

TBestC – Launch seminar

23-24 May 2003, Kaunas
Summarising report



Launch of the TBestC Project, Kaunas 2003 Summarising Report

Introduction

The TBestC (Transferring Best Solutions between Towns and Cities) – project aims at transferring Good Practices between five city pairs in the Baltic Sea Region, through study visits and close co-operation between the cities. The project will be carried out during 2003-2004. The project cities are not appointed in before hand so the project started with the Launch seminar in Kaunas where 60 city representatives gathered to find good partners to join the project with. This report will give you a short description of the aims and outlines of the project as well as a summary of all the interesting presentations kept by speakers from the Baltic Sea Region and from the US and the most important the Cities' Good Practice presentations. The program is viewed here below:

Friday, 23 May, 2003

- 9.00 Opening session
- UBC EnvCom Co-Chairman, Mr Mikko Jokinen, Guldbrand Skjönberg
- US REO, Ms Nanna Nyholm
- ECAT-Lt, Ms Audrone Alijosiute
- 10.00 Introduction of TBestC
- 10.50 Introduction of the themes
- Air Quality, Ms Tiina Hartman
- Bio-diversity, Mr Petteri Vihervaara,
- Energy, Mr Timothy Beatley
- Environmental health, Mari Siimar
- Information & education, Mr Mark Gibb
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.00 Theme workshops
- a) Air Quality**
- Best practice presentations from Cities of Kaunas & Lübeck
- Expert presentation by Ms Tiina Hartman
- b) Bio-diversity**
- Best practice presentations from the City of Malmö
- Expert presentation by Mr Petteri Vihervaara, Biota
- c) Energy**
- Best practice presentations from the City of Pori & Municipality of Gotland
- Expert presentation by Mr Timothy Beatley
- d) Environmental health**
- Best practice presentations from the City of Vilnius
- Expert presentation by Mr Argo Soon
- e) Information & education**
- Best practice presentations from the City of Kristiansand & ECAT Kaliningrad
- Expert presentation by Mr Mark Gibb
- 17.00 Presentations and reflection from workshop in plenary
- 19.30 Dinner

Saturday, 24 of May, 2003

- 9.00 Opening of Forum for Best Practices
The forum will give a good opportunity to get in contact with other cities and start the City matching process. During the event there will be served refreshments.
- 9.00 City presentation: What we learnt from Best Practice exchange!
- 9.30 Forum for Best Practices
- 10.30 Coffee is served
- 10.45 City presentation: What we learnt from Best Practice exchange!
- 11.00 Forum continues
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 Closing session
- Reflections & feedback
- Best Practices & Urban sustainability in Europe and USA, Mr Timothy Beatley
- Conclusion and next step
- Closing
- 15.30 Excursion to Open-Air Folk Museum
The Open-Air Museum gives a very good impression of life in the 19th century Lithuania. 15 farmsteads are arranged into four groups, which represent the main ethnographic regions of Lithuania. You will also get the opportunity to purchase some of the handicraft.
- 19.00 Casual dinner
- Presentation of Speakers:**
Mr Timothy Beatley, Urban and Environmental Planning, University of Virginia
Mr Mark Gibb, Executive Director, Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Ms Tiina Hartman, Air Quality expert, City of Turku
Mr Petteri Vihervaara, Director, International bio-diversity company Biota
Mr Mari Siimar, Baltic Regional Healthy Office, Turku.

Day One

Introduction of the TBestC Project

The project was introduced to the cities present at the launch seminar by *Anna Granberg*, Project Co-ordinator with the Union of the Baltic Cities Commission on Environment Secretariat. The three main areas of discussion were:

- The overall aims of the project
- The process to achieve the aims
- The eventual results for the participating cities

The presentations started with an illustration of the idea of the project. The flowers in the picture below are representing good practices in the area. The aim of the project is to transfer this good practices from one city to another in the region, this is represented with flowers with a line in-between them. The transfer and long-term strategic work with Best Practice exchange will lead to a more sustainable region which is symbolised by the picture.



