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# **INTERREG BALTIC SEA REGION PROGRAMME 2021-2027 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING**

# **INTERREG BALTIC SEA REGION PROGRAMME 2021-2027 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 This Report

This screening report has been prepared to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027. The screening has been made in accordance with the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive).

## 1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The objective of the SEA Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Under the requirements of the SEA Directive certain types of plan must be subject to an environmental assessment.

Article 3 (2) of the SEA Directive states that an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:

- Which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and;
- Which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC (EIA directive) or have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC (habitats directive).

Article 3(4) states that Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes, other than those referred to in paragraph 2 are likely to have significant environmental effects.

This report will determine the need for a SEA of the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027 through applying a screening procedure to determine if the programme fits the criteria set out in the SEA Directive.

The contents of this report are as follows:

- Part 2 sets out the background to the INTERREG programme;
- Part 3 sets out details of how the screening process works;
- Part 4 outlines the results of the screening of the programme thematic framework (screening carried out in 2020);
- Part 5 outlines the results of the screening of the detailed programme; and
- Part 6 sets out conclusions and next steps.

## 2. INTERREG PROGRAMME

### 2.1 Introduction to INTERREG

The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as INTERREG is part of the European Union's cohesion policy and provides a framework for action between national, regional and local actors from different Member States of the European Union. The programme aims to reduce social, environmental and economic disparities between EU member states through three types of programmes:

- Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes e.g. INTERREG Greece-Bulgaria; INTERREG Central Baltic;
- Transnational Cooperation Programmes e.g. INTERREG Baltic Sea Region; INTERREG Central Europe; and
- Interregional Programmes e.g. INTERREG Europe.

To date, five programming periods of INTERREG have succeeded each other: INTERREG I (1990-1993) - INTERREG II (1994-1999) - INTERREG III (2000-2006) - INTERREG IV (2007-2013) - INTERREG V (2014-2020).

The fifth period of INTERREG (2014-2020) was based on 11 investment priorities related to the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>1</sup> for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Programme was subject to a [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) (SEA) in accordance with Directive 2001/42/EC. The SEA concluded that due to the nature of the INTERREG Europe programme, only highly indirect environmental effects and contributions can be realised by the Programme and that in general, the strategic approach of the programme provides the potential for positive effects.

In May 2018, the European Commission adopted proposals aimed at restructuring cohesion policy and European structural and investment funds post-2020 including the INTERREG programmes<sup>2</sup>. Proposals confirmed that cross-border, transnational and interregional territorial cooperation, including across maritime borders and with third countries, should remain part of cohesion policy post-2020, while stressing the need to facilitate the implementation of ETC programmes in order to increase their effects.

The next period of INTERREG will run from 2021-2027 and will continue to support interregional cooperation among regions across Europe. The new programmes are currently being drafted and are expected to be submitted to the European Commission for approval in early 2021.

### 2.2 Introduction to INTERREG Baltic Sea Region

The INTERREG Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is one of the programmes under the ETC Transnational Cooperation objective. The programme aims to contribute to the EU's Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The cooperation area covers eleven countries, eight of them EU Member States and three partner countries (Norway, Belarus and Russia).

The overall objective of the programme is 'to strengthen the territorial integration for a more innovative, better accessible and sustainable BSR'. The 2014-2020 Programme offered funding in support of four thematic axes:

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/628228/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)628228\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/628228/EPRS_BRI(2018)628228_EN.pdf)

- Capacity for innovation;
- Management of natural resources;
- Sustainable transport; and
- EU Strategy Support.

The programme was subject to a SEA in 2014 in accordance with the requirements in Directive 2001/42/EC, and was conducted at two levels:

- The level of overall objectives and horizontal principles of the programme; and
- The level of activities supported by the programme.

