



1. NOSTRA project

In 2012, NOSTRA project was launched by 16 partners from 8 different European straits, with the aim of exchanging experiences and good practices concerning the cross-border management of straits. This INTERREG IVC project has a special focus on biodiversity and preservation of natural environment issues. The global budget for the project is EUR 2,36 millions, with EUR 1,79 millions of ERDF funding.

During three years, the partners from 10 different countries attended regular meetings at the scale of the partnership and at the scale of their own strait (territorial meetings).

The objective of the first year of the project was to assess the issues raised around straits, especially considering governance questions. In order to “See and learn”, the partners visited the Strait of Kvarken and the Strait of Bonifacio and met local stakeholders. A baseline study was launched in order to have a first assessment of the state of the different straits involved in NOSTRA and to know what type of governance tools exist.

The second year of the project was dedicated to the exchange of good practices. Four workshops have been organised to “Analyse and study” the major issues of straits, that is to say:

- Seascape and marine spatial planning (January 2013, Kent)
- Tourism and cultural heritage (April 2013, Lecce)
- Maritime safety and green traffic (June 2013, Fehmarn Belt)
- Coast and hinterland economy (October 2013, Uusimaa).

The objective of the final year of the project was to « Think and act ». To do so, three cross-cutting seminars have been organised:

- Link between the coast and the hinterland (February 2014, Reggio Calabria)
- Capitalisation on European projects on protection of biodiversity (June 2014, Bonifacio)
- Finalisation of the implementation plans (September 2014, Tulcea)

They aimed to better understand the link between the different subjects tackled previously and help having an idea of the ideal (cross-border) governance tool to ensure the preservation of straits' natural environment. The objective was also to work on the outputs of the project, that is to say a good practices guide and the implementation plans.

2. Final Conference of the project – 22 October 2014 in Brussels

The final conference of NOSTRA project took place on 22 October 2014, in Brussels. For this occasion, many political representatives of the local authorities involved in NOSTRA were present. The day was introduced by a speech of the President of Pas-de-Calais County Council, lead partner of the project:

“What unites us is the belief that our territories, even diverse and different, are facing similar issues, on which the exchange and sharing of experiences enrich us, collectively.”

The straits, these passageways that both link and separate the two lands and two seas, are places with a concentration of multiple issues that cannot be apprehended separately. The results of NOSTRA project are the first illustration of it and reinforce our conviction.”

This final conference was the opportunity to give an overview of NOSTRA project activities and outputs. Specific focus was made on the results of NOSTRA within the straits involved in the cooperation project thanks to testimonies during a round table with a representative of each strait.

3. The main results of NOSTRA

The main results of NOSTRA project have been presented during the final conference of the project, on 22 October 2014. Focus can be made on 3 major outputs:

- **A baseline study** was launched in 2012 to undertake an assessment of all 8 of the straits involved in NOSTRA. A specific attention was paid to biodiversity and socio-economic issues. The reports produced by a consultant team also looked at what types of governance exist in straits, especially in a cross-border context.

The objective of this baseline study was to assess the main issues faced by European straits and the answers that have been given to these issues by local stakeholders and European regulations. To go further, recommendations have been made by the consultant team for future actions and potential areas of cooperation, at the scale of each strait and at the scale of the partnership.

➔ The full study can be downloaded **on the project website**.

- **A good practices guide** has been produced in 2014. It gathers 50 good practices identified within NOSTRA project around 7 themes:

- Joint governance – 6 good practices
- Seascape and marine spatial planning – 2 good practices
- Sustainable tourism – 7 good practices
- Sustainable transport – 9 good practices
- Maritime safety – 7 good practices
- Responsible economic development – 13 good practices
- Direct actions in favour of natural environment – 6 good practices

For each theme, the link is made with the main focus of the project, “preservation of biodiversity and the natural environment”, in order to explain why the partners chose to work on this subject.

➔ The good practices guide can be downloaded **on the project website**.



- **15 implementation plans in total** have been produced by the partners of NOSTRA in 2014. Each of them aims at transferring a few good practices from one strait to another in order to improve the local and regional public policies and to work towards a sustainable management of straits' territories. Each plan is at least partly at the cross-strait scale: it shows the real commitment of local authorities from both sides of each strait to work together.

➤ A summary in English of each implementation plan will soon be available **on the project website**.

4. After NOSTRA, the European Straits Initiative

The final conference of 22 October 2014 was celebrating the end of NOSTRA project. However, it does not mean the end of the partnership. Indeed, the second part of the day was dedicated to a political meeting of the European Straits Initiative (ESI), of which NOSTRA is the main result. The presence of Henri Malosse, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, and of a representative of the European Commission, showed the interest of the European bodies for the activities of the European Straits Initiative: promising for the future of the network.

Many of NOSTRA partners are engaged in the European Straits Initiative since 2010 and the signature of a first Memorandum of Understanding aiming at engaging lobbying actions to promote the straits' specificities at the EU level and cooperation projects; the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding answers the will of the partners for further cooperation. It has been followed by the adoption of an Action Plan including the will to prepare the application for a new cooperation project.

The signature of this new Memorandum of Understanding was an opportunity for 4 new partners to join the network:

- Municipality of Lolland, in Denmark, on the Fehmarn Belt
- Municipality of Pantelleria, in Italy, on the Strait of Sicily
- Province of West-Vlaanderen, in Belgium, on Dover Strait
- Nord County Council, in France, on Dover Strait

Other authorities have announced their will to join the network and will sign the Memorandum of Understanding very soon:

- The entrance of the Ionian Islands Region, in Greece, will enable the entrance of a new strait in the European Straits Initiative: the Strait of Corfu.
- A Tunisian partner, on the Strait of Sicily, will enable the two shores of this strait in between Europe and Africa to be part of the European Straits Initiative.

➤ To continue to follow our activities, please visit **www.nostraproject.eu** and **www.europeanstraits.eu**

