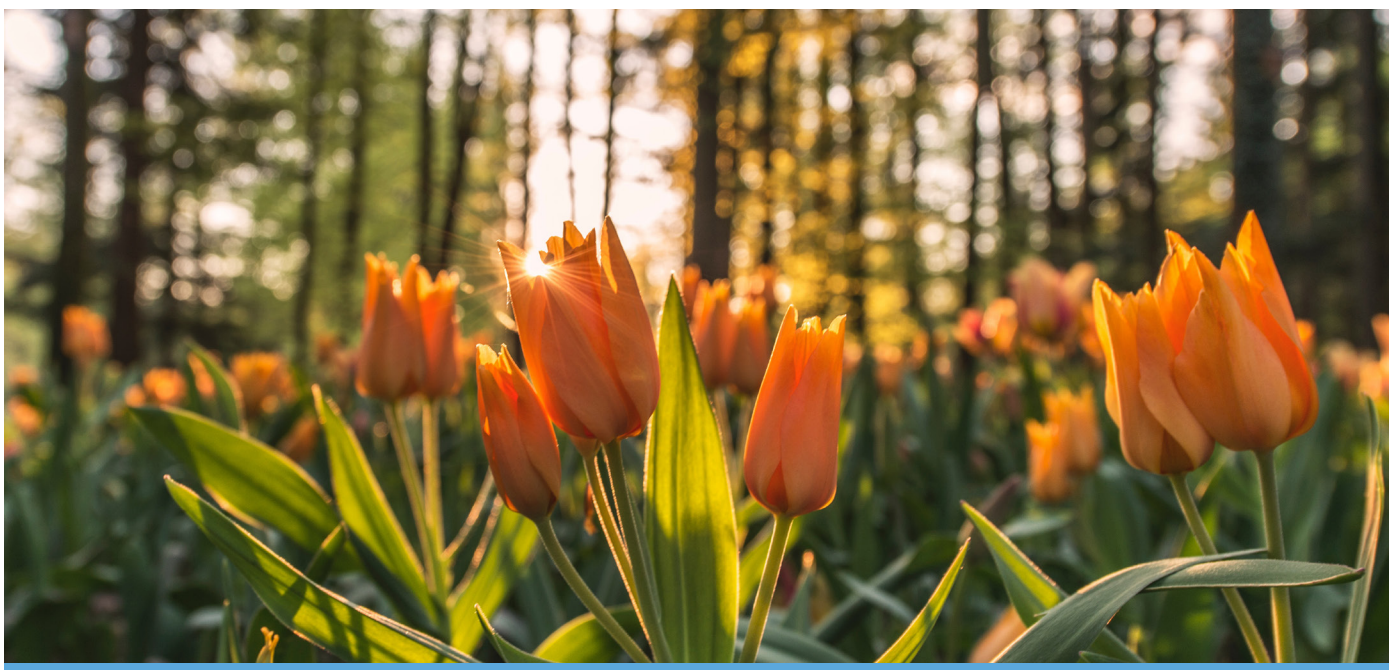


# Annual Implementation Report 2016

Citizen's summary



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Regional Development Fund

## What did the year 2016 look like?

### Implemented projects

The year 2016 has been a year of active implementation. All first call projects have been in implementation and have started their reporting. The second call was ongoing and new projects were approved. The first payments were certified and interim payment claims submitted to the Commission.

The programme has been well received by stakeholders, and in the first two calls the amount of applications has been very high. This has allowed the programme to focus on selecting the best quality projects for funding.

Especially first call projects, but partly already the second call projects, have been actively implementing their activities. The first information from the projects shows that they indeed have been of good quality and that they support the programme specific objectives well. Also, the emphasis on real results has been successful. Thus, projects are carrying out activities that are likely to lead to the promised results. The first results in the form of deliverables, outputs, awareness or impact are visible from some projects.

The communication efforts of both the programme itself and its projects have been successful. Social media has gained in importance. Currently, at least 46 of 67 funded projects are active on Internet or social media platforms. Programme information is spread over social media and traditional networks.

### Priority 1 - Competitive Economy

2016 was characterised by getting fully started with the implementation of 1st call projects and consulting, assessing and contracting the 2nd call successful projects.

The second call had slightly less applications (29) compared to the 1st call (46) but it can be explained with following factors: the number of strong organizations got involved already with 1st call projects, there were more programmes (national and cross-border programmes) open for submitting applications and continuous good work on informing potential applicants on foci and requirements of Central Baltic programme for avoiding the mismatches of projects to our specific objectives. To achieve this, consultations were given actively.

The 2nd call assessment brought about high competition of strong projects. Only the strongest projects received funding. The proposal to Steering Committee was made to balance the need for achieving results for all Specific Objectives and find good coverage for all sub-programmes.

Altogether the SC selected six projects (5 regular and 1 small) to pass the 1st step. Five projects were finally approved (4 regular and 1 small project). Three projects (2 regular and 1 small project) were approved under SO 1.1 and 2 projects under SO 1.3.

Project implementation during 2015 and 2016 has created a good basis for the 3rd call. Based on 1st and 2nd call decisions all Specific Objectives of the Priority 1 were open for applications.

### Priority 2 - Sustainable use of common resources

In the second call two projects for SO 2.2, which previously had no projects, were selected for funding. Thus, the special attention paid to attracting project applications for this SO lead to good results. SO 2.1 saw three new projects that nicely widened the scope of tourism development within the programme. No projects were selected for funding in SOs 2.3 and 2.4. The total number of priority 2 projects approved in the 2nd call was five.

