Baltic Regional Programme

BALTIC REGIONAL PROGRAMME: FOURTH ANNUAL EVALUATION MEETING 3 JUNE 2002
DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA
BALTIC REGIONAL PROGRAMME
FOURTH ANNUAL EVALUATION MEETING, 3 JUNE 2002

DRAFT AGENDA

Chairman: Ambassador Francesco Olivieri, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD
Chairman, Committee for Co-operation with Non-Members

Venue: Château de la Muette
2 rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris

Time: The meeting will start at 9h30

I. Morning session

Item 1. Introduction
   • Welcoming Remarks by Ambassador Olivieri, Chairman

Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda
[CCNM/BALT/A(2002)1]

Item 3. Economic situation in the Baltic countries: An update on reform progress in the Baltic countries
   • Presentations by:
     • Estonia
     • Latvia
     • Lithuania

Coffee break

Item 4. Baltic Regional Programme Implementation Notes -- 2002: Presentations by the Chairmen of the Baltic Working Groups and discussion
   • Introduction by Eric Burgeat, Director, Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members (CCNM)

   • Implementation Note for Estonia [CCNM/BALT(2002)2]
   • Implementation Note for Latvia [CCNM/BALT(2002)3]
   • Implementation Note for Lithuania [CCNM/BALT(2002)4]
II. Afternoon session

Item 5. Review of selected Baltic Regional Programme activities

a. Taxation
b. Education
c. Trade
d. Baltic Anti-Corruption Initiative

Pause

Item 6. Future of the Baltic Regional Programme – looking ahead

Discussion items:

- Future of the Baltic Regional Programme
- Aiming for sustainability—introducing the concept

Item 7. Other business

All participants are invited to a reception in Salle Roget Ockrent, Château de la Muette, following the meeting.
Background

1. The OECD Council agreed to establish the Baltic Regional Programme (BRP) on 12 March 1998 [C/M998)6/PROV]. This agreement was part of an overall consensus reached on an integrated Programme of Work with Non-Members. The Programme was established on the condition that at least 75 per cent of its funding would come from voluntary contributions.¹

2. The Baltic Regional Programme promotes three main objectives, as agreed with the Baltic and OECD Member countries:

   ➢ To assist in the completion of the transition to market economies;
   ➢ To promote the stable integration of the Baltic region into the global economy; and
   ➢ To encourage the use of best practices of the OECD in developing policies and strategies in the Baltic region, in order to promote long-term sustainable economic growth and political stability.

3. The Baltic Regional Programme is “demand driven” in order to find the most effective ways to assist the Baltic countries to reform their legislation and to avoid duplication with other international organisations. In each Baltic capital, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinates a Working Group to advise on and implement the BRP activities. The members of these Groups also contribute knowledge of co-operation with other international organisations such as the EU.

Objectives of the meeting

4. In response to the request by the sponsors, which includes the Baltic countries, the Baltic Regional Programme is built on a basis of thorough evaluation. The Annual Evaluation Meeting functions as ex-post evaluation, and is also structured to impact the ongoing and future objectives and programme of work and budget.

5. Participants have been invited to engage in open, transparent dialogue to:

   ➢ Discuss the state of the Baltic economies, progress in the transition process and integration into the global economy.
   ➢ In regard of the reforms made and still needed, evaluate the continuing relevance of the Programme’s Medium Term Objectives
   ➢ Evaluate the implementation of the BRP during the past year, including participation in bodies of the OECD
   ➢ Review selected Baltic Regional Programme activities with the experts involved

¹ Voluntary contributions were made to the Programme in 2001 by: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United States, and the European Commission.
Discuss the future of the Programme

Delegates are referred to the following general documentation for more background information:

-- The Baltic Regional Programme Annual Report 2001 [CCNM/BALT(2002)1]
-- The Baltic Regional Programme of Work 2002
-- The CCNM 2002 Timetable of Events

**Item 1. Introduction**

6. The meeting will be chaired by Ambassador Olivieri, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OECD and Chair of the OECD Committee on Co-operation with Non-Members.

**Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda**

7. The evaluation meeting will consist of a morning and an afternoon session on 3 June 2002. Four substantive agenda items are proposed.

**Item 3. Economic situation in the Baltic countries: An update on reform progress in the Baltic countries.**

8. Officials from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will make presentations. A list of speakers will be provided at the meeting. Participants are invited to engage with the speakers and delegations in the discussion.

9. The Baltic countries have made impressive progress over a decade of transition. They have liberalised and opened their economies to the international market, and have implemented a significant number of difficult and complex market oriented structural reforms. The representatives of the three Baltic countries will present the recent economic situation, update on the latest reforms and the remaining challenges to complete the transition process of their economies.

**Item 4. Baltic Regional Programme Implementation Notes -- 2002: Presentations by the Chairmen of the Baltic Working Groups and Discussion**

9. Mr. Eric Burgeat, Director, CCNM, OECD, will introduce this item, with a brief overview of the scope of the Programme, as well as the method of activity implementation.

10. The attention of the participants is drawn to the informative Implementation Notes, prepared by each of the Baltic countries. The Chairmen of the Baltic Working Groups will each present their Notes.