The [environmental assessment report](#) concluded that a large share of the activities can be characterised as 'process designs' (i.e. institutional processes, organisational development, strategy development, etc.). For these activities the direct environmental impact was assessed as insignificant (neutral). Those activities which are of a more concrete nature and which could, hence, potentially have a more direct environmental impact, are described in very general terms in the draft programme document. The environmental assessment concluded that this means that it is not possible to provide a detailed assessment of the significant environmental impacts which could be expected.

### **2.3 INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027**

The 2021-2027 programme is currently under preparation by a Joint Programming Committee (JPC). In July 2020 a programme thematic framework (2021 – 2027) was produced which included three themes:

- Innovative and resilient economies and societies and responsive public services;
- Sustainable use of the Baltic Sea and regional water resources adapted to the impacts of climate change; and
- Climate change mitigation.

This was supported by two policy objectives and seven topic areas as shown in Figure 1. Table 1 sets out the assumptions that have been made under each topic. These assumptions set out the committee's understanding of how the programme could contribute to this topic.

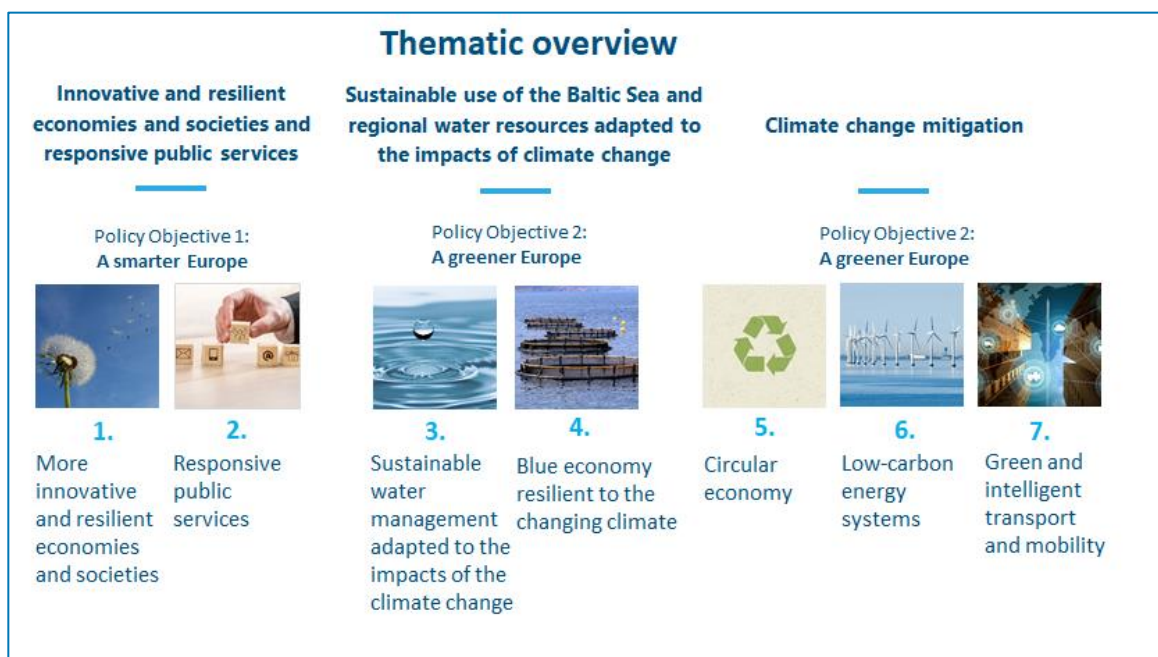


Figure 1: Overview of the Baltic INTERREG programme thematic framework

Objectives	Topics	Programme assumptions
Policy Objective 1:  <b>A Smarter Europe</b>	More innovative and resilient Economies and societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilience is considered as ability of both economies and societies to respond to any external disturbances</li> <li>Business and communities are at the heart of resilience building process;</li> <li>Untapping potential of digitalisation is crucial mean for increasing adaptability of the BSR;</li> <li>There is a need for redefining approach to smart specialisation to reinforce the BSR resilience at the macro-regional scale;</li> <li>Approaches to resilience building in the BSR need to consider uneven territorial developments.</li> </ul>
	Responsive public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying systemic and cross-cutting approaches to delivery of public services to increase their efficiency;</li> <li>Including aspects of territorial differences and relations (e.g. rural-urban) to deliver public services better tailored to the needs;</li> <li>Enhancing social innovation and empowering citizens as user of public services and drivers of their transformation</li> <li>Strengthening digitalisation as an important enabler for more responsive public services;</li> <li>Paving the way for "greener" (resource saving and environmentally friendly) public services creating opportunities for business.</li> </ul>
Policy Objective 2:  <b>A Greener Europe</b>	Sustainable water management adapted to the impacts of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving water quality in the region by addressing different types of water resources: the Baltic Sea and coastal waters, inland waters e.g. rivers and lakes, as well as storms, floods, etc.;</li> <li>Intensifying implementation of already available measures and testing new solutions to prevent and</li> </ul>

Objectives	Topics	Programme assumptions
	climate change	reduce water pollution as well as re-use water in the whole region; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancing cross-sector actions as water resources and catchments are shared and used by multiple sectors and stakeholders;</li> <li>• Adapting water management practices in cities, rural and coastal areas across different sectors to the changing climate conditions.</li> </ul>