The Overall Aims of the Project

There are three overall aims that the project is aiming to achieve, these are:

- To transfer good environmental practices between five city couples in the Baltic Sea Region
- To wider disseminate and promote good practices
- To present a new perspective, through the participation of US experts and hopefully offering a study visit to the US

The Process to Achieve the Aims

The most feasible process to be implemented in the TBestC project was the process of benchmarking. This is a process best described as, the way children learn, as it involves observing an action and copying it. In this case observing a best practice and implementing it in your own city. The overall process will take place as follows:

- City A has Good Practice, and City B is interested in this Good Practice
- City A and City B couple with each other
- City A and City B applies together to join the TBestC project. UBC Environmental Commission will evaluate

and approve the cities' participation.

- Approved City A and City B plan a study visit and a feasibility study
- The plan is discussed with UBC Environmental Commission and support is agreed upon
- City B goes to City A to learn about their Good Practice
- City B and City A present the experiences of the visit in TBestC Interim WS I, Nov 2003
- City B investigates the possibilities to implement Good Practices with tutoring from City A.
- City B writes a feasibility report with help from City A
- City B and City A present the feasibility report in TBestC Interim WS II workshop
- UBC publishes a summary of the feasibility report as a part of the TBestC report
- The result of the whole process and the outcome will be presented in the Final Seminar, Nov 2004

The Eventual Results for the Participating Cities

For the cities participating in the TBestC project there will be a number of tangible outcomes:

Learning City:

- The adoption of more environmentally friendly policies in the city
- The chance to make your city a better place to live

Teaching City:

- The ability to examine whether your project is able to be repeated elsewhere
- The chance to help cities deal with problems you have already overcome

Both Cities:

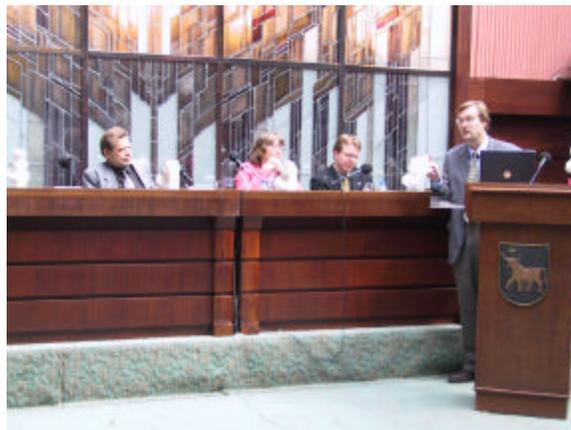
- The chance to form partnerships with other cities, creating new colleagues and friends
- The ability to develop these partnerships in the future for activities such as student exchange
- Gain knowledge and experience of working in partnership schemes

Introduction of TBestC Project Themes

The TBestC project will incorporate a number of themes that each of the cities can work within in order to spread best practices around the Baltic Sea Region. The project themes were introduced and brief presentations were given by experts in each of the five theme areas. The themes are outlined below along with the name of the expert that introduced it. There are also a few brief comments on the main points of the presentations.

- *Air Quality – Ms Tiina Hartman*
 - Difficulty in getting people interested in air quality unless there is an obvious severe problem
 - Different things effect air quality:
 - Traffic
 - Energy Production
 - Industry
 - Health hazards related to air quality
 - Irritation of respiratory system
 - Inhaled gasses acting with water in body produces harmful acids
 - Management
 - Needs an holistic approach
- *Biodiversity – Petteri Vihervaara*
 - Over 1.75 million species of biodiversity world-wide but recent estimates suggest this figure could be between 10 – 100 million
 - Why is biodiversity important?
 - Species are the base of ecosystems
 - Ecosystem Services
 - Nordic region has seen five fold increase in population over last 25 years, this is bound to have an effect on biodiversity
 - Urban ecology is extremely important and needs protecting against:
 - Traffic
 - People
 - Pollution
 - Climate Change
 - Predators
 - Green Areas now becoming very few in Nordic region
 - Land Use Planning needs to be developed to conserve green areas

