



BSR STARS
Innovation in the Baltic Sea Region

Policy implications for BSR Stars Partners view of lessons learned from StarDust in participating countries



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This work has been conducted by StarDust project manager Karin Nygård Skalman and Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting

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This publication has been produced as part of the StarDust project, financed under the Baltic Sea Region Programme. The views expressed in this report, as well as the information included in it, do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Commission and in no way commit the institution.

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Executive Summary

BSR Stars is a transnational programme and policy collaboration that aims at strengthening competitiveness and economic growth in the Baltic Sea region by fostering transnational linkages between specialised research and innovation nodes. BSR Stars is a flagship within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. BSR Stars was jointly developed by the ten countries involved in 2009-2010.

The StarDust project 2010-2013 was the first step in achieving the long term goals of BSR Stars. The project was seen by the partnering countries as an essential way to test and to learn more about what was needed for a full-scale implementation of BSR Stars. In total StarDust mobilised 34 partners from the public and semi-public sector. These partners were supported by 43 associated partners from national, regional and local levels in the participating countries. In StarDust there were five testbeds for transnational innovation collaboration:

- Active for Life – new solutions for wellbeing and active ageing
- Clean Water – excellent network for higher water quality
- Comfort in Living – kitchen concepts for elderly
- MarChain – a platform for maritime collaboration
- Mobile Vikings – a platform for increased innovation capacity in mobile telecom

This report summarizes the lessons learned from StarDust actors involved in the respective countries. The purpose is to draw policy conclusions on how to work with transnational collaboration on innovation in the BSR based on the strategic idea of BSR Stars. The method used to gather data for the report was workshops in each country in order to draw implications from each country participating in StarDust.

When it comes to design of StarDust the overall design makes sense for most partners. The strategic idea of StarDust is emphasised as interesting. Working with projects is seen as a good design aspect of the projects but pre studies are needed in order to create a common ground for cooperation. Involving the ministries and innovation agencies in reference groups was a missing component in the design. Partners perceive it as important to have national contact points for the different pilot projects. Interaction between cluster organisations and policy makers on a domestic level promotes development. Access to support tools is seen as a well-functioning part of the design. According to partners the tools used in StarDust worked well. Other views regarding the design of StarDust is that the use of Interreg financing is not perfectly adjusted to the needs of collaboration. Some partners identify the administrative burden as troublesome. There is also a need to validate partner organisations so that partnerships consist of strong cluster organisations from the different countries.

The main lessons learned regarding implementation is that management issues are very important when implementing a project like StarDust. Management issues are mentioned as essential in the implementation of the projects and the importance of clear leadership (and sometimes the lack of leadership) in the projects is something that partners view as highly important. The leadership of the transnational cooperation in the projects may define the outcome of the project. Another important lesson learned regarding implementation is that communication is needed on different levels in order to make transnational cooperation work. Communication and information flow is mentioned by partners as one of the key elements in implementation. Another important aspect is

financial issues. Partners talk about the need for flexible financing and express the need for transparency. Another lesson learned is that cluster organisations involved in transnational collaboration has to be specific about its own targets. To find showcases or “low hanging fruits” is important for both national and international cluster cooperation.

Regarding goal fulfilment the project has achieved many of the goals targeted. Most partners believe that StarDust resulted in open innovation platforms even though the concept of open innovation platforms is not clear to everyone. According to partners new capabilities and competencies have been achieved as well as a toolbox of open innovation methods. Networks have been expanded as a result of the project as well as increased involvement and information flow between countries. The information flow created by the project has resulted in an exchange of sectorial knowledge as well as information on how to work with cluster development and regional innovation strategies. The overall view of partners is that StarDust resulted in new innovation projects. New concepts of innovation has been used and spread, e.g. the Demola and the Innovation Camp. Cooperation in the BSR is perceived as valuable. The created networks simplify the initiation of contacts and thus a foundation for long term collaboration has been created. According to partners, it is too early to measure the effects up to now of StarDust regarding commercialised products and services.

In the report overall conclusions and policy recommendations are made to BSR Stars:

- The design makes sense and creates value but fine tuning can be done
- Building strong strategic alliances demands strong leadership regarding both strategic and operational issues
- Process support in different stages and in different areas is needed
- Partners involved needs to be nationally recognised and to have legitimacy
- There is a need for non bureaucratic financing when it comes to innovation activities
- Different goals in StarDust has been achieved according to partners but for long term effects there is a need for critical mass of projects and collaboration platforms
- Non expected results should not be underestimated such as the spread of and absorption of existing knowledge and concepts from other countries

1. Introduction

1.1. The strategic idea of BSR Stars

BSR Stars is a transnational programme and policy collaboration that aims at strengthening competitiveness and economic growth in the Baltic Sea Region by fostering transnational linkages between specialised research and innovation nodes. This will lead to new types of collaboration with the aim of developing new products, services and business models for global markets. BSR Stars is a flagship within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and contributes to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. The programme is the first of its kind in Europe (having been jointly developed by ten countries and tested since 2010), and represents the “state of the art” in smart specialisation and challenge-driven innovation policies on a macro-regional level.¹

BSR Stars is built on a number of departure points²:

- A focus on solving societal challenges and finding new market potentials in areas where the Baltic Sea Region can be globally competitive, and where the market for new system deliveries, applications, products and services is substantial
- A systemic view on innovation – i.e. innovation demands collaboration and a social context that brings smart individuals together in the macro-region
- An acknowledgement of the existence of strong innovation environments³ in different fields in each country that have the role of facilitating cooperation between triple helix actors (research organisations, companies and the public sector), and that can act as catalyser for sharing knowledge and developing business between countries
- A balance between supporting development and growth in existing structures, and supporting more radical innovation and renewal for tomorrow’s growth platforms
- A view of the Baltic Sea Region as a shared “resource base” for innovation to happen (not excluding stronger relations to other growth regions in the world)
- A belief in the need for trust and social capital to be built in order to realise the full potential of transnational collaboration

The last decade has seen an unprecedented expansion of international collaboration in research, development and innovation. Many countries have developed specific measures for improving international RDI collaboration to globally source knowledge, boost economic development, or satisfy an increasing domestic demand for specialist personnel. This has reached a level where there are no longer purely national innovation systems.

The long-term vision of BSR Stars is to establish globally-leading innovation hubs and work towards a more integrated resource base in the BSR as a macro-region.

The mission is to shape a more integrated and dynamic resource base by linking strong research environments, clusters and SME-networks – creating a number of globally

¹ The BSR Stars programme is a joint effort of ten countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden) that has been developed since 2009 – involving experts from these countries’ ministries, national innovation agencies, cluster organisations, SME-networks and research/innovation organisations. The programme is a result of longer-standing policy cooperation and sharing of good practices in the field of cluster development that has existed between these countries over the last decade. The program can be downloaded at <http://www.bsrstars.se/bsr-stars/>

² These departure points have been inspired by both academic literature, policy strategies and national programmes, and are continually revisited – ensuring that the programme reflects current innovation policy strategies and priorities.

³ research and innovation centers, cluster organisations and SME-networks

leading research and innovation hubs in the BSR in order to achieve stronger critical mass, attractiveness, and a competitive international position. These hubs (or transnational innovation partnerships) will be skilled in identifying market potentials in "grand challenges", mobilising competencies that may be dispersed over different sectors and geographies, and providing open platforms from which various actors can work together to create innovative solutions that tackle these challenges.

The BSR Stars programme is a long-term initiative working towards four overall objectives:

1. Facilitating transnational networks, partnerships and strategic alliances between cluster organisations, companies, universities and public authorities, which lead to:
 - innovation-driven new business models, commercialised applications, products and services
 - increased export activities (both between countries within the BSR and outside of the BSR)
 - new firms and jobs
2. Sharing, developing, and utilising open and demand-driven innovation methods⁴
3. Improving innovation policy capabilities to leverage specialised national strongholds – bringing added value to all involved (i.e. macro-regional smart specialisation)
4. Strengthening the international visibility and attractiveness of the BSR's innovation capabilities.

1.2. Working on policy strategic and operational levels in parallel

In order to achieve the long term goals of BSR Stars, there needs to be continuous development of both the strategic policy frames, and the operational activities that are undertaken.

On a policy level, innovation strategies, policies and financial instruments need to support transnational collaboration. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region provided the over-arching framework, and many national and regional-level innovation strategies have already mirrored the aim of stronger transnational collaboration on innovation. True macro-regional action also requires that the shared strategic aims are reflected in policies and financial instruments in the participating countries. A coordinated programme governance structure can help enable effective implementation, and continuous development and renewal of policy measures.

On an operational level, companies, research organisations and societal actors need to explore and act on the potential of the macro region (through collaborative development activities, market expansion, etc.). Innovation processes are enhanced through the diversity of involved agents and individuals. By teaming up with complementary partners, companies and other actors have the possibility of leveraging their own strengths in combination with others in order to address challenges or take advantage of market opportunities that are not possible to take on alone. For some actors, clusters and other innovation nodes may help speed-up linkages and the development of trust by serving as proactive bridging agents – identifying relevant opportunities and complementary competencies, as well as facilitating collaborative action.

⁴ Open and demand-driven innovation methods are those that support companies (and other organisations) to access and use knowledge from outside their own organization (from other companies, research organisations, entrepreneurs, students, user groups, experts, etc.) – innovating together with partners to share both risks and rewards; methods can include new ways of gathering market intelligence (e.g. through signal sessions with experts and anthropological research), new ways of identifying potential collaboration partners, new ways of collaborative development (e.g. interactive innovation camps), etc.

Companies and research organisations – as well as policy actors – need to interact across the various levels of innovation systems (see illustration below) to ensure that innovation processes can reach their full market potential.