	Blue economy resilient to the changing climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue economy is based on sustainable use of water and marine resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs and sea ecosystem health;</li> <li>• Supporting sustainable and innovative business development of emerging and established sectors in the region;</li> <li>• Mitigating potential conflicts among users of sea space and promoting its joint use;</li> <li>• Strengthening resilience of blue businesses in adapting to the changing climate and mitigating impacts of blue businesses to climate to keep and increase productivity in a sustainable way.</li> </ul>
	Circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The circular economy supports shift from linear to circular use of resources;</li> <li>• The circular economy requires a systemic and holistic approach, going beyond the waste sector and making connections across water, energy, transport and land use in an integrated manner. It implies behavioural change and integrated planning</li> <li>• Business and communities are at the heart of transitions towards circularity. The design of interventions should take into account winners and losers of the transition;</li> <li>• Untapping potential of digitalisation is important mean for achieving resource efficient BSR economy;</li> <li>• There is a need for redefining approach to smart specialisation to accelerate transition towards circularity.</li> </ul>
	Low-carbon energy systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing regional greenhouse gas emissions across different economic sectors to mitigate the climate change;</li> <li>• Increasing energy efficiency and energy saving in production processes and public and private building stock</li> <li>• Enhancing production and distribution of renewable energy from locally available resources and integrating it in building, industry, district heating and cooling</li> <li>• Enhancing capacity of public authorities as enablers for decarbonising the energy systems through updating policies, sharing and introducing good practices;</li> <li>• Mobilising industries and citizens to initiate introduction of energy solutions towards the climate neutrality and plan wider deployment with other public or private funds.</li> </ul>
	Green and intelligent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancing transition to zero greenhouse gas emissions with use of renewable fuels and clean electricity;</li> </ul>



Objectives	Topics	Programme assumptions
	transport and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing the smooth movement of people and goods within and across cities and regions while saving resources by increasing efficiency, integrating transport modes and strengthening digitalisation;</li> <li>• Harmonising transport systems across the borders enabling coherent use of green transport solutions;</li> <li>• Enhancing capacity of public authorities in urban and regional planning and introducing of green and intelligent transport solutions to reduce pollution;</li> <li>• Mobilising transport companies and citizens to actively use green and intelligent transport solutions.</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Overview of the Baltic INTERREG programme thematic framework**

## **3. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: THE SCREENING PROCESS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Under the requirements of the SEA Directive specific types of plans that set out the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment (a strategic environmental assessment or SEA).

To establish if a plan needs to be subject to the full SEA process, a "screening" assessment is required against a series of criteria.

