

SMALL HARBOURS

**Central Baltic Programme 2014-2020
project results that developed small guest
harbours on the coast of the Baltic Sea.**



Project PortMate improved services in 19 small ports. These included, for example, desalination systems, led lighting and waste water piping. The project also produced videos and guidance on port safety solutions as well as information on resource efficiency. Photo: Kristiina Kortelainen.

What are result packages?

Result packages are part of the 2014-2020 programmes' capitalisation strategy. They promote programme achievements in logical entities by providing summaries of results and examples of good practices. They are all structured in the same way.

In total, there are 10 packages that summarise different thematics addressed by the Central Baltic programme. The themes of the different packages are:

- Export
- Labour market
- Sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas
- Vocational education
- Sustainable tourism
- Integrated urban planning
- New business development
- The development of transport corridors
- ***Small ports development package***
- Water

Project **MASAPO** increased maritime safety in coastal areas and small ports. In total, 8 small ports were in which commitment to long-term voluntary maritime rescue was achieved.



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The map shows all ports that were improved during the 2014-2020 period. In total, 175 ports were planned to receive improvements. Map data from OpenStreetMap.



Scope of the package

This capitalisation package contains information about Central Baltic 2014-2020 programme results of the projects developed small guest harbours on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Projects were implemented under the Specific Objective 3.2: Improved services of existing small ports to improve local and regional mobility and contribute to tourism development.

The aim of the SO was to improve services of small ports' network (e.g. facility services, rescue services and joint marketing). This would improve travel opportunities of local people as well as attract more visitors to the region. In developing new services for ports modern technological solutions leading to resource efficiency and use of renewable energy were supported.

12 projects were financed under the SO 3.2 and services in 175 small guest ports were improved.

Background

There are total about 1500 guest harbours around the whole Baltic Sea. On the coasts of the Central Baltic countries, as well as on islands and in the archipelago area there are hundreds of small ports: small-scale cargo ports, yachting marinas, fisheries' ports, guest harbours. These are important for local economies and their existence has always been crucial for local and regional mobility.

The historical background of small ports development and sailing and boating tradition is different in the Programme countries. In Finland and Sweden, it has been always common activity and part of the lifestyle with it's normal development. In Estonia and Latvia most of the coastline was closed for 50 years during the Soviet occupation and no leisure boating was possible. Existing small ports were meant only for local small fishing boats and for connection between islands and the mainland. The situation has changed during last decades and many local ports have been turned in to guest harbours. The number of small vessels has been increased but the boating and sailing is still not affordable for most of the people. That's why development of the region as a maritime tourism destination is important: it would support development of ports as well as local boating culture.

Developing small ports' infrastructure is a precondition for tourism development and increasing prosperity in coastal and archipelago areas. It's not only about the port and sailor, it's also for other tourists travelling in the region as well as for other related sectors. It has been calculated that 1 euro spent in the guest harbour generates 4 euros in other coastal businesses.

Improvements in small ports' services (e.g. facility services, rescue services, marketing) improve accessibility, foster growth in economic activity, employ local people and enhance development of other business activities. In turn, they are also important for tourism development, especially for services of yachting and small boats.

The main target groups of guest harbours with improved services are visitors of the Central Baltic small ports, inhabitants using small ports for commuting and leisure as well as companies offering other services to users of small ports.

Timeline

Small ports' development projects were funded from 4 calls of the Central Baltic programme 2014-2020. First projects started in 2015 and the last call projects were finished in 2022.



Timeline of projects

Achieved results and effect

Projects improved the overall service level of small guest harbours on the coast of the Baltic Sea. In total 175 small ports were involved in 12 projects. Different projects focused on different issues to improve in involved ports. That's why some ports participated in several projects during the programme period: in one project the improvement of technical infrastructure was the main focus, in another the maritime safety level was improved and/or energy efficiency issues were handled, etc.

Activities implemented by different projects in different ports can be grouped under:

- **Improvement of existing piers and related infrastructure** (water and electricity supply, fuel stations) **as well as increasing ports mooring capacity by installing additional floating piers**
- **Improving facilities** - saunas, toilets, laundry and kitchen equipment
- **Improving and developing environmentally friendly solutions for waste and sewage handling on the land as well as in the harbour water area**
- **Improvement of energy efficiency and investments in renewable energy solutions** - solar panels, wind power generators
- **Developing leisure facilities** - playgrounds, resting and barbeque areas, etc.
- **Development of maritime safety and rescue services**

In addition to direct investments and improvements in guest harbours several horizontal aspects were covered by projects as well, e.g. creating networks of port owners and platforms for joint marketing, developing new tools and solutions for booking mooring place or other services, capacity building of voluntary maritime rescue organisations, etc. In such activities the value of cross-border cooperation has been the most evident.

The following joint tools are available for boaters:

- www.balticsmallports.eu
- 30miles.info
- Mobile app Smart Marina Baltic

Experiences and lessons learned

Public sector support for the small guest harbour sector was very much appreciated. According to boating sector representatives from Finland and Sweden **it was first time possible to use EU funds to develop their small ports**. At the same time projects faced some challenges in engaging small ports or relevant organisations as project partners. In many cases ports are privately or small community owned organisations with too low capacity to implement EU supported cooperation project. That's why they are not able to participate as a partner but would need some organisation representing them to implement the administrative procedures. In some projects municipalities took this responsibility to represent beneficiaries in their region, in Estonia the small ports sector organisation took this role in few projects. In Åland the Programme faced serious challenge to get ports involved until Åland Development Center was established and given responsibility to act as project partner and intermediary body to represent small ports as project beneficiaries. As a result, the interest of Åland ports to participate and improve their services increased rapidly.