2. Taking the strategy operational – the StarDust project

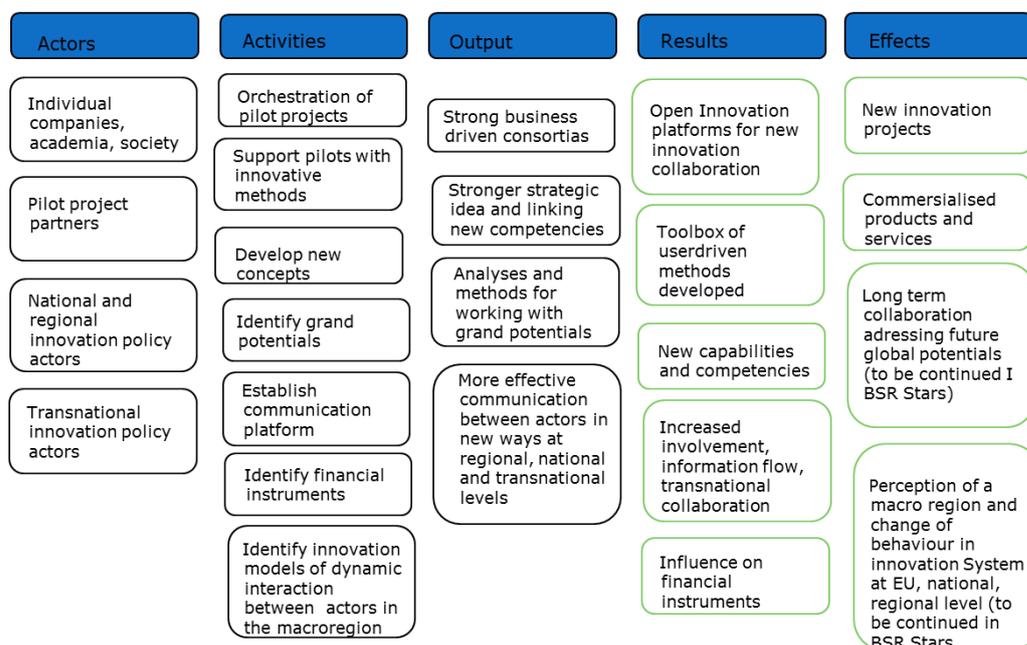
2.1. Experimenting with developing transnational collaboration – StarDust

The StarDust project⁵ is the first step in achieving the long term goals of BSR Stars. The project is led by VINNOVA in Sweden. In total, StarDust mobilises 35 partners from the public and semi-public sector. These partners are supported by 48 associated partners from national, regional and local levels. This set of partners represents all national ministries and innovation agencies in the ten Baltic Sea countries (See Appendix I for a list of partners and associated partners).

The partnering countries in BSR Stars viewed the project as an essential way to test and to learn more about what was needed for a full-scale implementation of BSR Stars. Over the course of the project, partners expected StarDust to result in new open innovation platforms (addressing grand challenges) and a toolbox of working with “user-driven innovation methods” between countries. Other expected results included developing new capabilities and competencies for working transnationally (among people working in cluster organisations and SME networks, as well as among people in national ministries and agencies), increasing involvement and information flow between countries, and influencing financial instruments to better enable transnational collaboration on innovation in the Baltic Sea Region. These results from the StarDust project are expected to contribute to a number of longer-term effects such as new innovation projects, commercialised products and services, and longer-term collaborative platforms addressing societal challenges. The overall effect logic for the StarDust project is illustrated below.

⁵ Financed by the EU- Baltic Sea Region Programme with 6,5 million Euro for a period of three years (2011-2013), www.eu.baltic.net

StarDust Effect logic



The core of StarDust and the “testbed” are five transnational innovation partnerships⁶:

- Active for Life – new solutions for wellbeing and active ageing
- Clean Water – excellent network for higher water quality
- Comfort in Living – kitchen concepts for elderly
- MarChain – a platform for maritime collaboration
- Mobile Vikings – a platform for increased innovation capacity in mobile telecom

Each partnership brings together researchers, clusters, SME-networks and public actors from different countries. The partnerships combine different perspectives and areas of expertise. The set of partnerships are supported by various types of training, coaching, external expertise, etc. (see section on “process support” below) in order to support the development of the partnerships’ strategic idea and value proposition, facilitate access to outside expertise and market intelligence, increase cultural awareness and strength of the collaborative partnership, and provide continuous coaching to catalyse progress.

The overall aim for the five partnerships is to establish sustainable platforms for continuous development and dynamic smart specialisation.

⁶ The partnerships were selected through a transnational call for expressions of interest conducted in early 2010. More than 20 partnerships responded, and the BSR Stars steering group (led by VINNOVA) selected five to be included in the StarDust project application.

2.2. The report

As StarDust is about creating results and effects on different levels, as was mentioned in previous section, different ways of learning from the project has been undertaken.

- A research study on participating cluster organizations and their ability to support internationalization by Emily Wise.
- A research study on regional competitiveness within ICT, Clean Tech, Maritime Transport and Health by FORA and Stockholm Business School.
- A study on support tools (e.g. matchmaking tools and social media, Estonia/Norway).

Results from StarDust have been monitored by the lead partner VINNOVA. A final report called "Stronger together - strengthening Global Position through Business and Innovation Collaboration in the BSR" was published in December 2013⁷.

StarDust in facts and figures

Total budget: €6.5m

35 partners and 48 associated partners

Attracted more than €11.1m of add-on funding

Involved more than 890 SMEs in innovation activities

Developed 35 new concepts

Succeeded in 9 research and innovation calls for tenders

Tested 14 new collaborative innovation methods

The purpose of this report is to summarize the lessons learned from actors involved in the respective countries in order to draw policy conclusions on how to work with transnational collaboration on innovation in the BSR based on the strategic idea of BSR Stars. This report should thus be seen as a report summarizing the different views and the lessons learned from participating organisations in each country. It should be mentioned that different countries have participated in StarDust in different ways and that the number of actors from each country varies. There are 35 partners and 48 associated partners in the StarDust project. The partners have all played different roles in the project and thus their impression of the achieved results varies.

The method used to gather data for this report was workshops in each country in order to draw implications from each country participating in StarDust. Involved actors such as ministries, innovation agencies, cluster organisations, research institutions, companies were invited to participate in a workshop in each country. Workshops were thus conducted in each involved country except for Iceland (Telephone interview).

- Estonia, 10th of September 2013
- Sweden, 2th of October 2013
- Denmark, 3rd of October 2013
- Finland, 7th of October 2013

⁷ The report is available for download here: <http://www.bsrstars.se/reports/>

- Germany, 8th of October 2013
- Lithuania, 10th of October 2013
- Latvia, 11th of October 2013
- Norway, 13th of October 2013
- Poland, 2nd of December 2013
- Iceland, 16th of December 2013 (Telephone interview)

In the appendices of this report a list of the participants that have participated in any of the above mentioned workshops can be found.

2.3. Analytical framework

The workshops in each country have been conducted with the use of the same methodology going through 3 steps:

- Self-evaluation

Initially participants have been asked to evaluate StarDust using the effect logic developed for StarDust and reflecting on if the goals have been achieved or not

- Interviews on lessons learned

As a second step participants worked with interviews as a tool to discuss the lessons learned from StarDust. Interview questions used were:

- What do you think are the main lessons learned from how StarDust as a project was designed?
 - What are your reflections about the implementation of StarDust (e.g. process support, communication, management, cooperation)?
 - What are the most important lessons learned regarding the implementation of StarDust?
 - What are the success factors for making cooperation work?
 - What was the main use of StarDust?
 - Are there unexpected results from StarDust?
 - Have there been synergies to other initiatives in the Baltic Sea Region?
- Discussion about the future
- In the third part of the workshop, a discussion regarding the future was held. The discussions included which areas that should be continued, which that should be terminated and which that should be initiated.

2.4. The design of StarDust

Summary

- The overall design of StarDust makes sense for most partners
- Pilot projects are a good way to work but pre studies are needed
- Involving the ministries and national innovation agency in reference groups was a missing component in the design
- The use of Interreg and the Baltic Sea Region Programme is not perfectly suited to the needs of building macro regional innovative collaboration
- There is a need to validate partners organisations and people involved
- Having support tools is seen as a well-functioning part of the design

In workshops the participant actors of StarDust were asked about the main lessons learned from how StarDust as a project was designed. Different aspects of the design of StarDust were identified as important. These different aspects and lessons learned are presented below.

The overall design from BSR Stars makes sense for most partners

The overall strategic idea of StarDust is emphasised in workshops as interesting. One of the aspects regarding the overall design of StarDust is the notion that cluster organisations can act as intermediaries in order to create links between companies, research organisations and societal partners in and between the different countries. In one of the workshops the policy frame was mentioned as very positive as this enables contacts to be made between countries and between different spheres of Triple Helix (Business, Academia, and Society). Linking strong actors in each country in order to deal with a challenging societal issue is an approach that is seen as important. Such an approach is an opportunity to enable transnational cooperation. In one of the workshops this is mentioned as:

“Themes are relevant”

“The overall subject is interesting”

“The philosophy was clear”

During the workshops some critical views regarding the design was raised. Some actors view the design as too broad. Other views are that a challenge driven approach could be complemented with a more bottom-up approach focusing on existing strongholds in the different countries.

“There could be a greater involvement with a bottom up approach and one should not only focus on the challenges”

Some partners believe that the goals of StarDust are realistic ambitions and others think that an even greater emphasis could be put on results. There was also some critique regarding the overall design of StarDust. Here it was said that StarDust should have been altered so that more synergies with the Nordic innovation programmes could be created and that the time perspective of three years was too short.

Projects are a good way to work but pre-studies are needed

Working with projects is seen as a good design aspect of the StarDust project. There are however still comments about how the projects were identified. Some of the StarDust partners perceive that the identification process of projects was done too quickly and that the process in some ways was closed for insight. Some partners believe that the pilot projects should be designed so that more emphasis and time can be spent on the pre-study phase. To work and analyse the prerequisites for pilot projects could influence the content and the partnership.

