



Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Information and Communication Strategy

Adopted by the Committee of Senior Officials 3 March 2010

Communication is both essential and strategic for any organisation to present in a cohesive manner the organisations' clear and discernible aims to its stakeholders and ultimately to the general public. Feedback from the latter should be encouraged.

The CBSS information and communication activities will strive to highlight the work conducted by CBSS Expert Groups (EGs), Task Forces and projects as well as to focus on the expected and actual achievements and results.

Communication is to be effective, relevant, forward looking and constructive. It should create for the CBSS an image of being instrumental, bringing together different actors – both on governmental and non-governmental level.

Mainstreaming Communication

A set of distinct and clear messages will be developed for each Expert Group, Task Force and project. They will be quick to understand, simple and to the point. Each message is to be repeated and built upon over time. Particular attention should be paid to highlighting successful activities and projects, implemented by the CBSS or under the CBSS auspices.

The Committee of Senior Officials and the staff of the Secretariat will ensure that communication aspects are included right from the beginning of all policy formulation.

Communication work will be regarded as a tool to actively support the objectives of the Council as a whole, characterised by openness, high availability and pro-activity.

The responsibility to integrate communication and make it a vivid and natural part of the everyday work of the CBSS is a joint responsibility of everybody involved to be active and to understand the opportunities of well functioning communication.

Responsibility, Organisation and Implementation

The Foreign Minister, chairing the Council is the main speaker for the organisation.

The Presidency takes the leading role in all communication through the year.

The Chair of the Committee of Senior Officials takes an active role in communicating the priorities for the year and the Council's activities.

The members of the Committee of Senior Officials act as the organisation's representatives. Members of the respective CBSS Expert Groups and Task Forces are responsible for and have the right and duty to develop key messages to communicate their work.

The Strategy will be implemented under the guidance of the CBSS Presidency and the Director General of the Secretariat.

The CBSS Secretariat ensures continuity and coordination in implementing the CBSS Information and Communication Strategy, and acts as a focal point of information on regional cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region on approval of the CSO.

The communication tasks at the Secretariat will be carried out by the Press and Communications team in coordination with the respective staff members.

Internal Communication

For the Council as a multi-national cross border organisation with a number of different partners at different levels it is essential for internal communication to recognise common aims.

Internal communication will facilitate that all the relevant actors are involved and will build a sense of ownership – whether that be to the aims, the direction or the results of the organisation, its projects and/or its work in general.

Involved actors need to identify themselves as part of the bigger CBSS picture, including:

- Senior Officials and other government officials
- Expert Group members
- Strategic Partners and project partners
- Secretariat Employees

External Communication

The Council of the Baltic Sea States will focus on the following selected target groups:

- Intermediaries (credible and knowledgeable individuals and groups that can transmit information and act as duplicators and multipliers) and
- End users (the ultimate audience the organisation would like to reach)

Intermediaries

- Member State Officials and European Commission Officials
- Representatives of other regional Councils and their Secretariats, especially in the BSR
- Representatives of other pan-Baltic organisations
- Observer State Officials and representatives of Strategic Partners
- Parliamentarians
- Media representatives
- Librarians

End Users

- Representatives of International Organisations, NGOs and the business community
- Researchers, experts and students in the respective field
- Persons interested in or connected to the work of the CBSS and the general public

Thus External Communication can be channelled through different means and various tools.

The CBSS website www.cbss.org is the main tool for communication coordinated by the Secretariat and provides the basis for a one-stop-shop overview of CBSS activities and projects. The website is aimed at increasing the visibility and appeal of the CBSS.

Other communication tools include:

- Official publications of the Council of the Baltic Sea States
- Reports, seminars, workshops and conferences
- The CBSS flag and its placement

Logo and Key messages

The CBSS logo should always be used to increase the visibility and common identity of the CBSS.

Each CBSS cooperation body is responsible to define its purpose and to develop key messages about its activities, achievements and actions which will be channelled in the appropriate manner.

In developing its key messages the CBSS cooperation body should answer:

- What does this body focus on?
 - Why is the CBSS involved in this particular issue and how?
 - Which benefit do the activities of this body bring to the region?
- These messages then need to be channelled effectively to the target audiences.

CBSS Project Participation

The Information and Communication Strategy is a tool to mainstream ideas and projects to the political decision making level of the Member States.

The findings of the projects should be communicated from the project-level to the policy-level, to enhance and strengthen the project-policy-loop.

The CSO is regularly informed about the progress of projects and related major events.

The CBSS should focus on clear messages for each project and each stage of the projects throughout their lifespan answering the following:

- What does the project focus on?
- Why is the CBSS involved in this particular project and how?
- What is the benefit that the project brings to the region?
- Why is the project strategically important?
- What is the Experts Group's or other cooperation body's institutional role within the project?
- What are the expected results and achievements of the project?

Evaluation and Indicators

The CBSS Communication activities will be measured and evaluated using various indicators.

Budget

The budget for the activities related to the implementation of the Strategy is covered by the CBSS Secretariat annual budget, that of the Units and means and resources of the Member States including the Presidency.