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Baltic TRAM Approach to the Diffusion of Research-Intense Solutions

Project featured in the story: [Baltic TRAM](#) (Transnational Research Access in the Macro-Region)

Baltic TRAM story presented by **Ott Rebane**, Industrial Liaison Officer, Faculty of Science and Technology, Institute of Physics of the University of Tartu and a representative of the Baltic TRAM Industrial Research Centre based in Estonia and **Zane Šime**, Communication and Research Coordinator at the CBSS Secretariat, Baltic TRAM Work Package 3 Leader.

The closure months of the Baltic TRAM project is a good timing for outlining in a greater detail to the EUSBSR PA Innovation audiences the achievements of the project which forms part of the Baltic Science Link flagship.

It should be pointed out right away that the majority of aspects presented in this project story are modelled according to [the most recent call of the Let's Communicate team](#) to share more in-depth insights on the project-based developments which help to bring the overall aspirations of the EUSBSR into reality. Baltic TRAM submission for this particular call serves as the key reference point for the project story's structure. The Let's Communicate call was kept in mind in order to highlight those specific Baltic TRAM angles, which have been less pronounced in earlier online publications but are equally important components for a successful establishment and operation of a macro-regional science-business interface.

1) What are the key components of the Baltic TRAM communication and activities aimed at promoting public awareness about research potential and science-business cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region?

The communication of Baltic TRAM is very diverse because the project covers a wide scope of audiences and topics. On the one hand, Baltic TRAM addresses the policy makers' circles and administrators of the funding programmes with its focus on smart specialisation, open science and open data with a pronounced angle of the [European Open Science Cloud](#), as well as innovation governance in general with its cross-cutting ties to various strategic frameworks and EU-wide landmark initiatives captured in the Baltic TRAM policy making publications. Moreover, Baltic TRAM has been also highlighted to the audiences following the developments of [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [EU science diplomacy](#).

On the other hand, Baltic TRAM and its Baltic Sea Region-wide network of Industrial Research Centres addresses EU-based small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in order to attract customers willing to explore what services offered by the analytical research facilities assembled by Baltic TRAM can offer to solve their specific product or service development challenges.

To reach out to the EU-based SMEs, Baltic TRAM open call to submit challenges was promoted via a great diversity of channels. It was made known to the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities, as well as the Swedish Institute to reach out to the alumni networks of its Management Programme Northern Europe. These were some of the transnational outreach examples.



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Nationally, the Estonian Industrial Research Centre demonstrated a notable versatility in its outreach efforts. The Estonian Industrial Research Centre engaged in person in various networking events, such as the [sTARTUp Day 2019 - From Zero to Hero](#) held in Tartu, [Maames](#) held in Tartu, [Seminar of the Estonian Centre of Excellence \(TK 141\) "Advanced materials and high-tech devices for energy recuperation systems"](#) in Tartu, [Collaboration festival "At the right time in the right place"](#) held in Tallinn, to name a few examples. Likewise, in December 2017, the Baltic TRAM open call was promoted via the leading Estonian business media platform [Äripäev](#).

Some of these engagements were also brought to the attention of the social media users interested in the Baltic Sea Region-wide collaboration by being shared not only on the Baltic TRAM website but also via the [@CBSS_SRIA](#) Twitter profile. E.g. Baltic TRAM was one of the most actively promoted projects during the #EUSBSRBetterTogether social media campaign, most prominently shown by the [Tweeted EUSBSR blog entry](#) "Innovation is Better if Delivered Together".

2) What kind of results have been delivered by the project?

The active phase of Baltic TRAM implementation has been already concluded with 68 applications submitted by the EU-based SMEs.¹ Almost all of these applications were processed via the Baltic Sea Region-wide network of Industrial Research Centres during or shortly after the project's implementation phase.

The Estonian Industrial Research Centres, hosted by the University of Tartu, processed both business cases from the SMEs based in Estonia (e.g. Nutrilooop), as well as Finland (e.g. by exploring the utilisation of the side flow material²). Some of these examples are captured in the concluding report "[Baltic TRAM Smart Specialisation Trends](#)". The report elaborates how Baltic TRAM has contributed to the hands-on approach in maintaining the skills and expertise vital for the "clean", "green" and circular economy and the future domains of a sustainable business growth.

3) Are the results possible to be illustrated in numbers?

The University of Tartu was among the analytical research facilities which formed the overall statistics of 30% of transnationally processed business submitted challenges, meaning, that the analytical research facility which was found to be best suited for offering the measurements was located in another country than the SME. Additional statistics are available in the presentation slides shown during the Baltic TRAM co-organised [conference "The Baltic Sea Region – A Science Powerhouse"](#) in Brussels in November 2018.

In more specific numbers, at the Industrial Research Centre hosted by the University of Tartu out of the 11 different companies as clients (having 13 different measurement projects) the

¹For more information please consult the brochure online: https://www.baltic-tram.eu/sites/sites_custom/site_baltic-tram/content/e24061/mainCollItems81032/BalticTRAMBrochure_eng.pdf

² Baltic TRAM promotional leaflet of this business case: <https://bit.ly/2Hjflsl>

The report on the Baltic TRAM open portal (index 4): <https://opendataportal.utu.fi/record/case-study-index-4>



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number of transnational cases where the client company came from abroad was 3. The number of cases where the analytical research facility was eventually not in the Industrial Research Centre's host country Estonia, was – four.

4) What kind of an effect does the project has on daily lives of a group of people?

Baltic TRAM offered measurements were just one stage in an overall R&D process undertaken by several innovative and forward-looking SMEs. Thus, the services offered by Baltic TRAM didn't result in completely new products being developed. However, as it is outlined in one of the [Baltic TRAM promotional leaflets](#) of the analysis offered for the side flow material: "For a micro company, the start of a new product development process is a big challenge which means that the support for the initial measurements and feasibility study turns out to be of a high value."

In addition, for other products, Baltic TRAM offered services from a renown analytical research facility offered an external quality control (reference to the p. 13 of the report "[Baltic TRAM Smart Specialisation Trends](#)"). All in all, Baltic TRAM has helped to improve the quality of products being offered to various customer segments in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond it.

The project story was prepared with an aim to give a wider audience a more nuanced example what actions a university keen on supporting the major milestones defined for the Baltic Sea Region by the EU can undertake in a project format modelled as an integrated component of a more sustained flagship initiative.

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