“If possible, an initial “pre-study” phase to secure partnerships, vision goals etc. before committing to three years of (strategic) partnership”

In workshops, the lack of interaction and meetings between the pilot projects were mentioned as an issue that should be strengthened in the design of StarDust. If a close cooperation between different pilot projects can be established, innovation and business potentials between sectors can be utilised to a larger extent. The pilot projects also need to enable more company involvement.

“The pilot structure is very good but needs to be more vertical and easy access for business.”

Involving the ministries and national innovation agency in reference groups was a missing component in the design

One of the lessons learned regarding the overall design of StarDust is the need to have reference groups on a country level. As for the design of StarDust this was missing as a component in the design. Policy makers from the different countries designed StarDust and they were advisory/steering group to program management of the project. Partners perceive it as important when implementing to have national contact points for the different pilot projects.

“It would have been good to have a third layer in the design- different working groups on the country level. This point of contact has been missing in the project and it would possibly have opened up new possibilities.”

When creating international cooperation between countries based on the logic of the BSR Stars project, there has to be an interaction between cluster organisations and policy makers on the domestic level (i.e. the home country of the cluster):

“I would have hoped to have more of a national dialogue, i.e. to find out what results have been created and to have exchange of knowledge between the national stakeholders.. On a policy level you can show that collaboration and activities have an impact, good results are automatically communicated back into the system. To have a policy dialogue on a domestic level can improve national programmes and initiatives. If dedicated people to work with can be identified, this really inspires to new projects.”

The use of Interreg and the Baltic Sea Region Programme is not perfectly adjusted to the needs of collaboration

In some of the country workshops the funding from the Baltic Sea Region Programme was identified as a design issue for StarDust and something that influences the design of the project. Some partners identify the administrative burden as troublesome in this aspect and others view that the Interreg funding has influenced the process and the logic of doing things in the project.

“We got stuck in a certain logic and process when we decided to seek funding from the Baltic Sea Region Programme”.

“This kind of long-term complicated projects with a rigid funding might make it harder to engage”.

The Interreg funding also meant that adding additional partners to the pilot projects was not possible. For other partners, such as research organisations, the source of funding meant other kind of problems as in the case of subcontracting:

“This gave no room for adding new partners or subcontractors,⁸ and thus no possibilities to add expertise that is often required in order to perform specific tasks. This is difficult for a research institution like us”.

Other partners have the impression that the way StarDust was designed in Work packages was a result of the Interreg funding. Yet, there is a notion that there was a certain degree of flexibility and that the budget set up was adequate. These partners think that it was possible within the project to adjust over time and to restructure during the way of development for pilot projects. One of the partners rose the need to have small funds in common between pilot partners in order to be able to budget small task projects during a workshop.

There is a need to validate partner organisations and those involved

One of the issues regarding the design of StarDust that has been brought up in the workshops is regarding how the partnerships in the pilot projects have functioned. There was an expectation that partners of the pilot partners would consist of strong cluster organisations. Quite a few partners raise a concern regarding that the selection of partners in the pilot projects did not always work very well.

“...the focus was on finding suitable partners. There was not so much effort given in finding the best ones.”

In several workshops, the validation of partners has been expressed as important and this has put high expectations on the involved partners. According to some of the partners, it is necessary that both partners and individuals are validated. For the same partners it is expected that those organisations that are involved as partners should be able to handle international projects, show a high level of commitment and they should be relevant as stakeholders. Individuals representing the involved cluster organisation should have project management skills and/or expertise.

An idea raised during one of the country workshops is that it should be possible to evaluate partners after some time in the project. This would make it easier to alter the composition of each partnership during the project period.

Access to support tools is seen as a well-functioning part of the design

Tools to support cooperation between the involved partners in the pilot projects were part of the design. According to the partners, these tools have worked well. Some partners mention that it would have been useful if the tools that were developed by StarDust could have been developed even earlier on in the process. Process support is viewed as an important part of the design. Especially that support that deals with setting goals, developing strategies are seen as especially useful as partners often have different

⁸ It is possible to purchase subcontractors as consultant. It is not possible to add new partners and make major changes more than ones during the project lifetime.

agendas. The matchmaking of partners as well as and communication tools between partners are also viewed as important tools.

2.5. Project implementation

Summary

- Management is a success factor in implementation
- Communication is needed between different levels and process support is appreciated
- Financing needs to be flexible
- It is important to create results early on and to have more business orientation

In workshops in the different countries participants were asked about their reflections on implementation and the main lessons learned from implementation.

When talking about implementation, a majority of partners and associated partners speak about a cooperation that has developed over time and that the partnership today can be characterised by trust, knowledge about the different cluster strengths, information sharing and that there now is a good platform in order to form continuous cooperation. The time perspective of three years is considered to be too short when building strong transnational cooperation.

Management is a success factor in implementation

Management issues are mentioned by partners as very important when implementing a project like Stardust. Overall partners are satisfied with the way VINNOVA has managed StarDust. In the workshops partners express that VINNOVA managed the project in a good way.

“VINNOVA played an essential role in the implementation”

“The network is strong because VINNOVA held it together”

One aspect mentioned regarding management by VINNOVA is that the project management took lead in discussions with the Baltic Sea Region Secretariat, something which was perceived as positive by the partners. Other partners emphasise that meetings and workshops with VINNOVA have been a good way of communicating.

There are also partners that believe that there was not a clear role between lead partner and other stakeholders in the beginning. The partners believed that the project management of StarDust could have developed a clearer plan for external communication from early on and that administration should have been in place from the start.

Management issues are mentioned as essential in the implementation of the projects. The importance of a clear leadership (and the sometimes lack of leadership) in the projects is something that partners views as highly important. The leadership of the transnational cooperation in the projects may define the outcome of the project. Strong leadership in the projects is a key to a successful implementation, and thus partners propose that training should be available at the beginning regarding leadership issues.

“One of the most important lessons learned about the implementation are the problems of leadership. The leadership should be defined in the beginning. The absence of a clearly defined

leadership made the project somewhat dysfunctional. In the future skills and training should be available from the beginning. It is a make it or break it situation. It defines the outcome. “

Communication is needed between different levels and process support is appreciated

Communication is needed on different levels in order to make transnational cooperation work. Communication and information flow is mentioned by partners as one of the key elements in implementation.

“It is essential to communicate, to solve problems and to communicate”

Projects with a large amount of partners and associated partners (like StarDust) require communication. According to partners, the cultural and language differences also make communication more difficult.

According to some partners, communication aspects and tools could have been developed and used earlier on in the project. Moreover, both external and internal communication could have been arranged in a better way. Quite a few partners are pleased with the communication tools such as the use of Projectplace (an internet tool for project management that has been provided to project partners).

Partners have appreciated the process support given in the implementation of the pilot projects. The teambuilding between partners takes time and it can be facilitated by process support. It is about *“understanding of how to work together.”* There might also be different expectations from partners. One of the partners express that it might not be so easy to collaborate in reality as in theory.

Substantial work was required early on in the pilot projects in order to form the transnational partnership and set the framework for strategy development and overall planning of the project. According to both the project partners the different support tools that were offered to the pilot projects added value by bringing in different aspects to the collaboration and different kind of competences,.

Partners perceive that the management has offered support when needed. When there are challenges in the pilot projects and when collaborating between partners in different countries it can be of great use with interference from outside the pilot. Partners think that interfering in the pilot work might be a good idea when it is obvious that there is a problem.

“Interfere early when it is not working. If there are challenges or problems do interfere. Sometimes it is easier to identify the problem from outside the pilot.”

There are also partners that think process support tools were good but that they should have been introduced earlier on in the process.

“Good innovation tools were introduced to the projects. When we got the tools they were utilised but the tools should have been there earlier.”⁹

Financing needs to be flexible

Financial issues are raised by partners in the discussions about implementation. Partners talk about the need for flexible financing and express the need for transparency. For some countries, national financing is a barrier. Partners without possibilities to add extra funds

⁹ There were many tools available to choose from early in the project, but the value of the tools were not known to the partners and to use them were not compulsory.

perceive this as a problem. Others mention the allocation of the budget within the pilot projects and perceive the split of the budget lines between partners as a problem:

“It was not good splitting the budget lines between partners. We did not expect such a long time with budget changes. The project is too big in that sense”.

The Interreg financing has also created problems for national partners when arranging support activities. During a workshop in one of the partner countries the inflexibility of the budget as well as the perceived inflexibility with the Interreg financing was raised as problem. Moreover, the budget and project planning were not viewed as flexible enough for project partners to act accordingly and they did not support collaboration.

It is important to create results early on and to have more business orientation

According to the partners, there are lessons learned when it comes to creating the desired results. One lesson learned that was identified at a country workshops is that the cluster organisation involved in transnational cooperation has to be specific about its own targets. To find showcases or “low hanging fruits” is important for both national and international clustering cooperation. The involvement of private enterprise is fundamental for the creation of results.

“More companies should have been involved.”

“More business and companies to the network, there should be better involvement”

Lessons learned about what makes cooperation work

The following section is a summary of what partners believe are important factors when it comes to creating a successful transnational cooperation in the area of innovation facilitation/generation/promotion.

Leadership and management is crucial

Leadership is very much about facilitating cooperation. In the interviews with the project partners, words such as *patience* and *openness* are frequently mentioned. Several partners believe that the Lead partners should include all the partners in decision making processes. One comment is that the leadership should not be authoritative when creating cooperation.

“Lead partners should not be of authoritative style”.

Involvement of different levels of governance

Governance issues are mentioned as an important aspect in making transnational cooperation such as StarDust work. The involvement of ministries and innovation agencies is considered to be a success factor.

Shared vision and ambitious goals

To have common goals is a fundamental cornerstone for cooperation. The common goals create a basis for being engaged.

“Common understanding and shared goals, so that most partners are actually engaged”.

Some partners talk about the importance of having common problems to be solved, others talk about just having something to work on together.

