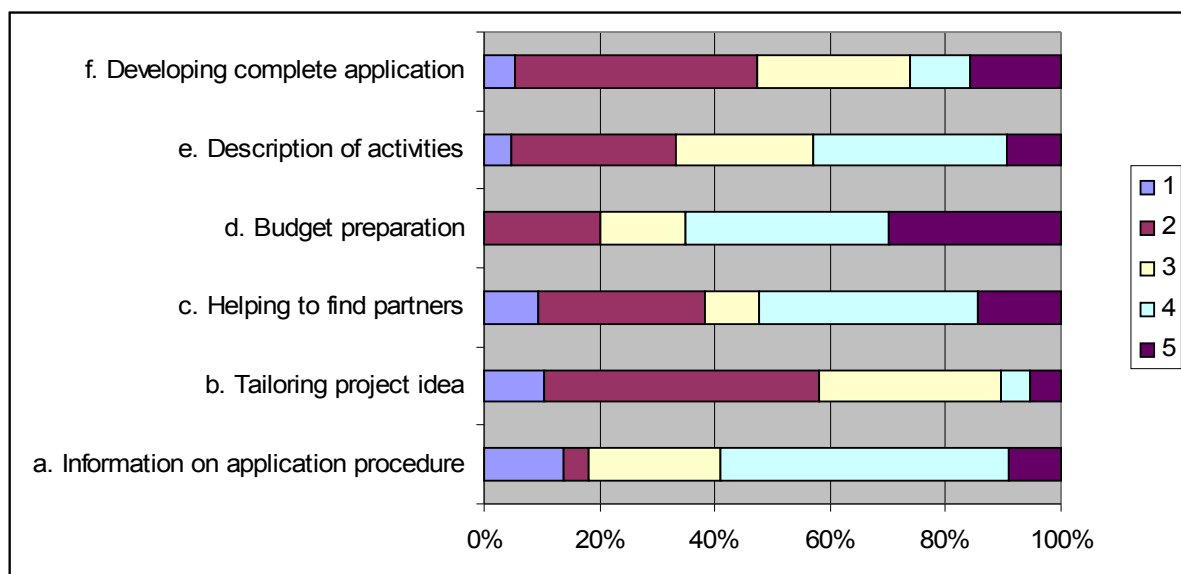
## The most useful supports for your organizations

Out of the 220 questionnaires reviewed 199 would be more interested in applying for funds from the SBP if they got support. Below the answers are first specified by country and finally what the newcomers have identified as the most useful support.

The question posed in the questionnaire:

*Which type of support is the most useful for your organisation in order to apply to South Baltic Programme?  
(You may select several options, please prioritise them by selecting number from 1 to 5, where 5 means the most useful type of support)*

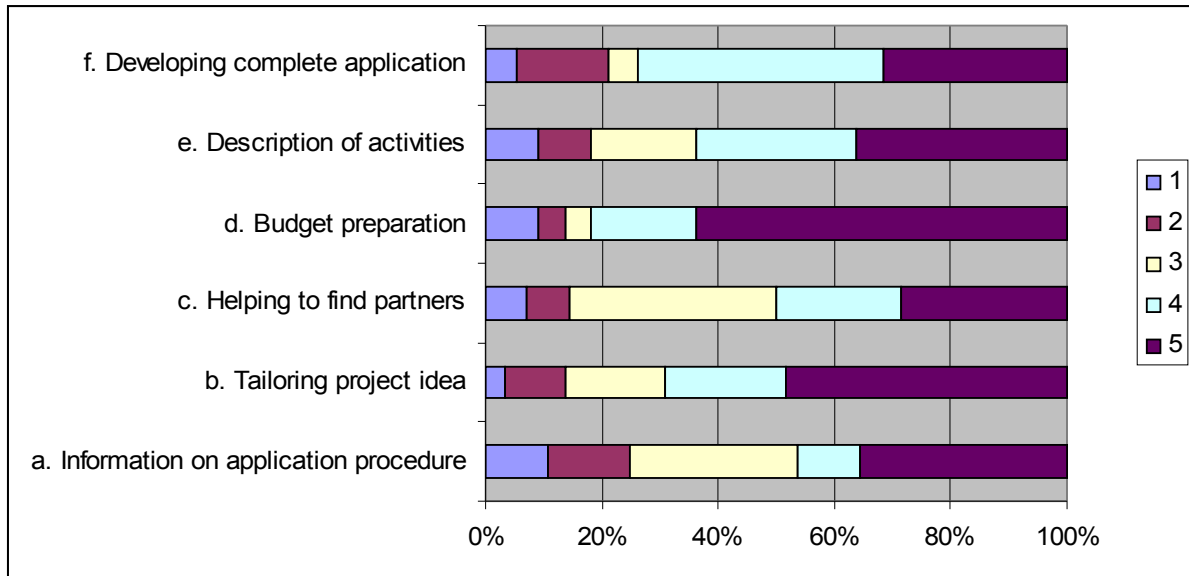
### Denmark



The greatest needed for support seems to be during the budget preparations. Information on the application procedure is another issue where the need of assistance is evident. The third most important area for support is getting help to find relevant partners followed by “description of activities”. The two remaining issues (developing

a complete application and tailoring a project idea) do not need as much support. This is particularly true for tailoring the project idea which was only identified as a barrier by approximately 10 % of the Danish respondents.

