

# Biosphere for Baltic

Tourism for Ocean  
Literacy and Sustainability

# Final report

## Swedish Institute Baltic Sea Cooperation – Seed Funding

Project name: Biosphere for Baltic – Tourism for Ocean Literacy and Sustainability  
Project number: 02761/2019  
Project owner: Biosfärenheten Kristianstads Vattenrike  
Project period: 2019 09 01 – 2020 12 31  
Project management: Anna Särnblad, Marint Kunskapscenter i Malmö  
Johanna MacTaggart, Swedish Man and Biosphere Program  
Carina Wettemark, Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve

This project is funded by the Swedish Institute.





## Summary


There are many environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea and subsequent need for increased ocean literacy among local citizens as well as visitors to the region. In Biosphere for Baltic – Tourism for Ocean Literacy and Sustainability, nine biosphere reserves in seven countries around the Baltic Sea collaborated to mobilise knowledge, strategies and exchange best practices when promoting ocean literacy and raising awareness of these challenges.

The project has resulted in a strong network between the biosphere reserves and increased knowledge, joint learning and collaboration on sustainable tourism practices and how storytelling can be used to highlight and promote ocean literacy among tourists visiting the biosphere reserves. In addition, local sustainable products that have a positive environmental impact and contribute to sustainable development have been mapped in order to be further explored. Iterative exchange events have led to increased collective learning and understanding of how the 2030 Agenda is implemented in different regions/countries around the Baltic Sea.

## Background

In June 2017, during the UN Ocean Conference in New York, the Man and Biosphere Programme in Sweden, the Swedish National Commission of UNESCO, and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management pledged a joint commitment to facilitate learning and disseminate good practices from UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the Baltic Sea Region, within and beyond the network of biosphere reserves.

Biosphere for Baltic is a result of this commitment and the partnership connects biosphere reserves around the Baltic Sea. The network was initiated during 2018 with seed funding from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, co-ordinated by Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve. Biosphere for Baltic provides a unique opportunity for the participating biosphere reserves to network and share experiences, results and best practices.



## Common challenges

Biosphere reserves are learning sites and model areas for sustainable development. Around the Baltic Sea are nine biosphere reserves in seven countries. They all work closely with local stakeholders across sectors in order to combine nature conservation with sustainable community development in ways that are specially suited to their particular location. Biosphere reserves are popular tourist destinations and millions of tourists visit the Baltic Sea biosphere reserves each year.

A common challenge is the many environmental challenges facing the Baltic Sea, and subsequent need for increased ocean literacy, i.e. the understanding of the oceans influence on you and your influence on the ocean, among local citizens as well as visitors. The latter represent a significant target group for sustainable tourism activities that promote ocean literacy and raise awareness. Biosphere reserves around the Baltic Sea are in different ways and to varying extent already

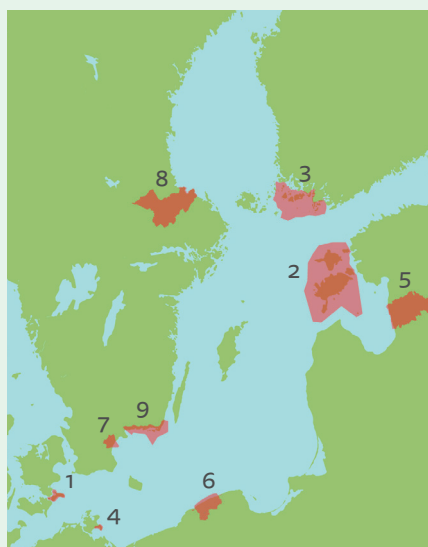
engaged in local tourism activities. However, collaboration and learning between the biosphere reserves is lacking. Further, local products that have a positive environmental impact and contribute to sustainable development are available in the biosphere reserves. Although, the potential of using these products for increased awareness through storytelling and branding is not fully explored.

In the project Biosphere for Baltic – Tools for Ocean Literacy and Sustainability the biosphere reserves in the Baltic region have been able to initiate a transnational collaboration on sustainable tourism practices that highlights environmental challenges and contributes to ocean literacy. The biosphere reserves have collaborated to mobilise knowledge, strategies and exchange best practices when promoting ocean literacy and raising awareness of the Baltics Sea's environmental challenges.