According to partners, the level of ambitions regarding goals should be high. In order for results to be ambitious there cannot be too many compromises.

“Accept that we should not compromise too much. Because otherwise you do not get ambitious results”

Business involvement and market access in order to create results

Creating results together between the different countries is a prerequisite for a functioning cooperation between partners. Results are dependent on business involvement, business interest and closeness to markets. Companies should see an interest in participating.

Process support activities help speed up collaboration

Process support accelerates the processes of transnational cooperation. Process support can assist in the creation of mutual trust and understanding between partners in different cultures and settings. The support may also promote the creation of a win-win situation where the different parties see the common benefits and where a mutual understanding about the content of cooperation becomes clear. Partners identify the necessity to work with process support in different phases of cooperation.

“When we did the business model generation it was so concrete and practical. Everybody was very enthusiastic and felt that they had learned something.

Evaluation sessions were also good. I wish there had been more time to do more.”

Quite a few partners identify that process support should especially be arranged in the beginning of cooperation in order to speed up the mutual understanding and the creation of common goals.

To find the division of roles in the network and to broaden the network continuously

Transnational cooperation benefits from having real commitment from each partner. It is important that all partners find their role and strategic niche in the collaboration. To identify the complementary skills of the different partners is a way to work with smart specialisation in a transnational context. To establish the role of partners is also about division of tasks.

Developing the network by adding new components

Both the network and the cooperation have to be developed continuously. This can be done by adding new components to the cooperation. Means to develop the transnational cooperation include adding new cross sectorial possibilities for cooperation, to involve different representatives from different institutions and sectors as well as to involve target groups in the innovation activities.

Communication is crucial in transnational cooperation

Good communication is needed in order to create an understanding between partners from the different countries. In order to make cooperation work, both informal and formal contacts have to be made on a regular basis. These meetings can be complemented by different communication tools such as Skype meetings etc.

3. Goal fulfilment

Summary

- Most partners believe that StarDust has resulted in open innovation platforms even though the concept of open innovation platforms is not clear to everyone
- The goal of developing a toolbox is perceived as achieved in StarDust
- According to the partners of Stardust, new capabilities and competencies have been achieved
- According to the partners of Stardust, networks have been expanded as a result of StarDust as well as increased involvement and information flow between countries. The information flow created by the project has resulted in an exchange of sectorial knowledge as well as information on how to work with cluster development and regional innovation strategies
- Views are divided as to whether results of the StarDust project have had an influence on financial instruments supporting transnational innovation collaboration on both a national and an international level
- The overall view of partners is that StarDust has resulted in new innovation projects. New concepts of innovation have been used and spread, e.g. the Demola and the Innovation Camp
- According to the partners, it is too early to measure the effects up to now of StarDust regarding commercialised products and services.
- Cooperation in the BSR is perceived to be valuable. The created networks simplify the initiation of contacts and thus a foundation for long term collaboration has been created
- Most partners express that the macro regional concept is of use and that working together between countries is important. Some partners describe the macro regional approach as a bit of an eye opener. Moreover, partners suggest that there is a perception of a macro region but that a change of behaviour in the innovation system is more of a long term development

This section presents partners view of goal fulfilment in StarDust. Goals where set up in the beginning of the project according to the Effect logic in section 1.2.1.

3.1. Results

Open Innovation platforms for new innovation collaboration

Most partners believe that StarDust has resulted in open innovation platforms even though the concept of open innovation platforms is not clear to everyone



Most partners think that StarDust has resulted in open innovation platforms even though the concept of open innovation platforms is not clear to everybody. The concept of StarDust in itself is seen as an open innovation platform as it creates new types of cooperation.

Demola was mentioned as an example of an open innovation platforms by the creation of new Demola platforms in the different countries. Support tools like the use of Project

place is also mentioned when talking about the goal of open innovation platforms in the workshops. Working with grand societal challenges and working cross sectors creates prerequisites for open innovation platforms.

One comment in one of the country workshops regarded whether the platforms are really open or not.

Toolbox of user driven methods developed

The goal of developing a toolbox is perceived as achieved in StarDust



In workshops the goal of developing a toolbox of user driven methods is perceived as achieved in StarDust.

“We worked with support tools and learned a lot for the own organisation. We had coaching sessions and evaluation during the way. The output and results were how leadership and international collaboration could be developed”.

Many partners talk about the different tools and that the use of different tools improved the understanding of respective strengths, cooperation and strategy development in the projects. One of the partners from the Maritime collaboration explains:

“The project support tools was very good, it helped us to understand each other. In the beginning we understood maritime differently. We know now what the different countries do. It is very important. There was a good translation made.”

Different methods such as signal sessions, Business model canvas, matchmaking tools and Innovation camp are mentioned as user driven methods used. These methods are described as being concrete and useful.

“Innovation camp gave the opportunity to sit around the table with students, universities, companies etc. and to find the best way to solve projects. The results were 5 prototypes.

The tools were useful in collaboration and the use of tools can be introduced earlier on in the process of cooperation. Tools can also be further communicated according to some partners.

New capabilities and competencies

According to the partners of Stardust, new capabilities and competencies have been achieved



New capabilities and competencies have been achieved through participation in Stardust. This is a goal that most partners perceive is reached.

Cultural understanding has increased according to some partners as well as understanding the market. Cluster organisations have picked up ideas from other clusters. Understanding the sector in different countries is important in order to cooperate on innovation as one of the partners explains:

“We have different levels of development and understanding the industry is very important in order to do innovation. It is a very competitive environment. Sometimes it can be hard to share information in the sector. We developed a capability to talk about ideas that can be used for the whole macro region. Now we can cooperate based on the content.”

Also innovation agencies talk about the new knowledge and capabilities gained. In one of the countries involved the new competencies gained resulted in developing the national cluster program into a supporting internationalization.

“We participated as an agency, now we have new connections and new partnerships, we have various networks in innovation. It increases our competencies and we now start to internationalise cluster development in the national scheme. “

Increased involvement, information flow, transnational collaboration

According to the partners of Stardust, networks have been expanded as a result of StarDust as well as increased involvement and information flow between countries. The information flow created by the project has resulted in an exchange of sectorial knowledge as well as information on how to work with cluster development and regional innovation strategies



Networks have been expanded as a result of StarDust according to partners.

“What we perceive as a result was using the network within BSR. It was well functioning. It was easy to tap into the network. It was the whole Baltic Area. So my experience was that it was a good network and that the network has been expanding.”

Increased involvement and information flow between the countries is a result from StarDust according to most partners participating in the national workshops. The information flow created by the project means exchange of sectorial knowledge as well as information on how to work with cluster development and regional innovation strategies. Some partners express that they have been influenced by how other regions work with innovation and that there are synergies between different regions. The international innovation strategy of Skåne (Sweden) is mentioned when it comes to cross-sectorial innovation collaboration and peer reviews as well as the eco-system developed by Hermia in Tampere (Finland). Different countries also highlight bilateral relations and potentials being developed as a result of StarDust.

Partners also talk about that networks created in StarDust are sustainable.

“We have been able to create a stable and effective network of clusters”.

The sustainable networks can create opportunities for the future and examples of new joint project applications are being exemplified.

“We have good cooperation preparing for future projects to different programs.” .

One of the partners explains how the results in increased involvement and collaboration in the macro region is shown:

“BSR Stars and StarDust is used as a good example in EU and nationally when it comes to the EU BSR Strategy. I think in the end it worked. “

Influence on financial instruments

Views are divided as to whether results of the StarDust project have had an influence on financial instruments supporting transnational innovation collaboration on both a national and an international level



Views are divided about whether StarDust resulted in an influence on financial instruments (nationally and internationally supporting transnational innovation collaboration). Quite a few partners believe that steps has been taken in influencing future financial instruments but that the influence is not strong enough. Other partners believe that there has been a clear influence of financial instruments from working with StarDust. National programs supporting cluster development has been developed into supporting also international activities and in some countries a Baltic Sea Region dimension has been included in the EU structural funds.

“We are now planning the new financial instruments, StarDust has definitely influenced the way of thinking about internationalization. There is definitely an intention, people are thinking about making the cluster programme international (it is on the agenda) so this might be a result actually”.

Applications developed by partners in the different pilot projects in StarDust have received financing which creates an example of influence according to some partners. The influence of Bonus supporting also innovation activities and the creation of Innovation express is mentioned as examples of how StarDust influenced different financial instruments.

Other partners believe that StarDust has or will influence financial instruments but indirectly. The increased knowledge about what is needed to support the BSR development within a sector will in itself attract more funding according to partners.

3.2. Effects

New innovation projects

The overall view of partners is that StarDust has resulted in new innovation projects. New concepts of innovation have been used and spread, e.g. the Demola and the Innovation Camp



In national workshops the overall view is that StarDust has resulted in new innovation projects and different examples of new projects were presented. Partners from Mobile Vikings told about new innovation projects as well as the Demola¹⁰ network being developed which will create a platform for product and service development.

“We have really new ideas and new ways of combining cross sectors. The Demola project, it is now established in different parts. We want to establish it here as well. A group of students are working on one project topic, and they deliver to the industry. We focus on mobile solutions.”

¹⁰ Demola offers university students the opportunity to join multidisciplinary teams tasked with solving real-life business challenges together with partner companies. The concept started in Tampere in 2008 and is now spread to five countries linking 25 universities, over 300 companies and more than 2,000 students.

“Demola helped us with new business ideas but also to demonstrate businesses, universities and students.”

The results developed in the Innovation Camp¹¹ in Denmark was identified as important when it comes to new innovation projects from the pilot project of Comfort in Living. The innovation camp which gathered companies and design students from different countries created an arena to work on multi-functional concepts for kitchen for elderly people. The Innovation Camp resulted in prototypes and new concepts for multi-functional kitchen.

“Some of the concepts are concrete. We have concepts and prototypes that show the potential. The thing about the camp- it forces everybody to work on the same project. They had to do business plans for the concepts. In that way we got the concept very far.”