## Germany

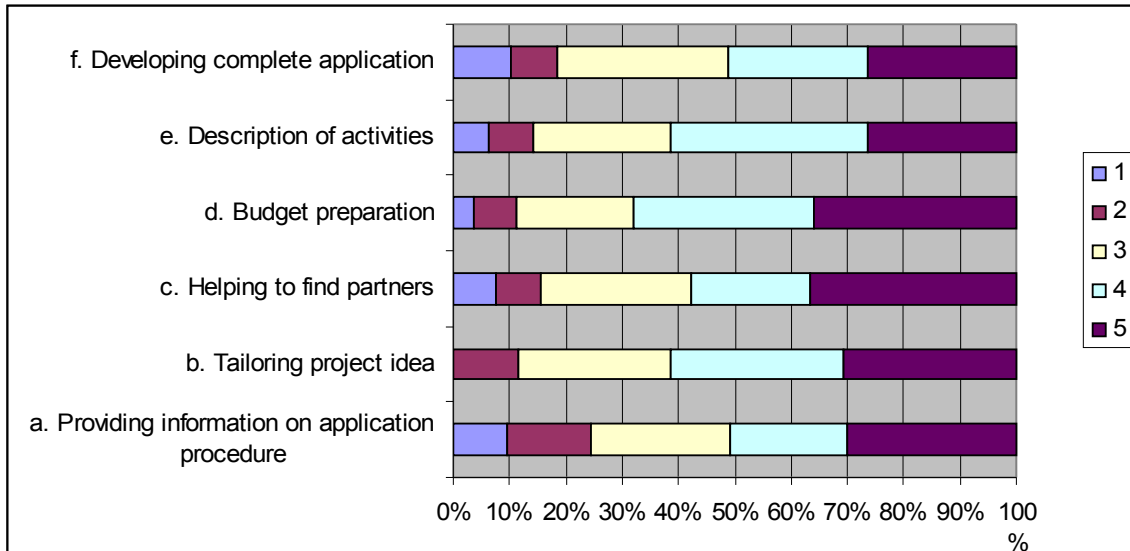


Once again budget preparations are in greatest need of support. Developing a complete application, tailoring a project idea and describing the activities are also in great need of assistance.

The development of a complete application is higher ranked in Germany than in other countries.

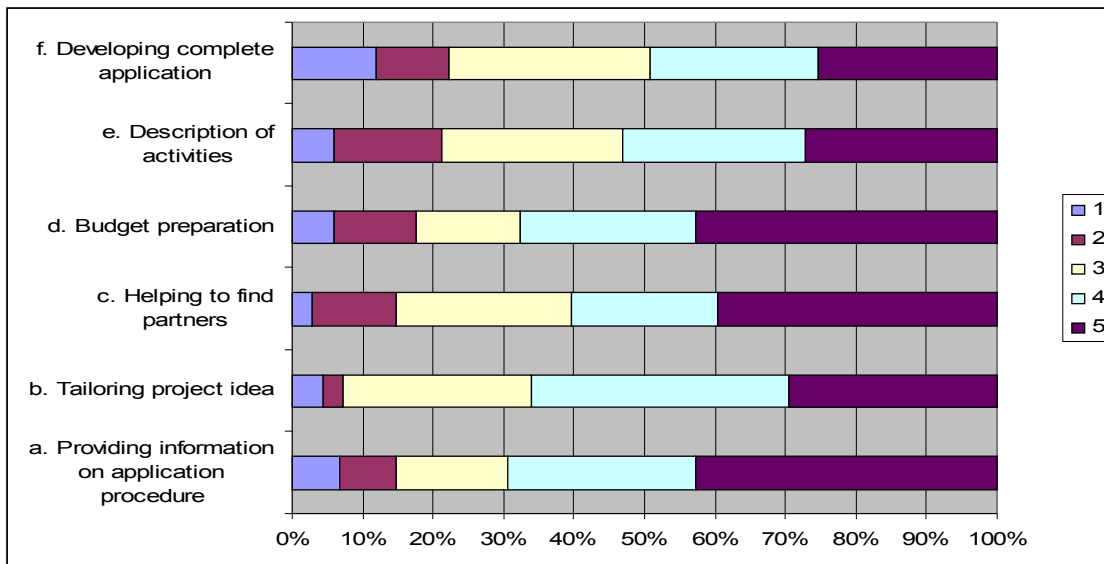
From the analysis we can also draw the conclusion that all areas of support are generally of high importance.