Investments in environmentally sustainable solutions in ports was one of the important focuses. It included sewage and wastewater treatment, garbage collection, floating pump-out stations installation as well as implementing green energy solutions. Investments in alternative energy production using solar and wind power became especially valuable in the situation of rapidly increasing energy prices in 2021-2022. But in some regions (Gotland, SWE, Hiiumaa, EST) projects faced serious challenges in starting local electricity production because of the low capacity of regional power supply infrastructure and ports were not able to join the network. In some cases, it ended with cancellation of planned investments.

Development after the projects ended

Most of the projects have reported that **created relations and networks will ensure the future cooperation** between partners and ports. Working together, especially in marketing of the Baltic Sea region as a maritime tourism destination will continue. Partners and port owners have understood that although being competitors on the same market they can be successful only together because sailors and boaters need them all, not just very few harbours on the coast.

Another field that will exist and be further developed is the **maritime safety and rescue services**. It needs continuous training and practices, incl. cooperation across borders to ensure safe sailing and boating on the Baltic Sea.

Some organisations participated in Central Baltic Programme **projects have initiated the further cooperation and will implement the small guest harbours development project involving all countries around the Baltic Sea**, except Russia, financed by the Baltic Sea Programme in 2021-2027 funding period.

Participating projects

- **SmartPorts**, improving ports' services, developing network of modern small ports and developing online booking system for leisure boats
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/32>
- **MASAPO**, improving maritime safety in small ports of Baltic Sea Region
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/41>
- **30MILES**, improving ports' services to have a modern guest harbour in every 30 miles, developing tools for safe access to ports
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/17>
- **PortMate**, developing safe and sustainable small ports network
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/66>
- **FamilyPorts**, developing family friendly and environmentally sustainable guest harbours
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/50>
- **Sustainable Gateways**, improving sustainable services of ports in coastal national parks
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/94>
- **BATSECO-BOAT**, improving sewage collection system for leisure boats in small ports
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/87>
- **Smart Marina**, improving ports' services and creating app for the network of small guest harbours
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/84>
- **SEASTOP**, improving ports' services along historic sailing routes
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/77>
- **INTROSERV**, improving maritime safety in small ports of Baltic Sea Region and developing joint Trossi (towing) service for small vessels
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/123>
- **CBSmalPorts**, improving energy solutions in small ports and developing Central Baltic small ports network and it's joint marketing
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/137>
- **Arc Gate**, developing service points for maritime tourists in the Archipelago remote areas
<http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/127>

SAILING FROM ONE THRIVING SMALL PORT TO ANOTHER

Cooperation across borders ensured that even the smallest of guest ports could improve their infrastructure and services to meet modern safety and environmental standards

On the Island of Rödhamn, in South-Western Åland, the positive effects of the **Smart Marina** projects can be seen and felt in the port's day to day life. Before Smart Marina, there was no warm water, drainage nor electricity in the guest harbour. And although some sailors enjoyed the modesty from before, the majority of guests have greatly appreciated the updates, tells Anette Gustafson, the manager of the guest harbour and its café.

“Many people today seek more comfort and so improvements like these are necessary in order to survive”, summarises **Brage Jansson**, the operating manager of Åland Sailing Society, that also operates the Rödhamn port. According to him, Smart Marina has enabled even the smallest of ports to make necessary changes they could not have managed to implement without the funding and shared knowledge provided by the project.

SHARING SUCCESS AND KNOWLEDGE

Also **Minna Keinänen-Toivola**, project manager for **PortMate**, highlights the importance of knowledge sharing for successful project implementation. Only through knowledge sharing and benchmarking can you learn how to do things differently or better and it is also a very cost effective way of doing so.



The results of PortMate are very impressive: In less than three years, 38 official safety videos were made and almost one million euros were invested in sustainable and resource efficient solutions in small ports.

The recipe for success, according to Keinänen-Toivola was teamwork, energetic attitudes and a real desire to develop the small ports of the Central Baltic Sea region in a safer, more ecological and resource-efficient direction.

RESULTS THAT LIVE ON

“We have always been sailing to each other in the Central Baltic region”, **Jonas Davidson** from **SmartPort** points out. And his colleague **Jaano Martin** is delighted by the fact that their work will leave behind an improved network of small harbours. “Seeing something that really makes a difference and that will last for a long time makes my job feel meaningful”, says Brage Jansson.

Besides the physical network of improved small ports, the networks of people behind these projects will continue to exist - creating more innovations and improvements that positively impact the lives of the people in our regions in very concrete ways.

Based on stories and interviews in the programme project database.
Written by Safira Schubak, national Contact Point Finland.

Smart Marina helped harbours transform into attractive and modern ports by connecting harbours and other relevant actors across CB borders to jointly enhance the level of services.

Programme Priority: P3 Well-connected region
Duration: 01.02.2018 - 30.04.2021
ERDF: €6 243 202

SmartPorts developed 16 small ports in Sweden, Åland, Estonia and Latvia through investments in infrastructure, safety and comfort.

Programme Priority: P3 Well-connected region
Duration: 01.10.2015 - 30.09.2017
ERDF: €1 225 260

PortMate improved services in 19 small ports. These included, for example, desalination systems, led lighting and waste water piping. The project also produced videos and guidance on port safety solutions as well as information on resource efficiency. Photo: Kristiina Kortelainen.

Programme Priority: P3 Well-connected region
Duration: 01.11.2016 - 31.12.2019
ERDF: €2 044 091