The development of the INTERREG BSR programme has been split into two processes, the development of the programme thematic framework, and the development of the more detailed programme document. The Programme thematic framework was agreed in July 2020 and the draft programme document will be available in January 2021.

Due to this a two-stage SEA screening process has been adopted, as follows and this is shown in Figure 2.

At each stage of the screening process a number of questions are addressed and these are shown in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

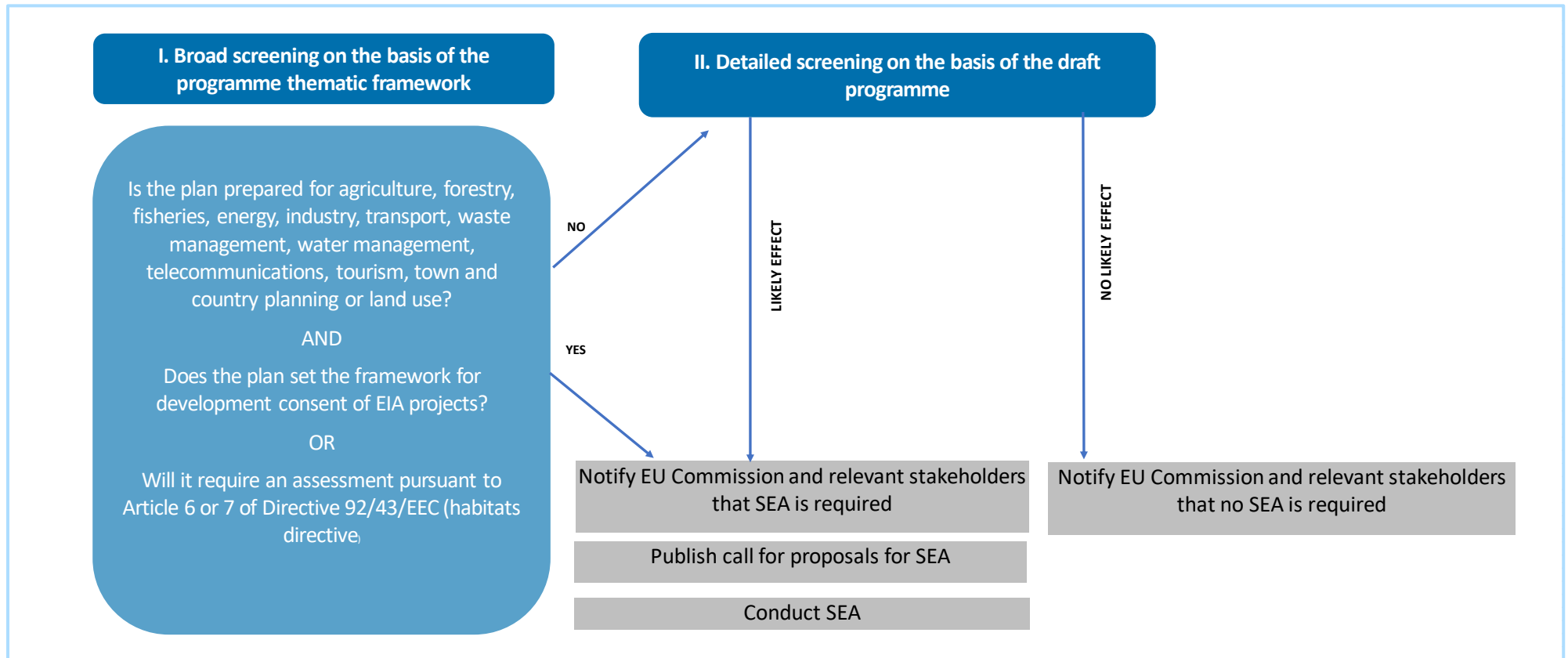


Figure 2: SEA screening process

## 4. BROAD SCREENING OF THE PROGRAMME THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 Introduction

A broad screening of the programme thematic framework was undertaken in July 2020 and this process is outlined below.