## Lithuania



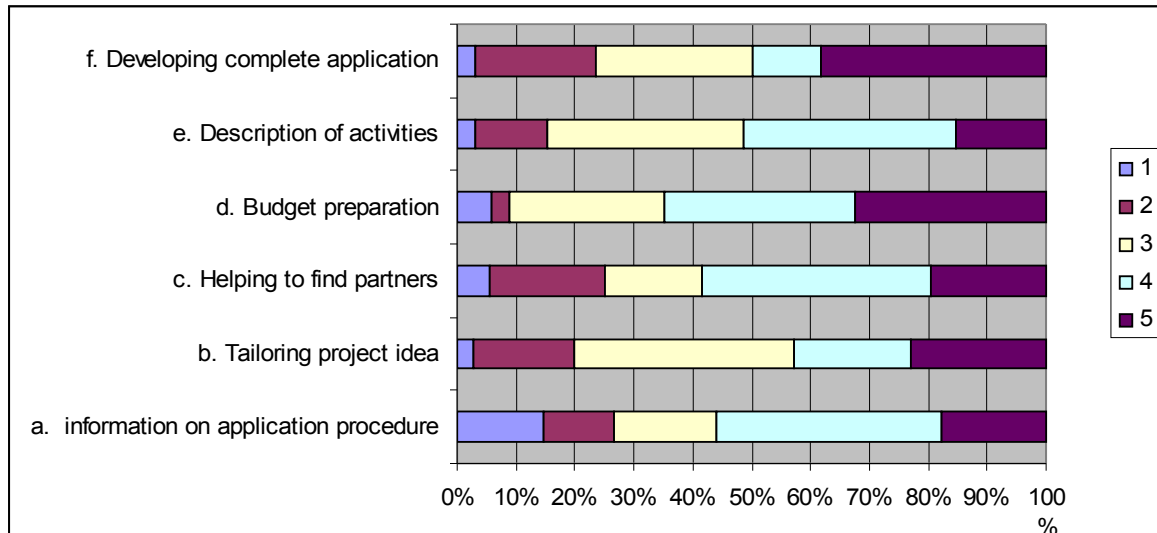
Help with the budget preparations are again the most useful support. The other pre-defined barriers all seem to be in need of assistance and are of almost equal importance. Generally all areas are of importance for the Lithuanian respondents.

## Poland



The main field of support identified by the Polish respondents is “Providing information on application procedure”. Similarly to the other countries the budget preparation is mentioned as one of the greatest barriers to overcome. But all areas pre-defined were acknowledged as important.

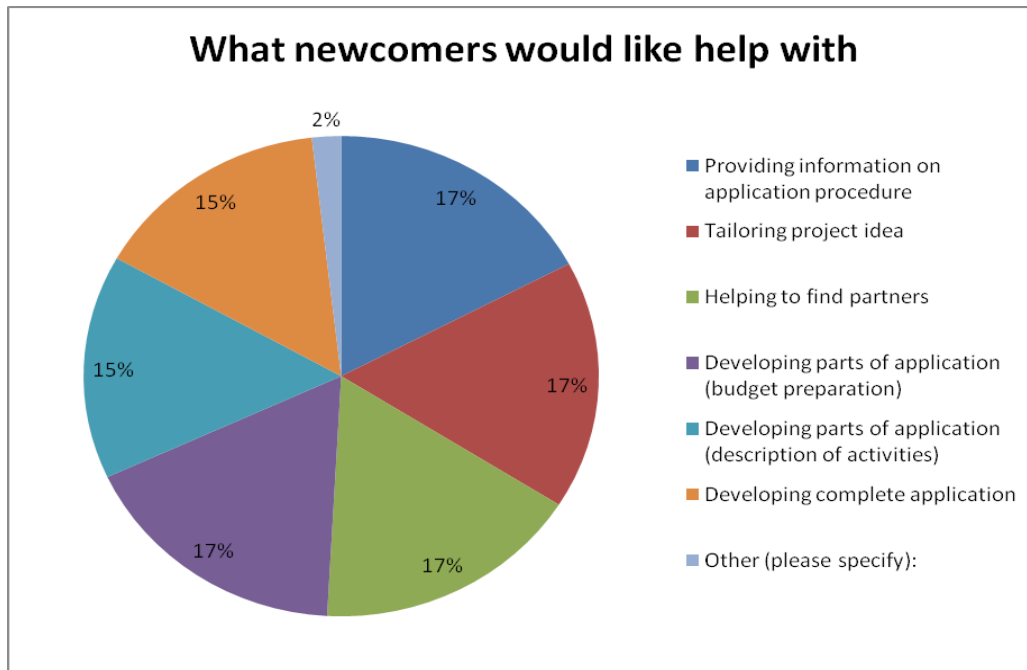
## Sweden



The support in budget preparations was highly prioritized by the Swedish respondents. The second highest priority was help in finding partners and providing information on the application procedure.

