

UBC

UNION
OF THE BALTIC
CITIES

2016–2021

UBC Sustainability Action Programme

Stairway towards Sustainable Baltic Cities





UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021
Stairway towards Sustainable Baltic Cities

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2016–2021

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Stairway towards Sustainable Baltic Cities

Adopted at the XIII General Conference
Gdańsk, October 2015

Working towards smart and sustainable Baltic cities!

The purpose of the Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 is to guide the whole network of the UBC towards development of a smart and sustainable Baltic Sea Region. The programme gives strategic direction to the realisation of our vision of the UBC cities in the future - creating **a smart, safe and sustainable** Baltic Sea Region.

This Action Programme was adopted as an annex to the UBC Strategy 2016–2021 by the XIII UBC General Conference in October 2015 in Gdynia, Poland, and it was guided and produced by the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission (UBC SCC) in collaboration with other UBC member cities.

We hope that this Sustainability Action Programme will bring inspiration to all UBC cities to become the sustainability leaders in our region and beyond!

On behalf of the whole UBC,

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Our vision for sustainable UBC cities until 2021 and beyond



“UBC cities will be climate-smart, providing a good ground for green economy to grow, while being resource-efficient and sustainable in all their activities as well as protecting the environment and waterbodies in the Baltic Sea Region. They will increasingly be known as global forerunners when it comes to creating inclusive, diverse, democratic, gender equal, high quality living environment for their inhabitants.”

The Union of the Baltic Cities continuously recognises its responsibility for making our future a sustainable one and is committed to undertake all the efforts that this requires.

We have already taken many steps together and we will continue to dedicate our work with our member cities to continuously improve our capacity and practices all around the Baltic Sea

Region and build societies with a high quality of life.

Many UBC cities are already forerunners in different fields of sustainability. UBC aims to support them on their way further to the top as well as guides other cities on the stairway of their sustainable development.

**UBC CITIES ARE THE FORERUNNERS
IN SUSTAINABILITY**

Challenges and developments in the Baltic Sea Region, Europe and the world

A common goal for people around the world is to improve their lives and living conditions for themselves and their children: we need to have secure jobs, sufficient supply of food and water, safe housing and a livable environment. Governments want to secure economic growth, ensure safety and security, create jobs and reduce poverty. Businesses want to expand and grow and make more profit.

At the same time we know that local political decisions are needed in cities to tackle many large scale challenges: combat and deal with **climate change**, improving the state of **the Baltic Sea**, vicious **environmental problems** in many parts of the world and making energy production and energy distribution more sustainable. The big challenge is to support the transformation from traditional to modern, **clean and smart technologies**. All these challenges are global, but they get especially tangible on the local level. The guiding question is: **How do we respond to those challenges?**

We live in a highly urbanized world and have to make our cities smart in order to lead a good life. Cities are the **key actors in making a change**: with smart city planning, smart use of resources including the human resources of their inhabitants, the use of new technology and new ways of working and cooperation this can be possible!

It can be done by protecting the urban environment, water bodies and water supplies and planning for sustainable mobility. Cities are aiming more and more at being carbon and nutrient neutral establish the principle of circular economy and industrial symbiosis to ensure a smart and sustainable development in their urban area. We are also aware of the many social and cultural challenges facing us, and aim to work diligently towards tackling social exclusion. UBC wants to support its member cities on the way to become smart and sustainable in all possible ways.



THE KEY QUESTION IS:

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO THESE CHALLENGES?

Cooperation and liaison – our “Open house” approach

The UBC wants to be “an open house” for sustainable urban development. All members as well as external partners and stakeholders are welcomed to join in our effort of making Baltic Cities sustainable. At the same time, we are strongly contributing to Baltic Sea regional, European and Global partnerships and co-operation processes to advance sustainable development. Our conviction is that an “Open House”- approach is critical for bringing a long-term change for sustainability.

In applying it we are implementing principles of good governance to our own work. The UBC works in close cooperation with the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the Secretariat of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), VASAB and the Nordic Council of Ministers, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and the Covenant of Mayors in sustainability related questions.

In the regional level our work is also strongly influenced by **the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea**, which has been a guiding document for years.

The UBC also works closely with different EU institutions to contribute to the implementation of EU 2020 goals, the EU Climate and Energy Package, the EU Mobility Package and various EU policies and directives.

And as we all need to look beyond our own local, regional and national borders, UBC also takes its global responsibility, following global policy developments towards sustainable development: Globally the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”** explicitly goal **11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**, decided by the UN General Assembly 25 September 2015 are guiding our work.