To make an assessment of the need for SEA at the stage of the programme thematic framework the following questions have been addressed:

- Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use; and
- Does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a)) or has it been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC (habitats directive)?.

If the answer to both of these questions is yes, then a SEA must be carried out. If the answer to either of the questions is uncertain or no, then a more detailed screening must be carried out on the programme using the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the SEA Directive.

The screening of the programme thematic framework concludes that, although the INTERREG BSR Programme is high level and strategic in nature, it is considered likely that INTERREG BSR Programme funded projects will incorporate one or more of the named sectors within the DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC. At this stage it is considered unlikely that the INTERREG BSR Programme will set a framework for future development consent of projects pursuant to the EIA Directive, however further information is required on the Programme strategy and fund allocations and this will be screened at the detailed screening stage.

Table 2 sets out this consideration.

Screening question	Assessment	Yes/No
Is the plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use?	The plan is not prepared specifically for any one of these sectors. However, projects that arise from the INTERREG programme are likely to fall within more than one of the sectors named.	Yes
Does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Article 3.2(a)); or  Has it been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7	Through a review of the proposed thematic framework for the INTERREG BSR Programme it is considered unlikely that any Objectives or Topics will 'set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment'.  This is because the proposed Programme themes are high level and strategic in nature, accounting	Uncertain  Proceed to more detailed screening of the programme

Screening question	Assessment	Yes/No
<p>of Directive 92/43/EEC (habitats directive)?</p>	<p>for a wide geographic coverage across a number of policy objectives. The proposed thematic framework and assumptions do not contain criteria or conditions which could guide the way the consenting authority decides an application for development consent.</p> <p>At this Stage in the SEA process, exact detail on the Programme Strategy and Programme fund allocations is not yet known therefore, for the purposes of this screening assessment, it is recommended that a more detailed screening of the Programme is undertaken.</p> <p>Due to the strategic nature of the Baltic Sea INTERREG programme it will not require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC (the habitats directive).</p>	

**Table 2: Screening of the programme thematic framework**

## 5. DETAILED SCREENING OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME

### 5.1 Introduction

Annex 2 of the Directive sets out the assessment criteria for considering significant environmental effects. The INTERREG draft programme has been assessed against these criteria. The detailed assessment is set out in Table 3 below.

The screening of the draft programme concludes that:

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects	Potential effects of the programme
<p>1(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;</p>	<p>The INTERREG BSR Programme does not 'set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment'.</p> <p>The programme does not contain criteria or conditions which could guide the way a consenting authority decides an application for development consent, either with regards to location, nature, size and operating conditions.</p> <p>With regard to allocating resources, the programme is not intended to finance large-scale implementation. Instead the programme develops a leverage effect on regional development by investing in the institutional capacities of the programme's target groups whilst providing the mechanism for small scale testing piloting activities for new solutions.</p>
<p>1(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</p>	<p>The INTERREG BSR Programme influences other plans and programmes through providing support to member states policy makers to integrate environmental concerns into territorial plans and potentially implement new more positive standards for industry.</p> <p>Some examples given are using support to help policy makers integrate climate change mitigation measures into blue economy development plans; updating local energy and transport plans, introducing common environmental standards for ships and ports; and integrating circular economy policies into territorial strategies.</p> <p>It does this through improving co-operation and knowledge sharing between the programme participants in different member states and regions. Any influence that the programme has is positive and does not increase the likelihood that other plans and programmes will cause significant negative effects.</p>
<p>1(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>The INTERREG BSR Programme helps policy makers integrate environmental concerns into territorial plans. Any influence that the programme has is positive and does not increase the likelihood that</p>

