“Branding the Baltic Sea Region as a region for blue growth”

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Outline

I. Macro and supranational regions as brands
II. Past and existing efforts to brand the BSR
III. Branding the BSR as a 'region of blue growth' – is it feasible?
I. Macro and supranational regions as brands
Some are defined by natural characteristics..

The Alps region
..others are mainly politically created
Some have a long tradition of political cooperation..
..for others it’s a newer thing
Some regions have strong political institutions.

United in diversity
..for others cooperation is more voluntarily
Some regions are used in the marketing of other regions and places.

- 'The Øresund Region – a gateway to the Baltic Sea Region’

- ‘Innsbruck – the Capital of the Alps’

- ‘Hungary – the essence of Europe’

- ‘Malaysia – truly Asia’
..and some at the expense of others..

• ‘Estonia: Nordic with a twist’ (instead of ‘Baltic’)

• ‘Slovenia – the sunny side of the Alps’ (instead of ‘Balkan’)

• ’Croatia - the Mediterranean as it once was’ (instead of ‘Balkan’)
Some regions are used in brands or as home markets.

- **SAS** – "it’s Scandinavian"
- **Telia-Sonera** – "provides telecommunication services in the Nordic and Baltic countries"
- **Nordea** – "the largest financial services group in the Nordic and Baltic Sea region"
..others have no political identity, but boast powerful images based on a shared cultural identity..

• Scandinavia
  • 'Scandinavian vikings', 'Scandinavian design/furniture', 'Scandinavian masters/open', 'Scandinavian Airlines' etc. etc.

• Mediterranean region
  • 'mediterranean lifestyle/culture/holidays/food/diet' etc. etc.
Regions and brand image

Mediterranean *diet*

Mediterranean *lifestyle*

Mediterranean *holiday*

Mediterranean *architecture*

Mediterranean *landscape*
Regions and brand image

Baltic Sea Region diet?

Baltic Sea Region lifestyle?

Baltic Sea Region holiday?

Baltic Sea Region architecture?

Baltic Sea Region landscape?
BUT..

Baltic Sea Region cooperation

Baltic Sea Region market

Baltic Sea cruise

Baltic Sea herring
Summing up

• No strong common cultural identity
• Emerging political identity
• Emerging economic identity
II. Past and existing efforts to brand the BSR
What is a brand?

• Brand: conceptual entity that creates positive, unique and distinguishable associations

• Branding: creating and maintaining these associations – identifying, developing and communicating the parts of the place identity that are favorable in the eyes of specific target groups

• Actions and behavior sometimes more important than communications
Branding as promise delivered

‘Promise delivered’
A portfolio of brands..

- Supranational Brand
- National Brand
- Sector Umbrella Brands
- Regional and City Brands
- Cluster Brands
- Corporate Brands
- Product Brands

Number of Brands
Mozzarella
med Körsbärstomat, Basilika & Röd pestocréme

Pajskal med olivolja. Bakad med omtanke i Dalarna.

230 g 3,5-4 min
Experiences from other projects
Experiences from BaltMet Promo

Japanese tourists

Global investors

Creative talents (film makers)
Experiences from BaltMet Promo

• Supra-national branding benefits from a bottom-up approach using concrete products and services

• A common work plan helps shift from competition to cooperation

• Cooperation on national level and on identity difficult

• The more distant the target market, the more cost effective supra-regional branding becomes.
ONE BSR

International tourists

Global investors

Talent retention

Common identity
III. Branding the BSR as a ‘blue region’ – is it feasible?
Branding challenges for the BSR

• Coordination and management – no decision-making authority

• Multiple stakeholders, multiple identities and multiple target groups
  – No strong common identity, weak identification
  – No established or clear image

• Competition with national/sub-national initiatives

• No clear definition of the region (which countries? how many inhabitants?)
Considerations

• Why ‘blue region’? Creating value for whom? What’s the added value of being a region?

• Do we have the critical mass, and capacity to create linkages between the different strongholds and clusters?
  – Leading in marine industries – but need to ‘connect the dots’

• Many initiatives and projects
  – Key role for EUSBSR and EU 2020 to coordinate and connect

• What about our credibility in terms of perceptions?
Future opportunities and considerations

• Can we build a meta-brand? Identify meta-brand values?

• From ‘storytelling’ to ‘storybuilding’

• Can we brand our cooperation?

• Shall we brand the past, the present or can we brand the future? Do we live in ’nexttopia’?
... It is not easy being green...
The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear

Socrates
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