



## 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

### 1. Introduction

The BALTECH Consortium, initiated in 1997 and established in 1998 was set up with the aim to be the solid base for wider partnership and closer cooperation between universities in the Baltic Sea Region within the area of natural sciences, technology and industrial management. In the long term perspective the goal has been to create a virtual "Baltic Sea University of Science and Technology" based on a number of universities around the Baltic Sea as a strategic resource for long-term development of education and research in accordance with the needs of the region.

The Consortium is governed by a Board consisting of representatives of the Partner Universities and a Secretariat appointed by the Board.

#### ***The statutes of BALTECH stipulate among others to:***

- *stimulate the integration into European education and research systems,*
- *take an active part in developing the policies of higher education and science in the Baltic Sea region,*
- *provide scientific expertise and to give expert conclusions on principal questions of technology development in the Baltic region countries,*
- *encourage novel study programs and courses in different fields of science and technology,*
- *support the integration of higher engineering education with research and technology development as well as to promote efficient methods for training engineers,*
- *promote innovation in engineering and technology education,*
- *participate in international assessments of study programs and research projects,*
- *support communication between academic and administrative staff members and students including mobility in the framework of different European Union programs,*
- *support the organization of international conferences in order to disseminate new achievements in research and development,*
- *promote joint research and educational projects, especially in interdisciplinary fields,*
- *strengthen the development of relations between universities and industry and to consider the industry's requirements for engineering and technological education,*

- encourage new approaches in the management of engineering and technology education,
- promote continuing and distance education for engineers,
- encourage the awarding of joint degrees,
- create a BALTECH information network.

## **2. BALTECH - focus and highlights in 2009**

### ***2.1 BALTECH activities were focused around:***

- Enhancing communication between academic and administrative/support staff.
- Enhancing communication between students.
- Support of mobility among students
- Conferences and seminars on topics of common interest, with an aim to disseminate new achievements.
- Initiation of joint educational and research projects.
- Development of BALTECH information network.
- Network building with non-academic networks and organizations.

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The world financial crisis and the general down-turn in the global economy, which affected the Baltic countries in particular, had no direct impact on the activities of BALTECH, although travelling and attendance at conferences was cut down among members.

The EU Baltic Sea Strategy document, which was adapted during the Swedish EU Presidency in the second half of 2009, and which is the first of its kind on regional development strategies within the EU, can be seen as an impetus to further enhance cooperation between the BALTECH universities, especially since innovation, education, research & development are priority areas within the EU including the governments around the Baltic Sea.

### ***2.2 Highlights***

- BALTECH Spring Conference, Lund, March 26 - 27. *Educational Environments of the Future and Quality of Teaching*

- BALTECH Rectors' meeting, Lund, March 27
- BALTECH Student Union meeting, Lund, March 27
- Nordtek Annual Conference, Reykjavik, June 13 - 15
- Baltic Development Forum, Stockholm, October 5 – 6, BALTECH Student Body participation
- Career Services meeting, Tallinn, November 23- 24,
- Board Meeting, Stockholm, December 1
- Student Union meeting, Stockholm, December 1
- BALTECH fall Conference, Stockholm, December 2, which was an official event during the Swedish EU Presidency. "*Universities – a vehicle for innovation in the Baltic sea Region*".

BALTECH Student Body Exchange, 12 exchanges during the year.

### **3. Collaboration in Education and Research**

Cooperation in education and research have traditionally been the corner-stones of BALTECH, in 2009.

#### ***3.1 Erasmus Mundus***

An application was submitted to the EU for funding of joint Erasmus Mundus programs within *Environmental Management and Cleaner Production* and *Industrial Engineering and Management*. These were not approved of.

New initiatives were taken at the board meeting on December 1, 2009 to initiate ER programs within *Materials and Processes for Sustainable Energetics* and *Health Care Technology* (also supported by Nordplus). Provided an interest from the member universities, it was agreed that TKK would submit the applications, since the likelihood to get approval from old EU member seems bigger than for applications from new states. Since no interest was attained among member universities, no application was handed in 2010.

### **3.2 Nordplus**

A joint application for funding from the Nordplus Higher Education program was submitted in April 2009. The application covered mobility and communication activities of BALTECH. The application was not approved of.

### **4. Cooperation between administrative units**

In line with the cooperation between administrative staff, a meeting for Career Services was arranged in November 2009. It focused on exchange of everyday routines and work practices.

### **5 BALTECH conferences**

Two conferences were arranged in 2009.

*Educational Environments of the Future and Quality of Teaching*, Lund March 27.

*Universities – a vehicle for innovation in the Baltic sea Region*, Stockholm, December 2.

The aim is to find topics of joint interest. The set up of the BALTECH conferences is usually on three levels, a European, a national and a university one. All or most BALTECH universities take part in preparation phase.

Both conferences attracted approximately 50 participants, including students.

The fall conference was 100% financed by the Swedish Development Agency Sida Öst and was part of the official Swedish 2009 EU Presidency.