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects	Potential effects of the programme
	other plans and programmes will cause significant negative effects.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>There are many environmental problems in the region, some of which are global issues, some which are specific to the Baltic context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreasing water quality and increasing water pollution. The environmental state of the Baltic Sea and inland waters is endangered.</li> <li>• The growing effects of climate change on waters, for example, increasing occurrences of storms, floods and droughts.</li> <li>• Balancing joint use of marine and coastal areas.</li> <li>• Slow take up of circular economy principles.</li> <li>• EU energy targets have not been reached by some nations.</li> <li>• Urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases from the transport sector.</li> </ul> <p>Any influence that the programme has on helping to address these problems is positive and does not increase the likelihood of significant negative effects.</p>
1(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	<p>The INTERREG BSR Programme helps to deliver elements of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the European Green Deal by enhancing the skills and knowledge needed in the region to transform the environment, public health and well-being and contribute to innovative sustainable development.</p> <p>Any influence that the programme has on implementation of community legislation is positive and does not increase the likelihood that other plans and programmes will cause significant negative effects.</p>
2(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	It is unlikely that the INTERREG BSR Programme will cause significant negative effects on the environment.
2(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	The conclusions of the <a href="#">environmental assessment report</a> of the 2014-2020 Programme remain true for the 2021-2027 Programme. The conclusions of this report stated that a large share of the activities can be characterised as 'process designs' (i.e. institutional processes, organisational development, strategy development, etc.). For these activities the direct environmental impact is neutral. With regard to indirect effects there is also unlikely to be an indirect negative effect due to the nature of the programme. There could be indirect positive effect due to the mechanisms put in place by the programme.
2(c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;	
2(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	
2(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	One difference between the previous Programme and the 2021-2027 INTERREG BSR Programme is that the 2021-2027 Programme has a stronger focus on implementation. However, these projects are small scale testing of solutions which are unlikely to have significant effects.
2(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;	

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects	Potential effects of the programme
(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;	
2(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	

**Table 3: Screening of the Draft Programme**



## 6. CONCLUSION

This screening report has been prepared to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027. The screening has been made in accordance with the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive).

A screening procedure has been applied to determine if the programme fits the criteria set out in the SEA Directive.

The broad screening of the programme thematic framework in July 2020 concluded that a more detailed screening of the likely effects of the plan was needed. This more detailed screening has looked in detail at the context and likely effects of the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027.

The determination reached after applying this screening process is that an SEA is not required for the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme 2021-2027.

The determination has been made for the following reasons:

- The INTERREG BSR Programme does not 'set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment';
- Due to the nature of the measures proposed in the programme it is unlikely that the INTERREG BSR Programme will cause significant negative effects on the environment; and
- Although the Programme does have some influence on implementation of community legislation and an influence on other plans and programmes (through integration of environmental and sustainability considerations), any influence that the programme has is positive and does not increase the likelihood that other plans and programmes will cause significant negative effects.

## APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENT REVIEW

The table below shows a summary of the documents reviewed by the team.

Document reviewed	Summary
<b>Documents reviewed for the purposes of screening</b>	
Concept note Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Baltic Sea Region Inter-reg programme 2014-2020 (COWI, May 17 2012)	The report could help the team consider the necessity of screening in a SEA for the Baltic Sea Region Programme. However, the report does not make reference to a screening process. The report just states that as part of the Ex ante evaluation for the Baltic Sea Region programme 2014-2020 a Strategic Environmental Assessment (hereafter SEA) has to be carried out. The report does not state why it has come to this conclusion without following a screening process.
Explanatory Note for the Public Consultation on the draft Operational Programme and draft Environmental Report for the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020	As above this document does not make reference to a screening process. It just states that the SEA is carried out in line with the requirement of Directive 2001/42/EC
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 Environmental Report.	<p>This sets out the results of the SEA of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020. The report could help the team consider the necessity of screening in a SEA for the Baltic Sea Region Programme. However, the report does not make reference to a screening process. The report just states that the SEA was carried out in line with the requirement of Directive 2001/42/EC.</p> <p>This document provides contextual information to the team and has helped the team understand broadly the potential for the current Baltic SEA region programme to have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The report concludes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large share of the activities can be characterised as 'process designs' (i.e. institutional processes, organisational development, strategy development, etc.). For these activities the direct environmental impact is assessed as insignificant (neutral);</li> <li>• Those activities which are of a more concrete nature and which could, hence, potentially have a more direct environmental impact, are described in very general terms in the draft programme document. This means that it is not possible to provide a detailed assessment of the significant environmental impacts which could be expected. A tentative, qualitative assessment is provided;</li> </ul>