It was explained how different competencies were used from different countries in developing new multi-functional kitchen concepts.

“How it works? The University from Poznan creates technologies, The Latvian University creates the design and the companies produce. Danish people are responsible for materials. Swedish are also product developers. It builds international strong teamwork”.

The potentials of creating new innovation projects by working across the pilot projects and the different sectors were brought up during workshops.

“We can bring our competence in energy efficiency into other sectors like Active for life and Comfort in living. We have brought our solutions into sectors that do not have these kinds of solutions and techniques”.

Commercialised products and services

According to the partners, it is too early to measure the effects up to now of StarDust regarding commercialised products and services.



The effect of commercialised products and services from StarDust has not yet been reached according to partners.

“I guess that we have not reached the level of new commercialised products and services.”

Long term collaboration addressing future global potentials

Cooperation in the BSR is perceived to be valuable. The created networks simplify the initiation of contacts and thus a foundation for long term collaboration has been created



As mentioned earlier most partners believe that the network and cooperation created by participating in the StarDust project will last. Cooperation in the BSR is perceived to be

¹¹ Innovation Camp was arranged in Copenhagen. Teams of young designers, mentors and business representatives from 17 companies and seven countries were mixed and matched in cross-cultural teams.

valuable. The networks created makes contacts easy to make and the foundation for long term collaboration has been created.

“We have a joint interest in the Maritime industry. We can combine the best national strengths from every country.”

Perception of a macro region and change of behaviour in the innovation system at EU, national and regional level

Most partners express that the macro regional concept is of use and that working together between countries is important. Some partners describe the macro regional approach as a bit of an eye opener. Moreover, partners suggest that there is a perception of a macro region but that a change of behaviour in the innovation system is more of a long term development



In the workshops, most partners expressed that the macro regional concept is of use and that working together between countries is important. Some partners describe the macro regional approach as a bit of an eye opener.

“StarDust was an eye opener for me. Before StarDust we looked at the regional level. But now we started to look at other countries and bigger projects in order to identify new combinations of competences with other countries. We now look on both the national and on the international level in order to develop a macro region”.

According to the partners, there is a perception of a macro region but a change of behaviour in the innovation system is more of a long term development.

“Of course this wide effect of macro regional behaviour needs a longer time. It needs continuation. If you bring eleven countries together you have thousands of different perceptions in the different countries.”

Some of the partners are optimistic

“We have taken the first steps towards a new macro-regional behaviour.”

The partners that believe that there has been a change in the innovation system describe the influence on the new programming period of the EU programmes. Other partners suggest that the increased interaction between countries and the transnational collaboration in the projects have had impacts on the national cluster strategies. A regional representative explains the value added of having a multilevel dialogue on smart specialisation strategies in the Baltic Sea region as follows:

“As a region this has meant a lot to us, having the continuous multilevel dialogue on smart specialisation issues in the Baltic Sea Region. The multilevel dialogue is important to us in order to find the right partners regarding societal challenges.”

One of the partners believes that other macro regions in the EU could learn from the macro regional collaboration in the BSR:

“In the macro- regional view it could be useful for Southern Europe. They could learn from us in the Baltic Sea Region and from the Baltic Sea Region Strategy.”

3.3. The main benefits and unexpected results

Summary

According to the partners, one of the main benefits of StarDust is that StarDust can be seen as a first step towards BSR Stars and a test in transnational cluster collaboration. Through the cooperation between the different countries, StarDust is also believed to have resulted in concrete activities and results. The majority of partners claim that new contacts and new networks of partner organisations are the main benefits of StarDust. Several partners describe the networks as strong and sustainable. New knowledge and knowledge sharing are mentioned as positive results of StarDust and something that have been of great use.

StarDust and BSR Stars are also mentioned as being strong brands. Being part of the network means that the cluster organisation can be seen as accredited with a quality label.

At the workshops in each of the participating countries, the StarDust partners were asked about the main benefits of StarDust. Below is a summary of their responses.

A first step towards BSR Stars and a test

StarDust is by many partners seen as a first step towards the implementation of BSR Stars.

“StarDust has meant a launch of the BSR Stars and the StarDust project helps us to go to full scale implementation.”

In that way StarDust can be seen as a test and an experiment project regarding transnational cluster collaboration.

“It was a test case for cluster collaboration”

“The main benefit is to test the concept of collaboration between countries and businesses; for example how does it work?, what are the common goals? Can we actually share expertise and knowledge?”

Partners believe that collaboration should be continued and the created network has provided an infrastructure for cooperation. There is a belief that a macro-regional approach creates a value-added and that linking different parts of the Baltic Sea Region can be of importance for innovation activities.

“If we are to handle the international competitive situation we have to cooperate and we have to know each other”.

StarDust was a step forward but there is more to do to get even more results. .

An identification of first activities and creation of initial results

Even though partners mainly view StarDust as the first experimental stepping stone towards BSR Stars, concrete activities and results were also created through cooperation between the different countries. Within the framework of the StarDust project, activities that are deemed as important for all or some partner were identified. For instance, SMEs had opportunities to develop their ideas and prototypes for new products have been

developed. StarDust has also resulted in new project ideas that can be built on in the future. The Demola concept and the broadened use of this concept are seen as positive results.

The creation of networks and new contacts

Most partners identify new contacts and new networks of partner organisations as the main benefit of StarDust. Some partners describe the networks as strong and sustainable.

“The network which is really sustainable thanks to strong personal relations”

Partners also believe that created the network will grow. The network is believed to be a good platform for future business development, new projects etc.

Knowledge sharing and new knowledge developed

New knowledge and knowledge sharing are mentioned as beneficial results of the StarDust project. Cooperation is believed to have contributed to increased competencies in different ways. Some partners talk about new knowledge when it comes to innovation methodologies or project management as well as communication. Other partners mention to increase understanding of the rationale for transnational cooperation.

StarDust and BSR Stars as quality assurance

StarDust and BSR Stars are also mentioned as strong brands. Being part of the network means that the cluster organisation can be seen as it has been accredited with a quality label. BSRStars creates legitimacy and the brand can play a role in different situations including a good platform for different EU applications.

3.4. Unexpected Results

Participants in workshops in the different countries have been asked about unexpected results from StarDust. The replies to this question vary, and the unexpected results can be seen on different levels. Some partners perceive it as impressive that cooperation could be implemented with the large amount of partners. During one of the workshops, one of the participants express one unexpected result of StarDust as follows:

“The StarDust and BSR Stars have enabled a better integration of the Nordic innovation model and related networks. This has also been of benefit for the Nordic countries”

Other unexpected results include the amount of unknown innovations that already have been developed in the selected industries in the Baltic Sea Region. There is a disappointment among some partners that companies were not involved in a sufficient way. Other unexpected results include both cultural differences on one hand and cultural similarities on the other. Some partners perceive the cultural differences as big while others do not perceive them as big as previously anticipated.

“StarDust has crushed all my preconceptions; there are far less cultural differences than I thought”

Some partners mention the fact that projects were open to collaboration outside the BSR as one unexpected effect.

“We were also more open to other regions; and to compare the situation with other clusters and regions. We felt a need to compare with European networks and clusters,

and we could bring conclusions back to our own organisation. We also hosted visits from some Bulgarian clusters.”

Contacts with new partners and strong personal networks are, according to some of the partners, the most interesting unexpected results.

“I was surprised by the strong personal networks I got. I did not expect that. These networks can really be beneficial in the future. For the region where I come from, it is very interesting in different sectors. Companies from other sectors also want to create business with countries in the Baltic Sea Region”.

Other partners mention the process support, the communication and open innovation tools as interesting unexpected results. These tools can, according to some partners, be used in different settings and also in other transnational cooperation initiatives. Some partners also mentioned that the matchmaking enabled new and unexpected contacts.

StarDust and its working methods have resulted in new ways of doing things. The Innovation Express as well as the Demola network and the orchestration pilot on sustainable cities between Espoo in Finland and Skåne in Sweden¹² were all mentioned as positive (an unexpected) results.

An increased knowledge about the Baltic Sea Region and an increased understanding of the macro regional concept are unexpected effects.

BSR Stars and StarDust today seem as something of a role model for other macro regional strategies on innovation in the EU. This is another unexpected effect.

¹² VINNOVA have for 1,5 year financed two pilot projects additionally to the StarDust project with the aim to find ways of how to develop and orchestrate complex international partnerships. Smart cities cooperation between Tampere and Region of Skåne is one case. The other is system development of clean technology systems to China. Cross thematic cooperation between actors in the clean water and mobile Heights partnership has added renewal and new innovative ideas.

4. Sustainability

Summary

- The majority of partners believe that it is important to continue the cooperation developed in StarDust, to learn from best practise as well as from mistakes and to continue the development of cooperation.
- There is an unexploited potential with working with the existing network including the possibility to add new cross-sectorial activities.
- The macro-regional approach has opened up for a broadened perspective beyond the home region. Joint applications for funding together with partners from StarDust can be a way to maintain the network. Different support tools used in StarDust are also considered as interesting to continue working with. Matchmaking events can be of use in creating meetings between people that in turn can create new project ideas.
- Some partners suggest that the development of strategic ideas of cooperation should be conducted prior to the identification and application for funding. These partners suggest that the pecking order today is reversed, i.e. the work to identify funds is done reactively and not based on a pre-determined strategy.
- When countries arrange capacity building activities together some partner believe it is important not to bundle management from different levels of expertise in the same trainings. Cluster managers can differ greatly when it comes to skills and expertise. If cluster managers with high expertise are put in the same groups as managers with little expertise the former will have little use of the training.
- It will be important in the future to clarify the use of the analytical work and how policy impact from this work can be achieved.
- Many partners believe that it is important to become even more specific in the pilot work and to deepen the cooperation. As of today, some areas are perceived as rather broad and pilot partners believe that there is an unexploited potential in becoming more specific and to build the network from that.
- Several partners identify a need to more directly involve companies in future activities. StarDust and BSR Stars are seen as a better possibility for company involvement compared to different EU initiatives.
- Different ways of strengthening the transnational cooperation between cluster organisations were suggested in the workshops. Transnational cooperation and development of joint strategies between cluster organisations in different countries are viewed as complex tasks that demand different kind of support.
- It is believed that policy makers can learn from how a transnational collaboration on innovation can work and further that the same policy makers also can support if there are problems with the cooperation. Closes linkages between private enterprise and policy makers is believed to facilitate trade between neighbouring countries.
- Smart specialisation issues in a macro regional context are identified in some workshops as a future potential scenario for the neighbouring countries. By doing so, clusters and strongholds in each country can be used in a smarter way.
- Education and training is an opportunity to create understanding between countries and also to establish links between people. For future possibilities in using the macro region as a more integrated resource base it will be important to include these aspects into education
- It is important to create larger networks in the future. Expanding the networks to third countries outside the BSR as well as getting more relevant partners on board in the participating BSR countries are issues that were mentioned.