Developing a complete application was ranked as the biggest obstacle when taking only the highest scores into account, (fives on a scale from 1 - 5 where 5 means of great importance) but when taking the second highest scores into account it loses its importance slightly.

## Newcomers



**In Denmark** “Providing information on application procedure” and “Developing parts of application (budget preparation)” stood out.

**In Germany** “Tailoring project idea” had the highest score

**In Lithuania** “Developing parts of application (budget preparation)”, “Helping to find partners” and “Tailoring project idea” had almost the same high score.

**In Poland** “Providing information on application procedure” got a higher score than the other options.

**In Sweden** “Developing parts of application (budget preparation)” got the highest score closely followed by “Helping to find partners” and “Developing complete application”

Here are a few examples of other suggestions of support mentioned

Accounting - Follow-up  
Project management  
Financial support

Translation into English

## Interviews

Below you will find a summarized version of the outcomes from the interviews. The questions asked are attached to this report.

### Denmark

#### Thematic areas

Environment and Climate seems to be of highest importance for the Danish interviewees. Within the field the following areas were mentioned specifically; ecology, energy, green church, planning raw material and sustainable use of landscape were also mentioned. Labor markets were also highly prioritized and this included a focus on older generations as well as good conditions for students. Mobility was mentioned and specifically for waiters/waitresses and cooks. Tourism was also an area of high importance and closely linked to education and competence in half of the cases it was for the waiters/waitresses and cooks to attract pupils from abroad and hotel management. The other areas which were brought up by the Danish interviewees were religion (religious questions, integration and churches such as a migrant church and the already mentioned green church) and economy.

The overall purpose of the thematic areas was mainly networking to exchange experiences, increase knowledge and strengthen international cooperation. Another comprehensive goal was to increase the attractiveness of the region to attract new people and encourage the people to stay in the region (by creating more jobs for example) More specific things mentioned in relation to the various project ideas were enhancing the teacher quality by exposing them to realistic teaching situations, a green church and new ideas for planning raw material

#### Funding

Most of the Danish interviewees were working on externally funded projects within the area today. Half of them had applied for EU-funds previously, most commonly in Leonardo.

Of those who had applied most had experience from both being granted and being refused funds. The reasons for rejection which were brought up were: Unequal participation of the partners; project doesn't match the needs of the organization and is not implemented enough in the organization. The results can't be used in the right way. One of the interviewees argued that the argumentation isn't always true and that it can be hard to foresee the outcome due to political decisions.

None of the Danish interviewees had considered applying for funds within the SBP but refrained from it for any reason.

## The South Baltic Programme

All of the Danish interviewees were aware of the South Baltic Programme. The sources of knowledge were quite varying; conferences and seminars or newsletters (especially from region Zealand), from a colleague, the Capacity Building Project or someone working at the SBP. Nothing stood out particularly except the sender of the newsletters, Region Zealand, which was mentioned more than once.

The span of knowledge ranged from “Not so much” and “I know about the possibility of rent-an-expert” to “A lot, I’ve read much about it”. The majority however claimed to have a basic knowledge. Two people claimed that they knew it was an INTERREG programme which was enough.

## Barriers

Three obstacles stood out among the Danish interviewees: Finding partners overseas, the financial issue (the uncertainty of getting money back but also the need of having a great liquidity to begin with) and the lack of time and capacity. It was also considered hard and complicated to apply for EU-funding both due to the complexity, hard conditions and lack of knowledge of the programme but also because of national laws. Accounting was also considered to be an obstacle.

Most of the Danish interviewees considered it to be possible to overcome some of the barriers themselves through capacity building and by using the right people within the organization and finding the right partners to fill the gaps. Regarding the co-financing it was argued that this is mostly a problem for smaller organizations and they won’t be able to conquer this obstacle themselves.

Most of the Danish Interviewees welcomed external assistance only one claimed that assistance wasn’t needed to overcome the barriers (the barriers mentioned by this person was finding partners and liquidity). The desired support was mainly guidance in general (Dialogue with authorities, the JTS or help from “rent-an-expert” which “sounded very good” and was a “good idea”) and help with the budget.

## Support

Nothing stood out when the Danish interviewees considered which type of support would be most useful for their organization in order to apply to the south Baltic Programme. Three people mentioned Finding Partners and two rent-an-expert. The rest of the suggestions were only mentioned by one person: Developing a project idea; formulating the project idea; Dialogue with JTS and CP’s; Time management; Matching the programme; Budget and Technical information. The support was mainly

needed in the beginning while addressing the above issues, finding partners, developing the project idea etc.

