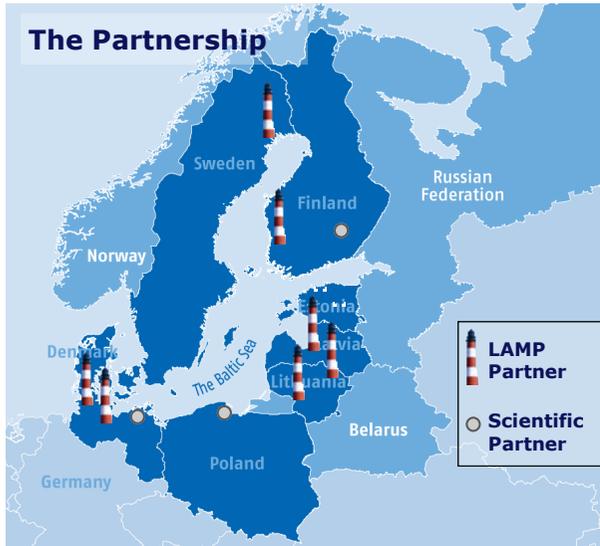


Best Agers Lighthouses

Strategic Age Management for SME in the Baltic Sea Region



“Best Agers Lighthouses” in a Nutshell

“Best Agers Lighthouses” focuses on **age management interventions** in selected **small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)** and public organisations.

The interventions will follow a jointly developed methodology which is based on the results of the “Best Agers” project. They will be monitored and evaluated scientifically in order to determine the concrete economic consequences of implementing – and of *not* implementing – age management in human resources policy.

The involved companies and organisations will be promoted as lighthouses in order to provide an **applied and practical model approach** of personnel policy in times of demographic change for enterprises and public employers.

The Point of Departure

The main stage Baltic Sea Region Programme project “Best Agers” has shed light on the **changing role of older people (55+)** in Baltic Sea economies that are confronted with the consequences of demographic change. As **ageing and shrinking workforces** become reality, it is necessary to change the mindset with which we see older people - especially in working life. Older people can contribute to economic activities and innovation processes in various ways: by remaining in employment or acting as mentors, senior advisors or entrepreneurs. The partnership has shown that whereas the legal, administrative, social and cultural differences between countries make it impossible to prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach, there are certain common traits that hinder economic activity of older people in all involved EU member states. These are:

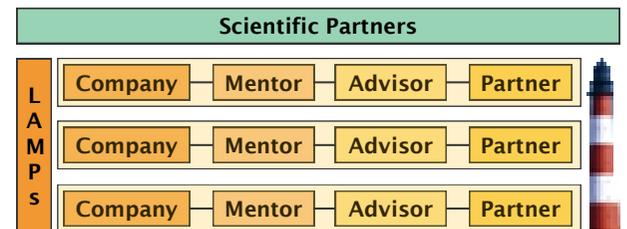
- a high level of ‘ageism’ among employers, despite a positive appreciation of older workers’ competences
- a lack of willingness among employers to proactively change their personnel strategy
- a lack of encouragement and incentives for older employees to remain in the company
- a lack of visible positive examples, even in seemingly more advanced member states such as Sweden.

Many EU member states currently witness controversial debates about raising retirement age in order to safeguard the pension systems against ageing societies. These discussions are often based on the paradigm of a fixed age limit which separates the working age population from inactive people. Raising this age limit will inevitably lead to protests and cannot be the only solution.

The Approach

The “Best Agers” partners’ research has indicated that keeping older workers can be economically beneficial for employers. Meanwhile, attracting continued employment of older workers requires both a change of attitudes and a reform of working conditions according to the individual’s physical and intellectual capabilities and needs. This process is called age management.

In the “Best Agers Lighthouses” project, **Local Age Management Partnerships (LAMPs)** will be formed in eight partner regions. Each LAMP will consist of a project partner, a public or private employer, an internal mentor and an experienced external advisor. Together they will carry out an intervention that will identify threats and opportunities resulting from the company’s personnel age structure and help to reform HR management in order to make better use of the knowledge and experiences of older workers in key positions.



The partners will **demonstrate measurable benefits** and success factors of applying age management to **provide incentives for other employers to follow suit** and to stimulate decision makers and the social partners to give age management more room in national policy discussions.