4.1. What to continue with

The majority of partners in the different countries believe that it is important to continue the cooperation developed in StarDust, to learn from best practice as well as from mistakes and to continue the development of the cooperation.

“We started to work together. We could see that some projects were more successful than others. We should implement the best practise that we have here.”

It considered as important to use and develop the networks that have been created within StarDust.

“The most important recommendation is to continue, this is very much needed, but it should be more in dept.”

“We should continue working with innovation cooperation platform that we have created.”

The developed network is not only useful within the pilot projects but also between the pilot projects. There is an unexploited potential with working with the existing network including the possibility to add new cross-sectorial activities.

Meetings in the BSR setting should continue to create joint energy to work together. Some partners recommend that meetings with all partners should be continued in the future.

“There is a potential with large meetings with all partners. A mix with all partners is better than exclusive meetings for the pilot partners. Joint meetings might result in more ideas. Larger meetings can help to create new networks and help us to create new products in the region as well as to spread new innovations in a broader region in Europe.”

Even though networking activities are important, it is important to continue working with overall strategy.

“StarDust is a strategy development project. This should be continued”.

According to some partners, projects initiated between partners should support strategy .

There are different things the network can continue doing including e.g. to apply to different EU programmes promoting transnational collaboration between countries. Partners believe that new networks and working relations have been created. The macro-regional approach has opened up for a broadened perspective beyond the home region. Joint applications for funding together with partners from StarDust can also be a way to maintain the network.

“In order to work good we could try another application, in order to keep the network sustainable.”

Instruments such as the *Innovation Express*¹³ are mentioned by partners as practical and result oriented. According to partners, this kind of instruments should be continued. For instance, the *Innovation Express* makes it possible to create new relations in an easy way. Different support tools used in StarDust are also considered as interesting to continue working with. Innovation activities that have proved to create interesting results, including e.g. the *Innovation Camp*, can be used in order to attract companies.

¹³ The BSR Innovation Express Call was launched in early 2013 to foster the internationalization of SMEs through cluster organisations. Individual innovation proposals were able to apply for a maximum €0,5m for 1,5 years.

“Innovation camp creates results, you get down to a concrete level. This is where the industry becomes interested.”

Matchmaking is often mentioned in the country workshops as an important component for transnational cooperation that should be continued. Matchmaking events can be of use in creating meetings between people that in turn can create new project ideas.

In some country workshops, it has been emphasised that transnational cooperation should be demand driven. Thus, if cluster initiatives in a certain sector have identified a potential in cooperating with other clusters in the Baltic Sea Region such cooperation should be enabled and funded.

4.2. What to stop doing

Based on the lessons learned so far, partners discussed which activities they believe should be discontinued.

The potential of cross-sectorial cooperation is mentioned when talking about things that should be continued. Creating new and unexpected innovations might need more of a implicit cross sectorial approach. However, some partners believe that it is not fruitful to separate different sectorial projects like in StarDust as there are potential for innovation in between sectors.

Some partners suggest that the development of strategic ideas of cooperation should be conducted prior to the identification and application for funding. These partners suggest that the pecking order today is reversed, i.e. the work to identify funds is done reactively and not based on a pre-determined strategy. When countries arrange capacity building activities together some partner believe it is important not to bundle management from different levels of expertise in the same trainings. Cluster managers can differ greatly when it comes to skills and expertise. If cluster managers with high expertise are put in the same groups as managers with little expertise the former will have little use of the training.

“The best cluster managers should meet the best cluster managers from other countries. It is not interesting otherwise”.

The innovation monitor which was a part of StarDust is mentioned in this discussion. (The BSR Innovation Monitor 2012 highlights areas of innovation policy where the BSR countries could improve their framework conditions for innovation). The question is whether the monitor really should be used on a policy level. It will be important in the future to clarify the use of the analytical work and how policy impact from this work can be achieved.

In one of the country workshops the question of specialisation was raised. Here it was mentioned that there should be a bottom-up approach. The top-down approach may result in that a certain area of specialisation on a macro regional level will be imposed on countries.

“We should specialise in the fields that actually exists. Sometimes things are being imposed on countries and they are not very active. Go from smaller things.”

4.3. What to start doing

In the country workshops several ideas of what to start doing was identified.

Adding on to the pilot work

Many partners believe that it is important to become even more specific in the pilot work and to deepen the cooperation. As of today, some areas are perceived as rather broad and pilot partners believe that there is an unexploited potential in becoming more specific and to build the network from that. Other pilot partners have already started discussing how to become more specific in new areas and in new technologies. This is believed to make the projects more attractive for companies and there is a belief that this can lead to that the private sector become more involved and thus that partaking companies become more competitive in the future.

“In MarChain we have discussed new areas and new technology (light weight), this can be a push for companies to earn money. If we can be a magnet, and to learn what is happening, the parts manufacturers can be involved at an earlier stage.”

Partners in MarChain also talk about the interest of building a transnational Maritime platform between cluster initiatives within the sector. Such a platform would facilitate cooperation within maritime issues.

More business involvement is needed

Several partners identify a need to more directly involve companies in future activities. StarDust and BSR Stars are seen as a better possibility for company involvement compared to different EU initiatives. Partners believe that this is the case because cluster organisations can act as intermediaries. One of the partners concludes:

“It is important to learn from this project because network and linkages are expanded very well”

There are different suggestions about how to involve companies more directly. Cluster cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region could be a platform for the matchmaking of different companies and thus the creation of business opportunities in the neighbouring countries. One suggestion is to create different databases that make it easier from companies in one country to find companies in another country. Another suggestion is that cluster organisations in the Baltic Sea Region jointly could act as a one-stop-shop in supporting market and innovation activities. Companies may also be interested in participating in different macro-regional themes of development, especially if this also creates business opportunities.

Process support for cooperation and development of strategies

Different ways of strengthening the transnational cooperation between cluster organisations were suggested in the workshops. Transnational cooperation and development of joint strategies between cluster organisations in different countries are viewed as complex tasks that demand different kind of support.

“The coordination process of pilot projects must be about more facilitation, more time and more support.”

Different ways of supporting the development of joint strategies are proposed by partners in the different countries. Different communication solutions can help as means of enabling dialogue (meetings and discussions). Strategy tools such as the creation of

roadmaps for the transnational cooperation, is another suggestion. Working with visualisation and communication are perceived as very important when making knowledge in different countries more accessible. Visualisation and communication are also believed to be important when developing joint goals.

In the first phase of cooperation partners believe that it is important to quickly understand the different competencies in the different countries. One way to gain such an apprehension is travel to the partner country and to receive a personal presentation of One way of doing this is to travel to that country and to be presented to strong actors in that country. For partners to get to know each other it may also be helpful to really spend time together in the beginning and to work with different tools that can help create a joint understanding of methods and of goals.

“I have heard from lots of people that it is important to work more intensely in the beginning of cooperation. Use the events to really get to know each other, after that you can start working with product development, seeking finance etc.”

Working with more cross-sectorial meetings is one way to create new ideas of development between areas.

Development issues for policy makers

During the workshops different aspects that policy makers should start doing were identified. One of the proposals regarded the importance of involving policy makers more frequently in the pilot projects. It is believed that policy makers can learn from how a transnational collaboration on innovation can work and further that the same policy makers also can support if there are problems with the cooperation. Close linkages between private enterprise and policy makers is believed to facilitate trade between neighbouring countries:

“Another aspect to emphasise is the connection between businesses and policy makers. We should make it easier for companies to establish their operations in neighbouring countries and simplify the registration of subsidiaries”

With the experience from BSR Stars one national representative of a ministry talked about the importance of making innovation policies international.

“We should have innovation policy tools that we can internationalise in our countries. We have started to internationalise the start-up policies but there are also other policy instruments that we can add to the internationalisation aspect. But that means that BSR Stars would be an even broader concept on innovation”

Smart specialisation issues in a macro regional context are identified in some workshops as a future potential scenario for the neighbouring countries. By doing so, clusters and strongholds in each country can be used in a smarter way.

“Also the division of labour- the idea of OSKE¹⁴ could be spread- Smart specialisation on a BSR level that is long term development and takes a while.

¹⁴ The Centre of Expertise Programme (OSKE) is a fixed term special government programme aimed at focusing regional resources and activities on development areas of key national importance. The operations model of the programme was reformed for the term 2007–2013 as a cluster-based model, the overriding objective of which is to increase regional specialisation and to strengthen cooperation between centres of expertise. The National Programme involves 13 national Clusters of Expertise and 21 regional Centres of Expertise.

Issues about how to fund transnational innovation activities have been brought to the attention of policy makers in the workshops. Here, funding for pre-commercial development in transnational innovation activities was one suggestion. The Innovation Express is mentioned as a practical way of financing in the initial phase of a cooperation project, but that there should also be funding available for projects that are more substantial.

Exit strategies for policy makers was another proposal that was identified in one of the national workshops.