### Participating Biosphere Reserves

Nine biosphere reserves in seven countries around the Baltic Sea participated in the project:

- |                                   |         |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Møn                            | Denmark |
| 2. West Estonian Archipelago      | Estonia |
| 3. Archipelago Sea                | Finland |
| 4. Southeast Rügen                | Germany |
| 5. North Vidzeme                  | Latvia  |
| 6. Słowiński                      | Poland  |
| 7. Kristianstads Vattenrike       | Sweden  |
| 8. Nedre Dalälven River Landscape | Sweden  |
| 9. Blekinge Archipelago           | Sweden  |



## West Estonian Archipelago

The project's first international exchange event was held in West Estonian Archipelago biosphere reserve on September 18th – 20th 2019. The meeting took place in the village of Kassari on the island of Hiiumaa. The overall theme for the event was sustainable tourism and the participants were able to share experiences, explore and discuss sustainable tourism and meet local entrepreneurs.

The event was opened by Kaja Lotman, Nature Conservation Adviser, Estonian Environmental Board and Lia Rosenberg, co-ordinator West Estonian Archipelago biosphere reserve. Kaja Lotman also gave a presentation on the authority's efforts for coastal and marine areas and an overview and introduction to the biosphere reserve.

Joining the event was also Anne-Ly Torstenson, tourism and marketing manager at Hiiumaa Development Centre, who gave a talk on tourism on the island. She explained how they work with destination marketing,

the island's strong nature values, its authentic culture and islandic lifestyle as well as the importance of the biosphere reserve.

### Workshop - sustainable tourism activity

To inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature is key for all work conducted within a biosphere reserve. This was also the starting point for the workshop held by Johanna MacTaggart, coordinator of the Swedish MAB-program, that focused on how a common approach, in the form of a sustainable tourism activity, can help people engage in the challenges of the Baltic Sea. The participants did not only collaborate to come up with a sustainable tourism activity, but more importantly explored the purpose and unique values behind, i.e. why the activity should be offered and why it is important, as well as how to describe and mediate the biosphere reserves unique way of doing things.



Anne-Ly Torstenson, tourism and market manager at Hiiumaa Development Center, talks about Hiiumaa as a tourism destination.



Focused participants in group discussions during the sustainable tourism workshop.

The workshop navigates through a process that helps to set clear objectives and to find the activity's engagement goal and to establish what you would like the tourist to think, feel and do after participating in the activity.

The resulting three sustainable tourism activities all shared the goal that tourism should contribute to a more sustainable Baltic Sea. After participating, the tourists engaged in the activities should think that *they are part of the solution*, feel that *they know how to act* and *share their experience and visit other biosphere reserves*. The activities are all campaigns. Two of them are social media campaigns focusing on reducing plastic pollution and littering in the coastal areas by inspiring to take action. The third activity aims to encourage tourists to ask for sustainable alternatives and to have clear requests of sustainability measures towards local businesses and entrepreneurs.

### Choose activities (workshop example)

Use the agreed core messages to help brainstorm engagement activities. Write down as many ideas as you can in the boxes. Then pick the best three.

#### 1. Social media campaign

Joint #message that can be used throughout the BRs. For example: collect trash, take a picture with your "catch" and post on social media, tag with #message. Connect to an installation with a scale where you can weigh the garbage?

#### 2. Encourage and inspire tourists to demand sustainability

Encourage tourists to ask for sustainable local alternatives and be demanding when it comes to sustainability towards local businesses and entrepreneurs.

#### 3. Cigarette buds

A joint campaign that highlights the problem with cigarette buds. Show how they affect the environment in order to encourage people to dispose them correctly.



## Field trip

The exchange event is also an opportunity to learn more about the hosting biosphere reserve and to get insight to some of its projects and activities. While in Hiiumaa, the participants visited inspirational places on the island and got to meet local entrepreneurs and tourism business. Toomas Kokovkin, expert within Estonian MAB, guided on the bus and shared the history of both the island and the biosphere reserve.

In Orjaku harbour the participants got to meet Omar Jõpiselg, entrepreneur and head of the local municipality, who told about the tourism in the area and other local initiatives. The field trip also took the participants to Vaemla Wool Factory where wool from the island's sheep is turned into yarn and beautiful knitwear. The sheep help maintain open landscapes and contribute to biodiversity. Lunch was served in Roograhu, a tourism destination that can be reached by land, sea or air. The bus also passed by the old Suuremõisa manor as well as some of the islands recreational harbours where tourists arrive during summer. Before returning to Kassari Holiday Center, the participants also got to visit and the fish shop "Kala ja võrk" in Kärkla village. The recently opened shop offers sustainable fish from the island's coastal fishermen as well as specialities from local producers and their own products.



## Storytelling & sustainable products

Due to the pandemic spread of the corona virus, exchange event #2 was remodelled into a series of on-line workshops and lectures focusing on storytelling as a means to promote sustainability from a biosphere perspective.

