

## ***Executive summary***

*The city of Szczecin chose to participate in the MARRIAGE project as a partner. MARRIAGE is part-financed from the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme and runs from October 2011 to December 2014.*

*The acronym MARRIAGE in full stands for: ‘MARRIAGE – better marina management, harbour network consolidation and water tourism marketing in the southern Baltic rim’.*

*Led by the Economic Development Corporation Vorpommern, the MARRIAGE project initiates cooperation and exchange in water tourism marketing, marina management and operation as well as the consolidation of the marina network in the southern Baltic rim. The overall aim of the project is to increase the incomes from water tourism in the participating regions in Germany (Land Mecklenburg - Vorpommern), Poland (Zachodniopomorskie and Pomorskie regions), Russia (Kaliningrad) and Lithuania (Klaipeda Region), which are mostly lagging behind in these respects within the South Baltic area. MARRIAGE concentrates on cross-border activities and an international knowledge transfer that adds concrete value in the regions. Project results include information for boaters about the attractive sailing area in the South Baltic Rim, and training material for marina operators for a profitable marina management. Within MARRIAGE, the City of Szczecin advanced its marina management skills and intensified marketing towards boaters from the southern Baltic rim. It participated in the international exchange and closely cooperated with the Zachodniopomorskie Marshal Office in the marketing activities planned within the project. More information is available at: [www. project-marriage.net](http://www.project-marriage.net).*

*Because of the city’s participation in the project, it has been obliged to develop the Waterside Tourism Development Programme (hereinafter named the Programme). This Executive Summary presents the major findings of the Programme.*

*Szczecin, like many other European port and harbour cities, undergoes the process of urban regeneration, both functionally and spatially. Waterside rims are exceptionally important part of this regeneration process, especially as they contribute to the city’s identity and image of a sea city. Szczecin’s unique feature relies in the fact that the port (industrial and port areas) are located in the heart of the city. As examples from other European port cities show, urban regeneration of port areas may be long-term and of complex nature.*

*The Waterside Tourism Development Programme may help look at the city’s regeneration vision from a different perspective. The major challenge for the city is to plan its development in such a way so as the city can play its role as a cross-border metropolis in the southern part of the Baltic Sea Region. The new EU development paradigm urges the city to make plans in the wider context of its functional area and not “within the administrative borders”. Close cooperation of Szczecin with its neighbouring communities is then a must to fulfil this objective.*

*Furthermore, close cooperation with partners under projects such as Marriage is of particular asset to the City. Not only it can gain from information and expertise exchanges, but it can further contacts to develop new ideas which could be implemented for the benefit of residents, tourists and all interested parties.*

*As far as the strategic documents on the local level are concerned, the Programme fits well into the Szczecin City Development Strategy 2025 (SCDS 2025), which stipulates the activities to be taken in the field of tourism. The SCDS 2025 identified the key development areas in the tourism sector, naming the priorities and directions of development, especially in waterside tourism, which seemed essential to the implementation process of the strategy.*

*The SCDS 2025 urged to ease tourism development, based on the city's natural, historical, and cultural heritage (Strategic Programme II – Szczecin – a city of modern, competitive and innovative economy). Moreover, the Programme also fits into the objectives of the city brand strategy (Floating Garden 2050), in which water, green areas and space have been identified as key elements of the city potential.*

*Within the hierarchy of the city strategic documents, the Programme is a sector programme complementing the four Strategic Programmes developed and adopted by the Mayor of the City in 2013.*

*The territorial scope of the Programme extends beyond the city administrative borders and covers the Szczecin metropolitan area, and even Cross-Border Metropolitan Area of Szczecin. The Programme is of developmental-integrational nature. It should be implemented during the period of five years (2015-2020). It meets the strategic objectives of major European, national, regional and local documents, especially with regard to tourism development. These major strategic documents have been thoroughly analysed to name the obligations for the city of Szczecin, as they may exert impact on its activities and implementation of the Programme. The overriding objective of the Programme is to implement the principle of sustainable development. Other principles according to which the Programme will be implemented are: concentration of funds, complementarity of activities, partnership, social participation, equal chances, network cooperation and multi-funds usage.*

*The Programme has been structured in such a way, so as to cover the following key issues: the description of the programme and its objectives, challenges, functional delimitation, benchmarking of the neighbouring tourist areas, Cross-border Metropolitan Area of Szczecin, potentials and barriers of waterside tourism development, accessibility, tourism brand and destination image, agreement with the strategic documents, priority areas, planned activities (infrastructure, organisational actions, residents' awareness and development of human resources for implementing assumed objectives and coordinating joint marketing activities), financial resources, and the added-value of the Programme.*