“I think there should be a clear exit strategy from BSR Stars/StarDust. One has to be clear of what phase this programme should support”.

Developing competencies in different ways

Issues about competence development in the short term and in the long term have been discussed in the workshops. Education and training is an opportunity to create understanding between countries and also to establish links between people.

For future possibilities in using the macro region as a more integrated resource base it will be important to include these aspects into education. One suggestion raised during the workshops was to involve master students in the international innovation projects. Another suggestion is to offer graduates internships in the companies in the BSR. This is something that cluster organisations can arrange through cooperation.

“Provide opportunities for graduates from universities with internships in companies in the BSR. It will be easier to cooperate with each other in the future, young people are open to changes and they can help to raise the competitiveness of companies”.

Education is also a way to disseminate knowledge regarding new technology in the involved clusters. Joint training on new technological opportunities can increase competencies and also create better prerequisites for joint innovation. IT-solutions in ships was mentioned by partners in the MarChain project as one possible area for joint training.

One suggestion is that BSR Stars can announce calls for proposals with the target group of PhD students within the areas of societal challenges for the BSR and to facilitate the creation of joint teams of researchers between the countries.

Training of cluster managers was brought up as something the different countries should continue doing together. It will be important to develop both content and quality in these trainings according to partners.

Expand the networks

In the workshops partners talk about the importance of creating larger networks in the future. Expanding the networks to third countries outside the BSR as well as getting more relevant partners on board in the participating BSR countries are issues that were mentioned. Both issues are viewed as important for the different pilot projects within StarDust

“In future projects it is relevant to attract and engage new stakeholders and networks. For example, in the Clean Water pilot there are partners missing. To emphasise the missing parts.”

Getting more stakeholders to understand the possibilities with the BSR Stars collaboration platform is highlighted by several partners.

“The vision now is to start to educate more people in the organisations and in the broader society in order to inform more people about this.”

“We have to convince municipalities to use the results from our work in their regions.”

Expanding the possibilities when it comes to funding will be important in order to reach the goals of BSR Stars. Other EU financial instruments involving the EU 27 (but still with a strong involvement from the Baltic Sea Region Cooperation) was mentioned as a possibility.

5. Overall conclusions and policy recommendations to BSR Stars

The design makes sense and creates value but fine tuning can be done

The design of StarDust and the logic of creating long term strategic alliances in the BSR make sense for partners. It creates value for participating cluster organisations, SME-networks, innovation milieus and their involved actors (companies, researchers, public organisations). New information and knowledge is created between partners and countries by the BSR Stars and StarDust focus on achieving an international competitive position. It creates an increased level of ambition for regional or national initiatives.

Even though the overall design creates value, there are opportunities in fine tuning the design regarding issues such as the use of pre-studies/feasibility studies, of financing and involvement of different levels of governance in order for even greater effectiveness and quality in transnational cooperation.

Policy recommendation: In future design of programs or projects under the umbrella of BSR Stars there is a need to fine-tune the design such as working with pre-studies/feasibility studies, working with flexible financing and involving different levels of governance.

Building strong strategic alliances demands strong leadership regarding both strategic and operational issues

Building strong strategic alliances between partners in different countries need strong leadership regarding both strategic and operational issues. To create a collaborative environment and a joint vision between nationally and regionally strong actors needs orchestration and co-creation of meaning in order to move forward.

Policy recommendation: Leadership issues should be prioritised in future BSR Stars projects.

Process support in different stages and in different areas is needed

Process support in different stages and in different areas is needed due to the degree of complexity, information and knowledge gaps, cultural differences, different national innovation policies, different economic maturity between countries, different national rules and regulations etc. Process management needs a toolbox that is continuously developed and people involved needs to develop skills in transnational collaboration in line with the ambitions of BSR Stars.

Policy recommendation: Process support is needed and needs to be developed and spread continuously. Process support should support the vision and ambition of BSR Stars such as working with strategy, global market aspects and smart specialization.

Partners involved needs to be nationally recognised and to have legitimacy

The vision of globally leading innovation hubs in the BSR demands long term commitment and strategy. The actors participating need to have legitimacy when it comes to issues such as strategic plans, to be nationally recognised, to have unique skills and resources. There is also a need for a global perspective and competence on how to act on the market opportunities and to work in parallel between regional, national and transnational levels in the macro region. Working with complex innovation strategic transnational alliances needs organisations with resources and competencies that can be developed together with others. This means that there has to be basis quality requirements on the participating organisations (such as for cluster organisations, competence centres, SME networks etc.). Quality requirements can be about languages skills, own resources, administrative knowledge.

Policy recommendation: The selection of partners and matchmaking issues are of high relevance for future projects and actions. Quality requirements for partners should be developed.

There is a need for non-bureaucratic financing when it comes to innovation activities

There is a need for working with strategy and to create short term results in order to keep involvement and to attract business involvement. This implies that there is a need for resources for both the long term and the short term activities. There is a need for non-bureaucratic financing that is not clearly specified in the beginning. Innovation activities by nature cannot always be planned for in the start of a project.

Policy recommendation: Develop and use non-bureaucratic financing such as the BSR Innovation Express in order to stimulate transnational innovation activities.

Different goals in StarDust has been achieved according to partners but for long term effects there is a need for a critical mass of projects and collaboration platforms

Different goals in StarDust have been achieved according to partners. Especially the creation of open innovation platforms, a developed tool-box for innovation cooperation, new capabilities and competencies, increased involvement/information flow and transnational cooperation. The views on how influential the project has been on developing new financial instruments vary between the partners. There are examples of steps taken in the design of new financial instruments nationally and in the EU.

The perceived created effects is more difficult to analyse in this stage as this kind of collaboration is long term and experience shows that effects on innovation takes time. Partners perceive that the infrastructure is in place and that innovation projects and prototypes have been created. When it comes to commercialised product and services, this has not been reached during the project period according to partners.

Commercialisation takes longer time than three years. The perceived results indicate that there are prerequisites for long term effects and that the design of StarDust is valid. These results created can be considered as a first step but there is a need for an increased critical mass of projects and collaboration platforms in order to create substantial and sustainable effects. New innovation projects and prototypes are developed but these are not

commercialised yet. The infrastructure and the competencies built with the partners is an asset for future opportunities in commercialising.

Policy recommendation: Results are created by the collaboration in StarDust which should be supported further. There is a need for an increased critical mass of projects and collaboration platforms in order to create substantial effects. Time frames should be adjusted according to commercialization aspects. An increased focus on commercialization and measures to follow-up on commercialization might be needed. Long term financing and support is necessary.

Non expected results should not be underestimated such as the spread of and absorption of existing knowledge and concepts from other countries.

The non-expected results should not be underestimated. Some of the unexpected results mentioned in the national workshops are the creation of strong personal networks, information sharing such as unknown innovations in other countries that can be used and spread, the cross thematic potentials for new innovation and business opportunities and the use of the Demola concept in different countries. This shows that by strong networks, information sharing and trust new unexpected opportunities unexpected may occur. Opportunities are here defined as new ideas of innovation but also the spread of and absorption of existing knowledge and concepts from other countries.

Policy recommendation: Networking should be stimulated on different levels and between different sectors. Governance issues on how to network is important and should be developed. Meeting places are important as activities and governance issues are interlinked.

Appendix 1: List of Workshop participants

Estonia, Tallinn, 10th of September 2013

Tiiu Evert, Enterprise Estonia
Mart Laatsit, Ministry of economy in Estonia
Raivo Portsmuth, Estonian Maritime Academy
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA

Sweden, Stockholm, 2th of October 2013

Erik Litborn, VINNOVA
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Erik Bunis, VINNOVA
Emily Wise, VINNOVA
Sophie Lehmann, VINNOVA
Lars Fernvall, VINNOVA
Marit Werner, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll
Maria Lindbom, Region Skåne
Henrik Lundblad, Mobile Vikings, Mobile Heights
Linda Malmgren, Mobile Vikings, Mobile Heights
Philip Stankovski, Mobile Vikings, Cluster 55
Kerstin Hindrum, MarChain , SP
Inger Ahldén, BSR Food, Ideon Agro Food
Lennart Lindahl, BSR Food, Ideon Agro Food
Ann-Christin Bayard, Sustainable Sweden Southeast
Jiaman Jang, Future Position X, University of Gävle
Micael Gustafsson, Mobile Vikings, Cluster 55°

Denmark, Copenhagen, 3rd of October 2013

Betine Simonsen, Comfort in Living, Innonet lifestyle
Emily Wise, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Henrik Noes Piester, Ervhersstyrelsen (ERST)
Joan Knutsen, Comfort in living, Innonetlifestyle
Merete Daniel Nielsen, Netmatch

Finland, Helsinki, 7th of October 2013

Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Hugo Tamagnini Gonçalves, Active for Life, Culminatum
Pirjo Kutinlahti, Ministry of Employment and the Economy
Tapio Karvonen, MarChain , University of Turku
Johanna Kilpi-Koski, Clean Water, LADEC
Kristian Keinänen, Clean Water, LADEC

Esa Kokonen, Baltic Institute

Germany, Berlin, 8th of October 2013

Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Wolfgang Crasemann, BMWI
Ulrich Hausner, MarChain , WP6, WTSH
Christin Skiera, VINNOVA
Kerstin Hintze, Active for Life, BioCon Valley
Wolfgang Blang, Active for Life, BioCon Valley
Jörg Lorenz, Mobile Vikings, MobCom

Lithuania, Vilnius, 10th of October 2013

Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Tadas Tumenas, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania
Vilma Puriene , Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania
Lina Stanionyte, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania
Aldona Vyšniauskienė, EEC Service – Medvisit
Gintautas Monkevičius, EEC Service – Medvisit
Andrius Sutnikas, KSTP
Saulius Arelis, VITP
Daiva Krasauskaite, MITA
Sarunas Bagdonas, VITP
Jurate Mazeikyte, Community Building Consultants
Agne Norkeviciute, Community Building Consultants
Dalia Matukiene, Monak 2