- *Energy – Timothy Beatly*
 - Present ideas of sustainable forms of living from around Europe
 - Main aim in today's society is to use less energy
 - Added emphasis being placed on renewable forms such as wind power
 - Other renewable forms being researched currently include pedal power, which has been used to power a concert in the USA
 - Widely experimenting with the use of glass in buildings to maximise natural light and therefore reduce the need for energy to power artificial lighting
 - Housing developments in areas such as Amsterdam now being developed that run exclusively on renewable energy



- *Environmental Health – Mari Siimar*
 - Aims of Healthy Cities:
 - To promote healthy cities
 - Collect information on urban health
 - Create projects to improve urban health
 - Important role to be played by decision makers
 - Aim to maximise healthy resources at the disposal of all individuals
 - Mentioned a number of health documents that had been published recently the most important being the one created directly from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit
- *Information and Education – Mark Gibb*
 - Spoke of the importance of forming partnerships
 - Used example of North Virginia forming partnership with municipality of Stuttgart
 - Outlined different schemes used in Stuttgart and US
 - Bike lanes
 - Car sharing
 - Recycling
 - Green rooftops
 - Traffic calming
 - Underground rail networks
 - A number of advantages can come from partnerships:
 - Educational Swaps
 - Sharing of ideas
 - Work Experience

Theme workshops

A workshop was set up for each of the five themes where each expert presenter was encouraged to elaborate on the presentations they had given that morning. This was also the occasion when the best practices were presented by a number of the participating cities.

- *Air Quality*
 - This workshop included best practice presentations from the cities of Kaunas and Lübeck
 - Kaunas:
 - Have to deal with air quality with an holistic approach
 - Very important to gain financial aid
 - Have to have a good tool to implement and need good communication
 - However more measuring is required and emission levels have to be recorded precisely
 - Lübeck:
 - Gained a fairly successful level of participation
 - Obtained good knowledge of the problems they were facing
 - Managed to ascertain local assistance and recognised air quality as an important factor within their city
 - However the air quality problem is complicated and it can be difficult to gain full co-operation
- *Biodiversity*
 - The best practice presentation was given by the city of Malmö
 - Malmö discussed how it had:
 - Created green areas and preserved nature in the urban area
 - Created compensation habitats and relocated species within the city
 - Incorporated rain water management schemes within residential areas

- Promoted the use of bio-indicators, protection of old trees, preservation of bats and the inclusion of ecological corridors within the city
- This workshop also created a list of reasons why you should work with bio-diversity in the city:
 - Human well-being
 - Water
 - CO₂ absorption
 - Erosion
 - Flooding
 - Bio-pest control
- **Energy**
 - The best practice presentations were given by Pori and Gotland
 - Pori:
 - Good example of the development of wind power
 - Achieved excellent local participation
 - Wind farm generates around 10.3 Mega-Watts of electricity
 - Ideas for further development of these wind farms in the future
 - Gotland:
 - Idea to become entirely dependant on renewable energy by 2025
 - Already implementing excellent renewable ideas including wind, bio-mass and solar
 - Already established a number of partnerships with cities such as Oxford in the UK
 - All municipal owned transport now runs on bio-diesel
- **Environmental Health**
 - This workshop focused on the problems that traffic causes to the environment and ways that these problems may be eradicated
 - Problems included: Health and Safety, Noise, Pollution, Resource Use, Economic Problems and Social Aspects
 - Possible solutions were discussed and the outcomes were:
 - Better promotion of public transport
 - Incentives for cyclists
 - Areas created for pedestrians and cyclists only
 - More pollution and noise monitoring
- **Information and Education**
 - There were four best practice presentations in this workshop, these were given by Panevezys, Riga, Kristiansand and ECAT Kaliningrad.
 - Panevezys:
 - Creation of an environmental library
 - Development of a nature school to educate youngsters on the importance of the environment
 - Developed a scheme for disposing of hazardous waste
 - Riga:
 - Emphasised the importance to utilise universities with their students research competition initiative
 - Established a Public Council of Environmental Protection Fund
 - Have currently published 28 research papers and assessed over 97 projects
 - Kristiansand:
 - Presented their innovative Eco-Lighthouse project
 - Eco-Lighthouse was a project aimed at making small and medium sized businesses more sustainable
 - Strongly integrated with the economic services
 - ECAT Kaliningrad:
 - Environmental education and the involvement of businesses
 - Training for managers
 - Company access to environmental information