*The Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship is situated in the NW part of Poland. In the north the neighbouring Germany, as well as the border river Oder, which is furrowed with numerous*

*creeks and islands, which pass through Szczecin, bound by the Baltic Sea and in the west the province. The Szczecin Bay as inland waters and the outer coast form an attractive sailing area with many harbours with short distances between. All these factors condition water tourism development in the metropolis.*

*Szczecin is the capital of Zachodniopomorskie with about 420 thousand inhabitants. It is also a core city of the metropolitan area. The city cherishes a well-established maritime profile and is one of the most attractive destinations for sailors in the southern Baltic rim. There are several marinas existing, but still they seem to offer insufficient capacity to meet high demand of residents and guests. Developing new marinas, such as for example the one on Grodzka Isle and hosting the Tall Ships Races event result from the water tourism-oriented policies adopted by the local government.*

*Major assets are: a vast area of inland surface waters, access to open sea, location on a natural north-south transport route, the city history of European roots, modern cultural values, and attractive services. To develop tourism based on water environment values, one should base on the possibilities offered by water tourism, and the latter does not fit into concepts of locating the offer in one place.*

*Tourist development of waterside areas, including culinary base, cultural and entertainment offer require further advancement. The Programme assumes that its strategic destination will be the Oder Estuary, covering the network of waterways of the Lower Oder, Dabie Lake, Szczecin Bay, straits of Swina, Dziwna and Piana rivers and coastal part of the Pomeranian Bay. The Oder Estuary is the area where several hundreds of tourist projects have been developed. Most of them were co-financed by the European Territorial Cooperation Programme and Regional Operational Programme for Zachodniopomorskie Region 2007-2013. Among 652 projects, as many as 349 projects were implemented in Szczecin.*

*The Programme has identified key developmental problems of the destination area, including uncoordinated relations between the interested parties and the lack of specialised tourism operators promoting the water tourism offers at national and overseas markets. In the waters of the Oder Estuary, in the first place on Dabie Lake water recreation activities are taking place (mainly kayaking and sailing). In the city of Szczecin itself, there are 6 yacht rental companies. In the Estuary, there are 25 ports and marinas. 8 of them (the largest number) are situated in Szczecin. The number of places for guests is as little as 170. This number is relatively small, if one takes into consideration that the whole Estuary offers 1063 places for guests.*

*Szczecin is the destination for cruises. In 2013, the city hosted 90 river cruisers and 3 sea cruisers. Deepening the fairway is necessary if this trend is to continue. Further, it seems the major challenge for the city, as defined in the City Development Strategy 2025, is to revitalise vast waterfront areas, combining numerous interests of tourists, residents and generating key tourism products.*

*Passenger sailing in the Oder Estuary is not fully developed. In the recent years, the demand for sailing services offered by carriers has gone down. The number of ships and voyages has lessened, too. The main reason behind this phenomenon was related to organisational and ownership changes.*

*The Programme stresses that waterside tourism development must be coordinated in several areas. The coordinated activities must cover both the so called hard investment projects, and shaping of the residents' awareness and development of human resources for implementing assumed objectives and coordinating joint marketing activities.*

*Apart from enlisting the planned and possible activities, ranked according to infrastructure, organisation and management and residents' activation activities, the Programme also assumes that its long-term result will be a tangible and durable increase of the number of tourists, aiming at creating new jobs and increase of incomes in the tourism and tourism-alike services sectors.*

*Because of the Programme implementation, it is expected that new effective mechanisms for coordinated promotion of the Oder Estuary with tourism products based on natural and anthropogenic heritage will be developed. The competitive position of the Szczecin metropolis in the Baltic Sea Region is to increase, too.*

*Finally, the Programme makes a number of recommendations that should be implemented by the city of Szczecin to reach its waterside tourism development objectives. One of these is to name the waterside tourism manager who would be responsible for coordinating activities, especially together with the West Pomeranian Regional Tourism Organisation and the Association of the Szczecin Metropolitan Area. His major responsibility would be to develop the destination brand and defining its delimitation borders.*

*The Bureau for Social Communications and Marketing, Szczecin Municipal Government, will monitor the Programme and its implementation.*

*It is assumed that the Programme's implementation will be financed from the city budget in the first place, complemented by the external funds. Some of these may come from the state budget, European and national operational programmes, budgets of cities and towns located in the Oder Estuary and other interested partners.*