

Work Package 2

Reinforcing the Image of Baltic Metropolises as Innovative Locations

The changing role of cities – particularly metropolitan city regions – together with increased territorial competition have caused an upsurge in city marketing activities, i.e. communicating, promoting and selling cities/regions on the global arena.

Most of the individual metropolitan cities in the Baltic Sea region are today proactively involved in marketing themselves as attractive destinations for visitors, conferences, and fairs and as efficient locations for headquarters, foreign direct investments, research and development facilities etc. and/or as innovative environments for knowledge-based industries and creativity.

The goals of place marketing strategies and community building focused work of the “Baltic Metropolises Innovation Strategy” (BaltMet Inno) project were strengthening the role of knowledge, innovation and dynamic environment in promotion of Baltic metropolitan cities, cooperation in innovation-related marketing activities including innovation and entrepreneurship aspects in marketing strategies and identification of possibilities for transnationally complementary activities.

In the framework of the project, activities were carried out in two different fields – Community building and Marketing strategies. The existing marketing practices and strategies were analysed in different cities of the Baltic Sea region participating in this project: Riga, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Berlin, Stockholm, Tallinn, and Oslo. Furthermore, data have been collected from organisations responsible for marketing strategies and activities in all the partner cities of the Baltic Metropolises Network.

In order to deepen the understanding of the process in each of the cities, four field visits of the members of the local marketing council of City of Riga were organised to the cities of Copenhagen, Oslo, Helsinki and Stockholm.

In order to acknowledge the overall marketing situation in all the Baltic metropolitan cities and regions, a questionnaire was circulated in summer 2005 to gather information on the participants and organisations engaged in the process of developing marketing strategies and their implementation.

The research based on the questionnaires, field visits and interviews shows that:

- each of the BaltMet cities has its own branding strategy focusing on the industries which have favourable advantages, trying to find their unique features and selling points;
- most of the regions with longer experience in marketing their capital cities have established separate institutions responsible for implementing the marketing strategy of the city/region. Either that is one single organisation

(for instance, Berlin Partner) or the responsibility is divided between several institutions according to the target audiences (e.g. Stockholm and Copenhagen);

- there are several groups of experts (4 to 6) engaged in the process of developing marketing strategies in the regions questioned - entrepreneurs, politicians, scientists and researchers, public employees and consultants, in some regions also citizens, students and representatives from unions and employers' organisations;
- on average, there are three main organisations responsible for city/region marketing. In most cases they are government- or municipality-based and have similar marketing strategies aiming to promote the city as a tourism destination as well as a business centre and an object for investment;
- large-scale events are financially a more effective way of attracting tourists. Therefore the main activities within this segment are targeted towards event marketing – attracting large international conferences, exhibitions, and the like.

Based on the findings of the research, a marketing strategy framework was created for metropolises in the Baltic Sea region and piloted in Riga and Tallinn. The strategy framework supports a focused approach towards key target groups – entrepreneurs, tourists and inhabitants. Accordingly, in order to strengthen its position in growing competition for residents, businesses and visitors, the Riga City Council is currently working on a Riga City Marketing Strategy. The aim of such a strategy is to increase attention paid to analysis of city clients' needs and integration of those in the city development plans, to use more city promotion activities, including creating and implementation of attractive city brand and image, as well as to assure coordination of marketing activities, thus gaining maximum efficiency.

The Riga City Marketing Strategy for Facilitation of Entrepreneurship is one of the three sections of the gradually developed Riga City Marketing Strategy, and it has been worked out within BaltMet Inno project. This is a medium-term planning document, reflecting on the intentions and position of the municipality with regard to facilitating entrepreneurship, taking into account the very essence of marketing. City targets, tasks and planned actions are formulated in the strategy. A detailed and precise action plan is updated annually according to this strategy.

The summary of the Riga City Marketing Strategy for Facilitation of Entrepreneurship provides for a set of principles, targets and actions. The elaborated strategy document provides brief substantiation for the need for a marketing strategy, envisages a place and meaning of a marketing strategy in the context of city development documents, the principles used in drafting it, describes a vision and objectives set within the strategy, courses of action, formulates a marketing strategy, lists activities and actions set for each course of action, as organised in the action plan. The document is concluded by a strategy implementation organisation and supervision system.

The strategy framework and Riga City Marketing Strategy for Facilitation of Entrepreneurship strategy were presented at the international conference

“Place Marketing in Metropolitan Regions” in Riga on 4 - 5 April 2007. The conference participants were also introduced to the best cases and global trends in place marketing. The conference was continued by a workshop on collaboration possibilities in innovation-based city marketing. The conference participants agreed that it is important and necessary to cooperate with nearby municipalities, especially when targeting at the international arena, and it is crucial to have support from both politicians and professionals in the field to successful implementation of city marketing strategies.

Another aspect of the work was community building. First of all that means taking care of the project website and the web-based database of the project activities and attained results as well as innovation players and city marketing organisations in the Baltic metropolitan regions. Within community building activity, a workshop "Joint Innovation Policies for the Baltic Sea Region" was organised on collaboration opportunities between projects, networks and organisations promoting innovation policies in the Baltic Sea region" in Helsinki on 31 October 2006. Within the workshop, different projects and networks and their objectives were presented, The participants also shared their experiences and expressed suggestions for collaboration.

With regard to identification of further international complementary marketing activities, the question is not essentially one of reducing or aligning marketing activities, but of attuning the various initiatives to each other and marshalling them to an overall vision of the Baltic Sea region. This is not only an issue of finding the strength and opportunities of each city, but also to support formulation of strong innovation-based city brands in the Baltic Sea region. This means that the particular advantages in one city are highlighted and supported by the other cities' complementary advantages. Information exchange, and adjusting marketing activities to the events' calendar in other BaltMet cities as well as in various Baltic Sea network initiatives will support each city in developing distinct city profiles, while at the same time contributing to the overall marketing effort of the region as a whole.

Future joint activities in promotion of the Baltic Sea Region and community building issues were discussed by marketing experts and professionals from the BSR in the transnational workshop "Metropolitan Marketing in the Baltic Sea Region - Current Outlook, Best Practices, Future Visions" in Riga, on 13 - 14 September -2007. The workshop was attended also by representatives from Baltic Development Forum sharing their views on current Baltic Sea Region branding and future cooperation ideas.

As embedded in the title of the project, particular attention has been paid to the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in city marketing of the Baltic metropolises and their promotion in future as attractive and modern places to live, work and study. Even though all the cities have their own independent marketing strategies and brand marketing experts, city representatives and project partners have supported the idea of a common brand, “Baltic Sea Archipelago of Innovation”. The brand highlights the partnership character of the network, and the metropolitan city regions as connected and collaborating islands of competence, reinforcing the image of the Baltic metropolises as

networked and advanced innovative hubs at the local, regional, European and global levels.

What is proposed here is an attempt to support the creation of a regional identity from the science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship perspectives. A shared understanding and appreciation of the Baltic Sea region as a resourceful region with particular characteristics at the top of the innovation chain! By communicating to each other, and above all to the rest of the world, the cities, and the region, communicate to their own citizens! The Baltic Sea region is created by narratives and stories told to outsiders as well as to insiders, thus strengthening the self-image as well as the sense of a common identity.

Work Package 2 of the BaltMet Inno project was coordinated by Riga City Council International Projects Division within City Development Department Board of Economics.