

# Baltic Energy Islands Connect – Vision Paper

A collaboration between the emerging energy islands in the Baltic Sea, Gotland/Bornholm/Saaremaa/Åland, with a vision to

## **Make the Energy Islands of the Baltic Sea models for inclusive green growth**

*We believe that in the future, the energy islands in the Baltic Sea are connected to essential energy infrastructure, necessary to unlock the renewable energy potential as well as the growth potential for the communities.*

### Framework for the collaboration

The islands in this collaboration are looking into a future where political visions advocate for much more wind energy in the Baltic Sea to achieve our common European goal of a carbon-neutral future and independence from Russian energy.

This transition catapults island communities into a new and exciting reality. From being more on the periphery and remote from the mainland, the islands are now at the center of the green transition, and by producing and transferring energy for the Nordic and the European energy markets, the islands communities can greatly benefit both economically and socially.

The development also presents challenges to the islands, when often lacking experience on working with the green transition. So, by forming this collaboration the islands can share experience and utilize on our common foundation, along with the determination to ensure a development that also generates local growth on the islands while securing islands interests.

### Purpose

Massive investments in green energy in the Baltic Sea are necessary to make this transformation of the island communities a reality. These investments should act as a catalyst for economic development that can bring growth and increased prosperity to the islands. However, investments in offshore wind, electricity and hydrogen infrastructure cannot stand alone. The development must consider local values, involve and engage the local population, and take in to account the importance of the interconnected steps in the value chain.

The islands in the collaboration will strive to unlock the potential of this exciting new development by:

- enable investments in renewable energy and infrastructure in the Baltic Sea and contribute to the transition of Europe
- ensure that these investments benefit the local island communities
  - engage and empower local communities
  - attracts and enable investments in local businesses

### Approach

We will realize the potential and purpose of the collaboration by:

- Being a strong advocate for island interests to decision-makers and developers
- Ensuring stakeholders connect
- Developing joint projects to address common challenges
- Coordinating knowledge exchange between the islands

## Pre-amble

The ambition is to establish a clear organisational structure that allows for smooth communication within the collaboration Baltic Energy Islands Connect (BEIC). The intention is to create means to also meet physically and hopefully, as we progress, be able to establish a joint secretariat.

The working language will be English and the main communication platform will be Microsoft Teams.

## Description

BEIC has been endorsed politically through the political management of each island and the work within BEIC should be anchored towards responsible politicians, on each of the islands, on a regular basis. We therefore suggest to establish a **BEIC Committee**, consisting of about two leading political representatives from each island. Meeting form is primarily digital and frequency 1-2 times/year.

A **Steering group** should be established to continuously follow up the work within BEIC and take decisions on issues like funding, project applications and the organisation of any joint personnel (secretariat). Decisions are made on the basis of consensus. 2 representatives per island.

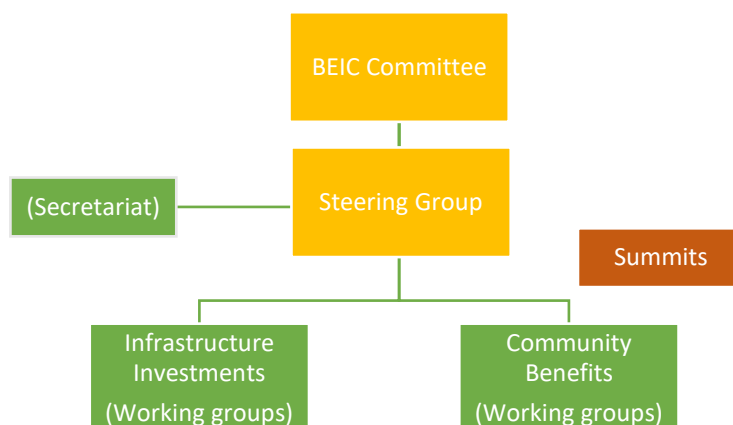
Meeting form is primarily digital, although when time/economy allows, physical meetings are aimed for. Frequency: 6 times/year.

**BEIC Summits.** Two times per year we should aim to hold BEIC Summits to allow for a greater exchange of experiences where each island decide upon the number of participants. BEIC Committee and/or BEIC Steering Group meetings may be scheduled at these summits when suitable.

The Summits are typically held in the spring and in the autumn. Given the ambition to hold a Summit on Bornholm each May that can be one of these yearly occasions and then alternating between Saaremaa, Åland and Gotland in the autumn.

Working groups will be established along the way and will be overseen by the Steering Group.

## Organizational structure



| Enable investments in RE and infrastructure   | Engage and empower local communities   | Attract and enable investments in local businesses   |
|---|--|--|
| Collective action   | Collective action  | Collective action  |
| Advocate for the need for collaboration on a national and EU-level to enable investments in hydrogen and DC-infrastructure.   | Advocate for national and EU-funding that enable the local municipalities / parliaments etc. to engage and empower the societies.  | Advocate for national and EU-funding that enable local growth – support to local framework that makes the islands able to attract investments.             |
| Advocate for the islands' interests to decision-makers (ex tender process and design of local possibilities to be part of the grid) and developers (local content considering business and education) | Actively exchange best practices to engage and empower local communities.<br><br>Provide an international perspective on the green transition and spread the Energy Island concept to our local communities. | Training and development of skills capacity.<br><br>Inventory and gather the collective capacity of courses in green transition and develop joint programs |
| Island action - Based on knowledge developed and shared among the islands   | Island action - Based on knowledge developed and shared among the islands  | Island action - Based on knowledge developed and shared among the islands  |
| Contribute to clear the paths on the island, increasing the likelihood to invest in green energy projects that create local value   | Increase the level of knowledge in local communities about trends in green transition and sustainable initiatives  | Establish developing framework that enables and facilitates the companies access to large amounts of green electricity                                     |
| Contribute to and advocate for shifting the demand on the islands towards fossil-free fuels, including for ferries and domestic flights   | Participate in the creation of an ACE toolkit that makes sure citizens are seen as a vital resource in planning for new green initiatives  | Encourage involved parties to form partnerships that will contribute to the transformation of education relevant to energy islands                         |
| Participate in capacity building events that aim at transferring knowledge on topics related to energy hubs   |  |  |