### **6 External and contacts**

#### **6.1 Nordtek**

BALTECH was invited to take part of the Nordtek annual meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, June 13 – 15. Toomas Käbin gave a presentation of BALTECH in one of the working groups.

The topic of the Nordtek 2009 conference was *Borderless Engineers and Natural Scientists*.

There is a regular exchange of information between the Nordtek and BALTECH Secretariats.

### **6.2 The EU Baltic Sea Strategy**

Contacts were established with Vinnova (The Swedish Government Agency for Innovation Systems) who is coordinating the implementation of The EU Baltic Sea Strategy in order to evaluate possible contribution from the BALTECH universities.

### **6.3 Baltic Development Forum**

BALTECH Student Union representatives took part of the Baltic Development Forum (BDF) conference in Stockholm in October.

BDF is the most prestigious meeting of its kind in the Baltic Sea region, gathering top level politicians, academia, business circles and R&D and is an important forum for networking.

## **7 Student activities**

The BALTECH Student Union has been active within the so called BALTECH Student Body Exchange Project. The 2009 activities are presented in the document *BALTECH Student Body Exchange Report*. The Student Union is given free hands to work out strategies and to come up with ideas.

In addition to this, students have taken an active part in the BALTECH conferences.

The BALTECH Student Union board meets twice a year. Students from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were more active in the work than students from Finland and Sweden.

Payment and administrative routines for student activities have been worked out and implemented.

## **8 Scholarships**

### ***8.1 BALTECH Mobility Scholarship***

The BALTECH Mobility scholarship was announced four times during 2009, with deadlines on February 15, May 15, September 15 and December 15.

Mobility scholarships amounting to 10.014 Euro were awarded to 21 students, out of 43 applicants. The scholarships were open for short term assignments and covered travel costs and weekly allowances for a period of eight weeks. In December 2009, The BALTECH board decided to extend the duration to 12 weeks as from 2010. The scholarships are open for bachelor, master and PhD students irrespective of study field at any one of the BALTECH universities for studies or visits to any one of the BALTECH universities.

### ***8.2 ÅF Grant***

The ÅF Grant is administered by BALTECH but payments are effectuated directly between ÅF and the scholars.

In 2009 two scholarships were awarded.

## **9 Rectors' meeting**

The 2009 rectors' meeting took place in Lund on March 27. Rectors were mainly represented by members of the BALTECH board.

## **10 Board meetings**

A board meeting was arranged in Stockholm on December 1.

Since the death of Lennart Nilsson in May 2009, the KTH board member post as well as the coordinator of joint projects has been vacant.

## **11 Management**

The BALTECH Secretariat usually holds short weekly meetings during the spring and fall terms. The following persons participate: The Chairman of the Board (prof Jakob Kübarsepp), the Secretary (Toomas Käbin), the web-administrator (Hedvi Valgemäe) and the IRO (Maret Hein). Others are invited when needed.

The Secretariat is responsible for the management of BALTECH.

Information on all BALTECH activities is provided through news- letters on a regular basis to rectors, board members, the International Relations Offices and Student Unions.

## **12 Agreements**

BALTECH had the following agreements in 2009:

- Lennart Nilsson/KTH, coordinator of joint projects and Task Forces (until May).
- Käbin Consulting OÜ/Toomas Käbin, Secretary of BALTECH.

## **13 Finances**

BALTECH is primarily financed by the member universities. The annual membership in 2009 was 5.000 Euro.

ÅF paid BALTECH 20.000 SEK, (approx 2.000 Euro) to cover administrative costs in connection with the ÅF-Grant, which is handled by the BALTECH Secretariat.

Revenues amounted to 82.565 Euro (budget 72.741), which includes the 2008 surplus 30.941 Euro..

Costs amounted to 54.326 Euro (budget 72.500).

The surplus, to be forwarded into the 2010 budget was 28.239 Euro (budget 241).

Spending on Research and Education has been almost zero. This explains much of the surplus.

Some comments to the attached document *BALTECH Budget/Outcome/Estimate 2009/2010*:

1. Student Activities; not all 2009 Faculty Exchange expenses have been paid.
2. Scholarship, not all 2009 scholarships have been claimed yet.
3. Task Forces, no operations were registered, thus no money used.
5. Meetings/Conferences. The Fall conference, which was not budgeted for, was 100% financed by SIDA Öst (94.308 SEK/approx 9.700 Euro).

## **14 Auditing**

The BALTECH accounts form an integral part of the Tallinn University of Technology accounts under a separate dossier. The accounting at Tallinn University of Technology is subordinate to the laws and regulations of the Republic of Estonia. Auditing is done by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

## **15 Web-page**

The web-page [www.baltech.info](http://www.baltech.info) has been updated constantly. The BALTECH Student Union has come up with ideas on changes in order to make it more user-friendly and accessible.

Tallinn, April 15, 2010

Jakob Kübarsepp

Chairman of Board

Toomas Käbin

Secretary

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