### Wild Sweden - and the power of storytelling

Marcus Eldh, Swedish ecotourism entrepreneur, lecturer and founder of Wild Sweden, gave an inspirational lecture on how he uses storytelling to raise awareness and promote sustainability while his guests experience the Swedish wilderness. Storytelling has been an essential part of Wild Sweden since the beginning and key to success is authenticity and sharing personal experiences. The lecture was followed by a joint discussion and Q&A.

### Putting storytelling into a biosphere perspective

The lecture by Marcus Eldh was elaborated on and followed up during two workshops held by Azote, a communication agency that specialize in environmental science and sustainability. They gave an overview of the basics of storytelling and nudging, and the participants got to work on their own upcoming projects to learn how to build a story and how to apply it to the right market in order to connect with the audience.

The workshops were based on homework by the participants with the goal to find a tourist activity that can be communicated during 2021 through storytelling using social media.



### Homework example

Choose 1 tourist activity for your biosphere region.

Think about the three corner stones: target market analysis, storytelling and nudging.

How can you apply this to your activity?

- What tourist submarket do the activity apply to?
- What storytelling message could work?
- What nudging technique could work?

## Questions

### BUILDING A STORY

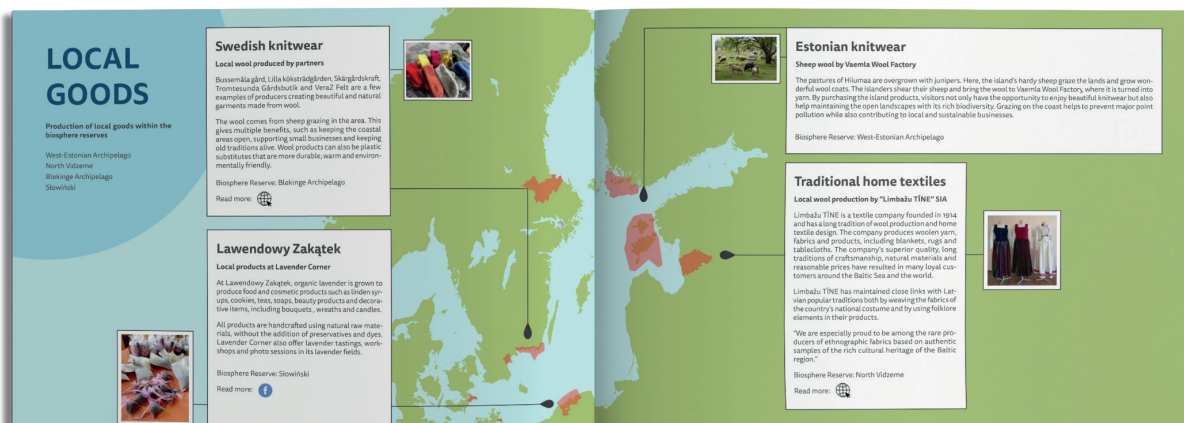
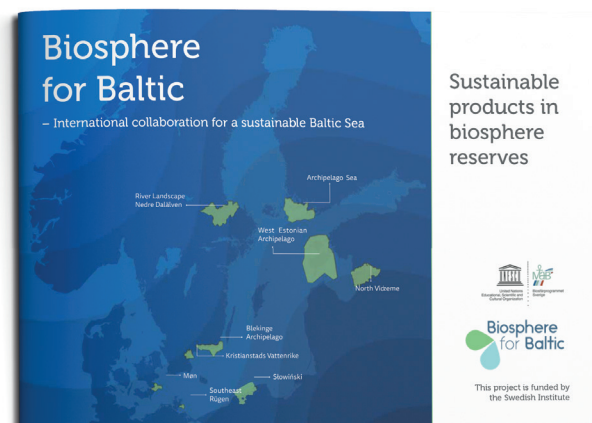
1. Why are we telling the story?
2. To whom are we speaking? (Choose 1 listener)
3. What is our narrative? (timeline, characters, history, emotions)
4. How do we make the listener care? How do we make my story, "our" story?
5. Who should narrate our story?

### GOALS & STRATEGY

1. How do we measure a successful outcome? (Please think of specifics such as by having x number of visitors in 2021)
2. What objections or thresholds might there be? How do we respond?
3. Can we nudge our listener in the right direction by positive reinforcement?

## Sustainable products in the biosphere reserves

All participating biosphere reserves have local businesses and entrepreneurs offering products that have a positive environmental impact and contributes to sustainable development. The potential of using these products and highlight how they contribute to the environment and the consumers through storytelling and branding has also been explored. As part of their homework, the participants were asked to find two local products that can help the biosphere reserve and target markets to reach sustainable transformation. A brochure presenting the products have been produced.





# Communication

The project has further defined and consolidated the network and in addition to the activities above new means of communication has been established as well as a Biosphere for Baltic logo, a graphic profile and a Biosphere for Baltic Facebook group.