Document reviewed	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It should be noted that as the draft programme does not provide indications of how the funds will be split between specific objectives or between process designs and concrete activities, it is not possible to assess the relative importance of the specific objectives or activity types, which further adds to the uncertainty in the assessment;</li> <li>• Given the very overall nature of the likely significant environmental impacts identified and the vast degree of uncertainty in any possible prediction of these impacts the likely significant environmental impacts from not adopting the BSR Operational Programme are equally vague;</li> <li>• At the overall level, it is assessed that if the programme were not adopted, actions to seek the fulfilment of environmental policy objectives (HELCOM BSR, EU BSR, Russia Northwest Programme) would still be implemented. However, as the programme aims to support and strengthen the implementation of these policies, it is likely that, without the programme, progress in this direction would be less than with the programme.</li> </ul>
<p>2014-2020 Interregional Cooperation Programme under the European Territorial Cooperation Objective (INTERREG EUROPE) Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report. Dr. Drager and Thielmann</p>	<p>This sets out the results of the SEA of the overall Inter-reg Programme 2014-2020. The report could help the team consider the necessity of screening in a SEA for the Baltic Sea Region Programme. In relation to screening the report states: Pursuant to the Directive 2001/42/EC adopted by the European Parliament and European Council, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the development and amendment of certain plans and programmes including those programmes which influence other plans and programmes (Art. 3 and Annex II SEA-Directive). Accordingly, the assessment of the effects on the environment of the Interregional Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (hereinafter: Programme) is obligatory. However, the team has concluded that the reasoning stated in the report is not strictly correct.</p> <p>This document provides contextual information to the team and has helped the team understand broadly the potential for the current Baltic SEA region programme to have a significant environmental effect. The report concludes that due to the nature of the INTERREG EUROPE only highly indirect effects and contributions can be realised by the Programme. In general, the strategic approach offers a potential for positive effects. Concerning the potential effects of the Programme as a whole on the environment and contributions to the EU environmental objectives and general EU environmental policy, the Programme is differentiated into two parts: PAs 1 and 2 show little, highly indirect effects and contributions, PAs 3 and 4 can realise also indirect effects and contributions but due to their explicit focus on environmental issues more effectively. The risk of negative effects and contributions is very limited.</p>

Document reviewed	Summary
<p>ESI Fund regulations</p>	<p>In the programming period 2014-2020 the ESI Fund Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1303 / 2013) stipulates the need to assess whether a SEA is required during the programming phase (screening):</p> <p>Art 55:4: "Ex ante evaluations shall incorporate, where appropriate, the requirements for strategic environmental assessment set out in Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (36) taking into account climate change mitigation needs."</p> <p>However, in the programming period 2020-2027 the ESI-Fund Draft Regulation<sup>3</sup> does not explicitly mention the need to conduct a SEA or assess whether one is needed during the programming phase. Neither does it exempt the managing authorities from conducting a SEA.</p> <p>However, to conform to the SEA regulations a screening assessment should be carried out.</p>
<p>INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020</p> <p><a href="https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/about_programme/BSR-Cooperation-Programme.pdf">https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/about_programme/BSR-Cooperation-Programme.pdf</a></p>	<p>The team have reviewed the previous Baltic SEA programme to help in the determination of whether the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027 is likely to include the level of detail that will mean it is a programme that "sets the framework for development consent".</p> <p>The programme states the following: Taking into account the wide geographic coverage and range of topics covered in the programme the financial resources are limited, especially compared to national and regional cohesion programmes. Therefore, the programme cannot finance large-scale implementation on its own. Instead the programme develops a leverage effect on regional development by investing in the institutional capacities of the programme's target groups. Improved institutional capacity in the programme context is understood as: 1) Enhanced institutionalised knowledge and competence; 2) Improved governance structures and organisational set-up; 3) More efficient use of human and technical resources (databases, technical solutions, small infrastructure etc.); 4) Better ability to attract new financial resources; 5) Increased capability to work in transnational environment.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border Management and Visa Instrument. COM/2018/375 final - 2018/0196 (COD)