Implementation of the 1st call projects in the light of the output indicators is continuing to advance well, and the projects' contribution is expected to be strong. Projects from the 2nd call are starting their implementation. No projects have ended yet, but they are on good track towards producing good results. Regarding the whole programme period, the output indicator target values have already been achieved in all but one (2.1) of the SOs. A minimum of two more successful tourism projects are needed to completely achieve the targets.

Interest towards the priority has continued to be active although the number of potential applicants and partnerships consulted during specific consultation events and in individual meetings was not as large as in the first two calls. SO 2.1 remains as the most popular target for applications. About 12,5 million euros may be allocated in the third call, which will likely be sufficient for 8 - 12 projects.

### Priority 3 - Well-connected region

In the beginning of 2016 the first call successful projects started active implementation and first reporting already. For some projects the start was smoother, some had little delays related with fulfilling conditions set by the Programme and contracting.

For the 2nd call for proposals 12 applications were received to priority 3. The split between SO's was very even, as there were six applications in both SO's. The Steering Committee approved three projects in SO 3.1, "Improved transport flows of people and goods", and two projects in SO 3.2, "Improved services of existing small ports". Altogether from two calls there are six projects in SO 3.1 and five projects in SO 3.2.

During the second half of the year consultations started with potential applicants for the third call in 2017. Special attention has been paid to informing the potential Swedish partners about the possibilities of the Central Baltic programme. Several Swedish organisations were consulted in 2016 and it can be expected that there will be applications for projects improving Swedish small ports as well as developing transportation nodes and corridors in next years.

### Priority 4 - Skilled and socially inclusive region

During the 2nd call, SO 4.1 "More people benefitting from stronger Central Baltic communities", five projects were approved. They support important target groups such as Estonian immigrants in Finland, unemployed youth, unemployed older people living in the countryside, or children of low-income families. The projects will contribute to the fulfilment of the programme result indicator by supporting six communities with social inclusion problems. Projects for SO 4.1 are still needed in the 3rd Call in order to fulfil the programme indicators. Keeping in mind the immigration crisis it would be important to encourage the potential project partners to develop projects to support the social inclusion of the new immigrants in CB countries.

In SO 4.2 "More aligned vocational education and training (VET) programmes in the Central Baltic Region", five projects applications were approved by the Steering Committee, one Small project and four Regular projects. All projects have started implementation in 2016. The projects contribute to the programme result indicator by aligning 9 vocational education or applied higher education programmes.

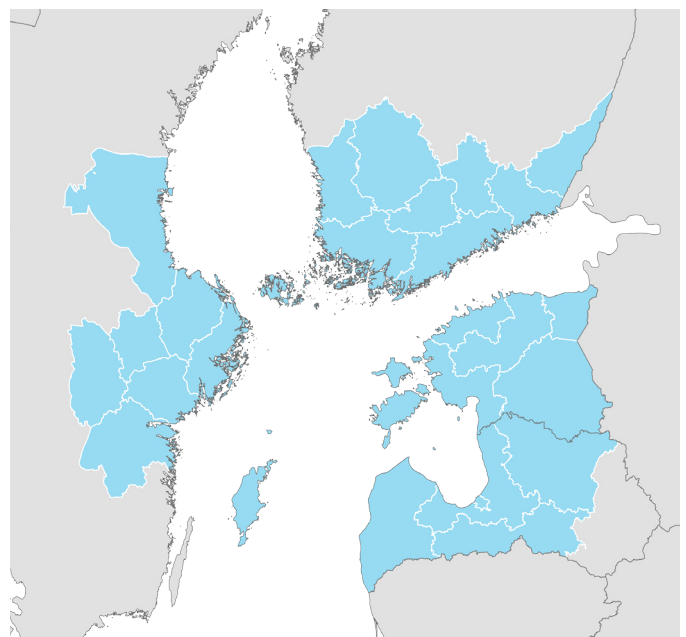
In P4 very few projects have partners from Sweden. Therefore, special attention has been paid to informing the potential Swedish partners about the possibilities of the Central Baltic programme. In addition, all potential applicants from all other CB member states have been informed about the importance of including Swedish partner and thereby supporting the social inclusion and aligning of vocational education in the whole CB region.

### Future call preparations

Preparations for the third call were ongoing during 2016. In the November Monitoring Committee, the application package and messages for the third call were discussed. The general understanding is, that the third call will be the last full call of the programme, with all priorities and Specific Objectives available.

Based on this, the Monitoring Committee discussed and agreed upon messages relevant for the potential applicants. These included content-related foci for different priorities, but also more general programme level aspects. Most importantly, the Monitoring Committee agreed to add to the Application Form a question in case not all sub-programme countries are participating in the project. The project is then asked to justify why it was not possible or considered relevant to have partners also from those countries. The underlying reason here was imbalance in the geographical distribution of partners, and particularly the relatively low participation of Sweden.

Plans for later calls or additional ways to spend money will be made after the second call decisions are known.



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# Some concrete examples from our great projects



**Top:** The EUSBSR flagship project BLASTIC (01.01.2016 - 31.12.2018) produces methods to preventing and collecting plastic waste from the Baltic Sea.



**Top:** thanks to our project Let Us be Active! (01.05.2015 - 28.02.2017) more than 150 elderly are now more connected to the society. The activities established in the framework of the project are still continuing.



**Left:** within the framework of the CBEwB project (01.09.2015 - 30.04.2019), student companies have created, among others, a “real” cloud utilising LED technology, a handbag raincoat and wooden earphones. Photos: Riina Nurmsaar.

**Right:** The FinEst Link project (01.08.2016 - 31.07.2018 ) takes a systematic fact-finding approach to the vision of a Helsinki-Tallinn fixed link.