Few of the interviewees could consider paying for support, among those who couldn't one stated that he would if there was a guarantee that the application would be approved.

During the application process the main barrier seemed to be related to partners. Mentioned problems were; finding them in the first place, getting everyone together, the wishes and needs of many organizations, communication with partners and getting the process to flow and partners who quit the last minute. Other obstacles mentioned were formulating the application, waiting for a long time without getting any response and not being able to do anything in the meantime. A few people didn't have any experience and chose not to comment although one pointed out that it looked extensive and bureaucratic.

Almost none of the Danish interviewees had received support previously. Those who had experienced it had done so through partners, programme administration, volunteers and internal capacities

## Germany

### Thematic areas

For the German interviewees the highest prioritized areas were stabilizing economic and regional growth. This included improving general conditions for business, , more support for enterprises with innovation and technology -focused, regional development through networking between science and economic, innovations, utilizing economic potential, improvement and extension of available structure, build up cooperation with focus on technology support, ,improvement of life-long learning, strengthening of intercultural competence in SMEs, support start-up and influence demographic change via start-up and city-regional development. Other areas mentioned were; capacity building and education, strengthening environment protection measures, and decrease the damages causes by climate change and environmental disasters, internationalization, macro-regional integration, rise of third party funds, tourism, image gain, care and preservations of ancient monuments, culture, common wealth development, and empowerment, sports and aqua culture.

By working with the above mentioned thematic areas the German interviewees hoped to enhance the regional development, to help SME's to internationalization and access to an international market, to haste and focus the development process and gaining a quality of life.

8 out of the 10 German interviewee's organizations were currently working in externally funded projects. 9 of them are working within the areas mentioned above.

## Funding

9 out of 10 German interviewees had previously applied for EU-funds. There were a few rejections. One because there were too many German partners and the other didn't state a reason but referred to the paper of rejection. All of the Germans had considered the SBP but refrained from applying for funds. The reasons brought up were bureaucracy, formalities, complicated accounting, heteronomy, contacts, guidelines, competences, resources and duration of employment.

## The South Baltic Programme

All of the German interviewees knew of the South Baltic Programme and had found out about it through work, information events and internet. Some of them have got information about the South Baltic Programme via the Capacity Building project. They have general understanding of the SBP as a special fund that supports cross-border cooperation in the region. The awareness they had was limited to knowing about past events and that it is "difficult".

## Barriers

Two out of 10 German interviewees not commented on the main obstacles. The most obstacles are to acquire money for pre-finance, co-finance and lack of support from regional decision-makers. The barriers mentioned were; language difficulties, no transparent work of administration, dread of competition, third party funds hardly expected, finding partner, cooperation partner structure, contacts, guidelines, competences and resources in term of time and personnel. Most of the German interviewees claimed that the language obstacles could be overcome by themselves for example through dialogue. However most of them stated that they would also need assistance from regional decision-makers, partners.

## Support

The most useful support for the interviewees organizations were conditions for entrance, search for partners and help with the application process, budget planning, accounting and reporting, hence most support was needed in the beginning. Only two out of 10 interviewees would not be willing to pay for support although one of them came with the reservation of it depending on the financial situation.

The mentioned bottlenecks during the application procedure were guarantee of partners and red tape (excessive regulations). Most of them had received external

support previously (one mentioned that it was through external agencies, one mentioned from ViaBalticaNordica, BSR Innoreg, BalticBiogas) in the areas of funding, content and the application process. Both perceived it as a positive experience such as pleasant, good advice and very helpful. In general they felt that they had received good assistance.

## Lithuania

### Thematic areas

The thematic areas mentioned by the Lithuanian interviewees are quite broad. However they can be grouped into 5 areas: Social assistance and Public Health; Sports; Education; Environment and Culture. The aims of these thematic areas are to support individuals and families in various groups at risk and to help them live under normal conditions and to safeguard health and consumer protection of public health safety and quality of service; to prepare for more qualified athletes, revive forgotten sports and update sporting facilities; to implement an educational policy to provide quality education services to meet the greater needs and to ensure equal and safe learning conditions; to explore the environment; to develop children's art-creative abilities and to provide the opportunity for each member of the community to participate in artistic expression and the creative process and develop educational and recreational activities and hopefully have a representative present Klaipeda amateur art groups in the country and abroad. Other areas where the interviewees had projects today were Human resources development.

### Funding

7 out of 16 had applied for project funding by the EU, of those most were successful. In the two cases which were not one reason was that they could not fill out the forms and in the other that "it wasn't based on the idea"

### The South Baltic Programme

Only three of the sixteen Lithuanian interviewees knew of the South Baltic Programme. They had learnt about it through internet, a seminar and from the country information centre. One of them had general knowledge from the website, the person who had attended a seminar knew of the area, main goals and about the Capacity Project. The third person had misunderstood and thought that the SBP was a Capacity Building project.