Document reviewed	Summary
	<p>The objectives of the programme are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific objective 1.1 'Research and innovation infrastructures': To enhance market uptake of innovation based on improved capacity of research and innovation infrastructures and their users</li> <li>• Specific objective 1.2 'Smart specialisation': To enhance growth opportunities based on increased capacity of innovation actors to apply smart specialisation approach</li> <li>• Specific objective 1.3 'Non-technological innovation': To advance the Baltic Sea Region performance in non-technological innovation based on increased capacity of innovation actors</li> <li>• Specific objective 2.1 'Clear waters': To increase efficiency of water management for reduced nutrient inflows and decreased discharges of hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea and the regional waters based on enhanced capacity of public and private actors dealing with water quality issues</li> <li>• Specific objective 2.2 'Renewable energy': To increase production of sustainable renewable energy based on enhanced capacity of public and private actors involved in energy planning and supply</li> <li>• Specific objective 2.3 'Energy Efficiency': To increase energy efficiency based on enhanced capacity of public and private actors involved in energy planning</li> <li>• Specific objective 2.4 'Resource-efficient blue growth': To advance sustainable and resource-efficient blue growth based on increased capacity of public authorities and practitioners within the blue economy sectors</li> <li>• Specific objective 3.1 'Interoperability of transport modes': To increase interoperability in transporting goods and persons in north-south and east-west connections based on increased capacity of transport actors</li> <li>• Specific objective 3.2 'Accessibility of remote areas and areas affected by demographic change': To improve the accessibility of the most remote areas and regions whose accessibility is affected by demographic change based on increased capacity of transport actors</li> <li>• Specific objective 3.3 'Maritime safety': To increase maritime safety and security based on advanced capacity of maritime actors</li> <li>• Specific objective 3.4 'Environmentally friendly shipping': To enhance clean shipping based on increased capacity of maritime actors</li> <li>• Specific objective 3.5 'Environmentally friendly urban mobility': To enhance environmentally friendly transport systems in urban areas based on increased capacity of urban transport actors</li> </ul>

Document reviewed	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific objective 4.1 'Seed Money': To increase capacity for transnational cooperation implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and working on common policies with the partner countries</li> <li>• Specific objective 4.2 'Coordination of macro-regional cooperation': To increase capacity of public institutions and pan-Baltic organisations for transnational coordination in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and facilitating the implementation of common policies with the partner countries</li> </ul>
<b>General SEA guidance documents / documents to be considered for a full SEA</b>	
Results of national consultation on SEA scoping report Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020	<p>This document sets out the results of the consultation of the SEA scoping report for the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020.</p> <p>This document will be considered in detail by the SEA team if a full SEA is needed to ensure that previous concerns are addressed in this SEA.</p>
Concept note Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Baltic Sea Region Inter-reg programme 2014-2020 (COWI, May 17 2012)	<p>The concept note outlines the specific methodological steps and the activities and timing of the SEA for the previous Baltic Sea Region Inter-reg programme.</p> <p>This document will be useful if a full SEA needs to be produced and will be reviewed in detail to ensure continuity of method to the previous SEA.</p>
Handbook on SEA for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013	<p>This sets out detailed guidance on SEA for cohesion policy.</p> <p>This document will be useful if a full SEA needs to be produced and will be reviewed in detail at that point.</p>

