## **Borders separate.** Nature unites.



The project family along the Europan Green Belt has born a new descendant: In January 2009, the INTERREG IV B project baltic green belt has seen the light of day. As the platform for nature conservation and sustainable development along the Baltic coast between Lübeck



and the Finno-Russian border, the project bridges the last large gap in the European Green Belt.



## What's the project about?

For decades, many coastal strips along the former socialist countries were completely or partly closed to public access. Not only did these strips demark national borders, but even constituted a barrier seperating two systems. Similar to the terrestrial border strips, these areas preserved vast, almost pristine stretches of coastland. Some of them were successfully designated as nature reserves or national parks after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, many pearls of nature up to now grace the water line both above and below the water surface – largely undiscovered, unrecognised and unprotected. Sea weed forests and sea gras meadows, bogs and beach walls, lagoons, bays and many other submarine and terrestrial paradises are typical of the Green Belt along the Baltic. The project baltic green belt wants to foster the conservation of these treasures of nature and to demonstrate their sustainable development, including eco recreation, sustainable animal farming, military based tourism, and integrated, participative coastal planning. To this end, a project community led by the University of Kiel (CAU) unites the Baltic NGO network Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) with the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) as well as a number of national partners from all countries along the baltic south-east.

## What do we work for?:

- development of an ecological network under the umbrella of the European Green Belt following the Green Belt vision
- collaboration of environmental NGOs, universities and authorities for a sustainable development of the coast
- protection of the environment and natural resources; improvement of the cological status of the marine and terrestrial Baltic Sea area (eutrophication, waste water, agriculture, tourism, ...)
- supporting the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea action plan for the protection of the Baltic
- evaluation of the implementation of international agreements for coastal protection along the Baltic Green Belt
- identification of barriers and success factors/indicators of sustainable coastal development



















### The project in short:

- Project name: baltic green belt
- Lead Partner: Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
- Project community: 13 partners and 9 associated organisations from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Russia (universities, environmental NGOs, regional administration, national/regional parks, municipalities) • Project period: January 2009 until January 2012
- Overall budget: 2,1 Mio Euro (BSRP Programme)
- Project KickOff: 1<sup>st</sup> baltic green belt forum, 19.-22.02.09, Travemünde (D)
- Website: www.balticgreenbelt.net

Prof. Dr. Horst Sterr Department of Geography, University of Kiel Ludewig-Meyn-Str. 14 24118 Kiel, Germany

## Contact:

Lead Partner

Coordination: m.schultz@geographie.uni-kiel.de Communication: s.maack@geographie.uni-kiel.de Tel.: +49-(0)431-880-1782 Fax.: +49-(0)431-880-4658





Part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument)

# Estonian green belt – pearl in European green belt



Estonia has a coastline of some 3800 km including about 1000 islands. In Soviet times, a coastal strip of up to 25 km width was under strict military control. This belt ran from the Russian-Estonian border towards the west and included the islands of the Estonian Archipelago. The strongest measures of surveillance prevailed on the Island of Saaremaa, from where the entrance to the Gulf of Riga was controlled. In contrast to this, the coasts on the inner side of the Gulf of Riga were practically free for people to access.





Soviet occupation and military left Estonia both, "brown" and "green" heritage. Overall in Estonia, 87.000 hectares were designated military areas, a large part of which was located on the coast. Many of them have been permanently contaminated, damaged and must be considered as brown heritage. But because of strict control, which did not allow any activities at the coast, there are also numerous vast almost pristine natural areas where countless valuable objects can be found (for example cultural heritage, national heritage, geologically important objects, woodland key habitats, wetlands etc.)



Nowadays the Estonian coastline has many threats, for example: Declining biodiversity, mainly due to the loss and degradation of the

- semi-natural habitats connected to the land abandonment
- Loss of cultural landscape value, mainly due to the land abandonment, real estate development





In order to avoid inauspicious developments, the coastline must be protected now to be secured for the future. It is important not to turn coastal areas to restricted zones again - management has to go hand in hand with nature protection and human activities. To allocate the areas according to their value an inventory must carried out to find the most interesting objects and sights in estonian coast. In 2009 about 200 valuable objects were mapped and studied in North-West Estonia, rest of the coast will be investigated in 2010.

The inventory will mostly be carried out by Estonian University of Life Sciences students, employees, experts and many volunteers. This assessment will result in a geographical data set of valuable objects along the coastline. The data set will then be promoted among planning authorities to be used for spatial planning including roads, resorts & touristic areas, nature protection sites etc.



**Estonian University of Life Sciences main goals in the project:** 

- To evaluate and make an inventory of Green Belt in Estonia
- Develop recommendations for good practice coastal protection and conservation
- Implement coastal protection and conservation good practices in spatial planning
- To compile a book and film about Estonian Green Belt



 Increase peoples awareness about environment and nature Information about Estonian Green Belt has reached brochures, information boards etc.

> More information online: http://www.balticgreenbelt.uni-kiel.de/ http://www.estoniangreenbelt.eu/







Baltic Green Belt is partly financed by the European Union (ERDF) within the Interreg IVB Programme