### Barriers

About one third of the interviewed did not know which the main obstacles could be or chose not to answer the question. Of those who answered the main issue was co-

financing followed by workload and lack of information. Other reasons mentioned were negative institutions, lack of partners, short time to prepare, lack of experience, unclear forms and a different culture of communication.

The answers to whether these barriers could be overcome by the organizations themselves were quite varying. While a few considered it to be possible by strengthening the English skills for example some said it might be possible but very difficult and others considered it to be out of their power. Regarding assistance to overcome the barriers it was agreed by all who answered that question that external support was important.

None of the Lithuanian interviewees had considered applying for the SBP but later refrained from it.

## Support

Mostly the Lithuanian interviewees desired advice and consultations in general. The areas specifically mentioned were formulating and framing the idea, financial matters, preparing proposals and drafting trainings. Help with translations was another suggestion.

Most of the interviewees wished for quite extensive support throughout the application process. It is possibly because of their lack of knowledge about the programme. The people who had been specific all agreed that the support beginning was the most important reason mentioned were that they needed help to formulate a clear idea to begin with since the rest is based on this. They also mention that having trainings in preparations of the application would be useful. However, only two have stated that they are willing to pay for such support.

Only three people reported that they considered there to be bottlenecks during the application process. These mentioned the language barrier and the lack of knowledge and partners.

## Poland

### Thematic areas

The Polish interviewees found tourism to be by far the highest priority. It was related to sub categories such as infrastructure, reconstruction of old heritage or construction of new attractions and tourism products. Other things mentioned by more than one of the interviewed were water and sewage management. The results are similar to those in the questionnaire. The difference is that the development of local communities focused on a young generation didn't have as high priority among the 10 Polish

interviewees. The main goal with the projects is to increase the tourism attractiveness.

All of the Polish interviewees were working with externally funded projects both within the thematic areas mentioned and in other thematic areas.

## Funding

All the Polish interviewees have applied for projects funded by the EU previously, mostly operational programmes and the European Social Fund. It was also a very high success rate. Almost all of the interviewees were granted funding. The two exceptions were rejected due to lack of financial means and low rated argumentation. Even though they all had experience from applying for EU-funds only two of them had experience from international programmes. In both cases it was the Norwegian Financial Mechanism.

## The South Baltic Programme

All but one of the Polish interviewees knew about the South Baltic Programme. The main source of information seemed to be the internet but information had also been spread through trainings and e-mail. They considered themselves to have a basic knowledge of the programme and its measures.

## Barriers

Few of the Polish interviewees had refrained from applying for funding within the South Baltic Programme. For those who had the main reason seemed to be lack of partners or other problems which were not related to the programme itself.

They perceived the main obstacles to be staff shortages, trouble finding partners and the language barrier. It was also evident that the focus had been on other projects (mostly infrastructure) where funds were tied up which had led to a lack of funds. It was evident that the obstacles were not considered possible to overcome without external assistance, but it wasn't clear who should be responsible, and of what. Consultancy companies, institutions and advisory bodies were suggested to mediate contacts, and give support in the creation and implementation of the project.

Although most of the interviewees could not point at any specific barriers during the application process a few were mentioned; language barriers, communication barriers (no cooperation with partners from abroad) and trouble formulating the application.

## Support

There was a desire from the interviewees to receive consultations throughout the process of creating and implementing the project, especially in the beginning with the

writing and help in finding information on the application procedure. Many also wished for help in finding partners. Although the support was much desired only two out of the ten would be willing to pay for assistance. All of the Polish interviewees had experience of support from previous projects and had perceived it “as expected”.

## Sweden

### Thematic areas

The Swedish interviewees considered the most important areas to be labor market issues such as Linking SME’s and crossborder labor-markets; Environment with special focus on renewable energy; and tourism. Infrastructure was also frequently mentioned but with regard to different issues, for example in connection to environment or tourism. The thematic areas were considered to be of importance for creating attractive and sustainable municipalities (economically, environmentally and socially) and in some cases also aimed to contribute to reaching the regional strategies’ goals for development. There was also an ambition to strengthen the south Baltic region and to contribute to knowledge sharing and better understanding across the borders in the area and to uniform the exercise of authority.

### Funding

Most of the Swedish interviewees had applied for funding for projects but in most cases only regional funds or only as a partner organization. There had been some rejections due to various reasons the most common being; the size (and budget) of the project, that it didn’t fit the profile of the programme, that it had an unclear project description or that more partners were needed.