The UN SDGs are marking a paradigm shift- from sustainable development being an “extra topic” to finally being a central issue in everything the UN does – and this hopefully also bounces back to nations, regions and cities.



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COLLABORATION AND LIAISON



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Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

UN Sustainable Development Goal 11

Our topics

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1. GREEN URBAN ECONOMIES

The “Green sector” is already a big employer within several sub sectors like waste and water management, air emission monitoring and energy efficiency, port management and maritime industry.

Municipalities and cities have an important role in fulfilling the **EU 2020 targets**, the **EU 2030 framework for energy and climate change** and have a clear role for enabling **green growth**. Cities can strengthen sustainable growth through a range of policy instruments like pricing, urban planning, regulations, public procurement and information, but as important are strong institutional fundamentals including city leadership, effective governance and Private-Public Partnerships.

Connected to growth, the concept of **circular economy** becomes more and more important: waste needs to be looked at as a resource and all resources need to be managed more efficiently through their whole lifecycle.

More resource efficiency, better eco-design, waste prevention and reuse processes will bring savings to businesses (and cities), reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also bring new growth and job opportunities. Also the concepts of **industrial symbiosis** and **sharing economy** are more and more important for cities to get acquainted with and to integrate into their plans and activities.

Through encouraging the recycling of resources between businesses and promoting an increased collaboration and sharing of services and goods, cities will move closer to achieving their goal of being smart and sustainable.



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Malmö Live —

ECO-DESIGN AT ITS BEST

OUR GOALS:

- to make the UBC cities **global green economy leaders** which provides good opportunities for innovative green and clean tech businesses and enable resource efficient economic activities
- to support UBC cities on the way to a **circular economy**
- to make UBC cities **sustainable** in their own economic activities

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- to arrange **trainings** and **exchange of experience** in circular economy related processes
- to **link** and **connect** UBC cities to global forums for smart city developments
- to **facilitate development projects** on circular economy, urban clean tech and smart city focus

2. CLIMATE-SMART BALTIC CITIES

Climate-smart leaders are cities that take climate change aspects into consideration in their entire decision making e.g. in urban planning, mobility planning, energy related actions (efficiency, production) and buildings etc. UBC Cities want to take the leadership in becoming climate-smart, decreasing their greenhouse gas emissions and using renewable energy sources efficiently.

UBC cities are key actors when it comes to combat climate change in the region. They are the actors to implement smart climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and integrate them into their everyday actions. The change in the global climate brings many new challenges for the local level and cities need to strive towards creating attractive, livable environments for their citizens.

Investing in sustainable and renewable local energy production brings the potential of energy independence as well as new business opportunities in the city and the region. Sustainable

urban mobility solutions and services is already becoming a key element in building attractive cities.

Many UBC Cities are already forerunners in climate work, having set ambitious goals for cutting greenhouse gases and becoming CO2 neutral cities between 2040 and 2050.

We aim to support the UBC cities in reaching and taking responsibility for their targets and aligning them with the EU goals. UBC is a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors and has established a Baltic Sea Region Covenant Club.



RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

OUR GOALS:

- to keep the UBC cities **climate change leaders** in Europe and globally
- to initiate and implement climate smart urban development (incl. climate smart-sustainable districts mobility models, energy efficient transport – building-planning)

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- to strengthen the cooperation with the **Covenant of Mayors** and support signatory member cities in **the planning and implementation of SEAPs**
- to **increase** the number of **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, SUMPs** in the region
- to **establish internal working groups** on sustainable mobility, sustainable energy use, and climate adaption

3. SUSTAINABLE URBAN ECOSYSTEMS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Attractive and prosperous UBC cities have clean and safe environments and they use all resources efficiently.

Nature has a valuable role for inhabitants and the general **attractiveness** of urban areas. Every city needs to have well-functioning green areas, a sound environment, highlight noise reduction and develop good ecosystem services.

We strive for better **urban planning** that will be based on the **Integrated Management approach**, planning parks, urban forests and recreational areas both to increase the well-being for the inhabitants and to increase **biodiversity** in the urban area. Especially the **integrated urban planning** of urban brownfields is an essential issue for UBC cities that are constantly growing and becoming denser. This topic also connects to the challenge of **decreasing hazardous substances**, both in soil and in water bodies.