Latvia, Riga, 11th of October 2013

Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Anete Vitola, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia
Ilze Beinare, Ministry of Economics
Martins Jansons, Ministry of Economics
Lilita Sparane, IT Cluster of Latvia
Kristine Zunde, IT Cluster of Latvia
Andris Spulis, Latvian Logistics Association
Vineta Krigere, Art Academy of Latvia
Maris Elerts, Investment and Development Agency of Latvia
Kristaps Rocans, Food Cluster of Latvia
Talis Juhna, Riga Technical University

Norway, Oslo, 13th of October 2013

Eivind Petershagen, Innovation Norge
Olav Bardalen, Innovation Norge
Knut Senneseth, Innovation Norge
Espen Warland , Innovation Norway

Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Emily Wise, VINNOVA
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA

Poland, Gdynia, 2nd of December 2013

Arkadiusz Mazurkiewicz, MarChain , Gdynia maritime university
Marek Grzybowski, MarChain , Gdynia maritime university
Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło, MarChain , Gdynia maritime university
Marta Czarnecka-Gallas, MarChain , Gdynia maritime university
Izabela Straczewska, MarChain , Gdynia maritime university
Michal Urbankowski, Ministry of Economy of Poland
Karolina Szybowiczup.poznan.PL
Jacek Bełdowski, Institute of Oceanology in Sopot
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting
Beata Szymczycha, Institute of Oceanology in Sopot

Island, Rejkavik 16th of December

Elvar Knutur Valsson, Ministry of Industries and Innovation, Iceland
Karin Nygård Skalman, VINNOVA
Anna Zingmark, Ramböll Management Consulting

Appendix 2: Main topics discussed in each workshop

Workshop in Estonia

- Maritime cluster cooperation and new knowledge and networks gained as well as results in new studies, new projects, new agreements between cluster organisations and also ports in the Baltic Sea Region area
- Knowledge sharing between countries and the expansion of contacts and networks that BSR Stars and StarDust resulted in
- Toolbox of user driven methods and importance of increased communication regarding methods
- StarDust influenced the way of thinking about internationalisation in national programmes
- The importance of involving different governance levels in transnational cooperation

Workshop in Sweden

- The increased knowledge about other strongholds and partners in the BSR as well as improved skills for working with transnational cooperation
- It takes time to build stable networks. Now networks are characterised by trust
- The importance of pre study phase to secure goals, partners involved etc
- The macro regional perspective makes sense and there is a potential in smart specialisation in the macro region
- The use of Interreg as financing is difficult
- The importance of communication tools in order to make cooperation work
- Importance of validating participating organisation
- Leadership is important
- Process support tools help speed up cooperation

Workshop in Denmark

- The useful network in the BSR especially related to design
- The innovation camp concept and the success factors
- The importance of strong partners and matchmaking aspects
- The importance of analysis supporting the projects and their strategic ideas even more
- The Innovation Express tool

Workshop in Finland

- Open innovation platforms
- The use of user driven methods and the importance of timing when using methods
- The importance of support for vision and strategy development
- New capabilities and competencies
- The spread and use of the Demola concept
- The importance of commercialisation
- The potential in more cooperation between projects/sectors.
- The importance of continuously identifying grand potentials
- The influence of financial instruments
- How to secure cooperation and how to create critical mass of projects in BSR Stars

Workshop in Germany

- The importance of the BSR network
- Developed bilateral cooperation
- The usefulness of the international perspective
- User driven methods
- Information spread between nations, regions and clusters (e.g. Demola and different ways of working with innovation)
- New capabilities and competencies gained
- Cross sectorial possibilities
- The need for European funding for transnational collaboration

Workshop in Lithuania

- New connections and networks in the BSR
- StarDust as a strategy development project
- The benefits of Demola
- Project support tools as a way of creating strategy development
- Exchange regarding innovation policies between countries
- The involvement of target groups in innovation activities
- Leadership issues in transnational cooperation
- The importance of internal and external communication
- The importance of making cooperation sustainable

Workshop in Latvia

- New connections and networks in the BSR
- How to strengthen networks in the future
- Project support tools and open innovation methods
- The openness of open innovation platforms
- How to involve companies
- How to improve commercialisation and how to involve venture capital
- Demola and Business Roaming agreement
- New application for funding and future financial instruments

Workshop in Norway

- The importance of matchmaking and having partners (cluster organisations) at the same level of expertise
- The importance of building different bilateral relations and networks
- International cooperation regarding competence development for cluster managers
- How to choose projects
- The difficulties with Interreg financing
- The interest for BSR cooperation should come from cluster organisations (bottom-up)
- Innovation Express as an interesting instrument

Workshop in Poland

- Smart specialization potentials with BSR cooperation and the importance of starting with strong areas today

- The use of cooperation in the BSR: larger internal market and economy of scale
- Open innovation platform and the use of user driven methods
- Process support in setting goals for cooperation is useful
- Leadership issues as very important in order to make cooperation work
- Communication platforms and tools appreciated
- The need for increased commercialization from transnational innovation activities
- Interesting with a spread of innovations between countries as a result from cooperation
- The importance of continuing networking with all StarDust partners.

Telephone conference Island

- The new national cluster strategy in Island
- Framework of StarDust as being useful
- Importance of being clear with target groups and to be able to communicate the idea
- Importance of being specific about open innovation platforms
- The choice of partners
- The importance of small countries working together towards growth regions in the world
- Cross collaboration and grand challenge approach as interesting ways of working together in the macro-region
- Importance of making good preparatory work and to get an even broader stakeholder view of cooperation.
- Innovation Express as a good tool to facilitate cooperation between countries

Appendix 3: List of Partners and Associated Partners

Project Partners

DE WTSH - Wirtschaftsförderung und Technologietransfer Schleswig-Holstein GmbH
DE BioCon Valley of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
DK FORA The Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority's Division for Research and Analysis
DK Project and Management Office, Aalborg University
DK Department of Health Science and Technology, Aalborg University
EE Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
EE Enterprise Estonia
EE Estonian Maritime Academy
FI Culminatium Innovation
FI Turku University
FI Lahden Seudun Kehitys LADEC Oy
FI HERMIA, Competence Cluster for Ubiquitous Computing
FI Machine Technology Center Ltd
LT Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania
LT Klaipeda Science and Technology Park
LT Kaunas University of Technology
LT Visoriai Information Technology Park
LT Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology
LV Latvia Information Technologies Cluster
LV Investment and Development Agency of Latvia
LV Art Academy of Latvia, Design Department
LV Latvian Logistics Association
NO Innovation Norway
PL Maritime Academy Gdynia
PL Institute of Oceanology of Polish Academy of Sciences
PL The Accounting Department, Poznan University of Life Sciences
PL The Department of Furniture Design, The Faculty of Wood Technology, Poznan University of Life Sciences
SE VINNOVA, Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems
SE Region Skåne
SE New Tools for Health
SE Sustainable Sweden Southeast
SE IDC West Sweden AB
SE Mobile Heights
SE Cluster 55°
SE SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden

Associated national partners

DK Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority
FI Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland
FI Baltic Institute of Finland
IS Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)
IS Innovation Center of Iceland
LV Ministry of Economics of the republic of Latvia

NO Royal Ministry of Trade and Industry, Norway
PL Ministry of Economy of Poland
SE Sustainable Business Hub AB
SE Tillväxtverket

Associated regional partners

DE Technology Center of Western Pomerania
DK University of Southern Denmark Reg X
FI The City of Helsinki
FI The City of Tampere
PL Pomorskie Voivodeship
SE Region Gävleborg
SE Region Västra Götaland
SE County Administrative Board of Stockholm
SE Region Blekinge
SE Region Västerbotten
SE Länsstyrelsen i Norrbotten

Associated partners to the pilots

CR University of Zagreb, Faculty of Forestry
DE Mobkom.net (Berlin)
DK Danish Innonet Lifestyle – Interior & Clothing
DK Maritime Development Center of Europe
DK BrainsBusiness - ICT North Denmark
EE Estonian Academy of Arts / Tallinn University of Technology
EE Marine Systems Institute of Tallinn University
FI Helsinki Business and Science Park Oy Ltd/Viikki Food Centre
FI Jyväskylän Regional Development Company Jykes Ltd
FI FinnMedi Oy
FI Maritime Cluster Programme, Finland
FI Finnish Culminatum Innovation's Living Business
FI Forum Virium (Helsinki), Finland
FI FinnMedi Oy
LT Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
LT Info Balt
NO Trådlös Framtid/Oslo Teknopol (Oslo)
NO ICT Grenland Norway
NO Nordland Research Institute
PL ICT West Pomerania Cluster, Poland, Szczecin
PL West Pomeranian Maritime Cluster Association
SE Baltic China Science park Network
SE ChemSec
SE IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute
SE Linnaeus University; Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
SE Future Position X
SL University of Primorska, Slovenia

BSR Stars links universities, clusters and innovative companies in the Baltic Sea region through projects and new opportunities for financing transnational cooperation. BSR Stars speeds up innovation using transnational cooperation to create strengthened competitiveness and sustainable growth.

StarDust consists of five sub-projects supported by new tools and methods on open and user-driven innovation. StarDust combines strengths and core competencies in nine countries in Northern Europe and brings business, academic and public worlds together.

During 2012 and 2013 StarDust has strengthened its partnership by attracting new partners and financiers: the partners received more than 8 MEUR as add-on investment, 15 research institutions and six new cluster and business development organisations joined as associated partners. The five sub-projects are continuing their work by preparing strategic action plans focusing on long term strategy.

*Contact: Karin Nygård Skalman, project leader of StarDust,
karin.nygardskalman@vinnova.se, Phone: +46 8 473 30 68*

www.bsrstars.se/stardust

The StarDust project started in 2011 and is finalized in 2013.
It is co-financed by the European Union's Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013.

