



Facts

The BEST project – B7 Exchange on Sustainable Tourism – is a joint project between the seven largest islands in the Baltic Sea. The B7 islands are Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden, Lead Partner), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Åland (Finland) and Öland (Sweden).

Associated project partners are

- Bornholms Research Centre, Nexö, Denmark
- Estonian ECO-Tourism Association, Pärnu, Estonia
- Gotland University College, Visby, Sweden
- Societé D'Eco-Aménagement, Montpellier, France

The project is supported by the European Union under the Interreg IIC Programme.

B7 reports on Sustainable Tourism

In 1998 B7 decided to make two reports on Sustainable Tourism. The first report (available from May 1999) focuses on the development so far on the B7 islands. The second report will give an update on the global development within sustainable tourism.

During the project a third report – A Green Paper on “Sustainable tourism in the B7 islands - definitions and markets” – will be elaborated.

The reports will be published on the Internet. Together they will make an important output from the BEST project. They will supply valuable information for the future development of tourism in the B7 islands and the Spatial Development of the Baltic Sea Area.

This is the BEST project

The Best Project was initiated as a result of the Common Strategy for the B7 islands, which was adopted in Visby in May 1996. The main objective is to promote Sustainable Tourism in the islands. Sub-aims are:

- To create an inter-island cooperation network to promote the development of sustainable tourism
- To establish common systems for codes of conduct, benchmarking and quality control
- To adopt and publish a Green Paper
- To initiate at least three development projects
- To make a B7 contribution to the VASAB and Baltic Agenda 21 processes

Key words for the project activities are:

DEFINITION · POSITIONING · APPEARANCE · NETWORKING

The project has a total budget of 360.000 Euro and a duration of 21 months. In order to take advantage of synergy effects formal agreements about exchange of information have been made with three similar Interreg IIC projects:

- ARCHIBAL (Finland, Sweden, Denmark)
- BTC (Baltic Sea Tourism Commission, Sweden)
- Bothnian Arc (Sweden, Finland)

Still waiting for an answer.....

Unfortunately there is a great mismatch between available PHARE funds and the great number of approved Interreg IIC projects. Due to this mismatch in the financial framework for the project the five EU-partners have decided to start the project anyway and to arrange for the Estonian islands to participate as much as possible.

Kick off meeting in Tallinn

The kick-off meeting was held in Tallinn on 23 April. All the seven islands were represented. There was also a representative from Bornholm Research Centre.

Conference on Sustainable Tourism

The first major activity to take place will be the “Saaremaa Conference on Sustainable Tourism in the Baltic Seven Islands” during autumn 1999. The conference is planned to take place at the end of September and to host representatives of the tourism industry, NGO:s and public authorities from the islands and other areas around the Baltic Sea. Are you interested to participate? Please, contact the project manager.

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Some facts about the partners, in this issue about Gotland and Bornholm.



Gotland

The island of Gotland is situated about 100 km from the Swedish east coast and about 125 km from the west coast of Latvia. The island has been a major tourism destination for many years, although tourism as we see it today started to expand during the 1960:s.

Sweden is still the primary market for the Gotland tourism industry and about 90 % of all tourists come from Sweden. The second largest market is Germany.

Gotland is the largest island in the Baltic Sea and it has been an important centre for trade and cultural exchange for hundreds of years. Maybe the most prominent traces of this position are the Hanseatic Town of Visby and the many medieval churches scattered over the Gotland countryside.

The Hanseatic town of Visby is on the UNESCO World Heritage List and one of the most important tourist attractions on the island. The rich and varied nature and cultural heritage of the island forms a good basis for the development of sustainable tourism. Another important factor is the establishment of Gotland ECO-Municipality. The aim, which is to make Gotland a sustainable island before year 2015, has been accepted as a challenge by private and public stakeholders alike.

Tourism is an important industry on Gotland and there is great potential to develop it even further. In order for tourism to remain an important economic activity a sustainable approach based on high quality is vital.

Bornholm

The island of Bornholm is situated in the Baltic Sea approx. 180 km south-east of Copenhagen, 40 km south of Sweden and 90 km north-northeast of Rügen, Germany and Poland.

Tourism on Bornholm expanded in the 1970's, but in the early 1980's this industry also stagnated. During the last 10 years there has been a new expansion, mainly by Danes, Swedes, Germans and Poles.

Bornholm has developed into an area for quality tourism and the overall goal is to develop tourism in careful balance with Bornholm's natural treasures and the local environment.

With its impressive rocky coasts to the north, the fine sandy beaches to the south, the regionally distinctive towns and the island's many historic and cultural attractions Bornholm in recent years has attracted more than 1 million bed nights during the peak season.

The island's clean environment, it's unique and varied wildlife and landscapes and its numerous cultural treasures form the basis for extensive tourism. Approx 8000 hotel and pension beds, at least 20 campsites and a large number of holiday cottages and flats are available.



The transportation capacity and the number of over-night accomadations regulate the influx of tourists. The number of tourists per day must considerably increase before it exceeds the number of residents aprox 44.500. The tourism industry is the 3rd largest industry on the island and it is important that the increasing approach on sustainable tourism is defined and attract the tourists in the future.

DO YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION?

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