### South Baltic Programme

8 of 10 knew about the South Baltic Programme. Some had known about it since the very beginning when it was first suggested. Most of the interviewees had a basic overview containing the geography, and the measures or the priority axes which they had obtained from colleagues, contact points or partners. They had also received printed materials or found information themselves through websites

### Barriers

Overall, lack of time seemed to be the key-problem. Whether it is needed to familiarize oneself with the programme, to find partners or to write an application the interviewee’s organizations simply didn’t have the time or were resistant to take the risk of investing large amounts of time into a project. Language- and cultural differences were also problems as well as difficulties in writing an application and meeting the high demands of the programme. It was believed that there is a mental

barrier when it comes to international programmes (due to ignorance and lack of experience) which could be bridged by providing information and marketing the benefits of international projects and by educating potential beneficiaries in understanding the rules and regulations and adjusting an application to these. The Capacity Building initiative is much welcomed, but those familiar with the South Baltic Programme also point out that the contact points have been very supportive and helpful in the past. Most agreed that external support is needed to overcome the main barriers. Some of the interviewees were specific with what support they desired. The suggestions ranged from help to focus the project and help with writing an application to getting help with leading the project and reimbursements for translators (since they quickly eat up the budget). There was also a request to target information so that when a measure related to certain issues comes up information regarding this would be directed to those concerned, they argued that there is limited time to cover what's happening and relevant information often drowns among the massive amounts of information they receive. However no one had a clear idea of who should provide these services and whom should be responsible. Suggestions ranged from the contact points, the JTS, and the Capacity building projects to the county councils or special consultants.

Another barrier mentioned was that it is hard to find partners and once you have it's hard to get them together to talk the project over thoroughly. Money for pre-meetings is needed.

In more than one case the SBP had been considered but didn't seem to be the most strategic choice when applying for funds. Regional funds often seemed to be a wiser choice for many reasons: No language- and cultural barriers. The international dimension sometimes demanded that the project became bigger than necessary. Others had decided not to apply in the SBP because their partners had found the programme time-consuming and the application process difficult in the past.

## Support

To have someone review/examine the application and make sure you have framed the project in accordance with the programme measures and used clear wording etc. was mentioned more than once, as was budgeting. Help with the application and how to structure and facilitate results was also mentioned. Educations also came up. A project school about intercultural communication was suggested and also an inspirational day with information and education to show the benefits of cross-border cooperation. Guidance was considered necessary to overcome the mental barriers.

The type of support desired varies in accordance with experience. A complete new comer will need help with structuring. A new comer with experience from other

programmes might need help to frame the idea into the South Baltic Programme and connecting the parts at the end.

Most interviewees would like to receive support in the beginning and the only processes mentioned specifically were writing the application including a budget and the process from generating the idea to writing the application.

The interviewees would generally be willing to pay for support if the benefits exceeded the costs, but they were clear about this matter being a question for the management to prioritize.

## Conclusions

- The interviews mirror the questionnaires quite well when it comes to the thematic areas if the different measures. The deviations are explained by the relatively small number of people interviewed in comparison with the number of people who filled out the questionnaire.
- Among the German respondents more than 30 % considered the human resources to be “of very high importance” in the questionnaire. After analysing the interviews it is evident that this is particularly the case for administration. Discussions with the German interviewees show that the gaps can also come from the lack of English skills.
- After analysing the interviews we can draw the conclusion that the answers to most of the issues touched upon in the questionnaire and during the interviews are evident for most EU-funded programmes and not only the South Baltic Programme.
- There was a high demand for support during the budget preparations in all countries
- The financial capacity is the main problem (pre-financing and co-financing being rated as the two greatest barriers to overcome) especially for small organizations (like associations, NGO’s etc. which are not financed by any regular national funds).
- After analyzing both the questionnaires and interviews it was evident that there was a contradiction regarding the English language as a barrier in the application process. While the questionnaires showed that this was not really a problem the interviewees on the other hand identified this barrier as an important one. This contradiction could be explained by the lack of language skills among the human resources. Even though there are enough staff in a company there is still a lack of human resources if they do not have the relevant skills. The lack of human resources was a far bigger issue in the questionnaire than the English language but the two might be related which would explain the deviations between questionnaire and interview results. While the questionnaire points out lack of human resources the interviewees state the English language to be a barrier as well. The reason might be that the human resources don’t have relevant skills, such as English.

- In Lithuania a contradiction between the results of the questionnaire results and the national policy regarding co-financing aspects was revealed. The co-financing and pre-financing were considered the two main barriers. But in Lithuania there are national funds which can be used for this. The explanation could be lack of knowledge regarding the support provided by the government. Never the less this conclusion should be treated as an interpretation that should be proved.
- The lack of knowledge about the programme was evident in all countries. For example in Lithuania more than 50 % of the organizations had no knowledge at all about the programme. This proves that more efforts should be put into spreading information about the possibilities of taking part in the South Baltic Programme (SBP). On the other hand the SBP is a relatively young programme which could explain the lack of knowledge. For many of the potential beneficiaries the Capacity Building Project was the first contact with the programme, which shows the importance to work on a grass-root level.
- From the analysis we can draw the conclusion that all areas of support are generally important in the South Baltic Programme. Hence we assume there is a need for long-term support to build up capacity.
- The application process was considered complicated by many. Interviews show that this perception can be derived from lack of experience which could be remedied by training sessions (tailored in accordance with the level of knowledge).
- The knowledge about the SBP was generally very low. Many of the respondents had never heard of the programme before they came in contact with the Capacity Building Project. This could be due to the “young age” of the programme but is still an issue which must be addressed.
- In the interviews those who couldn't point out any specific barriers where in many cases the same people who had no experience in the application process.