The project and its activities have also been communicated in various ways and channels:

## Exchange event #1

- A press release published by the Estonian Environmental board (in Estonian): <https://www.keskkonnaamet.ee/et/uudised/kuue-riigi-biosfaarialade-esindajad-arutavad-hiiumaal-kuidas-kaitsta-laanemerd>
- Estonian national radio interviewed Lia Rosenberg, coordinator West Estonian Archipelago Biosphere Reserve: [http://podcast.kuku.postimees.ee/podcast/intervjuu-laanemere-biosfaarialadlia-rosenbergligi/?fbclid=IwARolyO4CkEKQyPiginxYXMKJ7A8R-Zd\\_GfVpukoZRPmHf5zcRipSm8ENLpA](http://podcast.kuku.postimees.ee/podcast/intervjuu-laanemere-biosfaarialadlia-rosenbergligi/?fbclid=IwARolyO4CkEKQyPiginxYXMKJ7A8R-Zd_GfVpukoZRPmHf5zcRipSm8ENLpA)
- Articles in the local newspaper (see below) and the Estonian National Commission for UNESCO's newsletter no 41, 2019.

## Input paper and case study

- Input paper to Baltic Sea Region strategy and funding program – the paper has been sent to representatives involved in developing the strategy and funding program, including the coordinators of the EUSBSR policy areas: bioeconomy, education, innovation, nutri and tourism.
- Input IUCN World Congress – a case study from Biosphere for Baltic was submitted as a contribution to the MAB Programme's input to the IUCN World Congress and the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## Other

- The project manager Anna Särnblad was interviewed by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO about the project: <https://unesco.se/biosphere-for-baltic-handlar-om-att-visa-pa-vilket-satt-biosfaromradena-bidrar-till-agenda-2030-anna-sarnblad-biosphere-for-baltic/>

## Biosfäärialade esindajad kohtuvad Kassaris

Kassaris kohtuvad sel nädalal seitsme Läänemere-äärse biosfäärialade esindajad, kokku 20 inimest kuuest riigist: Eestist, Lätist, Soomest, Rootsi, Taanist ja Saksamaalt.

**HARDA ROOSNA**  
harda.roosna@niuleht.ee

"Kõos püüame leida lahendusi ühise Läänemere kaitseks, mere saastamise vältimiseks ja vähendamiseks," selgitas keskkonnaamet biosfääri programmi alaspetsialist Lia Rosenberg.

Neljapäeval ja reedel, 19. ja 20. septembril saavad Kassaris kokku rahvusvahelise projekti "Biosphere for Baltic Tools" partnerid.

Kahe päeva jooksul vahetatakse kogemusi jätkusuutliku turismi teemadel ja püütakse leida häid lahendusi nii kohalike elanike kui turistide mereteadlikkuse tõstmiseks.

Biosfäärialad on jätkusuutliku arengu mudelalad, kus töötatakse välja kestliku majandamise lahendusi ning käsitletakse kohaliku kogukonna ja pärandkultuuri koosmõjusid loodusele, selgitas Rosenberg. Kuna saared ja ranniku-

alad on populaarsed turismisihtkohad, külastavad Läänemere biosfäärialasid igal aastal miljonid turistid. Ühine väljakutse on Läänemere ees seisvad arvukad keskkonnaprobleemid ja sellele järgnenud vajadus mereteadlikkuse suurendamise järele nii kohalike elanike kui ka külastajate seas.

"Kutsume kokku Läänemere-äärse biosfäärialad ja arutame koos, kuidas tõsta teadlikkust merekeskkonnale tekkinud väljakutsetest. Kutsume inimesi üles aktiivsemalt tegelema neile väljakutsetele lahenduste leidmisega," ütles Rootsi riikliku MAB-programmi

### SUPPORTERS OF THE EUROMAB2011 CONFERENCE:



H.R.H. Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Duchess of Västergötland



Kevin Jones  
Social Capital Markets



Professor Carl Folke  
Scientific Director, Stockholm Resilience Centre



Johanna MacTaggart  
Coordinator of Biosphere Reserve Lake Vänern Archipelago and Mount Kinnekulle National MAB Coordinator, Sweden

Rootsis on juba seitse biosfäärialade ja programmi toetajate seas on ka kroonprintsess Victoria. Pildil paremal biosfääri programmi koordinaator Johanna MacTaggart.

koordinaator, Johanna MacTaggart saadetud pressiteates.

Muuhulgas tutvustatakse külastajatele Orjaku sadama turismiteenuseid, räägitakse

noorte purjetamiskoolitustest ja sellest, kuidas mereteadlikkust kasvatada.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Man and  
the Biosphere  
Programme Sweden