- Ambassador Peter RESTSINSKI, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Mr. Uldis VITOLINS, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia
- Mr. Romas SVEDAS, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania
11. These notes were prepared in consultation with the Baltic Regional Programme Working Group specialists, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in each country. These presentations are scheduled for about 10 minutes each. After each presentation there is a brief opportunity for questions for clarification purposes. A general discussion will follow.

The discussion is to focus on:

- The benefits and impact of the various Baltic Regional Programme activities;
- Use of the Programme to reform Baltic countries’ legislation and administration;
- Baltic Governments’ priorities with respect to the Programme and how the Baltic Regional Programme should respond to them;
- The relationship of the Baltic Regional Programme to the EU programmes and, where relevant, the work of other intergovernmental organisations;
- The benefits and added value of a regional Programme covering three Baltic countries and the lessons learned from this regional approach;
- Participation in bodies of the OECD

**Item 5. Review of selected Baltic Regional Programme activities**

12. The Baltic Regional Programme contains many activities on a wide range of themes. At each Evaluation Meeting, a selection of themes is chosen for review. This year, these are:

- Taxation
- Education
- Trade
- Baltic Anti-Corruption Initiative

13. A panel has been organised for each theme, comprised of Baltic experts and the OECD Secretariat activity managers. The aim of the panels is to focus on the main findings, policy impacts and lessons of the activities. Participants are invited to comment. Brief information notes will be available as room documents for each issue. Several publications are under preparation on the selected activities.

**Item 6. Future of the Baltic Regional Programme—looking ahead**


14. The medium-term objectives should be seen as voluntary commitments or benchmarks, developed and agreed among the OECD and Baltic countries. The common thread of the medium-term objectives is to achieve Baltic countries’ closer association with OECD standards and legal instruments. The objectives help to strengthen the long-term planning and evaluation mechanisms of the Programme and avoid duplication of activities with other international organisations, in particular with the EU.

15. It was foreseen that the objectives should be adaptable in the light of changing circumstances and that assessments at future evaluation meetings should indicate whether any adaptations are called for. This item will begin with a **Review of the Medium-Term Objectives 2001-2003**. The discussion could address the following issues:

- Should the medium term objectives be extended beyond 2003 to 2004?
• Should any new activities be included?
• Which activities should be considered completed, or be rescheduled for other reasons?

➤ Status report on Programme Funding for 2001 and 2002

16. The Baltic Regional Programme depends on the considerable intellectual and financial support received from the sponsoring countries, including OECD Member countries and the Baltics, the European Commission and other international organisations. This support has been of vital importance for securing the achievements of the Programme and will continue to be essential for its successful implementation. The Secretariat will review the main points of the report.

17. The report covers the funding situation in 2001 and that expected in 2002. It treats issues of staffing, meeting priorities, and cash flow. The annexes contain a full set of financial statements for 2001, as well as information on the funding received to date for 2002. The meeting is invited to address the following issues/questions raised in the paper:

• Would sponsors who have not made their contributions for 2002, please indicate as soon as feasible, that they will do so, and submit the required letters?

• For 2002, are there any new Programme sponsors who might come forward with some Programme or project funding? In order to attract new Programme sponsors, would Member and Baltic countries be willing to approach Members that are not currently sponsors, to encourage them to support the Programme? If so, are there any suggestions that might be made at the Evaluation meeting?

• Concerning the funding for 2003, the Secretariat will send out requests for voluntary contributions shortly after the June 2002 Evaluation Meeting. It is very important that countries indicate, during the summer, or as early as possible, that they will be contributing to the 2003 Baltic Regional Programme. (This is necessary for agreeing on a programme of work for 2003 with the Baltics and the Directorates, which must occur, at the latest, in early autumn 2002.)

• Member countries and the Baltic countries are invited to indicate their support for the Baltic Regional Programme in 2003, and the level of contributions they would hope to make. The amount of voluntary contributions needed for 2003 is estimated to be about 750,000 Euros (about 5 MN French francs), provided that Part 1 funding may be maintained at the level required to contribute to about one-half of the salary of the programme co-ordinator.

➤ Future of the Baltic Regional Programme

18. A number of issues should be addressed at this year’s Evaluation Meeting, in order to be able to smoothly conduct the Baltic Regional Programme in 2003 and start planning for 2004. These issues include, but are not limited to:

• The duration of the Programme beyond 2003, taking into consideration the schedule of accession of the Baltic countries to the EU, as well as the availability of other forms of cooperation between the OECD and the Baltic countries (OECD Global Forums, activities in the Common Programme for Transition Economies);
The Baltic countries involvement in OECD’s instruments and bodies: what are the expectations (pending and future requests), what results have been accomplished, thus far?

➢ Aiming for Sustainability—introducing the concept

19. A relatively new concept for the Baltic Regional Programme, but one that is familiar in co-operation initiatives and evaluation, is that of sustainability. At this stage of maturity of the Baltic Regional Programme, it is important to think about ensuring that results, in terms of the Programme’s impact on policy outcomes, are sustainable. This infers that the results of the activities become embedded and enduring. To this end, the OECD Secretariat intends to discuss this concept with the Baltic Working Groups and the Directorates, in the future, to determine how the concept of sustainability can be made operational in the Programme.

Item 7. Other business

20. Delegations may wish to raise any other question not covered under previous items.

21. The Chairman will conclude the meeting.

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