## Attachment 1: questionnaire

## Attachment 2: Interview questions

## Attachment 1: Questionnaire

### 1. How important will be the themes for your organisation in next 2 years?

(You need to select all themes, please prioritise the themes by selecting number from 1 to 5, where 5 means the most important theme)

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. linking SMEs, research networks and regional governments     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. cross-border labour market and mobility                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. new forms of education                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. improved and new transport connections                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. passenger transport  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. water management and water quality                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Integrated Coastal Zone Management                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. waste management   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. response to disasters  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. renewable energy sources                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. energy efficiency  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m. use of natural and cultural heritage                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n. tourism products and infrastructure                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| o. environmentally friendly products                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| p. development of local communities focused on young generation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| q. development of local communities focused on rural areas      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| r. building networks between NGOs                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| s. cross-border cultural and sports events                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| t. gender equality and social inclusion                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| u. other (please specify):                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

### 2. Have you ever applied for a project funded by the European Union?

(Please mark using x)

- a. NO
- b. YES 
  - i. national (e.g. financed by ESF, ERDF)
  - ii. international 
    - South Baltic Programme
    - other international programme

**3. What do you perceive as the main obstacles for participation in international projects?**

*(You may select several obstacles, please prioritise them by selecting number from 1 to 5, where 5 means the biggest obstacle)*

- |  |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. We do not have enough human resources                 | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. We have no financial capacity to co-finance projects  | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. We have no financial capacity to pre-finance projects | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. We do not know how to find partners                   | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Application process is too complicated                | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Application documents are not in national language    | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Other (please specify):                               | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

- |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| h. Other (please specify): | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|

**4. Do you know the South Baltic Programme? (Please mark using x)**

- a. NO
- b. YES

If you answered YES, please specify the information source:

- i.  Conference/seminar
- ii.  Internet
- iii.  Newsletter
- iv.  Radio
- v.  Newspaper
- vi.  Other organisation
- vii.  Information point
- viii.  Other source (please name):

**5. If you received support in development of project, would you be more interested to apply for funding to South Baltic Programme? (Please mark using x)**

- a. NO
- b. YES

**6. Which type of support is the most useful for your organisation in order to apply to South Baltic Programme? (You may select several options, please prioritise them by selecting number from 1 to 5, where 5 means the most useful type of support)**

- |  |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Providing information on application procedure              | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Tailoring project idea                                      | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Helping to find partners                                    | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Developing parts of application (budget preparation)        | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Developing parts of application (description of activities) | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Developing complete application                             | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |

g. Other (please specify):

1  2  3  4  5

h. Other (please specify):

1  2  3  4  5

**Contact details:**

Name of the organisation (in ENG)		
Country		
Contact Persons	Person 1	Person 2
Name		
Organisation		
Address		
Tel./Fax		
Email		
List other South Baltic Programme projects your organization participated in		
Have you participated in any of above project as Lead Beneficiary?		
Additional information		

## Attachment 2: Interview questions

Which themes will be of most importance for your organization in the next 2 years?
What do you want to accomplish with externally funded projects within these themes
Are you working with externally funded projects within any of the theme areas today?
Are there any other theme areas in which you have projects today?
Are you sure that all possible project themes were marked in the questionnaire?
Have you ever applied for a project funded by the European Union?
Which projects were they?
Were they granted funding?
If not, which was the main reason for the refusal?
Were you involved in any international programs? Which programs?
Have you previously considered applying for funding within the South Baltic Programme but refrained from it? If so, why?
What do you perceive as the main obstacles for participation in international projects ?
Can you overcome some of these on your own ? If so, which ?
Do you need assistance to overcome indicated barriers ? From whom ?
Do you know of the South Baltic Programme (SBP)?
How did you learn about the programme?
What do you know about the South Baltic Programme (SBP)?
Which type of support is the most useful for your organisation in order to apply to the South Baltic Programme?
When during the application process are you in most need of support?
Would you be willing to pay for support when externally funded projects are initiated, application is being written?
Are there any bottlenecks/barriers during the application process? If yes, which?
Have you received support if/when you have previously applied for externally funded projects?
Which projects?
What kind of support?

How did you perceive it?