

Guidelines for Baltic Sea NGO Network

§1. Name

The name of the network is BS NGO Network.



§ 2. Aim of the Network

The purpose of the network is to support the civil society in the Baltic Sea area:

1. By bringing NGOs from different Baltic Sea countries and from different fields together, for exchanging experience and information and improvement of knowledge and create partnerships.
2. By creating partnerships and supporting trans-national and inter- sectoral networks between NGOs from different Baltic Sea countries.
3. By making NGOs more visible and influencing the democratic decision-making process on national, regional and EU level.
4. By supporting the development of inter-national understanding and inter-cultural activities.
5. By raising public awareness and understanding for the work of NGOs, citizens activities and initiatives, and encourage people to get involved and take an interest in their own affairs.

§ 3. Annual NGO Forum

Each year the network is arranging a NGO Forum with participants from all the Baltic Sea countries.

The host country is the country that is chair of the CBSS. The national platform/focal points in host country in co-operation prepare the annual forum with the Co-ordination Committee.

The NGO Forum serves not only as a meeting point for NGOs but also offers an opportunity for a dialogue between NGOs and public authorities on future perspectives of co-operation in the region of Baltic Sea.

Results of each Forum are concluded in Forum's Final paper (statement) and delivered for further consideration to CBSS and other institutions on regional and European level.

At the annual forum a working and action plan for the next year is decided.

§ 4. National focal point/platform - structure

The NGOs in each country shall establish a national focal point/platform.

The platform shall be open to all NGO's wishing to participate in the Baltic Sea Network and the platform shall provide a free flow of information of NGO activities in the Baltic Sea.

The co-ordinator shall be elected among the members of the platform. An organisation can also be elected as co-ordinator.

The co-ordinator is member of the Co-ordination Committee, se § 6, responsible for interaction between CC and national platform.

§ 5. National focal point/platform – activities

The national platform shall choose the representatives from NGOs who shall participate in the annual forum.

The national platform shall discuss the agenda of the NGO Forum with its member organisations before the forum begins.

The platform shall arrange activities decided by the annual forum or CC.

§ 6. Co-ordination Committee (CC) - structure

Between the annual NGO Forums a Coordination Committee (CC) is responsible for the activities of the network.

Members of CC are one representative from each of the Baltic Sea Countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden).

From each country a specialist can participate in the meeting (= second delegate).

CC can also allow other persons to participate.

Chair of CC is the representative from the country, chairing of CBSS.

To assist the chair a troika with the previous chair and the future chair shall be formed.

To assist the chair a permanent secretariat can be establish in one of the countries, se § 8.

§ 7. Co-ordination Committee (CC) – activities

CC prepares the annual NGO Forum together with the platform from the country, which is chair of the CBSS.

CC can decide to make a political declaration. A declaration shall respect the decisions taken at the NGO Forum.

Between two forums CC can work together with national, regional or international political bodies to influence political decisions.

CC can establish thematic groups. The thematic groups can participate in the preparation of the annual NGO Forum and support the CC in certain political questions. Before each CC meeting each thematic group shall send a report of their activities to CC.

NGO members of CC can apply for funds to support the NGOs in the Baltic Sea countries.

CC is responsible for establishing tools for communication in the network. CC can e.g. establish a homepage and a newsletter.

§ 8. Secretariat*

A secretariat as mentioned in § 6 cannot act independently. The secretariat is only a practical help for the chairing focal point.

The secretariat informs all focal points about all its activities.

§ 9. Financing

The CC seeks for a common financing of the networks activities.

§ 10. Coming into Force and Changes

The present guidelines have been adopted at the CC-meeting 21st February 2008 in Latvia.

These guidelines can be changed, if proposed changes are announced at least 4 weeks before a CC meeting, in which all Focal Points are invited to participate. Changes have to be accepted by all Focal Points.

* Secretariat is not established yet

Updated 27/28 January 2012 CC-meeting in Berlin