Day two

Forum for Best Practices

The Saturday morning opened with the TBestC forum. This was the occasion when the cities present at the launch were encouraged to move freely around the room in order to find representatives from other cities which they would like to partner with to learn from their best practices.

From the feedback obtained from the participants of the forum so far, it is evident that the forum was seen by the majority of people to have worked extremely well and gave opportunity for potential city couples to discuss ideas. This resulted in a number of cities taking the initial steps for completing the application forms dur-

ing the forum, further outlining the success of the activity.

Closing Session

The floor was handed to *Mark Gibb*, *Timothy Beatly* and *Anna Granberg* to provide the participants with a variety of ideas on the closing of the launch seminar.

Mark Gibb spoke of the importance of working in a partnership in order to achieve tangible results for tangible problems. Mark also emphasised that by developing these partnerships it becomes easier to implement long-term solutions to what are, in terms of the environment, long term problems.

Timothy Beatly aimed to deliver a more large-scale perspective of the different initiatives that have been implemented all over the world in regard to more sustainable forms of architecture e.g. green rooftops and also more low key projects such as bicycle sharing. Timothy too spoke of the need to forge strong partnerships in order to help good practices spread over, not only the Baltic Region, but also Europe as a whole.

The final comments were left to Anna Granberg, the Project Co-ordinator, who took the opportunity to answer a number of the recurring questions that had been asked throughout the seminar:

1) Are Western European cities allowed to couple with other Western European cities?

Yes

2) Is the partnership allowed to consist of more than two cities?

Yes

3) How much support will the cities get who join the project?

No fixed cost, it is dependent on a variety of circumstances:

- Where the two cities are located
- Travel costs between cities
- Accommodation prices in the host city

4) What hierarchical level is needed to finalise the application form?

This is dependent on the city in question. In certain cases the head of the environmental department may have the authority to finalise the application form whereas in other cases it may take the signature of the mayor of the city to authorise participation.

These are just a number of the most frequent questions asked during the seminar, if you have any other questions regarding the TBestC project or any feedback on the launch seminar please do not hesitate to contact Anna Granberg, Project Co-ordinator at:

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We would sincerely like to thank everyone who participated in the launch seminar and take this

opportunity to remind all cities hoping to partake in the project that the deadline for application forms is **the 15 June 2003**.

Next Steps

The next step of the project, when the cities that will participate in the project have been chosen, is to start planning for the study visits that will take place during the autumn. The city that is interested to adapt a new good practice will visit the other city, of course this will not be a one way learning exercise, the cities will have time to discuss and learn from each other. The study visit will be followed by an intermediate workshop in late autumn where the results from the study visits will be presented.

After that the a feasibility study will start, the cities will investigate the possibility to transfer the good practice and perhaps also take the first steps towards it, this work be presented in the intermediate workshop II. After the feedback from the audience at the second workshop has been incorporated in the studies the cities will print feasibility reports. To wider spread the good work done and the good practice experiences the project will finally be presented during a final seminar where everyone interested will be invited in the end of 2004.

The project is carried out in co-operation with the US Regional Environmental Office in Copenhagen and ECAT-Lt.