OUR GOALS:

- to make UBC cities leaders in **resource efficiency**, **sustainable urban planning** and **biodiversity**
- to have UBC cities that **decrease hazardous substances** in soil and water bodies as well as keep and **strengthen** a rich **biodiversity**

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- to increase the capacity in **integrated management approach** for cities on urban planning topics
- to increase the **common understanding** on ecosystem services
- to **follow the policy process** on hazardous substances and **support the UBC cities in good management** of hazardous substances

4. BALTIC SEA AND ITS CATCHMENT AREA

The Baltic Sea is a connecting element for all of us, the core of the region. At the same time the sea is one of the most polluted water bodies of the world and a very vulnerable ecosystem. The Baltic Sea has a multifunctional role for the whole region; a transport route, a source for fish and seafood, leisure and wellbeing, tourism and also a source for water.

Many UBC member cities are located close to the shore or are otherwise closely connected to the sea and its inland water bodies. Due to alarming state of the Baltic Sea, improved water management has become an important goal for the countries around the Baltic Sea.

Smart planning in water issues in cities will help inhabitants and businesses to enjoy clear waters. Many UBC cities are forerunners and have taken the leadership in protection of the regional waters and the Baltic Sea by implementing voluntary actions for example in treatment of municipal wastewater.

Leader cities will see the potential of the concept **“from waste to resource”** when dealing with for example sludge and manure. Integrated water management can be one the solution for the challenges caused by climate change. In addition, it helps to battle the water pollution. Integrated Storm Water management and Coastal area management are main topics for many of the UBC member cities working with the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Blue growth is a key area of interest for the Baltic Sea region much due to the above mentioned reasons. Many UBC cities have big ports and are specialized in high quality shipbuilding.



VIKING GRACE OPERATES WITH LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS (LNG) AND SHE IS CONSIDERED TO BE THE WORLD'S MOST ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY AND MOST ENERGY EFFICIENT PASSENGER SHIP OF HER SIZE

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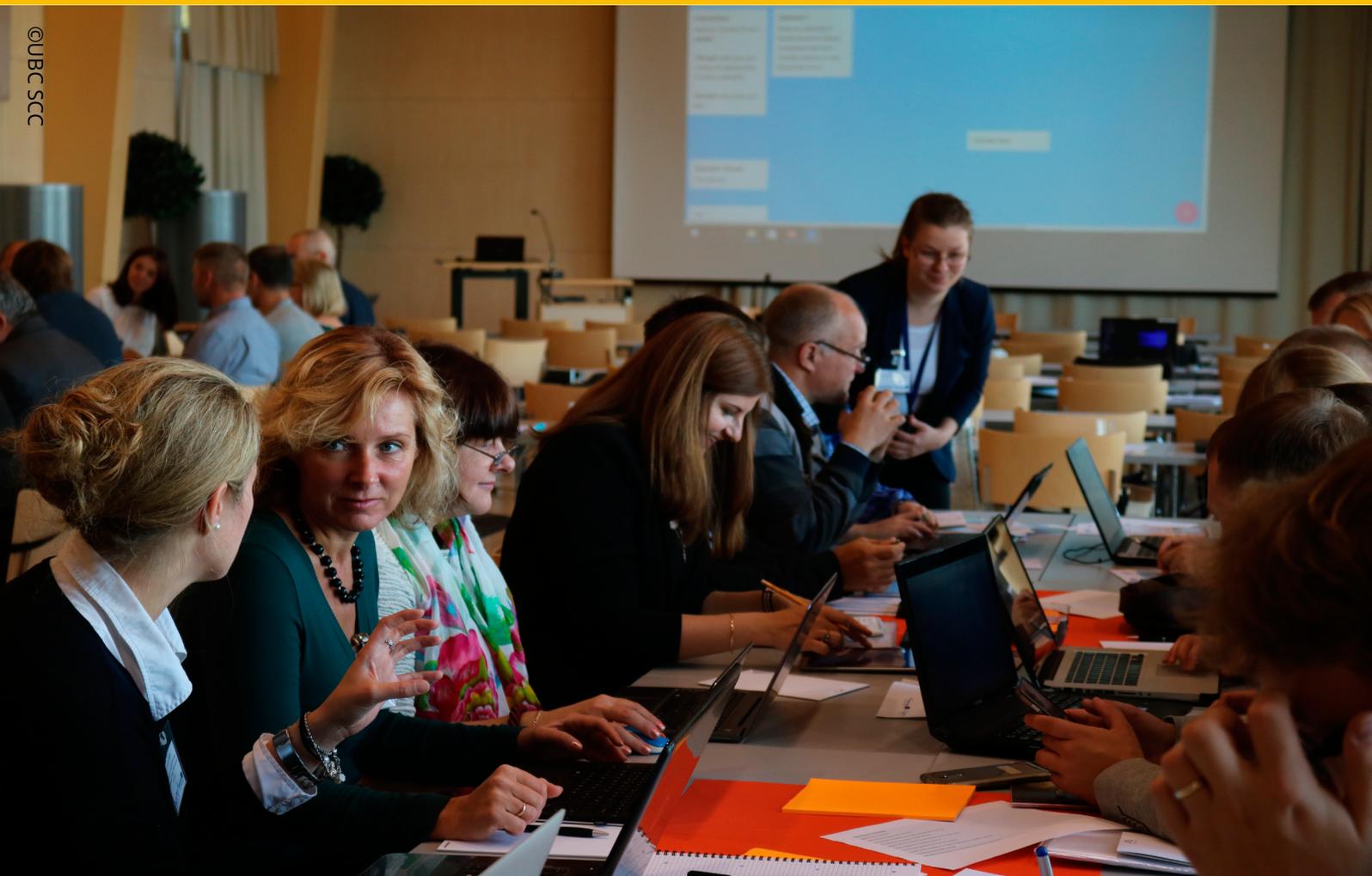
OUR GOALS:

- to make UBC cities leaders in **integrated water management**
- to improve the **ecological** state of the **Baltic Sea**

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- to launch a **Baltic Smart Water** hub
- to facilitate capacity building for **water management** and support knowledge based communities
- to increase UBC cities capacity for **integrated water management**

Our work



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Partnerships for knowledge-based development

UBC is a network organisation with seven thematic commissions. The Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 is a strategic document for the whole organisation, concretized by the commissions' yearly action plans. The implementation of the UBC Sustainability Action Programme is led by the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission and is reported to the UBC Executive Board and General Conference.

Every UBC Commission has its own ways of working towards our objectives; however, networking and partnership-based cooperation is at the core of all our activities.

Our work towards a smart and sustainable Baltic Sea Region is based on a well-developed and utilised network of stakeholders, also outside

of the organisation, as we also aim to provide a testing ground for corporations.

We have built up long-lasting partnerships with many organisations and actors in the region and are hoping to increase cooperation also with other organisations by following other developments very carefully.



THE SEVEN UBC COMMISSIONS WORK TOGETHER

TOWARDS SMART AND SUSTAINABLE BALTIC SEA REGION

This Sustainability Action programme will be implemented through:

- **project development and implementation** on relevant sustainability related topics together with UBC member cities and other UBC Commissions;
- **support for UBC cities through training and capacity building** with tools and methods developed by the UBC Sustainable Cities Commission and our partners;
- **benchmarking and updating the sustainability progress** among UBC member cities via surveys and good practice databases;
- **networking with you**, the member cities through regular commission meetings and specific conferences and seminars and thematic working groups;
- **exchange of good practices and information** by providing a learning environment that fosters on sustainability related issues through the network;
- **representation** of the UBC member cities in sustainability matters on e.g. the EU level

Our outlook on the future

IV



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BE ACTIVE AND BECOME A LEADER

IN SUSTAINABILITY!

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

A network is nothing without active members

With this Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 we want to prepare the ground for the next 5 years of fruitful cooperation, first of all with our member cities but also to take an active role in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals decided in UN General Assembly end of September 2015.

UBC Sustainability Action Programme 2016–2021 wants to encourage you to become more active, to be leaders in sustainability and take the chance to make a change. For your inhabitants. For your city. For the region. For the world.



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Make a change

For your **inhabitants**

For your **city**

For **the region**

For **the world**

Glossary

Blue Growth is the long-term strategy supporting sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole. Seas and oceans are driving the European economy and have great potential for innovation.

Circular economy is a novel economic model in which the focus is on reusing materials and values, and on creating added value in products through services and smart solutions.W

Eco-design can be defined as an approach to designing products with special consideration for the environmental impacts of the whole lifecycle of the product.

Ecosystem services are the benefits humans get from the ecosystems and they can be divided into four groups: *provisioning services* (food, fresh water, wood etc.), *regulating services* (e.g. climate regulation, water purification, waste management), *habitat services* (e.g. habitat for migratory species) and *cultural services* that are non-material benefits (e.g. intellectual development, recreation).

Green growth means fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies.

Industrial symbiosis is an association between two or more industrial facilities or companies in which the wastes or byproducts of one become the raw materials for another.

Integrated Management approach implies that various sectors of policies are being coordinated, different actors are broadly involved in policy-making, multi-level dialogue is taking place and daily policy-making is based on a vision and on a strategy with proper follow-up procedures.

Resource-efficiency means using our planet's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimizing the impacts on the environment.

Sharing economy is a socio-economic ecosystem built around the sharing of human, physical and intellectual resources. It includes the shared creation, production, distribution, trade and consumption of goods and services.

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If you wish to learn more about sustainability, go to
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